

For human rights

Published by the Department
for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation
of the United Evangelical Mission

Volume 12

“Challenges to the Churches in a Changing World”

**Texts from the 4th International UEM Consultation
on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation –
Batam / Indonesia, February 2008**

Edited by Jochen Motte and Thomas Sandner



United Evangelical Mission

foedus verlag

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Umschlaggestaltung und Satz: j.s.

Die Fotos auf dem Umschlag (Fotograf: J. Motte) zeigen Wohngebiete in Batam und das Bankenviertel in Singapur.

Cover photos (taken by J. Motte) show housing areas on Batam and the banking district of Singapore.

Printed in Germany

ISBN 3-938180-11-0

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Bibliothek

Die Deutsche Bibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliographie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

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Challenges to the churches in a changing world

Churches in the United Evangelical Mission striving for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

JOCHEN MOTTE

Since the JPIC Programme was established in 1993, UEM member churches have viewed working together for peace and justice as an integral part of their missionary task. They do so against the background of the violent conflicts and wars affecting UEM member churches – in the last years, especially, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and West Papua/Indonesia.

The situation in almost all countries in the South with UEM member churches has been marked by economic injustice, extreme poverty and the exclusion of large sections of the population from access to education, health, land and food.

In recent years, growing attention has been given to environmental destruction and the devastating human impact of climate change, especially in southern countries.

Active participation in the UEM's JPIC programmes and increasing applications for project support show that the churches have taken significant steps in recent years to improve their infrastructure and capacity to respond to current JPIC challenges and concerns.

The JPIC Programme of the UEM

The JPIC priorities in recent years have been:

Human Rights

Peace Building

Economic Justice

Environmental Protection and Climate Change

The UEM has encouraged member churches to examine how churches share biblical perspectives on dealing with JPIC, promote human rights, contribute effectively to peace building, strive for just and fair social and economic living conditions, especially for marginalised people in the context of globalisation, and contribute to environmental protection, through various international gatherings and consultations in recent years, e.g.:

- Mission and Globalisation – International UEM Workshop hosted by the Iglesia Evangelica del Rio de La Plata in Argentina – March 2006
- Protecting Human Dignity – Regional Consultation on Human Rights hosted by

the GKBP in Bali, Indonesia, organised by the UEM JPIC Department and Regional Office together with the Evangelical Missionswerk Südwestdeutschland and Lutheran World Federation – May 2007

- Global Network Congress – hosted by the German Evangelical Kirchentag in Wuppertal with guests from African, Asian and German UEM member churches – June 2007
- Overcoming Violence – Strategies for Peace Building and Conflict Resolution in Bukoba, Tanzania, in co-operation with the Regional Office hosted by the ELCT/NWD – November 2007

Since 1993, the JPIC Programme of the UEM has supported member churches in their efforts to address human rights, peace building, economic justice, environmental protection and climate change through lobby and advocacy work, capacity building and project support.

1. Lobby and Advocacy Work

In view of ongoing crises and violent conflict in the Great Lakes Region, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Papua/Indonesia, the UEM has engaged in international lobby and advocacy work in co-operation with its own constituency, other church and non-church organisations (e.g. the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches). Lobby and advocacy work is undertaken through direct contact with decision makers, urgent actions, workshops and discussions with representatives of Governments, the European Union and United Nations. The UEM has helped establish relevant lobby networks:

- West Papua Network in Germany and
- International Faith-Based Network on West Papua
- Ecumenical Network on Central Africa
- Human Rights Action Network on the Philippines

The UEM also participates in, and supports, national and international networks, initiatives and campaigns addressing economic justice, peace building and human rights promotion, e.g. Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance on HIV/AIDS and global trade, national initiatives in Germany on fair trade, debt cancellation and climate protection.

2. Capacity Building

Between 2004 and 2008, the UEM offered training opportunities in human rights and peace building at regional and international level: e.g., representatives from Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Namibia, DR Congo, Tanzania, the Philippines and Germany attended courses in peace building at “Responding to Conflict” in Birmingham/UK and in human rights at “Geneva for Human Rights” in Geneva/Switzerland.

It also established a consultancy for JPIC capacity building in Northern Sumatra for UEM SEKBER Churches in 2005. Eliakim Sitorus was appointed for two years.

At members' request, the programme, funded by the UEM, EKHN and LWF, was extended for two years till the end of 2010.

Other forms of capacity building have been developed in the area of long term personnel exchange: e.g., in the ELCT/NWD in Tanzania, Dr Anthea Bethge, a German expert on conflict resolution, has developed a JPIC programme to address domestic violence.

The JPIC Programme also financially supports capacity building in the churches, in the form of workshops, training and scholarships.

3. Project Support

Between 2004 and 2008 the UEM has helped member churches plan and implement more than 100 JPIC projects in the field of human rights, peace building and environmental protection.

The UEM JPIC Consultation on Batam, Indonesia Challenges to the Churches in a Changing World – February 2008

Based on the above mentioned developments and programme guidelines on justice, peace and the integrity of creation, 45 representatives and JPIC activists from UEM member churches in Africa, Asia and Germany came together from 10th to 17th February 2008 in Batam, Indonesia for the fourth International UEM Consultation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. The consultation was also attended by the Governor of the Indonesian Province of Riau, Dr Ismeth Abdullah; the German Government's Commissioner on Human Rights, Mr Günter Nooke; the President of the World Council of Churches, Ephorus Dr Soritua Nababan; the Moderator of the UEM, Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta; law and human rights experts from Indonesia, Dr Musdah Mulia, Dr Jayadi Damanik and Mr Payaman Simanjuntak; a church representative from Latin America, Mr Nicolas Rosenthal, the Vice Moderator of the VEM, Ms Emelda Simangunsong; the Chair Persons of the Africa and the Asia Region Bishop Benson Bagonza and Rev. Burju Purba; the General Secretary of the UEM, Dr Fidon Mwombeki; and further resource persons on labourers' issues, the environment and human trafficking.

The recent history of Batam Island itself reflects the changing world and the impact of globalisation. After becoming a free trade zone under former President Suharto, the population has increased from 7,000 in 1970 to more than 700,000 today, 30% of whom are estimated to be Christian. Thousands of young women from other islands have come to Batam to find jobs in the industrial parks, where international companies produce goods for the global markets. Labour, housing and health conditions are often very poor. The HIV/Aids rate is increasing and human trafficking has become a major problem on the island.

Churches on Batam are struggling to respond to the challenges in this fast-changing world. During the consultation, participants had the opportunity to gain an insight into the living conditions of people on Batam, with particular focus on workers’ concerns, environmental destruction, health and housing conditions and human trafficking.

The delegates during the consultation

- assessed developments in JPIC issues in the churches and the UEM;
- shared insights and experiences from different countries and regions on how to address human rights, peace building and environmental protection as a church;
- visited different places on Batam, where they gained an insight into the living conditions of the local people, met church people, labourers, NGO-activists, governmental officials and business people;
- reflected on diverse challenges related to the economic globalisation experienced on Batam, with consideration given to experiences from other regions and churches;
- reflected on the missionary understanding of JPIC within the UEM, based on bible studies and theological inputs,
- discussed and agreed on a message and recommendations for the UEM and its member churches for the future with regard to JPIC;
- worshipped together with more than 3,000 workers on Batam in an indoor stadium at an ecumenical gathering of all UEM member churches based on the island as well as in different congregations in Sunday services.

The message, together with the recommendations and all contributions available from the participants and resource persons, are published in this documentation. Special thanks to the hosting churches and the preparatory committees of the UEM SEKBER, Rev. Rudi Sembiring, Rev. Willem Simarmata, Rev. Burju Purba, Bishop Mangisi Simorangkir and the UEM consultant, Mr Eliakim Sitorus. Sincere thanks also to the Regional Co-ordinator Asia, Dr Robinson Butarbutar and his team, Ms Ayanka de Silva and Dr Alphinus Kambodji as well as to the UEM staff from Germany, Mr Thomas Sandner, Dr Uwe Hummel, Ms Angelika Veddeler and Ms Katja Bähr who contributed to the preparation and implementation of the consultation. Thanks also to the Südwind Institute and Mr Friedel Hütz-Adams, who prepared a study on Batam, which is also included in this documentation. Special thanks to all who assisted in the editorial work, especially Mr Frank Kürschner-Pelkmann, as well as Ms Cynthia Lies and Mr John McLaughlin.

Since the consultation, churches on Batam have started a process to establish a joint ecumenical programme to address the needs of the workers on the island and to serve especially those people who might become victims of economic and social change in a globalised world. The UEM will continue to support these churches in their efforts and wishes them success and God’s blessings in their witness and action. This publication is dedicated to the labourers on Batam Island, their protection and life in dignity.

Message and recommendations of the consultation “Challenges to the churches in a changing world”

We, the 43 participants and guests at the fourth JPIC-Consultation, met from 10th to 17th February 2008 on the Island of Batam, Indonesia, to discuss missionary challenges to the churches in a changing world. We are grateful to the churches in Northern Sumatra (SEKBER) as well as the churches in Batam, who have hosted us and shared their lives with us.

Although we came from four continents, Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America¹, with different political, social and economic backgrounds, we all experienced that we are confronted with a common reality of a world, which, in a rapid and continual process of change, is widening the circle of marginalised and suffering people worldwide. This phenomenon, which has come to be codified as globalisation with the understanding that it should offer humankind better opportunities for the improvement of its living conditions, has instead generated factors that rather threaten its existence.

In the sharing of our experiences, we realised that, since globalisation has to do with international trade, it has often been linked with criminal activities. It is the unquestioned dominance of neo-liberal thinking that leads to poor labour conditions and threatens the life and wellbeing of people all over the world. We observe violations of human rights within the countries of our members, but also in the world at large, e.g. in Darfur/Sudan or Pakistan. In conflict stricken countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Papua/Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, multinational companies have made a lot of profit through either the legal or illegal exploitation of natural resources and the arms trade.

Also, it is not only people in developing countries that are victims of globalisation. 62% of the population of such an affluent country as Germany feel that their near and long-term future is insecure. Life for ordinary people is increasingly hard and does not offer equal chances. The UEM, in recent years, together with other ecumenical bodies, has given special attention through its programmes on economic justice. UEM members have also addressed the issue of globalisation at different levels in their synods and church boards. In so doing, the church stands against any economic system, which causes the majority of the population to “live from the breadcrumbs falling off the table of the rich”. The participants call upon

1 We appreciated the presence of a participant the Evangelical Church on the Rio de la Plata, working in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay.

the churches to continue the process to develop a new model of an economy in the service of life.

We are all affected, in different ways, by the present unjust economic system. For example, refugees are finding it increasingly difficult to get into Europe due to protective European asylum policy and the brutal presence of police and military at the EU borders. As a communion of churches in the UEM, we express our solidarity with those who suffer under the consequences of this globalised changing world in the different regions where we come from. That is why we decided to come to Batam, in order to witness to our brothers and sisters subjected to economic exploitation by multinational and national companies seeking low cost labour.

During our various visits, we encountered people, mostly young boys and girls between 18 and 24 years of age working as casual labourers in unacceptable conditions. Coming from impoverished families, they fear dismissal and, therefore, remain loyal to their employers and outsourcing companies, despite the fact that their rights are constantly violated. We saw cases of people who had been trafficked and who finally were abandoned to their own fate without the work they had been offered, often under false promises. Also, women and even young girls and boys, who have been dismissed, now find themselves in commercial prostitution, threatened by HIV/AIDS. We encountered pollution of water in Batam, deforestation, untreated sewage and hasty and badly co-ordinated development. Due to massive and widespread corruption practices in society, government authorities fail to monitor and enforce labour law and environmental standards.

We appreciate that the churches in Batam have become more aware of the special needs of the victims of these developments and the labourers themselves have already started to stand up for their rights. We encourage the churches to respond to this situation by taking concrete action, setting up programmes to address the challenges described above.

“God wills a society in which all can exercise full human rights.

The human being, male and female, was created in God’s own image, blessed and made co-responsible with God for creation.” (Gen 1:26-28)

Dr Soritua A.E. Nababan².

“What was true is still true today: God suffers with the people whose human rights are violated, whether these are (...) political and civil rights (...) or socio-economic rights, which are violated by poverty, economic injustice, HIV and AIDS etc.”

Dr Zephania Kameeta³.

² Former ephorus of the HKBP and moderator of the United Evangelical Mission, 1996 to 2000

³ Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia and current moderator of the UEM

We believe the commitment to protect human dignity, the dignity of creation and to promote human rights is basic to the life and mission of the church. It is an integral part of our work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Every human being, male and female, is created in God’s image, loved unconditionally and made co-responsible with God for creation. Therefore, we affirm the dignity of each human being as a gift of God. We are called to recognise this gift, uphold the dignity of every human being and actively work for its protection. We reject the false opinion that dignity comes from a specific status in society or from human achievement. Consequently, we reject all practices that discriminate or oppress others socially, economically, culturally and politically, or on the basis of religion.

In order to protect human dignity and to prevent discrimination and oppression, the international community adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, followed by further human rights treaties and conventions. We recognise that these civil and political, as well as economic, social and cultural rights are indispensable legally binding universal norms to protect human dignity. In the Scriptures we find the commitment to safeguarding freedom and justice through law. The story of God liberating his people from slavery in Egypt and then giving them the Ten Commandments is paradigmatic in that respect: Freedom and dignity given by God is to be ensured by law. Furthermore, a special emphasis is put on protecting the rights of the stranger, the widow and the orphan, i.e. the marginalised and vulnerable in society. Consequently, those in power are strongly criticised when they violate or pervert the rights of these people: “Woe to those who make iniquitous decrees, who write oppressive statutes, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be your spoil, and that you may make the orphans your prey!” (Isaiah 10:1-2) As churches, we take up this prophetic call to protect the most vulnerable today and to seek effective legal and political protection of their rights.

We are convinced that human rights work is an integral part of our call to reach out to and love our neighbour. To serve our neighbour involves not only giving diaconal help when somebody is in immediate need, but also looking at the root causes why people are suffering. This means looking at the socio-economic, environmental, cultural and political structures that cause suffering and to actively work at overcoming these structures. It also means working *with* the people suffering and not for them. Our aim is to uphold the dignity of each person by ensuring freedom, justice and participation.

To promote human rights is an integral part of our witness to this world. Being the light of the world and salt of the earth, we commit ourselves to be critically and constructively involved in our societies, and we are convinced that human rights work is an appropriate way to do so. We recognise the obstacles posed by the lack of capacity or willingness of governments to enforce laws and protect human rights, as well as

by certain parts of church structures and practices. We seek to overcome these obstacles. We are motivated and empowered to do so by Jesus’ words: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” (Matthew 5:6).⁴

Recommendations

As representatives of churches in the UEM Communion of Churches in three Continents, we recommend the following:

To the members of UEM:

1. We encourage church leaders to continue the implementation of the previous UEM decisions on JPIC, especially establishing a JPIC Desk or similar adequate structures / bodies and providing personnel, facilities, budget and programmes. JPIC must remain a priority for the churches and needs adequate funding.
2. Furthermore, we encourage the UEM members to promote JPIC issues at all levels, facilitate local JPIC projects and provide direct assistance⁵ for the victims of human rights’ violations and of the HIV / AIDS pandemic.
3. We encourage the members to uphold human rights within the church and to seriously address human rights violations in their own constituencies.
4. We call the members to fight corruption and violence in and outside the churches and to develop their own codes of conduct in compliance with the UEM “Code of Conduct against Corruption and for Transparency” and the UEM “Code of Conduct against Sexual Harassment”.
5. We encourage the members to make use of the already existing networks and mechanisms and to put pressure on the local, national and global private and governmental players to comply with existing laws and regulations.
6. We encourage all members to reach out to and network with other actors of civil society at all levels with the aim of establishing a forum for all stakeholders (government, employers, workers and trade unions, religious organisations and NGOs) to address JPIC issues.
7. We encourage the members to relate to already existing ecumenical networks and think tanks where the unjust economic, social and political structures, policies and practices are critically discussed and alternatives developed.
8. We ask the members to make more use of the talents of their members to address JPIC issues, including empowering workers in defending their rights.

⁴ This paragraph has taken up key passages from the message of a Human Rights Seminar in Bali, Indonesia (May 2007) of the EMS, LWF and UEM.

⁵ This includes practical help, providing food and health services, and also pastoral counselling.

