

THE PACIFIC COMMITMENT TO THE NEW INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL ECONOMIC ARCHITECTURE

We, the participants of the Pacific Colloquium on **New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA)** representing the member Churches of the Council for World Mission, Pacific Region, came together from 15th to 17th March, 2017 in Suva, Fiji, to

- enable CWM churches to look critically at the current financial and economic Architecture.
- discuss alternatives from the grassroots level.
- share experiences and actions on how such issues are addressed in each context.
- outline a framework of action on specific program designs.

We deliberated on the destructive and all-consuming economic, social, and ecological practices that are generated by greed and individualistic ideals which further propagate poverty, inequality, injustice, and ecological destruction in our communities, region and around the world.

We understood that this is the first colloquia in a series of three that focuses on the Economy of Life, which is expanded in the Sao Paulo Statement as a “wholeness of life [that] can only be achieved through the interdependent relationships with the whole of the created order.”

We affirmed that the challenges highlighted in the Sao Paulo Statement are true and relevant to our island nations.

We were inspired by Biblical Studies and discussions, theological reflections, lectures, stories from our churches, and immersion activities in Suva, discussed and shared our deep concerns, and witnessed community projects that showed positive and hopeful ways in which alternatives could be created.

We realized that the dire climactic challenges faced in the Pacific islands, geographical isolation, and the vulnerability of island nations financial structures to the world markets are just a few cues that our communities are affected by policies that do not support an economy of life, but instead continue to oppress the majority and advance the few.

In view of this, we dedicate and pledge ourselves together to advocacy, self-critique and self-development. The work we set out to do is guided by the Word of God, supported by the church, influenced by evidence and informed at the grass roots level. This is a commitment and journey to which we give ourselves wholeheartedly.

AFFIRMATION

The Sao Paulo Statement, which arose from a world ecumenical conference on a New International Financial and Economic Architecture in Sao Paulo, Brazil 2012 calls us to “find new and just international financial architecture oriented towards satisfying the needs of the people and the realization of all economic, social, and cultural rights and human dignity.”

We have read and reflected deeply upon the statement in its entirety, and embrace the theological, socio-political and economic reframing of the assertions that are presented. We recognize that the focus of our contexts must take into account investment in our people and island environments, awareness about climate change, and awareness and advocacy about social injustice and inequality.

The vision found in the Sao Paulo Statement is informed and shaped by faith, in realizing the Lord’s purpose for humankind and life in all its fullness; that every person on this earth is entitled to a life that is not burdened by poverty, inequality or injustice. We reaffirm that all people are created equal by God. We believe that the Holy Spirit will lead our thoughts, our hopes and our actions, and we are inspired by the Sao Paulo Statement. We will rely upon our Lord to help us to achieve hope and design for the people of our region.

We therefore Commit:

- To share the Sao Paulo Statement with all levels of the church and communities so that there is an understanding and acceptance of the visions and concepts of the Statement.
- To conduct workshops/ seminars for church and community groups about the need to act upon our Christian values to eradicate poverty, prevent causes and eliminate effects of climate change
- To re-read and reinterpret scripture from the perspectives of the marginalized
- To be the voice for those who cannot speak and help to provide skills and services for those in need
- To engage in and ensure policies are in place for the benefit of all to bring life in its fullness.
- To reframe church policies towards commitment to economic and ecological justice
- To revise church budgets and create avenues to initiate alternative economic opportunities for the less privileged
- To initiate dialogue with other churches, agencies and organizations that exist within local communities as well as overseas agencies, governments, and church groups to implement programmes and projects to eradicate poverty and address climate change
- To create and maintain open communication among the members to be updated and refreshed with spiritual support and share best practices
- To encourage member churches to engage in shared programs and experiences of Peer Learning Programs, disaster risk reduction, poverty eradication and economic justice initiatives
- To develop inclusive activities for children, youth, people with special needs and the elderly
- To create a cooperative, insurance organization, or a financial institution or Social and Economic Financial Schemes
- To encourage youth, women and men to make use of the available resources through traditional and cultural projects

Genesis story about God's creation is the basic text that empowered the colloquium. It reminded us that the Pacific is God's creation and gifted to its people. We are called to care for the betterment of the community and we have the responsibility to care for the environment. We denounced the exploitation of globalization and the power of empire. We the church delegates are updated about the statistics on the economic architecture and the realities faced by our people on climate change in the Pacific. We are shocked. However, we are committed to engage our communities and churches to a larger vision of economy of life in the Pacific.

We realized that we can no longer afford to only provide charity and service to those at the margins, but to also move on to addressing the root causes, breaking down the systemic structural injustices, economic, social, political, religious and cultural.

We re-examined the Scriptures and were reminded of the call to the Church to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God with the hope of being agents of peace and seeking justice in establishing the reign of God. (Micah 6:8).

We pledge to work towards the implementation of this Commitment.