9. We encourage the members to develop a ministry that shall help members of the churches engaged in the economic, political and other influential sectors of our countries to be equipped with a holistic understanding of the Christian faith including ethical issues.
10. We ask the members to include human rights and conflict management in the curricula of church education, beginning from the Sunday schools to theological seminaries.
11. We ask the members to initiate projects with the communities aiming at the eradication of poverty, the reinforcement of the existing micro-credit unions, the setting up of appropriate measures for the improvement of food security and for the promotion of other approaches such as the Basic Income Grant.
12. We encourage the members to take up appropriate measures to protect the environment and to mitigate global warming.
13. We encourage UEM members to expect their own governments to exercise their duty to uphold the rights of their citizens, and – in the event of the occurrence of gross violation of human rights in the countries where UEM members exist – to bring to justice the perpetrators, e.g. in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Papua / Indonesia and the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

To the UEM Office:

1. We ask the UEM to continue to give priority to human rights, peace work and conflict prevention, environmental protection and the mitigation of global warming and to economic and social justice through
 - a. Lobby and advocacy work at the international level on human rights, peace work, protection of environment and mitigation of global warming together with other ecumenical partners towards the UN, governments, multinational companies etc. and, by doing this, to assist UEM members in the regions especially in times of war and crises.
 - b. Capacity building on JPIC through scholarships, trainings, visitations and workshops at different levels as well as through the exchange of personnel and special consultancies (as for example already done in the North-Western Diocese in Tanzania and in the SEKBER churches in Northern Sumatra).
 - c. Promoting theological reflection and awareness building on JPIC, e.g. by publication of materials, studies, posters etc.
 - d. Expanding project support to the churches on human rights, peace and conflict prevention and environmental protection.
2. We ask the UEM to support the churches in addressing human rights issues in their region;
 - a. To continue to actively take part in country / region specific lobby and advocacy networking as already done with regard to the Great Lakes Region, the

- Philippines and Papua / Indonesia: to promote advocacy networking on Sri Lanka, to extend the work of the Papua Network within Indonesian churches.
- b. To encourage SEKBER, PGI and UEM members on Java to be actively involved in showing solidarity with Papua.
 - c. To continue serving the needs of migrant workers and empower the members of the respective UEM member to face social and pastoral problems, e.g. the CRC programme for migrant workers from Indonesia in Hong Kong.
 - d. To support the churches in Rwanda and in the DR Congo in their efforts to promote peace in their region.
 - e. To express solidarity to churches in crisis and need, such as e.g. in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Papua / Indonesia and the DR Congo through pastoral visits and to support them in their advocacy work.
3. We recommend supporting UEM members in their efforts to secure and defend religious freedom.
 4. We recommend offering opportunities for ecumenical learning and training for vicars and pastors in all UEM-members with special attention to JPIC concerns
 5. We ask the UEM to support the call for an international financial court as a means to overcome the consequences of illegal and excessive foreign debts.
 6. We recommend to the UEM to continue to support the churches, especially in Asia and Africa in their HIV / AIDS programmes.
 7. We ask the UEM to conduct a study e.g. on oil palm plantations and their implications, e.g. for Papuans, and to look into the issue of firewood cutting and develop possible sustainable and ecologically sound alternatives for energy production.
 8. We ask the UEM to critically address the German government and the EU policies concerning refugees entering or wanting to enter the European Union in co-operation with agencies experienced in the field.

To the UEM-General Assembly and other governing bodies:

1. We recommend to strengthen programmatic co-workers exchange in the UEM on JPIC and to establish at least 3 new positions in the coming period of the General Assembly.
2. We propose to decide on the continuation of the work of the human rights commission for a four year period composed of newly elected Council members.
3. We recommend holding a 5th JPIC consultation in 2012.

The delegates of the 4th international JPIC workshop ask the members of the UEM Human Rights Commission to receive this message together with the recommendations and to incorporate it into their report to the UEM General Assembly.

Recommendations to UEM member churches in Batam (SEKBER):

1. To expose and fight corruption in and outside the churches at all levels.
2. To employ at least one pastor specialised in industrial ministry and a legal advisor to serve labourers in Batam as part of an ecumenical institution to address the needs of labourers such as labour rights, counselling, advocacy and pastoral care.
3. To support the Association of One in Mission (PSDM) in Batam in its programmes. The PSDM is encouraged to co-operate with others in their programmes.
4. To train all pastors in Batam to address the needs of labourers through their work in the parishes.
5. To establish platforms amongst the congregations for workers, for the exchange of experiences and the opportunity to voice their concerns and demands.
6. To support the existing labour newspaper (“Koran Buruh”) in Batam as one of the voices of the voiceless, through financial support and assisting the empowerment of its staff through training.
7. To provide shelters and care for victims of trafficking, migrant workers and permanent workers in need.
8. To build awareness on environmental issues and to protest against ruthless exploitation of natural resources and the destruction of the environment (e.g. to conduct a special worship and annual offering on JPIC issues).
9. To carry out a comprehensive study into the sustainability of the present development of Batam and its impact on the environment.
10. To lobby and advocate local government with regard to the policies and law enforcement on different issues relating to human rights and the environment.
11. To work together on JPIC issues with NGOs and other FBOs (faith based organisations), which have similar goals, e.g. PRAI.
12. To address the issues of human trafficking and prostitution as new areas of mission.

Words of welcome

FIDON R. MWOMBEKI

Honourable Moderator of the UEM
Honourable Governor of the Riau Islands, Dr. Ismeth Abdullah,
Very distinguished guests,
Very distinguished participants of the international consultation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I take this opportunity on behalf of the United Evangelical Mission: Communion of Churches in Three Continents, to welcome you to this consultation. We are very greatly honoured to see all of you here. I wish, on behalf of the UEM, to express our very deep and sincere gratitude to the government of Indonesia for allowing us to hold our consultation here. Especially, we express our gratitude to the honourable Governor of this area, for being here in person as we open our consultation. Kindly pass our sincere gratitude to all who in one way or another have facilitated our coming and staying in your beautiful country.

Secondly, I wish to thank all of the members of the local committee, under the committed leadership of SEKBER, for their tireless and dedicated work to make all the preparations for our stay here. Your work has impressed all of us.

I also want here to publicly thank Rev. Dr Jochen Motte, the UEM Executive Secretary for JPIC, who has worked so professionally and enabling with such dedication this consultation to take place here this week. His passion for fighting for justice and working to promote peace, based on adherence to human rights around the world is exemplary. The UEM is proud of him and his work. However, here I also must mention in absentia our very deep gratitude to Ms Katja Bähr, the secretary at the JPIC desk, whose commitment and professionalism has made it possible for the preparation to be given very detailed attention.

Of course, nothing could happen if all of you did not accept our invitation to participate. All of you are extremely busy people, most of you as top leaders of your churches, and some of you with international obligations. But you have left everything this week. Many of you have travelled for some days across seas and oceans, slept at airports, in order to be here. All of you, including our very own Moderator are here, because you, as well as the whole of UEM, take the working for JPIC as being at the very core of our mission as Christians.

Continuously, I have been increasingly disturbed by the reports of violence, injustice, suffering and unfair treatment of God's people around the world. Be it in

Kenya, where political violence has robbed people of their livelihoods, or in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where innocent citizens have lived in forests for months, and many women have been raped by soldiers. Stories are many from the Philippines where the government, under cover of labelling people as “rebels” or “terrorists”, is brutalizing poor peasants and killing innocent people who dare to speak up. We hear of increasing poverty within every nation where economies are always expanding, but only few benefiting. We know of landless poor in India, whose dignity is put into question because of the evil ideology, which grades people into castes. So we ask ourselves, what we can do to help.

Our conviction is that God wants all people to enjoy life here in the world. God is not happy to see children without food, mothers without healthcare, men without homes or jobs. God does not want anyone of us to suffer. That is why God has blessed all of us through the earth. The earth and all that is in it, including ourselves, belong to God. As stewards, some few people are able to challenge God’s will by destroying harmony on earth, by selfish behaviour, by disrupting and blocking God’s blessings not to flow to others.

That is what we fail to simply stand by and let it happen. We work hard to make sure everybody takes a rightful share in God’s blessings. We long to see a world where all God’s people, regardless of their age, gender, nationality, education level, race or any aspect of our existence, enjoy life on earth, here and now!

It is a noble cause. We must be proud of our work. We must never allow ourselves to be discouraged by slow results or criticism. God has called us, and sends us to work further, better and harder for justice, peace and integrity of creation.

Opening address

JOCHEN MOTTE

Dear sisters and brothers from UEM member churches in Africa, Asia and Europe, dear honourable guests.

Today, for the fourth time since 1995, we, as representatives of UEM member churches, gather to reflect on, and discuss, how to strive together for justice, peace and the integrity of creation in a world torn apart. We have gathered to share about the various challenges in the different regions and countries where we come from and to see and learn about the very specific challenges confronting those who have invited us to this island of Batam: the churches from northern Sumatra, known as the SEKBER Churches.

As people of faith, we are concerned about our sisters and brothers in need; people whose rights have been abused; people who live on the margins of our societies; people who live in the midst of war and violence. As people who are part of the United Evangelical Mission, we have committed ourselves through our churches to strive together for justice, peace and the integrity of creation and, by doing this, to seek the best for the local and global city.

Some of you here were with us already in 1995 in Sri Lanka, when we started out on this journey in the new United Evangelical Mission. I would like to mention explicitly Dr Soritua Nababan, who not only contributed to the transformation of the German Mission organisation, the *Vereinigte* Evangelische Mission, into an international communion of churches, but who, since then, has continued to emphasise that churches are called to witness our Lord who is a God of justice and peace – a God who liberates those who live under the conditions of poverty and oppression.

I welcome Dr Nababan, as former Moderator of the UEM, together with Bishop Kameeta, as current Moderator, and the Vice Moderator Asia, Imelda Simangunsong, the Chairperson of the African region, Bishop Bagonza, the Chairperson of the Asian region, Rev. Purba, the members of Council and the Human Rights Commission, Fransina Yoteni, Ebenezer Joseph and Hans Jürgen Steubing.

The presence of all of you is a privilege to us and is a clear demonstration that the UEM has continuously made it clear that the churches commitment to protecting human dignity and promoting human rights is basic to the life and mission of the church.

When we look back to 1995 and at what has happened since, we might be disappointed and think that our efforts have been in vain. The first workshop on justice, peace and the integrity of creation in 1995 in Sri Lanka focused on human rights.

Even then, this was not easy and delegates arriving at Colombo airport were only able to enter the country because a high-ranking diplomat assisted the church. This January, the government of Sri Lanka declared that 2008 would be a year of war and victory. The situation in the country could not be worse and no one knows how to end the fighting and achieve a peaceful solution.

Hundreds of thousands of refugees, caught up between the frontlines, are suffering. Many people have died and will continue to die as a consequence of the purely military approach taken by the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. Where human beings become victims of total war, human rights will have no chance.

We have experienced other conflicts in recent years, many of which continue up to the present today:

- in the Eastern *Democratic Republic of Congo*, where thousands of women have become victims of rape;
- in *Papua*, where indigenous Papuans feel discriminated and marginalised;
- in the *Philippines*, where pastors, church workers, journalists and lawyers have become victims of extrajudicial killings.

Churches in the UEM, affected by these forms of violence, struggle hard under very difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances, to support the victims of human rights violations and to work for peace in their regions.

Beside these forms of violence and the violation of political and civil human rights, many people in our member churches suffer because of extreme poverty, lack of food, education, medical treatment and health care, and a lack of adequate housing and employment. Churches have responded to these challenges in a variety of ways, for example,

- by promoting a basic income grant in *Namibia*;
- by developing credit unions in *Tanzania*;
- by establishing services for foreign domestic workers in *Hong Kong*.

Furthermore, some UEM members have developed, and are involved in, intense inter-religious dialogue in order to overcome prejudice and religious discrimination.

We are delighted to have high-ranking human rights experts and resource persons from different backgrounds among us, who will share with us their experiences of how to protect human rights. They will also discuss with us how we, as members of civil society, can contribute to the protection of human dignity.

We appreciate the steps taken by the Indonesian Government in recent years towards democracy and human rights by ratifying the two international human rights covenants on civil and political as well as on economic, social and cultural human rights. We hope that this process will continue and that further steps for implementation will be taken.

In this regard, I especially welcome and thank the Governor of the Riau Islands Province, Dr Ismeth Abdullah, who will open this conference officially. I also welcome

the German Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Günter Nooke, who, on his journey from Thailand to the Philippines, took up the invitation of the UEM and the churches in Indonesia to attend this consultation. I also warmly welcome Mr Jurij Aston from the Foreign Affairs department of the German Government.

In recent years, climate change and the growing threat to the environment have also become issues on the agenda of our churches.

In all these years, the UEM has tried to support the churches' struggle for human rights, peace and environmental protection through project funding, lobby and advocacy work, capacity building and by providing opportunities for sharing and learning.

A major issue on the agenda of the UEM and the churches has been the impact of economic globalisation on people's lives. Four years ago, at the 3rd international UEM workshop in Germany, delegates had the opportunity to learn that even in rich countries like Germany, which are profiting from economic globalisation, ordinary workers feel threatened by global economic change, when jobs are cut even when companies are making huge profits. Such a thing happened just three weeks ago in Bochum, 30 kilometres away from Wuppertal, where more than 2,000 workers are to be laid off after Nokia announced the closure of its factory there, while at the same time reporting a 67% increase in annual profits.

In 2005, a UEM delegation was invited by a Protestant Church in Argentina (IERP) to see how churches in Latin America respond to social and economic challenges and to learn from their churches' witness to protect human rights in this context. We are glad that the IERP has sent Nicolás Rosenthal to be with us as a guest of the UEM this week.

Today, we have gathered here in Batam, in the Riau Province of Indonesia and this is not by accident. More than 15 years ago, a pastor from the HKBP, Rev. Welman Tampubolon, came here and, under the name of the UEM, set up a foundation to address the needs of the workers. Thousands of them, mainly young women, have come here to work in the industrial parks, where national and international companies operate. Many of these women have to face difficulties with regard to basic workers' rights, housing and adequate health care. The whole island, which was to be developed as a “*second Singapore*” due to its rapid development, has to face almost all the difficulties and problems associated with economic globalisation.

For the first time in 2001, a UEM consultation of the Asian Region was held in Batam. At that time already, it presented its recommendations to the churches to respond to the needs of workers. We are grateful that the UEM SEKBER Churches have invited us to come here again. Let me explicitly thank you, the members of the preparatory committee of the SEKBER Churches: Ephorus Napitupulu, General Secretary Simarmata, Bishop Simorangkir and Ephorus Purba, Rev. Rudi Sembiring and all members of the Batam committee for the warm welcome to us here in Batam and all the hard work done in recent months and weeks to make this possible.

We look forward with great expectations to learning from you what it means to live as “church” in the midst of social and environmental challenges and change in a place like Batam. We look forward to sharing with each other our stories of failure and success, our miseries, our sufferings and our visions.

We hope that by doing this we may find strategies and strengthen each other in our common efforts to contribute to the elimination of poverty, to peaceful solutions for violent conflicts, to fair and just living conditions for all people in our global society and to the protection of human dignity in this world.

Challenges to the churches in the context of economic globalisation

Africa

BENSON BAGONZA

“Globalisation” is now widely acknowledged to be upon us. It is manifest in myriad ways. Much of the available literature on the subject is based on the assumption that the process of globalisation is a phenomenon originating in the Western World, spreading its tentacles around the world. For these purposes, it has long been considered that Japan, with its huge industrial complex, functions as part of the “westernising” or globalisation process. With the spectacular rise of China as a world scale producer of consumer goods and with India emerging as a prodigious provider of high tech software, it is becoming increasingly clear that westernisation can no longer be equated, a priori, with globalisation.

Another widely held assumption regarding globalisation is that it is “being done to”, or imposed upon, the multitudinous periphery of the world by some single-minded, latently conspiratorial, centralised plot designed to dominate and control, herding mindless victims/consumers of the world into a single market. Any person living in today’s world with access to radio, newspapers, the Internet and email facilities could be forgiven for understanding globalisation in conspiratorial terms.

The reality of the world we live in is much more complex than these assumptions might suggest. Indeed, it is at once more benevolent and more malevolent; it is both more and less controlled, moving in a variety of directions at once. Perhaps the most startling observation to be made about the globalisation process is that a very significant portion of the six billion people in the world lives in the periphery of anything recognisable as modern, western or, in terms of this consultation, “global”. They live as they have “always” done.

One of the great virtues/vices of generally accepted assumptions regarding “globalisation” is that the exceptions prove the rule. Moreover, the exceptions provide huge spaces, within which alternative or counter views and strategies can be identified and discussed. The problematic being considered in this consultation is premised on the notion that what happens in the periphery is also part of the global matrix. And if the reality of the periphery is rendered articulate, it, too, must be given attention and accorded due space. In a true global community, it is finally the “sum of all the parts”, which constitutes the whole. It can be argued that the globalisation “whole” which we confront in the popular press and even in much of the

academic literature is in fact not at all “whole”; it is a global pattern in which a minority of the parts dominate the whole; a phenomenon in which the “few” dominate the “many”.

Economic globalisation

In Africa, it is economic globalisation and the injustices that accompany it that create other forms of global manifestations. Economic globalisation refers to the increased integration of developing economies into the global economy. This means that countries are expected to open up their markets so that goods and services can enter these countries unhindered and freely. It further entails deregulation of foreign exchange controls so that big companies can invest freely without any interference or restrictions on their investment capital.

This agenda of free trade, liberalisation and less government intervention and control are pushed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and World Trade Organisation (WTO). These multilateral institutions, which are controlled by the powerful G8 and rich developed countries, force poor countries on to an economic path that leads to benefits for the few and impoverishment of the masses. The household surveys of Tanzania showed that in the 1990s the situation in the country worsened. In South Africa, one of the richest countries on the African continent, the last five years has seen an increase in unemployment. It has increased from 15-20% in the 1990s to more than 30% in 2004. The unofficial unemployment rate in 2005 was more than 40%. This happened in spite of an economic growth of between 2 and 4 percent. This means that although South Africa’s economy is growing it has shed jobs at an alarming rate. Usually, economists refer to job-less growth, economic growth without creating jobs. In this instance it is job-loss growth.

Job-loss economic growth is caused, among other factors, by mergers between big companies and investment in machines that replace workers. This is called automatisisation, where a productive workforce is replaced by machines. Unemployment is further aggravated by the emphasis on cheap imports that replace local production.

The dire economic situation of most African countries is a real concern. How do governments create an economically viable country that will reduce poverty and benefit the poorest members of society? This is a major challenge not only for governments but also for the church.

How can the church contribute to a more just economy that will benefit all members of society? The church in Africa has been strongly involved in the struggle for political liberation. The church must be involved in the economic struggle because, under present globalisation forces, it is the church that remains the sole voice for the voiceless millions.

The challenge to the churches

Poverty and economic injustices call on the church to deal with economic issues. We cannot argue that the economy is for the economist. Church leaders must deal with the economy and the economic realities of their countries. Economic decisions affect the lives of people; therefore, the church must concern itself with the economy.

The government is a major player in the economy of African countries. The church must ask how we can influence our governments. The church has a prophetic responsibility to proclaim the values of the Gospel to those in power. Advocacy and lobbying should be part of the responsibility of the church. This prophetic responsibility should also include the major international institutions like the IMF and WTO, which play a role towards our governments.

Conclusion

The mission of the church is not only to comply with outward manifestations of Christian life. It is not only about worship, prayers and hymns, but also about the great commandment “to love God with all our hearts and our neighbour as ourselves”. The mission of the church is to seek justice. Otherwise, as in Isaiah, we may ask: Why doesn’t God take note of us? Why is it that we humble ourselves and He does not acknowledge it? Why, because while you fast – your religious duty – you oppress the workers and “strike with your wicked fist”. The feast that God expects, is to free the oppressed and to break every yoke. It is to share your bread with the hungry, to provide shelter to the homeless and to cover the naked. This is what true religion encompasses. To address the needs of the poor and the marginalised, the passage in Isaiah takes on new meaning in the words of Jesus in Matthew 25. God will separate humanity into the righteous and the unrighteous on the basis of how we treated our fellow human beings.

Latin America

NICOLÁS ROSENTHAL

The present context of Latin America (LA) is very particular.¹ For the first time in many decades, all the governments of the region are of a democratic cut, covering an ample range, from the left to the right, the majority option being the centre-left or the so called “progresists”. These democracies, with all their imperfections and challenges represent a remarkable improvement compared to the situation of the second half of the 20th century, when totalitarian and bloody military regimes occupied the centre of the political stage.

¹ I will concentrate my analysis mainly in South America. Latin America is divided into South America, Central America and the Caribbean, and the reality of the other two regions is something different and far away from my day to day life in Argentina.

Another important development is the increasing economic and political integration of the region, where the centre-left or progresist governments of important countries (Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Uruguay), instead of competing as in previous decades (favouring the interests of the more powerful countries), have formed an economic block (MERCOSUR²) and are using their combined weight to reach political solutions in countries plagued by long conflicts (Bolivia, Colombia, Haiti, etc.).

This promising horizon is nevertheless overshadowed by some dark clouds, which require a lot of attention if we want to prevent them from becoming a terrible hurricane devastating the progress already made. Let me enumerate them:

Social Inequity. LA continues to be a region of great contrasts, with a Gini index (in fact, the world highest) that still shows an enormous gap between the poorest and the richest sectors of society. This is the result of decades of neoliberal economic policies and cyclical plans of adjustment imposed by the multilateral organisations providing loans (IMF and WB, among others). Supported by powerful political alliances such as the G7, these always work for the benefit of a small local minority and the interests of the big transnational companies, with the result that a great proportion of the population is pushed down below the poverty line.³ At the beginning of the new millennium, more than half of the 350 million inhabitants of Latin America were poor. The progresist / centre-left governments ruling at present have made great efforts to reduce this percentage, and in some cases (Argentina, Chile) it is now reduced to around 25%. However it seems to have stopped around that percentage, the so-called “hard core” of poverty. In the case of Argentina, five years of Chinese growth rates (9%) have not produced an improvement in the distribution of wealth, which continues to be 30 to 1 between the richest 10% and the poorest 10%.

Response of the churches: in the whole of LA, the evangelical churches share an understanding of the Gospel committed to justice for the poor and have been working for years in diverse diaconal initiatives. They have moved from a patronising vision to empowerment programmes and participative development that aims at enabling their protagonists to get out of their own poverty and help others. This includes training programmes and rural development, and diverse projects in the suburban belts of poverty that surround the big cities.⁴ The mis-

2 Paraguay is also part of MERCOSUR, but the government is not progresist.

3 A classic plan of neoliberal adjustment included privatisation of the public services, deregulation of the economy, opening to the external markets, fiscal adjustment by means of an increase in taxes and services and the reduction of social policies and government personnel, an increase in interest rates and a policy of zero deficits. These plans never worked, they only made the situation worse and led to the fall of governments. Peculiarly, they were quite the opposite of the actions the USA is now proposing to overcome its own crisis.

4 Like the Plan To Share the Announcement of the Gospel with the Poor (PCAEP) of my Evangelical Church of the La Plata River (IERP) in the suburbs of Buenos Aires.

sion vision that is behind these programmes, is that it is not possible to accompany those who suffer without proclaiming the presence of a God of love who liberates and demands justice for his people. This requires a very committed form of work to avoid falling into coarse proselytising.

External debt. The sword of Damocles hanging over our countries and their population are the external or “eternal” debts. Several studies have demonstrated that a substantial part of these debts are unjust, having been contracted under fraudulent conditions by non-democratic governments. In other words, in times of great financial liquidity in the middle of the seventies and beginning of the eighties, the banks of the Western countries and their governments granted loans to military dictatorships and governments characterised by a high level of corruption. But they did not demand guarantees that the money would be used for the publicised aims, and they lent it at a low rate of interest, which was later raised unilaterally. The weak democratic governments that took over in LA in this situation had to refinance these debts at more and more onerous rates, and at present the region has not only not managed to reduce the capital debt, but only manages to pay a part of the interest. This means that the debt still increases day by day although the amount of the original debt from the eighties has already been paid several times over.

Response of the churches: the evangelical “ecumenical”⁵ churches in the region not only denounced unjust debts and requested the authorities not to pay them back, but also participated in campaigns like Jubilee 2000, and took part in actions to investigate the fraudulent character of these debts such as the Programme of Illegitimate Debt of the LWF. One result of these actions is the call for an International Penal Court to be constituted that really audits these debts and determines the responsibilities and faults of those who fraudulently promoted them and/or encouraged them. A promising signal is that the new president of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, has summoned specialists of these church campaigns to publicly audit the Ecuadorian external debt. Obviously, there has been a substantial change in the understanding of what indebtedness is; from a reading of what is just from an ethical perspective, to what is legal from the point of view of the dominant powers.

Tension in Bolivia. On the political field, the biggest challenge in the region is the situation of Bolivia. After decades of successive political crises that included military dictatorships and weak and/or corrupt democracies, the Bolivian people voted

⁵ “Ecumenical”: churches that were founding members of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) in 1982 and that in their majority are affiliated with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and/or the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and/or the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC).

for the first time for a president representing the indigenous people, the socialist Evo Morales (with 54% of the votes). Until then, the country had been governed by a “racial democracy”⁶, where all the presidents were white (“Creole”) and belonged to the minority of descendants of Europeans, who dominate the economy and the culture, occupying the highest layers of society with access to education, health and good housing. The government of Morales has raised a model of democratic plurality unseen in Bolivia before, based on the rights of each of the ethnic groups that make up the country. This has caused much resistance, up to the point where the white minority that dominates the richest and less populated provinces of the country has raised the issue of the division of the country into smaller states (secession).

Response by the churches: The proposals of the government of Evo Morales are supported by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bolivia and the Methodist Church, two mission churches, members of CLAI, that are rooted in the majority of the ethnic group Aymará, one of the indigenous peoples of the region.

No peace in Colombia. Another challenge to peace on the continent is the situation in Colombia; a country suffering from a very bloody civil conflict that has lasted for several decades, with several revolutionary leftist armies, dominating various mountain and jungle regions of the centre and south of the country, fighting against the central government and its regular and paramilitary forces. Both sides have accused the other side of being involved in the trafficking of drugs, and that issue has been used as an excuse for a noticeable military presence of the USA in the country, strong material aid to the government and the presence of “advisers”. After 9/11, the USA added the classification of “terrorists” to the leftist forces, which worsened the situation even more. The problem is that unless all involved parties recognise the political nature of the conflict, there will be no possible solution. It is a case of the position of the majority of Latin American countries as opposed to the position of the USA and the European Union.

Response of the churches: The churches of Colombia (Presbyterians, Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans and Methodists, among others) are working together in what is called the Ecumenical Network (“Red Ecu mica”), a network that is being accompanied by CLAI and tries to give support to people affected by forced displacement and the tremendous deficiencies that the armed conflict produces. The basic projects that they implement are in health care, food supply, support/legal advice and education. Several of the pastors of these churches have been threatened, generally by the paramilitary close to the government, and as a consequence some have left the country.

6 Like South Africa during apartheid.

Rights of the indigenous people. In spite of the progressive character of many of its governments, we are witnessing the systematic violation of the rights of the original people in LA. Paradigmatic cases are that of the Mapuche people in the south of Chile and that of the ethnic groups Wichi and Toba in Argentina. The situation of the Toba in the Argentinean province of Chaco is full of anguish, because of the historical problem of land possession and the lack of respect for their culture: Many cases of death caused by malnutrition and diseases related to these problems have additionally come about in the last few months (tuberculosis, etc.). Their malnutrition is the result of extreme poverty and the impossibility for them to get access to their habitual means of food supply, which are hunting, fishing and harvesting on their communal grounds, which have been devastated by big agricultural or timber companies.

Response of the churches: For years the Argentinean churches have developed activities in co-operation with the indigenous people, trying not to fall into patronising attitudes but rather respecting their culture. Many actions are related to advocacy before national and international authorities. In the case of the Wichi people the presence of the Anglican Church of Argentine is very strong. The Tobas are accompanied by member churches of CLAI through the United Mission Board (JUM), also with participation of the Methodists, Waldensians, my own church, the IERP, and the Disciples of Christ.

Environment. The last dark cloud stems from issues related to the environment. In the first place, it is the issue of access to water. Although the public right to clean drinking water is legally guaranteed in most of the countries, in practice the states do not or cannot fulfil it. Even worse, the right to water of each individual is not legally safeguarded, and therefore we are experiencing the commercialisation of drinking water. We observe that this leads to the worrisome phenomenon of the purchase of great plots of land for the purpose of water extraction or the control of the access to it. Big companies, like Coca-Cola, extract enormous amounts of water for the production of their goods from the same underground sources used by the surrounding population. This is not controlled by the State, and no taxes have to be paid for the water.

Water is also related to the increasing “soyabeanisation” of the agricultural land. In the last few years, the high international price of soya beans (the Chinese market is a great consumer of them) has caused people to plant soya beans instead of other agricultural products. In addition to the dangers of monocultures and the dependence on the fluctuations of a single product, there are also problems caused by the fact that the soya beans used in LA are transgenic, requiring many dangerous agrochemicals to grow them and bleaching the soil of nutrients and water.

We are also experiencing an increasing clearing of forests and jungle in the whole of LA. The land is being used for agriculture and cattle breeding in the Amazon River basin or for the construction of hydroelectric dams, as in the Argentine province of

Misiones, parts of Paraguay and the south of Brazil. The natural consequence is desertification. Since the land is not suitable for agriculture and cattle breeding, its nutrients are exhausted quickly and rains devastate the thin layer of humus.

Finally I want to mention the issue of the paper pulp and cellulose paste factories that have a terrible effect on pollution. Although the problem has already existed for a long time, it has been aggravated by the construction of a gigantic cellulose paste factory by the Finnish company Botnia (with a production capacity equivalent to several of the present factories put together) in the Republic of Uruguay. It is built near the river that marks the border with Argentina and both countries share the water. The plant was constructed without previous consultation with Argentina, and the population near the plant feels affected by its construction as they live from tourism. For months they have been building up resistance to the project, blocking the transit of vehicles on the bridges that link both countries. The conflict is at the moment in litigation before the International Court of The Hague. Furthermore, the paper industry’s strategy with great economic power threatens the food security of the population, since it is based on a dangerous forest monoculture, the planting of artificial forests of trees (eucalyptus) that grow quickly and consume enormous amounts of water.

Response of the churches: Since March 2006, churches on both sides of the river have met several times to talk about the conflict that has developed between both governments (not countries) and has generated social protest, especially in the area of Gualaguaychú next to the plant. (In the meantime protest demonstrations were held in front of the Finnish embassy in Buenos Aires as well.) Pastoral letters have been sent to the Christian communities of the cities adjacent to the zone where the factory was built (Colón, Paysandú, Gualaguaychú, Fray Bentos).

Finally, I would like to call to your attention that on a continent where the evangelical churches are a minority, it is not always easy to respond to all conflicts and challenges.

Europe

HANS JOACHIM SCHWABE

Let me start with a possible shock for you: Globalisation is a very positive sign for all mankind, especially for the poor. Theoretically globalisation means that every human being has the same rights, wherever he or she lives. If in addition everyone had the same starting conditions, we could say that we would almost live in paradise. That means that mankind would enjoy life in all its fullness, accompanied by justice and peace, and would act according to the Bible. That is the vision; reality however is different, especially in the South and East of our world.

Even in Germany, one of the richest countries, where I come from, we have noticed growing difficulties for a lot of people. Even so-called “middleclass” people are struggling against poverty and realising that life is increasingly hard and does not offer equal chances. That is why more than 60% of the German population consider themselves losers in our society and are afraid of the near and long-term future.

From my point of view, those who carry responsibility in politics and economy try to hide the negative effects of evil developments by clever talking. That is why they use the term “globalisation” instead of “neoliberalism”.

Everyone in the world, who has at least a little solidarity in his heart, must revolt against this economic system, which knows neither peace, justice nor solidarity, nor does it safeguard our Lord’s holy creation, including plants, animals and of course every human being.

In order to put things straight – even though in Germany and the other Western countries the powerful and rich avoid this expression like hell – we have to say that we are living in a neoliberal economic system. A few key points may explain what this system means:

1. A tremendous reduction of jobs and the retention of a constant high rate of unemployment;
2. Focus only on shareholders and their unlimited demands for return on capital;
3. Abolishing – in the first step cutting down – of the social security system;
4. A growing gap between the very rich, who get richer and richer, and an increasing number of people, who get poorer and poorer;
5. The impingement of neo-liberal uniform opinions on our society that regards the economic neoliberal development as the only true system possible; it is claimed that people suffering under this system are themselves to blame for their situation;
6. De-regulation and privatisation;
7. The extremely rich people, the shareholders, their managers and advisers, the neoliberal politicians and the neoliberal media producers are the protagonists. This system does not accept any alternative thinking, nor anyone or anything that is more powerful than the system itself. That is why it has been called TINA (there is no alternative).

This system has not arrived in Germany and Europe just now, it has been built up in the Western World over at least the last 20 years.

Before I start telling you how the neoliberal system makes people ill and lets them suffer in our country and the whole of Europe, I want to make it very clear that those victims suffering live mostly in the South and East of our world. About 24,000 people die every day from poverty and malnutrition, mainly in the South and East. Enormous subsidies of about 349 billion dollars a year that western countries pay to their farmers and the partly closed markets offer no chances for farmers in the South. Some regions, particularly in Africa, are regarded as rubbish dumps for the toxic

waste we want to get rid of. The 500 biggest companies controlling 70% of international trade have increased their turnover by 50% in the last 10 years and their profit by 300%. 158 companies of those are from North America, 171 from Western Europe, 149 from Japan and 22 from Australia, South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand and China.

Europe and Germany are the major winners of the neoliberal system. The trend however is clear and the ideology of this system is the same in our context as elsewhere; allowing a few people to become richer and richer will boost our economic system; then the poor can easily live from the breadcrumbs falling off the table of the rich. When I told a neoliberal economic expert at a university that we have now been waiting for more than 20 years for the breadcrumbs which should have fallen down, he answered: “Your analysis is wrong. Social security will have to be abolished completely before the aim of the neoliberal system can be achieved. The poor will have to rely on the charity of the rich.” As I do not have enough time to explain in detail how this neoliberal system is continuously splitting our society, I just want to mention a few examples. You must always keep in mind that Germany is No 1 in international trade.

- More than 50% of international trade derives from criminal resources (for example unauthorised arms-dealing, money-laundering, drugs and tax fraud). The criminals are obviously the winners of neoliberalism.
- Downscaling of salaries is quite an important fact in Germany. More and more people are getting poorer. Although they work full-time, they often do not have enough money to survive without additional assistance from social security, and it is mainly women with children that are affected. The media tell us every day that German salaries are too high to compete with the rest of the world. The problems of Germany however are the ongoing ones of rationalisation, poor management, poor public education and reluctant willingness of companies to invest their money in training their employees. The well-known management consultant company Roland Berger published the following results of an investigation: if German industry made use of all its rationalisation possibilities, we would have 12 million instead of 4 million unemployed people. Another consultancy company stated that only 20% of the investments of German companies abroad have been profitable on a long-term basis. A report of 125 loan insurers came to the conclusion that the main reason for bankruptcy in Germany is bad management. It is therefore obvious that the aim of salary downscaling is purely to increase profits.
- According to UNICEF, Germany is experiencing the largest increase in poverty of all the rich countries.
- Incorporated companies paid about 34% of the total tax income in 1980; in 2004 it was just 7%.
- The top income tax rate was reduced from 45% to 39% in 2006 and further down to 30% in 2008; neoliberal politicians lower tax-rates for the rich, and declare at

the same time that they have to cut social subsidies because of public budget deficiencies. State financial support to fight unemployment has been cut back tremendously, and for years politicians have always started this process with the poorest in our society, for example the refugees. I would call it a tactic of step by step.

- Net-salaries in Germany increased by 35% between 1980 and 2004, net-profits and property value increased by 100%.

It is a scandal that in one of the richest countries in the world, many poor people depend on a food bank in Germany in order not to starve.

In Germany times have changed. Capital has gained the upper hand over people. The newly created expression of human capital reveals this.

Nowadays, it is not only poor people, who are suffering, even middle class people are being hit more and more by unemployment, unstable employment, reduction of regular income, the possibility of a very quick downgrading from a good middle class income to a so called 1 € per hour job.

Germany has no party really opposing the neoliberal tendency. There are hardly any objections at all. Every German citizen is involved in the neoliberal system and it is impossible to keep out of it completely. That is the reason why Germans are so reluctant to put up resistance against the system.

From my point of view we are approaching a decisive moment. We will see whether Germany decides to resist this inhuman system or to follow the fascist way, thus denying the fatal experience of our terrible history a little more than 60 years ago.

Before I can explain the actual position of the churches, especially the Protestant Church of the Rhineland, I must make two comments on certain dependencies relevant to this question:

- Protestant churches in Germany are middle class churches; we are a long way off being the church for the poor, even further away from having a majority of poor members. We are a territorial church, about 31.7% of the population are Catholics and 31.3% are Protestants. The Church of the Rhineland consists of 44 church districts with 777 parishes. Our church has about 3 million members.
- In my opinion it is a typically German attitude to blame individuals, when in fact the structures are to be blamed. If you consider your lack of success as being your own fault, you will not stand up and fight for your rights or those of other people. There will be no solidarity.
- The link between the churches and the government – especially the two big German churches, Catholic and Protestant – is quite strong (church tax collection by government, religious education at schools, subsidiary system etc).
- Decisions take quite a long time because of the structure of the churches (for example the General Assembly of the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland decided already in January 2005 to discuss the issue of “Globalisation”. But it was not the main topic of discussion in the Synod until 2008).

- Churches in Germany often have problems in discussing economic issues, as there are no critical experts on this subject available.
- On several occasions Protestant churches have been real pioneers for social and political development (peace demonstrations in the 1980s; uprising without bloodshed against the communist system and reunification).

Protestant churches in Germany have worldwide ecumenical relationships, which widen their horizon and can have quite an influence. Concerning our topic, one can mention among others the Accra confession of July / August 2004 (Processus Confessionis), which is already a compromise between the churches of the South and the North.

From my point of view you will get a better impression if I tell you a little bit, how this subject was handled at the different levels of our church and which decisions were taken. About five church districts were very much involved in this question, a lot of church districts had only a small amount of interest and a few districts none at all. Normally, the intensity of interest in the parishes is even smaller than in the church districts. In the survey however we did not get a lot of information on this. Our church district was one of the most active districts and I dare to say, that we together with another one were the promoters of the discussion. I think there are three reasons, why we have been so intensively involved:

1. Traditionally our church district has been very involved in social-ethical affairs.
2. Many parishes have partnership links to churches in other parts of the world. In this context, the relationship of one of our parishes with the Evangelical Church of Rio de la Plata has been most fascinating.
3. Our church district is very involved in the assistance of refugees at all levels.
4. We have also been involved in discussions with people who do not agree with our position.

In 2005, the decision of our synod to appeal for a covenant for economic, social and environmental justice in co-operation with churches in other parts of the world, was the starting point for initiatives in our own church district. This call also had consequences for our own behaviour (not to give up social standards for employees in our church, to support the movement against unreflected consumer-behaviour, to analyse all financial operations within and outside of our church, and to show solidarity with those excluded from “life in all its fullness”).

With numerous lectures, workshops, discussions and film evenings we tried to involve not only our parishioners but also the public. We were not only active in our church district, but our experts were involved in other church districts as well. The biggest issue was the publication of a book, in which authors from our partner church in Latin America shared with us an analysis of their situation. Our Superintendent analysed this contribution from a theological point of view and I did so from an economic one. The book was published under the title: “Globalisation – blessing or bane? Deciding and Confessing – a district council accepts the challenges”.

We were quite proud of the comment of Ulrich Duchrow – a leading Professor of Systematic Theology. He considered the book the best example so far in Europe, meeting the expectations concerning *Processus Confessionis* and the Agape process of the ecumenical church organisations. This clearly contradicts the opinion that such a response would not be possible from the churches in the North.

We have also begun to invest the money of our parishes and the district entirely in accordance with ethical standards. We use only electricity produced from natural resources. We have signed a master agreement with an electricity company. All our parishes have joined us and it is open to all individuals. We advise all parishes only to sign contracts with companies that pay minimum wages. We are in the process of publishing a list of products, which meet ecological and social-justice standards. From our point of view this is just the beginning of a never-ending process.

Surprisingly, even medium-sized company owners and high-ranking managers were evidently glad to realise the commitment of our church in questions of social ethics. A manager told me: “I am delighted to see that my church is involved in this issue. To whom can I talk frankly about my pangs of conscience?”

As for our Evangelical Church of the Rhineland, in 2005, the synod elected a working group to prepare this topic for the synod in 2008. This group worked very hard and came up with a proposal of about 100 pages, entitled “Economy for life”. The first part presents the challenge of globalisation, the second part our theological-ethical position, the third part the mandate for action in seven sections: work, ethical investment, peace-development-safety, climate change, consumer behaviour, agriculture and migration. Two other sections still have to be worked on: education and health. “Best practice” examples of the church districts were published in the appendix.

The biggest challenge was the theological discussion. Originally, there were two positions, one agreed with the Accra confession of 2004, which in consequence does not only mean reform, but possibly the necessity of a completely new structure for our economy. The other one was based on a human rights approach, which theologically is based upon the Trinitarian Confession. People with this position are of the opinion that the economic system has only to be reformed.

In a very long and intensive discussion the preparation committees came to the conclusion, also influenced by the speech of Konrad Raiser at our synod, that there is only one straight theological position possible: the Accra Confession, which also includes human rights. The Trinitarian Confession is not a good basis for the human rights position.

In the synod plenum we had a long and intensive discussion. It ended up with a very positive vote, which is outstanding in my opinion. No delegate voted “No” and there were only three abstentions. Some very committed delegates burst into tears, not only because they were quite exhausted, but also because they had put so much heart and soul into this subject.

I was not only delighted about the decision, but also about the change in attitude of people who were involved in this process. There were some people who had started as convinced neoliberals and in the end had completely changed their opinions and fought for the Accra Confession.

Not more than a start has yet been made by our church and all other churches around the world, and I am sure that there will be a lot of arguing ahead on concrete issues. There is a beginning however, and I thank God for accompanying us – that is how I feel about it. The decision of our synod in 2008 is neither a review nor the conclusion of the internal debate in our church, but another step in a process which can be described as a permanent analysis, an ongoing consideration and a continuous communicative action. The decision on the proposal “Economy for Life” is the beginning of its realisation, not its completion. Actions have to follow. Our church is obliged to account for the way it changes and for the improvements in the actual situation.

Asia

IMELDA SIMANGUNSONG

Does a better life truly exist?⁷

We believe that life can be better for each and every human being, but we resist the belief that this will occur through the present system of economic globalisation. We describe a better life in the following ways:

- *Life where there is safe drinking water; adequate nutrition, shelter; health care and education for all people;*
- *Life without fear of physical, emotional or mental violence;*
- *Life with time to rest, play and listen for the voice of God;*
- *Life with equal opportunities, equal rights and equal responsibilities;*
- *Life where all can receive education. This education should not only stimulate critical thinking in the individual but also benefit the community;*
- *Life where God is worshipped through every decision and action;*
- *Life shaped by true democracy where people make decisions about the issues that affect them;*
- *Life of praying constantly and proclaiming hope for another world;*
- *Life that can be experienced where we are, not somewhere else.*

Economics was originally seen as a normative theory about the production and the distribution of the means to live, clearly related to ethics, history and political sci-

⁷ Taken from the Message of the LWF International Youth Program - Transformation Through Participation (IYP-TTP), Batam Island, Indonesia, November 23-28, 2003.

ence.⁸ Economics is about people’s daily lives: procuring food, shelter and clothes, performing meaningful work.

The economic system has changed dramatically during the 20th century and especially during the last five decades. Production processes, investments, trade in goods and services are being integrated more and more into one global market. Lower transport and communication costs, as well as the reduction of import tariffs, quotas and foreign exchange controls have contributed to the emergence of a single global market for capital, goods and services. An automobile, for example, is hardly a national product anymore. The same is true for many other goods: electronics, clothes, shoes, food, drinks etc. Credit cards are the typical example for the globalisation of services, some of which can be used for payment in almost every corner of the world.

Decisive factors in the market economy are not only goods, but rather there are three factors which economists usually identify: labour, capital (“money”) and land.⁹ Labour, capital and land were organised to suit the market, i.e. they became trading commodities. But this is either a monstrous abstraction or a monstrous fiction. Obviously labour, land and money are not physical commodities produced to be bought and sold.

Globalisation has certainly brought progress and new opportunities, but on the other hand it has also brought misery. Despite growing global wealth, one person in three lives in poverty. There are millions of people in Asia still lacking access to basic health and education, safe drinking water and adequate nutrition. Thanks to improved communication technologies poor people are becoming aware of how richer people live.

After the economic crisis hit Asia in 1997 it became clearer that the global economy is dominated by the rich countries, mostly in the North. Many South East Asian countries collapsed while some others, such as Japan and China, were strong enough to survive. At that time many developing countries were forced to accept assistance from IFIs (International Financial Institutions) like the IMF and the World Bank, and in the process of recovery also had to take on more foreign debts. There were no other options to survive. However that help was not given for free; it was offered with some conditions that led Asia deeper into the neoliberal capitalist global system. The fundamental problem of the capitalist market economy is that it is highly abstract, not based on real life, but forcing real life into the ironmould of the money-accumulation mechanism.

Privatisation, deregulation, liberalisation and other agreements with the WTO came together with the package of conditions from the IMF and WB. What is hap-

⁸ Van Drimmelen, Rob, *Faith in a Global Economy: A Primer for Christians*, Geneva, WCC Publications 1998.

⁹ Duchrow, Ulrich, *Alternatives to Global Capitalism: Drawn from Biblical History, Designed for Political Action*, Kairos Europa, transl. from the German, 1998.

pening in Asia today was already foreseen at that time. Some countries that are rich in natural resources and “human resources” have to open their doors to Transnational Corporations (TNCs) and open their markets to foreign products. A highly contentious issue in the WTO is that of the so-called trade-related clauses, particularly in two areas: social clauses and environmental clauses.

When the Uruguay Round of The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) talks ended in December 1993, some countries promised to cut tariffs, dismantle non-tariff barriers to trade and liberalise trade in services. The Uruguay Round agreements on Trade Related Property Rights (TRIPs) have substantially increased the extent to which countries of the South are required to respect patents and copyrights held outside their territories. This will increase costs for the South while reducing its access to certain technologies. Those who benefit are the holders of intellectual property rights, which are overwhelmingly TNCs in the North.

With the sovereignty of nation states being eroded and a global government nowhere in sight, TNCs have taken advantage of this vacuum to become truly global in their outreach. The number of TNCs has grown from around 7,000 in 1970 to some 39,000 in 1995. Most of the activities of the TNCs in the South are limited to a small number of countries in Asia and Latin America. Since 1992, China has been the largest Southern recipient of foreign investment. TNCs naturally prefer countries where the political climate is “stable”, which does not necessarily coincide with strong democratic conditions.

Foreign investments come and go according to economic competition for higher company profits. There are no guarantees of employment since one company can just leave a country if it is offered lower costs in another country. The results are unemployment, lower wages and a lowering of working-condition standards.

For example, 9,000 employees are involved in design, product development, marketing and administration of Nike athletic shoes, while all of its production is performed by a global network of independent sub-contractors with some 75,000 employees, most of them in low-wage countries like Indonesia. A pair of Nike shoes selling for between \$45 and \$80 is produced for \$5.60 in Indonesia. The starting wage for the Indonesian girls and young women who sew them is \$1.38 a day. If labour costs increase, TNCs may shift production to countries where wages are even lower. Before it came to Indonesia, Nike closed down some 20 production sites in South Korea and Taiwan, and opened new ones in China, Indonesia and Thailand where wages are rock bottom.

Some TNCs are also responsible for environmental problems. About half of the so-called greenhouse gases emissions – which lead to accelerated climate change – are generated by TNCs. Commercial logging and mining by some TNCs contribute to deforestation.

The activities of TNCs also have political effects and sometimes they were involved in the host country’s political sphere. In some countries TNCs spent mil-

lion of dollars campaigning openly to make the new constitution favourable for foreign companies. They also joined national businesses in objecting to causes favourable to the workers. Some companies even hired moral philosophers and theologians to help them.

When the borders of countries are open, foreign companies not only enter Asian countries for the production of goods but also to take over services that used to be run by the government. Many sectors of public services were privatised by the governments, for example drinking water supply, electricity supply, national telecom services, national plantations, education/state universities, etc. After the economic crisis of Asia 1997 some companies owned by the government companies in Indonesia were changed into semi-private companies, but in practice they slowly became private companies. The government has cut almost all subsidies and these companies have to enter competitive markets to make a profit. This also means they can be “owned and run” by foreign companies. The public services became business orientated and the victims are the poor people who are excluded because they do not have enough money to access the services.

Many poor people are now looking for jobs abroad as migrant workers in some areas of low-skilled work. Now there is a big new market of cheap labour run by agencies that take profits from transactions of these human commodities. Most of the workers are women. But poor and uneducated people see this as a great opportunity to get more money since life in their own country is getting harder. The currency value of foreign money, which is so high, attracts them to work as migrant workers. Even many millions of educated people are now working abroad in different TNCs all over the world.

In Indonesia, most migrant workers come from rural areas. Major areas of agriculture production are no longer economically profitable for conventional farmers, especially landless farmers, without technology, without strong subsidies and a regulated price from the government. Foreign companies that provide the transgenic seed and control the market are dominant. Ironically, the government imports millions of tons of food products because national production is not sufficient to feed the people.

The mining activities are also taking people’s lands and most of the mining operations are run by foreign companies. And when people resist, the company and the government are usually hand in hand, using military force on behalf of the business. The major parts of the profits are enjoyed in the North, some by government officials who are involved in signing the contracts. The indigenous people are again marginalised and their rights are violated. Corruption, capital flight and tax flight are also some of the main causes of economic problems and poverty in Asia. Without capital flight and corruption, the debt crisis would not exist in its current form. More than half of the southern countries’ debts are in the form of private capital deposited

in the tax havens controlled by the banks of the North (e.g. Switzerland, Cayman Islands, Panama, Luxembourg and the USA).

Are there any alternatives for life's sake? If one affirms life and life-bringing economic systems, then one must reject economic systems and structures, which bring about death.

However, in the past decade there have been several attempts and concrete actions to bring improvement to this terrible situation. There have been some codes of conduct developed by governments regarding TNCs activities. There were initiatives to reduce the foreign debts of Highly Indebted Poor Countries. There was a series of UN conferences on environment, social development, gender issues and human rights, which produced important decisions and declarations though most still wait to be implemented.

Civil society, including many ecumenical movements, do not only constantly control and put pressure on governments, but also started a lot of initiatives to participate in the global economy on their own terms and establish just, participatory and sustainable communities. And this is a huge challenge before us as churches, to participate and contribute, to seek alternatives. Let me give a few examples, which have already started in some countries and churches.

- Fair trade – Alternative Trade Organisations (ATOs) buy goods directly from small producer groups in the South and sell them through shops, mail order companies, churches and the like. This is shortening the distance between producers and consumers. Producers thus have a better chance to realise a fair price for their products and a more secure income. Although this is a small proportion of overall trade flows, it is rising and can be significant in key markets such as coffee. Fair trade also enhances our awareness of the social and environmental impacts of purchasing decisions;
- Eco-wood and forestation projects;
- Earth friendly projects: organic farming to reduce dependency on chemical agricultural products, bio-fuel industry as an alternative to fossil-based fuel;
- LETS (Local Exchange Trading System);
- Unemployed self-help initiatives;
- Mondragon – a project in the Basque region of Spain, begun in 1941 by a Spanish priest, Don José Arizmendarreta, who set up a school to teach methods of responsible agriculture. Within a short time he established a number of co-operatives. In 1998 it became an association of some 200 organisations, including 120 worker-owned, democratically controlled commercial enterprises. More than 22,000 workers have guaranteed jobs for life, fully adequate income, health insurance and a pension programme that guarantees 80% of the last salary received in case of unemployment;
- Micro-enterprises and micro-credit – although there is a mixed record of successes and failures, and working conditions are often poor, micro-enterprises have the

potential of informal economies: small business, with high flexibility, absence of bureaucracy and speed of decision-making, labour intensity (production is often manual), possible for minimal capital inputs, local market orientation;

- Responsible investment – ethical investment;
- Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society (EDCS) – the Ecumenical Church Loan Fund (ECLOF).

Meanwhile, the main aim must be to create global democratic political institutions, which are capable of monitoring the transnational capital markets and forcing them to operate according to socio-environmental standards.

The choices are before us. Either we allow the dominance of money accumulation caused by the world market and based on cut-throat competition, accompanied by the consumption of luxury goods by a privileged few, the consequence being death and chaos for the majority of people, societies and the planet itself, or money is placed under strict control and used to satisfy the basic needs of people and to bring about social equality and environmental awareness.

As churches, we are obliged to take up this challenge, as I believe that Christian faith cannot make a separation between spiritual and material life. This time, I am not coming back to the issue of reviewing what is lacking in our churches. We have discussed that issue thoroughly in different consultations, seminars, trainings, including our International JPIC Consultation four years ago in Iserlohn, Germany. Let us move on in a more responsible manner and think creatively to find more alternatives to create an economy with a human face, an economy that sustains life.

Religion, culture and human rights

How to strengthen human rights in a globalised world

GÜNTER NOOKE

In my opening remarks I would like to focus on an issue that is being increasingly debated and that goes to the heart of the topic of our panel discussion today: this is the question of the universality of human rights.

The idea of universally accepted fundamental human rights standards precedes the era we call globalisation by far. It is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and well reflected in its title. But as we begin to celebrate the 60th anniversary of this corner stone of international human rights protection, can we really say that the idea of universal human rights standards has become an unchallenged *acquis*? One would think so, especially in an era where many feel to be living in a “global village”. But aren’t we witnessing a somewhat reverse trend in many fields, including in the human rights discourse, aren’t we witnessing a trend of fragmentation, mutual misunderstanding and distrust?

When the monks in Myanmar demonstrated out on the streets, we knew who was right and who was wrong, we saw that the aspiration for freedom was home for all regions and all cultures in the world, and we felt that no regime in this world had the right to suppress these aspirations by force. But there are strong currents and attempts to undermine what we thought belonged to the *acquis* of the human rights doctrine.

To give just one practical example: in September of last year, the Iranian government hosted a conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Tehran on what was called “Human Rights and Cultural Diversity”, opened by President Ahmadinejad and attended by more than 50 foreign ministers, including those of North Korea and Cuba, the current chair of the Non-Aligned Movement. If one reads through the final declaration one finds under the heading “role of the media” nothing but stipulations that tell the media what they have to do, not what they are free to do. Similar, the section devoted to the “role of academia”, and so on. This declaration clearly aims at undermining the idea of universality under the heading of cultural diversity. Only weeks later, the Human Rights Council in Geneva adopted by consensus a resolution on human rights and cultural diversity, tabled by Cuba, which included a reference to the Teheran Conference. And again, just weeks later, the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly passed a similar resolution tabled by Iran. All of this might not change the world from one day to the next, but in my mind it reveals a dangerous long-term trend. But perhaps we contribute ourselves to such trends when we label everything we deem desirable as a human right.

So what is it that forms the “noyveau dur”, the hard core of universally valid human rights standards? To my mind freedom of religion and belief and freedom of assembly, opinion and the press belong to that category, for they define the rules of the game according to which a society may compete for ideas and strive for solutions, free from force and compulsion.

In what way can the Christian community contribute to this? The problem of each religion is that it lays claim to the truth. But one cannot criticise such a claim that is common to all those striving for the truth, however one should insist that such claims be pursued in a tolerant way, free from force and compulsion, including the right to change one’s belief (even if this may sometimes be difficult to accept for a religious community).

Allow me to cite from the famous “Ring Parable”, the corner piece of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s “Nathan the Wise”, to illustrate the challenge.

In the Orient, in ancient times, there lived a man who possessed a ring, whose real value lay in its ability to make its wearer beloved of God and man. The ring passed from father to the most favoured son for many generations, until finally its owner was a father with three sons. Unable to decide which of the three sons was most worthy, the father commissioned two copies of the ring, then gave each son a ring, and each son believed that he alone had inherited the original and true ring.

But instead of harmony, the father’s plan brought only discord to his heirs. The dispute among the brothers grew until their case was finally brought before a judge. The judge pronounced his conclusion: “The authentic ring,” he said, “had the power to make its owner beloved of God and man, but each of your rings has brought only hatred and strife. None of you is loved by others; each loves only himself. Therefore I must conclude that none of you has the original ring.” The judge continued: “Or it may be that your father, weary of the tyranny of a single ring, made duplicates, which he gave to you. Let each of you demonstrate his belief in the power of his ring by conducting his life in such a manner that he fully merits – as anciently promised – the love of God and man.”

This parable has been interpreted in different ways. I believe that Lessing’s main message is not that the religions shall compete peacefully in a way that everything becomes arbitrary and the true religion will be lost. Rather, it is clear that the father commissioned two copies of the ring: thus the original one is still out there! This exemplifies how vital and existential the competition between religions remains. The parable tells us nevertheless that it is our own behaviour that defines our powers of persuasion.

Probably, the same is true for our endeavour to strengthen human rights. Only if we convince through deeds, not only words, will we have a chance to convince others of our concept of human rights. By no means should this allow us to be naive: human rights policy is power politics. But this alone will not persuade others to follow our example.

In particular the Christian community that cannot be accused, as many others particularly in the Western world, of not believing in anything anymore, can contribute in a very decisive manner to our endeavour of promoting basic and universally accepted human rights standards.

How to strengthen human rights in a globalised world

ZEPHANIA KAMEETA

In the context of Southern Africa, the fight for human rights has played a prominent and indeed important role in the struggle against apartheid and oppression. We have experienced how – in an ever increasingly globalised world – international role players have intervened in our struggle in the name of human rights; some with ulterior motives, for example to secure their international business interests, but some also genuinely out of humanitarian concern. What is done under the cloak of human rights and globalisation can hence be a curse or a blessing. So the call for human rights in a globalised world is not unambiguous. I do believe that we as churches have to go beyond the call for international conventions (as important as they sometimes can be). From the biblical understanding, we need to listen, talk, live and love our neighbours like our own children, we must start to concretely speak about universal human rights! Let us start to talk about human rights and their role in the global fight against injustice, oppression, dictatorship, but also poverty and HIV and AIDS. This then cannot be abstract, but as children of God we can do this concretely while acknowledging the differences in culture, religion, social upbringing etc. For us as church the Bible and God’s justice and grace have to be our yardstick.

One concrete example in Southern Africa is what was expressed in the Kairos document of 1985. As people who have been living under apartheid, we as the church can only compare our sufferings with the suffering of Jesus on the cross. If we truly believe in the presence of the Holy Spirit, then we cannot do other than to locate God and his works in our daily lives. In order to be the church therefore, we have to listen, to understand and be in solidarity with the weak, so as to read the signs of the times correctly and to have a true perspective from the people on the ground, or to use the famous saying: to become the voice of the voiceless. This foundation enabled the church to speak up against the injustice, oppression, suffering – the violation of human rights – during the apartheid time without being afraid of the ‘worldly’ powers. A violation of human rights is, for me, where people are denied the right to live and be loved as Children of God.

What was true then, is still true today. God suffers with the people whose human rights’ are violated, whether these are first generation rights (like political and civil rights under apartheid in South Africa and Namibia) or second generation rights, the

socio-economic rights that are violated by poverty, economic injustice, HIV and AIDS etc.

What then is the role of the church in a globalised world in the protection of these human rights? On the one hand, we have to acknowledge that the church has a big advantage. The church is working with the people on the ground and within the communities and thereby has the perspective directly from the people. Due to these roots, the church often enjoys the trust of the people. Furthermore, the infrastructure of the church reaches even small and remote places, making it often the only institution in a poor country that has that kind of infrastructure and coverage among the people, different regions and remote places. Likewise, we should not ignore the global network among churches as this conference bears witness to.

But before we come to the global level, we have to honestly ask ourselves today, whether we truly understand what it means to have your socio-economic rights violated. Do we understand what it means not to be able to feed yourself and your children day after day? Do we really understand what it means not to be able to travel to the next town to get life-saving medicine? Do we really understand what it means not to have a decent roof over our heads? Indeed, we should be careful with our judgments, our analysis and our quick remedies for these situations.

Let me give you examples from Namibia. Many women in Namibia work as domestic workers, often not only in one household, but in several different homes. For three days a week, they work for one family, for another two days at another house and in addition, they iron clothes for other people to make ends meet. What does their and their children's day look like? The mother, often a single mother, gets up very early in the morning to get to town in time for work. Her children are still asleep when she leaves. Then the children get up and the oldest one is responsible to make breakfast for the younger ones, get them dressed and their school bags packed. When they come home at lunch time, the mother is still at work, so they have to make lunch with whatever is there and are on their own until the mother comes back late in the evening. What does this mean, for the children and for the mother?

For the children, there is nobody to kiss and hug them goodbye in the morning, there is nobody to tell them to rest after lunch and to do their homework. They stay up late to wait for their mother and the dinner she can hopefully prepare. Can we truly imagine what it means to face this situation every day?

Another example comes from a woman who related to me her daily suffering. She rents a shack in a backyard of a house, which belongs to an older man. Often, she is not able to pay for the rent of the shack and then her teenage daughter has to sleep with the landlord in order for them not to lose the only miserable housing option they have. The woman said that every time this happens, she watches her daughter in agony that she might become pregnant or get diseases from that man. Can we really imagine what it means to live under such circumstances? I asked the

woman what she thinks when one of us stands in the pulpit and preaches. She just said: “I pray for you!” So I asked her: “What do you pray?” and she answered: “Lord forgive them, because they do not know us.”

I am afraid that although the church does have the connection to the people on the ground as said before, it is also true that we are quick to “cut out” these realities. We assume that we do know what is going on, while in fact we are sitting in an ivory tower and just talk and talk, not with the people who are suffering, but only about the suffering.

The violations of human rights can only be addressed if we directly involve the people who are suffering. Only, if we take the time and energy to listen to people’s suffering and try to understand their circumstances and the choices they have to make. Only, if we take the circumstances and choices seriously, can we start to claim to become the voice of the voiceless again. In order to find solutions, we have to start doing things *with the people* who are suffering and *not for them*. Likewise, the solutions should not be paternalistic, but should have come from the people concerned, as they know much better what would help them and could offer them real choices to improve their living conditions.

The famous “cookie-cutter”, one-fits-all solutions of institutions like the IMF and the World Bank have proven to be ineffective, as they do not take account of the local situations. Hence, while the Declaration of Human Rights gives us a basis and approach to work globally on the same issues, the solutions have to be tailored and measured according to the demands of the people involved.

For me, the campaign for the Basic Income Grant (BIG) in Namibia is an example how this approach can be translated into reality. The Basic Income Grant Coalition lobbies for the introduction of a universal cash transfer in Namibia. While the proposal came from a government appointed tax commission, the idea was tested and discussed with different constituencies all over Namibia. On the basis of the endorsement of these constituencies, the campaign was started and has now evolved into a fully fledged civil society movement comprising all civil society umbrella organisations. Currently, the Coalition is running a BIG pilot project for two years to prove that such a universal cash transfer does indeed work and has the desired effects on poverty alleviation and economic development.

In the pilot project, about 900 people of a small village receive a grant of N\$ 100 (US\$ 14) per person per month for a period of 24 months and it is entirely up to them to decide how to use the money. The first payout of the grant took place on 15th and 16th January this year and was a great success. The people went to the school to pay for the school fees of their children. The school reported that double the number of parents paid in comparison to previous years, and that for the first time they were able to buy enough toner and paper for the year. Many people bought food and clothes. The most amazing thing though, was that one could see that people got back

their dignity and that they felt the responsibility that comes with such an approach and such a project.

Lastly, the question arises whether we are serious enough to address the violations of human rights. Are we prepared to use our church structures for this kind of work? Are we prepared to give from our wealth and from our status to really address the root causes of human rights violations?

How to strengthen human rights in a globalised world

SORITUA A.E. NABABAN

WCC perspectives on the churches’ perspectives and principles with regard to human rights

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has a long history of involvement in the struggle for human rights and religious freedom. This involvement is based on the *conviction* that God wills a society in which all can exercise full human rights. All human beings are created in God’s image, equal and infinitely precious in God’s sight. The human being, male and female, was created in God’s own image, blessed and made co-responsible with God for the creation (Gen 1:26-28). In Jesus Christ, we believe God humbled himself and became human, in order that we may be reconciled to one another and with the Creator. God made no distinction between us based on race, colour, nationality, ethnic belonging, religious or other belief, sex or any other difference. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28).

Since 1968 the WCC has engaged *in support* of the human rights struggles of the churches and related organisations everywhere, but with special emphasis on countries suffering from *military dictatorship* in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Church-based human rights movements became major forces for justice and democratisation in their societies and in defence of their people.

At the United Nations, the WCC has facilitated the testimony of victims themselves, human rights defenders and church leaders. The WCC was instrumental in assisting in the drafting of important new international standards of human rights, such as banning the use of torture and providing support for victims. It also called for the creation of a working group on torture within the UN Commission on Human Rights.

The WCC has from the very beginning had *religious liberty* as its central concern. The defence and promotion of religious liberty continues to be an integral part of the mandate of the WCC. The WCC also contributed to new enforceable standards in the field of religious freedom and tolerance. The WCC made a valuable contribution in the drafting of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on religious

freedom and liberty, which reads as follows: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his (her) religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his (her) religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.” Indeed, the 5th WCC Assembly in Nairobi in 1975 stated: “Religious liberty should never be used to claim privileges. For the church, this right is essential so that it can fulfil its responsibilities, which arise out of the Christian faith. Central to these responsibilities is the obligation to serve the whole community.”

There are three main areas which the churches will be called to put more emphasis on in future:

1. The first significant challenge for the churches is *to analyse the current security emphasis on countering terrorism that will obviously lead to an increase in violations of fundamental human rights*, and to determine how best to address the situation.
2. The second challenge is in *the area of economic and social rights*. The dominant economic model, based on a globalised free market, has forced millions of people into meaningless jobs, often under inhumane working conditions, casual labour with no insurance of continuing subsistence, massive unemployment, poverty and despair. The struggle for economic justice – social, economic and cultural rights – will remain a major challenge for the churches in the future.
3. The third challenge is related to the *issue of intolerance*. In recent years, religious, ethnic and national discrimination, intolerance and violence have been a major contributor to oppression and violation of human rights. There is a need to *acknowledge, guarantee and protect* the rights of religious minorities, and to determine the degree to which religious freedom can be considered an absolute right in a pluralistic society, and the role of religion in conflict and in interreligious dialogue.

The WCC believes that international advocacy for peace, justice and human rights must be founded on a vibrant movement and struggle on the ground. This makes it obligatory for the WCC to nurture, support and sustain its vast network of churches in the regions that are involved in critical human rights situations.

Expectations towards governments in Indonesia and other countries including Germany

Let me point out that I am of the opinion that churches have the right to expect something from the governments with regard to human rights, *only* if the churches themselves respect, uphold and disseminate the principle of human rights within their communions. The issue becomes crucial, when church leaders are involved in human rights violations and when any human rights violation within the church is covered up by *subordinating truth to ecclesiastical tactics* or by *cultivating “the*

structures of deceit” in the congregations. The UEM should have a Code of Conduct against human rights violations for the use of the UEM member churches.

Churches have a *prophetic task* in society and therefore are obliged to convey to the governments what they expect the governments to do with regard to human rights. In the last ten years Indonesia has succeeded in improving its 1945 Constitution, amending it by including paragraphs, which regulate how to respect, uphold and disseminate the principle of human rights. The judicial instrument is there. The churches expect the government to deal with grave human rights violations. All recommendations of the National Commission on Human Rights must be taken seriously, without excuse. The government must not choose to prioritise to protect the interests of its own political groups and those of the economic powers, and in doing so, protect the interests of the *corporatocracy*. The government must carry out the mandate of the Constitution; if not, the government has broken the law.

With the provision in the Constitution, one can hardly understand why the Papuan people still *live in fear* vis-à-vis the government, and why the government allows *grave violation of human rights in Papua* and impunity for violators of human rights there to continue. As long as discrimination, stigmatisation, torture, disappearance of persons and other human rights’ violations in Papua are considered to be necessary and continue unabated, the churches *will and must continue* to remind the government of its constitutional obligations on human rights in Papua. The most absurd picture there now is that “armed guards”, who historically came into being in the struggle for independence in order to protect the people from colonialists, are now protecting foreign mining corporations – who are actually the new real colonialists and imperialists, executors of “the pernicious political and economic project of global capitalism” – by oppressing, torturing and killing the people in the surrounding villages whenever they express and demand their basic rights to be respected! Churches expect the government to protect the people, and not foreign investments. It is a basic human right to live without fear!

Assuming that *other countries*, with which Indonesia has bilateral and or multi-lateral relations, do also respect, uphold and disseminate the principles of human rights, churches expect that the bilateral and or multilateral relations with other churches should not be confined only to economic co-operation, but they should also include co-operation in human rights. To be more concrete, our churches expect that *Indonesia-Germany* co-operation should include co-operation especially in disseminating the principles of human rights and the necessary education of the people. As a people who have experienced terrible human rights violations in the past, Germany can share its experiences with Indonesia, especially in overcoming human rights’ violations. It will also be very helpful, if German government helps German firms and corporations operating in Indonesia to treat the labourers in an equally human way as they treat German workers in Germany and anywhere else. Churches also

expect that, in pursuing profit, the German government reminds the economic protagonists of their ecological responsibility, which, if neglected, will affect the life of all, the very thing that the recent Bali Global Warming Conference seriously warned about. We are aware that the German churches regularly address the German government on many issues pertaining to church and society, and we do hope that in a limited way, UEM member churches/members can address their respective governments and the German government on the issues of human rights.

In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, it is very important that the churches work together with other religions and faith-based movements for a peaceful development and human rights

We have reached the stage where *dialogue at a local level* should be promoted more. As a first step, I have encouraged local congregations to open direct contact with the leaders and the community of the mosques in their neighbourhood. Getting to know each other, personally and as communities, will certainly help awaken attention and care for the other. This direct contact and communication will not only help people to understand and know each other better, it will also certainly avoid and prevent hostility and physical conflicts, including prohibition of the building of worship houses or their destruction.

The challenge is not only to insist on religious freedom as a human right, but also to enable different religious communities to live peacefully in a pluralistic society, enjoying religious freedom. As long as Christian groups and congregations do not care to know the religious communities in their surroundings and neighbourhood, how can co-operation for a peaceful development and human rights be achieved?

For a few years now, many NU youth organisations in Java have offered protection to local congregations during Christmas days, so that they can worship peacefully. Good relationships with the NU leadership that started decades ago has brought this fruit. This “protection” is certainly not an ideal situation. We want a peaceful life and co-operation guaranteed by law for every person enjoying religious freedom. But as an example, the “Christmas friendship” can stimulate new initiatives. I think that local contacts and co-operation should now be prioritised. This means a serious call to churches to enhance their “equipping programmes,” firstly in the theological seminaries and at the same time in the “education programmes” of the congregations. It is also a serious call to the leaders of the churches to be willing to share their information on human rights, and to encourage all members of the congregations to take this challenge seriously, as an integral part of their calling.

Reference for discussion

There are at least three kinds of *churches’ responsibility with regard to human rights*.

- a) That all members realise that human rights are an integral part of the Gospel in its holistic understanding;
- b) That they respect, uphold and defend the human rights of all people; and
- c) That they co-operate with everyone in their own places, to defend human rights for all in their own places.

Concrete recommendations

Given that inherited, accepted and practiced religious and cultural values may run contrary to the defence of human rights, what shall the churches in the UEM have to do to strengthen their witness in disseminating and campaigning for human rights, and to assist victims of human rights violations, economic injustice and destruction of their environment?

1. All participants of this consultation – especially all church leaders! – must feel *obliged* to share and disseminate all information obtained in the UEM in other ecumenical organisations’ consultations, workshops and training – and there is more than enough information available – to other members in their respective congregations, other church leaders and to the whole church. How can an information campaign on JPIC issues be started and sustained in the whole church?
2. Church leaders should repent – *metanoia* – in the sense that they should leave the cultural traditional inherited concept of leadership, namely gaining information as power and keeping it for oneself. How to change? Church leaders are first of all “servants” and “slaves of all” (Mark 10:43-44), and not rulers or even “kings”.
3. Church-leaders and pastors should set an example in that they neither practice nor tolerate the violation of human rights in their personal lives, families and congregations. Church-leaders should avoid any form of manipulation of *subordinating truth to ecclesiastical or clerical strategy* and should not in any way build a *structure of deceptions*.
4. How do church leaders and pastors help their congregations to be sensitive to, to expose and to oppose peacefully human rights violations, economic injustice and destruction of the environment in their places? In this regard, how can persons in the church, community and government, active in promoting and defending human rights, be of use in assisting church leaders in their efforts?
5. Seminaries and other educational institutions run by the church from basic to tertiary levels should include JPIC concerns in their curriculum and programmes.

Promoting human rights through Islamic teachings

SITI MUSDAH MULIA

First of all, I would like to extend my highest appreciation to Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP) for having given me precious time to share with you my practical experiences in promoting human rights through Islamic teachings in Muslim society in Indonesia. My experience has been highly focused on the undertaking to promote democracy and to strengthen human rights, especially regarding the rights of children, the rights of women, and the right of religious freedom.

Before embarking to share and to explain my experience, allow me first to highlight briefly some information about the Indonesian Muslim community. As we know, the Indonesian Muslim community epitomises a case of exceptional uniqueness. In spite of being designated as the world’s largest Muslim community, Indonesia is not an Islamic State. Such a condition came about because the founding fathers of Indonesia, the majority of whom were Muslim, did not choose Islam as the foundation of the state. Rather, they chose *Pancasila* as the state philosophical foundation and at the same time as the guideline for establishing the state’s political power.

Certainly, such a choice was not made without reason, nor was it an easy thing to do. Historical record has expressly displayed and given clear witness to the fact that the hot debate of the founding fathers, that had torn the group into two severely opposing poles, the nationalists and the Islamists, was aggravatingly bitter and tough. The former advocated *Pancasila* and the latter wanted Indonesia to be based on the Islamic ideology. Such heated debate occurred in meetings prior to or in the wake of the Independence Proclamation, especially in the sessions held in the Konstituante in 1945.

The choice of *Pancasila* as the foundation on which the state and the life of the nation is based, witnesses the victory of nationalistic Muslims. In my opinion, the choice made was very realistic. There are at least two supporting reasons. *Firstly*, Indonesia is the home to people of great ethnic diversity, with their respective distinct cultures and languages, inhabiting thousands of islands in the Nusantara Archipelago. *Secondly*, for a long time communities inhabiting the Nusantara Archipelago have been known as religious communities who are willing to accept the arrival of religions originating from outside Nusantara, such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. As a logical consequence of this inclusiveness and of great tolerance, Indonesian society is highly diversified, adhering to different religions, not only to those previously mentioned big religions but also to the hundreds of local religions (indigenous religions), which are generally beyond public cognisance.

This reality of pluralism shall always be manifested and may not be negated in the life of the state and the nation. Also, the active role played by Muslim leading figures, especially those of the founding fathers, in embodying peaceful, tranquil, inclusive

and pluralism-respecting ideas shall always be born in mind and disseminated every time. These two ideas are of considerable usefulness and can serve as the inspiration generator for all efforts to foster peace, justice and humanity in Indonesia.

Promoting the rights of children

Basically, my work to increase of the quality of human resources began with the promotion of children's rights. How can Indonesians hope to grow as an advanced nation, if the children, who account for 30% of the total population, do not receive quality care? I devoted my time to this work for more than 12 years through Fatayat NU, the Nahdatul Ulema young women's organisation. It is an organisation of young women in the circle of Muslim-based Nahdatul Ulema organisations with the majority of membership at the grass-root level. The principal aim of this programme is to promote the basic rights of children at the grass-root level. This programme is concerned with the importance of fulfilling children's rights, especially child's health rights.

Actually, the implementation of this programme in Muslim society was not as easy as it was on paper. Talking about health means entailing a wide variety of other issues, such as a community's nutrition processes, ensured availability of clean drinking water, environmental sanitation, the provision of immunisation, medication and family planning contraceptive drugs and devices, the maintenance of health infrastructures and facilities provided by the government, and of no lesser importance was the issue of the family's income. The other handicap was related to bad traditions, such as the habit of feeding under five-year-old children with the food first chewed by the mothers, tradition prevailing and widely practiced in West Nusa Tenggara, the tradition of child marriage and also the tradition of polygamy. These bad traditions often run counter to the principles of healthcare.

In addition, table manners are strongly influenced by religiously dominated and legitimated patriarchal values. The culture and religious interpretations dominant in society indoctrinate that the husband is the leader of the family. The man is always considered the master of the household. As a consequence, the woman is nothing else than a housemaid. Women are still always considered as domestic servants, whose place of activity is never away from home, never even away from the mattress, water well and kitchen. Therefore, men (fathers or husbands) are usually given the first helping of the meal with certainly larger portions and better quality. Women (mothers and wives) shall wait for their turns. As a consequence, the ideal wives are those who have and observe great patience, waiting for their husbands and never taking their meal before their husbands. Customarily, women eat after their children. It is not surprising that what they get is only the leftovers and therefore the food they have to eat is of very low quality.

The religious standpoint also influences people's decisions to participate in the family planning programmes. Islamic teachings evidenced in a number of the Pro-

phet’s *hadiths* (traditions) state that married couples should have many children and advocate a strict prohibition of abortion. To make matters worse, culture goes in the same direction: “The more children you have, the larger fortunes you will get.”

In the course of 12 years being engaged in this programme, I have discovered much and having drawn interesting lessons from it. It was not easy to convince the people concerning the fulfilment of children’s rights, the importance of maintaining children’s good health and the need for family planning programmes. Several factors were presumably accountable for this unfortunate condition, among others, lack of education, patriarchal cultural values which regard women only as sexual objects, and still rampant gender-based religious standpoints.

The decision-makers in a family were generally men not women. The result is that the responsibility for taking care of the children is given to the wives or the children’s mothers. The child’s father or husband does not view this as his duty. The same unfortunate situation also applies to the family planning programme. As a result, the acceptors of the family planning programme were predominantly women. Very few men (less than 1%) were willing to use birth control measures.

To strengthen the rights of children, I convince parents (fathers and mothers) that children, in the eyes of Islam, are God’s Divine Message that must be safeguarded and whose survival must be well maintained. Children are entitled to some rights that must be met by parents. Since the parental responsibility to children is very strong, each family, through the family planning programme, must plan the number of children they want to have.

The promotion of women rights

The report on human development by UNDP in 2000 stated that in 1999 in Indonesia 54.5% of the work force in service and commodity projects were women. The number of workers in the civil service shows that women tend to get jobs not only with low incomes but also with low positions. Compared to men, women are more threatened by job lay-offs; women are also favourable due to their obedience. In general, working hours for women are longer, not only because of their domestic activities but also because of work outside the home.

In 2000, the economy crisis was getting worse, and 435,219 Indonesian women were working abroad as housemaids. Women migrant workers have a low level of income and can be laid off any time by their employers. They are also often abused. The contribution of these migrant workers to the foreign currency income of the state is very significant: 3 billion US-Dollars in 2001, excluding the cash they take with them after their work contracts are terminated. But for this contribution they do not receive guaranteed social security nor legal assistance from the state.

It is very important to note that being a women and poverty are very closely connected. Poverty is the product of injustice prevailing in society. Why women? The

world’s statistics reveals that the groups most vulnerable to oppression, discrimination and violence brought about by poverty are women. Consider the cases which relate to migrant workers, trafficking of women, prostitution and violence in conflict areas.

The undeniable fact is that a women’s position in Indonesia is still embarrassingly low, inferior and subordinate. Women are much more positioned as merely objects, second-rate citizens and very seldom given a public role and function. Some researchers point out three issues accountable for this unfortunate condition befalling women: patriarchal cultures, structural issues, and gender-biased religious interpretations.

The *first* factor is related to cultural issues. This patriarchal culture preserves a severely tight segregation, distinguishing public work from domestic work. Public work is always defined as the work done outside the home and given economic value and designated as a source of income. While domestic work is defined as the work done at home or in a family, is given no economic value and accordingly is not called income. Even though domestic work produces goods and services necessary for life, it does not enjoy economic value. As a result, women who are always placed in the domestic sectors are considered as not undertaking productive work, in spite of the fact and reality that it is women and the lower bracket of society who work hard to make both ends meet. Furthermore, such cultural ways demand that women comply with their natural disposition. The problem is, that what is meant by their natural disposition is identical with domestic work. Therefore, women must undertake several functions: reproductive function, domestic function and also social function. Consequently, women are to be charged with arduous manifold burdens. Such conditions make it hard, if not impossible, to uplift women’s dignity as full human beings.

The *second* factor is related to structural issues. We still have many public policies which do not side with women, such as the Marriage Law, Manpower Law, Health Law, Banking Law and Citizenship Law. Such statutory laws always place women as objects of law rather than subjects, causing them to undergo multiple layers of discrimination. In addition, women are still marginalised in the process of macroeconomic development. Limited access to economic resources, information and technology has hindered the upward advance of women’s potentials as economic protagonists.

The *third* factor is the interpretation of religious issues. The widespread and widely practiced interpretations in the community do not at all encourage women’s rights. Such gender-biased interpretations subsequently give rise to the following implications of gender inequity:

- *The misconception of human creation.* Generally, religious leaders always explain that the first human being created by God was Adam. Thereafter, Eve, his wife,

was moulded out of his ribs. Such conception has given rise to wide implications on the communal life of society, that is to say, women are men’s subordinates, women are only the second human beings, and women are not important creatures because they are only created from and for the interest of men.

- *The misconception concerning the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden.* Widely disseminated in the community is the idea that Adam was expelled from Eden due to the seduction of Eve, his wife, who was first seduced by the temptation of Satan. The implication of such an understanding implanted in people’s minds is that women are fundamentally seducers and are close to the Devil. Hence, never be too close to them and never listen to their opinion, as they are likely to send us to Hell. Women are not allowed to go out of the home at night or to go out of the house without their muhrims (guardian). It is much better for them to stay at home taking care of their household duties. They don’t need to pursue higher education, nor do they need to be actively engaged in the community.
- *The misconception regarding women leadership.* Widespread and deeply engraved in the mind of the people is the conception that women are not suited to be leaders due to their weakness in mind and religion. What is more, there is a *hadith*, which says: Misfortune befalls a nation when it entrusts its leadership to women. Such an idea is strengthened by the Quranic verse stating that men are leaders of women (an-Nisa, 4:34). These three examples of misconceived interpretations lead to the idea that the position and status of women is indeed low and inferior.

Allow me now to share my experience in promoting women’s political rights. In 1999, I was the co-ordinator of a voter education programme. This was established for women voters at the grass-root level. This programme was undertaken in 16 provinces in the pursuit of promoting women’s political rights. Through this programme I learned many important lessons. Even though Indonesia has been an independent country for more than a half century, generally, women have not been aware of their basic rights, especially with regard to political rights. The bad situation is reflected in the spontaneous questions and expressions made by participants of voter education programmes, such as: In choosing a political party can we disregard our parents’ views? As a wife, can I choose a political party which is different from my husbands’ party? Are we not sinful when we choose a party other than the ruling party? In choosing a party in an election, can we disregard the opinions of imams or ulemas? Is there any significance for women to be involved in politics? Are not politics dirty, cruel and full of hardships, so that women should not be active in the political area? Is politics the men’s domain because only men are entitled to be leaders?

It appeared from the voter education programme that there are three big problems with respect to Indonesian politics: the problem of being insufficiently represented in the public domain, the commitment of political parties is not yet gender-sensitive so

that it cannot yet provide enough access for women’s interests, and the obstacles generated by gender-bias and religious interpretation. In addition, many women still consider politics to be dirty and cruel. This point of view results in women’s unwillingness to be active in politics. Therefore in reality we found only few women interested in politics, because political parties are not friendly to women.

Promoting the right to freedom of religion

As we know, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights has been ratified by Indonesia by Law No. 12/2005. Article 18 of the ICCPR ensures the freedom of religion for every person. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his or her choice. No one shall be subject to coercion, which would impair his or her freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his or her choice.

I have been involved in promoting the right to freedom of religion or belief since 2000 as one of the founders of the ICRP (Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace). The ICRP is an association founded by a number of people who have a common concern in creating a society based on and characterised by peace and harmony. One of the concerns of this institution is to promote interfaith dialogue and to push the state to fulfil its obligation to strengthen the right to freedom of religion or belief.

During 2000-2007 the ICRP recorded 185 incidents of violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief. A series of destructive acts, violence and arrests against groups that were supposed to be “deviant” and other religious groups happened and were made public. The state has failed to promote, protect and fulfil the right to freedom of religion or belief. The state has even acted as a perpetrator of human rights violations due to its actions in forbidding religious sects and consenting to certain religious organisations, which were responsible for mass persecution of religious groups and beliefs.

My work on this issue is focused on campaigning, training and promoting the right to freedom of religion or belief through Islamic education and advocacy activities. It is very interesting to note that the obligation to strengthen the right to freedom of religion or belief is also ensured by all religions including Islam. Islam teaches us that human beings are free creatures. One of their freedoms is the freedom to embrace religion. This freedom is very important for human beings due to its potential to generate happiness and peace. All human beings are equal before God, whatever their religion, race and gender. That is the religious teaching, which became the foundation for the founding fathers of Indonesia when they formulated *Pancasila* and in 1945 the Constitution, especially article 29 on freedom to embrace religion. Therefore, education and advocacy-promoting campaigns are necessary in order to bring a freedom of religion and worship as one of the important pillars of democracy into reality.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the Indonesian Muslim community is very unique. Indonesian Muslims are very different from those in other areas, especially the Middle East. Indonesian Muslim communities have long experience of living together with people of different religions. Indonesian Muslims are very tolerant, open, inclusive as well as respectful towards humanity. The founding fathers of this country were indeed, like most Muslims, very respectful of humanity and active in campaigning for justice and peace. Indonesian Muslims are aware that the main functions of religion are to provide justice, security and peace to its adherents.

The important contribution for the fulfilling of human rights can be patterned in three actions as follows.

Firstly, there must be an implementation of cultural reconstruction through education in its widest sense, from education in the family to formal education in society. These efforts need to be implemented because a culture of tolerance and inclusiveness cannot emerge naturally and spontaneously in a society, instead it must be sown and arranged in such a way through the education system.

Secondly, there must be a revision of some laws and public policies, which are not conducive to the establishment of peace and justice as well as the upholding of human rights.

Thirdly, we have to develop a reinterpretation of religious teaching to be more conducive to the promotion of human rights. That is the teaching, which in Islamic terminology is called *rahmatan lilalamin*.

Finally, as a recommendation, I herewith request all prominent religious figures all over the world to build synergy, hand in hand, work together to strengthen democracy, civil society and human rights by promoting the values of religion, which teaches humanity, and encourages human dignity. Those religions that are accommodative to the values of humanity and friendly to women are religions that side with the powerless and minorities, the religions that really promise salvation, peace and happiness for its adherents.

As closing remarks, allow me to quote the hadits of the prophet Muhammad: “There will be a time when my community will get disaster.” Being confused, his companion asked: “O Allah’s Prophet, are there any righteous men?” The prophet replied: “There are quite many”, then He was asked once more: “Are those righteous men also subjected to God’s punishment?”. The Prophet replied: “That is right, the deviant men will get disaster as penalty of their deed, meanwhile the righteous men will get disaster as punishment of their unawareness to stop the offences and injustice. Only Allah knows better the truth.”

Promoting human dignity locally and globally

The challenges to the churches in a changing world: a human rights perspective

JAYADI DAMANIK

Historically, the end of the Cold War at the end of the 1980s also ended the conflict between the western and eastern blocks, and created a new dimension in international relations. Previously, ideological, military and economic confrontation, which had tainted international relations between the two blocks of countries, was transformed into co-operation for world peace and security, as well as the fulfilment of the welfare of the people according to the principles and purposes of the United Nations as stated in its Charter.

One of the new dimensions of international relations in the post Cold War era is the promotion of human rights, which has become one of the principle aims of the United Nations. This development has had an impact on the attitude of the international community, especially developed countries, towards human rights problems all over the world including Indonesia. It was noted that Indonesian foreign policies could only be accomplished through the settlement of domestic problems, including human rights problems. Indonesia has had no good track record regarding human rights since the new regime came to power in 1967. However, during the Cold War era, these problems had missed the attention of the international community since they were occupied with their own foreign policies regarding the Cold War. The end of the Cold War has placed the problems of the promotion and protection of human rights on the priority agenda of the international community.

I would like to underline that I am not an expert on church issues. When I talk about the challenges to the churches in this case, I do it from a human rights perspective, morally and legally. I do not have enough understanding to elaborate on the challenges to the churches from a theological perspective.

The concept of human rights

With “human rights” I mean a set of rights bestowed in its essence by God Almighty, and human beings as creation of God which must be respected, held in the highest esteem and protected by the state, law, government and all people, in order to protect human dignity and worth.¹ It is also important to note that human rights violations in Indonesia are all actions by individuals or groups of individuals, including the state

¹ See Article 1 (1) Act No.39/1999 concerning Human Rights.

apparatus, both intentional and unintentional, that unlawfully diminish, oppress, limit and/or revoke the human rights of an individual or group of individuals guaranteed by the provisions (set forth in Act No.39/1999 concerning human rights), and who do not or may not obtain fair and total legal restitution under the prevailing legal mechanism.

One of the important points in the above meaning of human rights are the terms “... as creation of God ...” and the second term “... protected by the state, law, government and all people ...”. Based on national and international human rights instruments, we could note “the protection, promotion, upholding and fulfilment of human rights are the responsibility of the state, especially the government”. The question is where is the position of the churches in this context? From the perspective of human rights law, is it true that the churches also have the responsibility to protect, to promote, to uphold and to fulfil human rights? This question is really fundamental for me, because again, on the one hand, the duty holder to protect, to promote, to uphold and to fulfil human rights is the state, especially the government, but on the other hand, human rights are a creation of God! Moreover, the substance of the human rights law is basically the regulation of the vertical relationship between the state and the people who live in the region of the state.

Not only on the national level (Indonesia) but also on the international level we can note that in the International Human Rights Law, it is clear that the legal subject for protecting, promoting, upholding and fulfilling of human rights is the state. By ratifying some Conventions/Covenants (International Human Rights Instruments), this means that the states are the legal subject in international human rights law to protect, to promote, to uphold and to fulfil human rights.

Theoretically, human rights could be identified as moral and legal rights. According to my understanding, churches as a “collection” of people, of human beings, have a moral responsibility to protect, to promote, to uphold and to fulfil human rights – as a creation of God. Not only morally, as a “collection” of people, according to national human rights law², by using “extensive interpretation method” in legal science, we could conclude, with no doubts, that churches also (as non state duty holders!) have a responsibility to protect, to promote, to uphold and to fulfil human rights. The duty holder to protect, to promote, to uphold and to fulfil human rights is basically the state (as state duty holder), but in modern human rights law (as the product of the changing world), it is already accepted that the non-state duty holders also have a responsibility to protect, to promote, to uphold and to fulfil human rights, at least on a moral level.

The implication of the above way of thinking is that the position of the churches towards human rights protection, human rights fulfilment, human rights upholding and human rights promotion is not only that of a victim of human rights violation nationally and/or internationally, but also that of a duty holder.

2 See Act No.39/1999 concerning Human Rights.

The basic facts

I would like to describe the facts of human rights conditions at the national level (in Indonesia) by dividing them theoretically in “a simple way” into civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other hand. The issue of peace, for example, belongs in my understanding to the civil and political rights, and the issues of environment/climate, labour, poverty, education, health, etc. belong to the economic, social and cultural rights. I also have to note that classifying human rights into civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other hand is, in a certain way, misleading, because all human rights are basically indivisible and interdependent.

Peace issues are in a human rights perspective not only related to the right to peace, but also relate to the right to happiness and the right to well-being. The right to peace is part of the right to life. In a comprehensive understanding, I would like to mention that the right to life also covers (1) the right to sustain life and to improve his or her standard of living, (2) the right to peace, happiness, and wellbeing and (3) the right to an adequate and healthy environment.

I have already introduced above the definition of human rights violations at a national level (Indonesia) by referring to the Act No.39/1999 concerning human rights. In a modern human rights perspective (as the product of the changing world), human rights violation are not limited to human behaviour/action (in action: killing, torture, etc.) but also cover human rights violations through legislation, because the substance of the legislation violates human rights, whenever the substance of the legislation discriminates against people, for example.³

In many human rights workshops or seminars at national or international level, when we talk about human rights violation, we usually talk about human rights violation as human behaviour/action only (state actors or non-state actors), not talking about human rights violations through legislation. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the first one, but also introduce the second one in talking about Indonesia, especially when it comes to human rights violations through Acts with discriminative substance over a period of more than 30 years during Soeharto’s rule as the President of Indonesia (1967-1998).

It is also really important to know about this kind of human rights violations in other countries/regions in detail, because as far as I know it also happened in the Asia-Pacific-Region, America and Europe, not only in the past but also in this modern era. Especially what happened in America, New Zealand and Australia related

³ Jayadi Damanik, “The Legal Responsibility of Human Rights Violation through Discriminative Acts in Indonesia”, Dissertation, Padjadjaran University, Bandung, 2007. See also E.W. Vierdag, *The Concept of Discrimination in International Law*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1973; and David M. Beatty (ed.), *Human Rights and Judicial Review, A Comparative Perspective*, Martinus Nijhoff Publisher, Netherlands, 1994.

to this issue in the past, I have elaborated on in my dissertation.⁴ Because of the limited time and space, I will not elaborate on this issue here. I just want to elaborate on the context of Indonesia during the Soeharto era (as President of Indonesia).

Human rights violation as human behaviour/action intentional or unintentional

The years 2005-2007 could be considered as a new era for human rights promotion in Indonesia. In October 2005, Indonesia ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966). Both instruments are considered as International Bills of Rights for the promotion and protection of human rights all over the world. However, looking at the human rights conditions in Indonesia, the conditions conducive for the implementation of human rights in Indonesia have not been fulfilled. In short, these conditions could be seen through the completion of gross human rights violations cases, which are: (a) the discontinued investigation process by the Attorney General with regard to cases with indication of gross human rights violations, although the inquiry into these cases had been completed by the National Human Rights Commission of Indonesia (Komnas HAM) for a long time (the Trisakti 1998, Semanggi I 1998 and Semanggi II 1999 incidents (TSS 1998-1999), the May Riot 1998 incident, the Wasior 2001-2002 incident and the Wamena 2003 incident); and (b) the refusal of several members of the state apparatus to co-operate with Komnas HAM regarding the implementation of *projustitia inquiry* into alleged gross human rights violations, in this regard, the inquiry into enforced disappearance incidents in the context of crimes against humanity.

Basic facts on civil and political rights⁵

Several problems also occurred in the implementation and protection of civil and political rights, among others: (a) The implementation of freedom of speech in public places is still determined by acts of violence and even some atrocities; (b) The continued acts of violence either conducted by the state apparatus or radical groups in the community. These acts have to be considered as violation of the right to personal safety and also the right to the protection of privacy, honor and dignity of a person, (c) The intrusion of the right to personal freedom, such as freedom of religion and worship according to his/her religion or belief experienced by, among others, many churches and Ahmadiyah adherents, and (d) The prolonged discrimination of particular religious adherents to practice their religion or belief through the determination of the Joint Regulations between Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of State Affairs No.9 Year 2006 and No.8 Year 2006 concerning the Guidelines for Head or

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Part of the description of this issue refers to The Annual Report the National Human Rights Commission of Indonesia 2006.

Vice Head of Regions to Carry Out Maintenance of Tolerance between Religious Adherents, Empowerment of Religious Adherents Forum and Establishment of Religious Places.

Apart from the immense problems mentioned above, several matters should also be considered, such as the suspension of the implementation of several international human rights instruments ratified by the Indonesian government at national level. These have shown that the state, which holds the responsibility for the protection, promotion, enforcement and fulfilment of human rights, has not made the necessary efforts to truly carry out its obligations.

It should be noted that the attention of the international community with regard to the protection, promotion, enforcement and fulfilment of human rights in Indonesia will increase with the implementation of a universal periodic review system by the United Nations Human Rights Council as the replacement of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Indonesia has been appointed as a member of this Council. I will also detail several major „developments“ of civil and political rights, which have occurred during the last few years.

Death Penalty

Many prisoners in Indonesia (including foreign citizens) are waiting execution. Some of the prisoners were proven guilty of crimes related to drugs (narcotics). The imminent executions are results of pending reviews (*Peninjauan Kembali*) of the Supreme Court decisions.

Three alleged persons responsible for the Poso riot incidents, namely Fabianus Tibo, Marinus Riwu and Dominggus da Silva, were executed on 22nd September 2006. Even though they were witnesses in the investigation of “Group 16”, the death penalty was carried out after their requests for clemency to the President of the Republic of Indonesia were rejected on 10th November 2005.

Until the end of 2006, Indonesia still had at least 11 laws, which contain the death penalty. The right to life is a non-derogable right under any condition and for anyone as governed in the International Human Rights Law as well as the National Human Rights Law (the 1945 Constitution and the Act No.39 Year 1999 concerning Human Rights). It should be noted that many countries in the world have banned the death penalty in their legal system or have limited the death penalty only to particular cases such as war and other state emergencies. In principle, the Second Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1988) prohibits the death penalty except for particular conditions such as war and other state emergencies.

The Ahmadiyah adherents

The Ahmadiyah adherents were evicted not only by the local community, but also by the leaders of a “certain” religion. The regional government as well as local police

officers did not do anything during and after the incidents occurred. The adherents of Ahmadiyah also experienced acts of violence during eviction. Therefore, the Ahmadiyah adherents claim that their rights have been violated, particularly since the government has not made any efforts to solve the problem. The prohibition of Ahmadiyah adherents in many areas in Indonesia is a violation of human rights, particularly the right of freedom of religion. Moreover, the eviction of Ahmadiyah adherents from their homes is a violation of their right of freedom to choose the place to stay within the territory of the Republic of Indonesia.

The forced eviction of churches

Many churches were evicted not only by the local community, but also, again, by the leaders of a “certain” religion. The regional government as well as local, regional and national police officers did not do anything during and after the incidents occurred. In some cases, members of the churches also experienced acts of violence during the eviction. Their rights, again, were violated, particularly since the government has not made any efforts to solve the problem. In human rights law, we call these cases, violations of human rights by omission. The prohibition of churches in many areas in Indonesia is a violation of human rights, particularly the right of freedom of religion.

Regional regulations violating human rights

The regional governments’ authority to govern their own territory is part of the implementation of regional autonomy. However, this authority has produced regional regulations related to particular religions and is discriminative in nature concerning particular groups, which violates human rights. There are at least 22 cities and districts implementing regional regulations based on Islamic law, among others, “anti pornography” regulation, obligation for students to wear veils and the prohibition of women going out alone at night.

In Banten for example, the Tangerang city government enacted the Regional Regulation.No. 8 Year 2005 concerning the Prohibition of Prostitution on 27th November 2005. However, this regulation had caused the police and/or security officers to act recklessly on the street, particularly arresting women going out alone at night, who are being accused of being prostitutes. This regulation should be withdrawn because it violates human rights, particularly the right of freedom of movement. Moreover, the regulation also causes the misuse of power and authority by the state apparatus, since there are no specific criteria in defining person(s) who are outside their homes alone at night and the one(s) who are not.

In East Java, the Surabaya city government enacted the Regional Regulation No. 17 Year 2003 concerning Street Vendors (*Pedagang Kaki Lima* or PKL). The regulation has violated human rights because it requires street vendors to register their

businesses. This requirement limits the opportunity for people coming from outside Surabaya to conduct businesses as street vendors, which has violated their right to work and their freedom of movement.

In Jakarta, the regional government had enacted Regional Regulation No. 11 Year 1998 concerning Social Order and the Regional Regulation No. 4 Year 2004 concerning Population Registration. Based on these regulations, the regional government conducted the *justitia* operation and arrested people who did not have identity cards. These regulations are violating human rights, particularly of freedom of movement.

Citizenship

One of the efforts to amend the policy with regard to citizenship, particularly non-discriminative legislation that protects the rights of children of Indonesian mothers who married non-Indonesian citizens, was the enactment of the Act No. 12 Year 2006 concerning Citizenship. The Act, as a replacement of the Act No. 62 Year 1958, aims to solve the uncertainty of the status of citizenship of particular persons and to provide legal protection of Indonesian citizens. The new Act contains new provisions, among others, the elimination of the phrase “original Indonesian” (*“Indonesia asit”*) which has caused many discriminative actions.

The Act No. 12 Year 2006 concerning citizenship provides limited double-citizenship for children from multi-citizenship parents. This provision also applies to a child born of an illegal marriage between a mother who is not Indonesian and a father who is Indonesian. The father should acknowledge the child before she/he reaches the age of 18 years or before she/he gets married. Moreover, the limited double-citizenship also applies to a child born in Indonesian territory while the status of citizenship of the parents is still uncertain. The Act No. 12 Year 2006 concerning citizenship also states that a wife who is Indonesian can sponsor her husband who is not Indonesian to apply for permanent residency. Moreover, the Act also determines that every person who has been a citizen of Indonesia at her/his birth does not need the Letter of Evidence of Indonesian Citizenship Holder (*Surat Bukti Kewarganegaraan Republik Indonesia* or *SBKRI*). These changes show the efforts being made to protect the right of every person to her/his citizenship.

However, the Act still poses a threat of the loss of citizenship for an Indonesian who continuously works in foreign countries for a five year period and is not on an official assignment: (a) when it is conducted without a legal reason and when intentionally he/she does not affirm her/his intention to become an Indonesian citizen before the end of the five year period; and (b) who does not affirm her/his intention to become an Indonesian citizen to the Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia during the next five year period.

Basic facts on economic, social and cultural rights⁶

Some problems still occur in the implementation and fulfilment of economic, social and cultural rights, such as: (a) the increasing rate of unemployment, which shows that the right to work is not fulfilled; (b) the suffering of people in regions because of *busung lapar*, which shows that the rights to food and health are not fulfilled; and (c) the hot-mud flow disaster which covered a large area and caused people to leave their homes and lose their jobs. This was considered a violation of the right to survival and the right to a good and healthy environment. I shall also detail several major developments of economic, social and cultural rights, which have occurred during the last years.

The workers, especially the migrant workers

The problems faced by migrant workers are complicated and pose a dilemma. In essence, the state should not prevent its citizens from working abroad. However, the policy of the Indonesian government towards migrant workers has not taken the worker's side. Regrettably, these workers, especially women workers, are often ill-treated during departure, transit, at their work places and on return. Cases of document forgery, violations of work contracts, underpaid wages, unpaid wages, fraud, persecution, physical abuse and sexual harassment often occur. The government has not found any solution for this matter.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur for the Rights of Migrant Workers, Jorge Bustamante, in his report in December 2006, stated that many Indonesian migrant workers have experienced human rights violations. Human rights violations are mostly faced by women and children migrant workers. They were raped, forced to become prostitutes and experienced other types of violence. Some other violations they experienced were long working hours without breaks, un-scheduled payment of wages and even unpaid wages, as well as mental abuse. Competition between migrant worker agents, both in sending and receiving countries, also added to the difficulties of legal protection for these migrant workers.

Human trafficking

Due to its nature as organised crime, human trafficking is a complicated problem. There are no exact numbers of victims of human trafficking, not only at national level but also at international level. It is assumed that the actual number is higher than the recorded number. Most of the victims are women and children. They become victims of fraud during recruitment process (through false promises of jobs with high wages), in transit areas, as well as at their places of work.

The efforts to deal with human trafficking are hindered because the related institutions and agencies at national and regional levels have yet to be co-ordinated. This

⁶ Ibid.

co-ordination, particularly at regional level, is very important since trafficking in persons are trans-border crimes.

The IDPs

Natural disasters have caused casualties and injuries as well as homeless people. These people have become internally-displaced-persons (IDPs). The protection and fulfilment of IDPs rights in the post-disaster era was focused on the rehabilitation of victims and on infrastructure reconstruction as the main programmes of the government and its apparatus. The programmes involved parts of the community in the establishment of disaster command posts, the building of bathing-washing-toilet facilities and the supplying of medicine, clean water, clothing and food. However, the follow-up of the programmes was hindered due to the unclear number of victims. Another problem encountered in dealing with post-disaster situations was the unresponsive approach towards vulnerable groups such as women and children, as well as disabled and elderly persons.

Malnutrition and Busung Lapar

Hunger and malnutrition in several regions have been reported widely by the media. Babies were experiencing bad nutrition and malnutrition in many regions. Infant mortality due to *busung lapar* also occurred. Districts and/or cities in Indonesia were considered food-vulnerable areas, because most of their inhabitants could not afford to reach a nutrition level of 70% of the daily nutrition index. Ironically, food supply vulnerability happened in regions which produced food, but where many farmers did not have enough production resources. They did not have enough income to buy food equal to 2,000 kilo-calories and 52 gram-protein per person per day (daily nutrition index). The number of food vulnerable areas was increased when Aceh and southern Java were destroyed by the tsunami and earthquakes. New areas with extreme poverty also emerged in Kalimantan and Sulawesi when flood disasters occurred in these regions. Chronic poverty and poverty caused by natural disasters brought poor families in a situation where they could not afford to buy food in appropriate amounts for all family members.

Nutritional decay was not only caused by the problem of lack of food and decreasing purchasing power. It was also related to bad management of the state, so that the government could not protect its citizens from hunger. The government programmes dealing with malnutrition were only ad hoc in nature, namely, the rice for the poor programme and direct fund assistance programme (*Bantuan Langsung Tunai* or *BLT*). *Busung lapar* cases have shown that the government has not carried out its constitutional obligation with regard to the fulfilment of the rights to food and health.

The National Examinations in the educational system

Problems occurred with regard to the implementation of the National Examinations system. Many intermediate school students failed in the examinations. As a result, the parents filed lawsuits against the President, the Vice President, the Minister of National Education and the Head of National Education Standard Institution. The lawsuits demanded, among other things, the re-implementation of the national examination and a revision of the national examination policy. The government failed to fulfil the right to education and to protect school children in Indonesia and to provide them with further education, which caused the failure of these students. Moreover, the parents also demanded from the government to revise the Act No. 20 Year 2003 concerning the National Education System and the Government Regulation No. 19 Year 2005 concerning National Education Standards. They also demanded that the government should make new additional regulations with regard to standards required to pass an examination.

Poverty and unemployment

Poverty and unemployment problems are serious problems, which have caused that the economic, social and cultural rights as well as the civil and political rights of millions of people have not been fulfilled. Around half of the Indonesian population still live in extreme poverty. They cannot send their children to intermediate school. According to the population census, conducted in May 2006, the level of poverty has reached 39.02 million people or 17.75% of the total population since fuel prices were increased.

Furthermore, the Central Statistical Bureau (*Badan Pusat Statistik* or BPS) recorded that, until October 2006, the number of unemployed in Indonesia had reached 11.1 million people. The West Java province had first place with 3.9 million unemployed people. The second place was taken by Jakarta with 2.8 million unemployed and the third place by East Java province with 1.8 million unemployed. These figures consisted of 10.8 million constantly unemployed people (10.21% of the total population) and 29.64 million part-time-unemployed people (31.22% of the total population). It is easy to predict that these numbers will increase in 2007 and 2008.

The hot mud-flow disaster in Sidoarjo, East Java

A hot mud-flow disaster occurred in the areas of natural gas exploration in Porong, Sidoarjo on 29th May 2006. Lapindo Brantas Corporation operated in this area. As a result, more than 10,000 people had to evacuate the area and became IDPs. Thousands of workers and farmers became unemployed since the rice fields, plantations and factories, where they used to work, were flooded with mud. The hot mud flooded at least three villages and hundreds of hectares of land. This has caused human rights

violations following the destruction of the ecosystem for the population in Porong, Sidoarjo, as the right to a good and healthy environment has been violated.

Moreover, the violations of the right to a good and healthy environment due to hot mud-flow disasters in Sidoarjo also caused violations of the right to health. The decrease in the quality of health of the people living in the areas came about because their homes were contaminated with mud and gas. As a result, 31,334 people had to receive medicines and 650 people had to be hospitalised.

Additionally, the hot mud-flow disasters also caused violations of the right to education. Children have to study in other schools. They also have to live in the camps that do not have adequate schools. The hot mud-flow has caused violations of the right to work. At least 20 factories have had to close down and have stopped their operations. As a result, 3,614 factory workers had to stop working and became unemployed. At the same time, hundreds of farmers could not work on their lands since about 300 hectares farmland and 61 hectares sugar-cane plantation were flooded with mud. Moreover, at least 40 micro and middle businesses have stopped their production since the disaster occurred.

The hot mud-flow disasters in Sidoarjo also created serious problems with regard to the right to property. According to the record, at least 1,810 homes in five villages were flooded with mud due to the continuous hot mud-flow. The people had to leave their homes. They also lost their property, such as land, houses, important documents, household and electronic equipment and also their animals. The disasters have eliminated land borders and evidence of property ownership. This has created difficulties for the owners since they do not have legal documents, to prove ownership of their houses and land. The destruction of important documents, such as personal identity cards, diplomas and certificates has added to the complicated problems of the right to property.

The indigenous people (Adat Law Community)

Violations of the human rights of the indigenous people did not only happen when violence occurred between members of the indigenous people groups and security officers with regard to land cases. Violations also occurred during the formulation and enactment of legislations such as the provisions for requirements of the indigenous people with regard to the acknowledgement of their traditional land (*tanah ulayat*). For examples, traditional land could not be used to guarantee bank loans. For bank loans, the land had to be converted into land with a license for business for a period of time. After that, the land was not directly returned to its former status and to the indigenous people. With these practices, in a few years time, all traditional land in Indonesia will belong to the state and the indigenous people will no longer own any land.

Another form of violations of the rights of indigenous people relates to the definition of the Act No. 41 Year 1999 concerning Forestry. The provisions in this Act

state that traditional forests surrounding the indigenous people’s environment belongs to the state. This definition has implicitly negated the meaning of traditional forests as the property of the indigenous people.

Human rights violation through discriminative legislation / Act on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights⁷

Soeharto signed 356 Acts in his position as President of Indonesia during 1967-1998. I found that 42 of these Acts have to be considered discriminative under the criteria of political beliefs, category, ethnicity, religion, sex, and/or social status; 30 out of 42 discriminative Acts are included in the field of civil and political rights, and the rest (12 Acts) are in the field of economic, social and cultural rights. From the 30 civil and political Acts, 12 Acts are discriminative under the criterion of category, 1 Act is discriminative under the criteria of category and/or ethnic, 8 Acts are discriminative under the criteria of political belief, 8 Acts are discriminative under category and/or political belief, and 1 Act is discriminative under the criteria of religion and sex. Furthermore, from 12 Acts in the field of economic, social and cultural rights, 7 are discriminative under category, 3 are discriminative under social status and 2 are discriminative under sex.

The question is, how the churches can respond or react to this matter? How far do the churches elaborate on this kind of human rights violation at least from a theological perspective? How far have the churches (and/or the members of the churches as citizens) brought these cases before the Constitutional Court?

Main challenges, response of the churches, and needs to be addressed by the churches

As I have mentioned before, the protection, promotion, upholding and fulfilment of human rights are the responsibility of the state, especially the government. In other words, the legal subject for protecting, promoting, upholding and fulfilling of human rights is the state. The churches as a “collection” of people, as human beings, also have a moral responsibility to protect, to promote, to uphold and to fulfil human rights. In National (Indonesian) Human Rights Law, as a “collection” of people, the churches also (as non-state duty holder!) have a responsibility to protect, to promote, to uphold and to fulfil human rights. In modern human rights law (as the product of the changing world), it is already accepted that the non-state duty holder (churches) also have responsibility to protect, to promote, to uphold and to fulfil human rights, at least on a moral level.

7 This description is based on Jayadi Damanik, “The Legal Responsibility of Human Rights Violation through Discriminative Acts in Indonesia”, Dissertation, Padjadjaran University, Bandung, 2007.

In my opinion, the challenges of human rights protection, fulfilment and promotion can be divided into two levels: the challenges at international level and at national level. Both levels are interrelated and indivisible.

At an international level, in my opinion, the developed countries (the rich countries), including some of the corporations from these countries, are in some cases guilty of human rights violations in the developing countries (the poor countries). Many policies at an international level do not aim at fulfilling human rights in the developing countries, but aim at capital accumulation only. Moreover, the substance of law in the developing countries is dictated not only by developed countries but also by some of the corporations from these countries for their own interest. On behalf of capital, anything goes, including human rights violations. This is the implication of global capitalism.

The description of some of the corporations from the developed countries as human rights violators in the developing countries does not mean that some of the corporations at national level do not violate human rights. Based on many cases, I have to conclude that this is really happening. Not only corporations, but also parts of the state apparatus at the national level, also violated human rights in many cases intentionally and/or unintentionally, as I have elaborated already in this paper. This is very ironic, because from a human rights law perspective, the protection, promotion, upholding and fulfilment of human rights are the responsibility of the state, especially the government, who are not supposed to violate the human rights of the people in their own country.

The question is how far the churches could participate to minimise or to influence politicians, not only at international level but also at national level, and how the churches could do this? I have noted that churches on the one hand are the victims of human rights violations and on the other could possibly be protagonists of human rights violations.⁸

I would like to suggest that the churches have to review internally how far this institution has violated human rights intentionally and/or unintentionally. This is really important because I believe that “we cannot clean the dirty floor by using a dirty broom!”. At the same time, the churches could take part in protecting and fulfilling human rights. The churches have to start protecting and fulfilling human

⁸ I do not want to elaborate on this topic in this paper, because in my opinion this is another topic. But using this opportunity I would like to remember that around two years ago (September 2006) there was a workshop held by the Indonesian National Commission of Human Rights in Medan, North Sumatra, to elaborate on this topic. At the workshop, almost all participants criticized the churches, especially the way the churches responded to local religions in many areas in Indonesia. In Batak society for example, we find the Parmalim Religion and in Java society we find the Kejawen Religion, etc. In human rights discourse, the churches in this case could possibly be categorized as actors of cultural genocide.

rights internally, that is in the churches’ daily behaviour, and at the same time try to influence politicians both internationally and nationally.

It is not enough anymore that the churches run charity programmes. At this stage, I realise that the churches have to enter the political sphere at a national and international level, because in the end the fulfilment and protection of human rights in any place are based on the political will of the power holders; not only the states but also the capital owners, as well as the international communities. In the legislation process in parliament, for example, the churches have to try to enter this political sphere so that the substance of the legislation (enactments) at national level can to a certain degree contribute to the protection and fulfilment of human rights. At an international level the churches also have to try to discuss with the capital owners so that they run their businesses in a clean way based on human rights.

End note

At the end of this paper I would like to note that it is possible that my opinion differs from other opinions related to the above topic. For this matter, I always welcome any comments or criticism.

International labour standards and Indonesian labour laws

PAYAMAN J. SIMANJUNTAK

From the early 1970s up to the pre-monetary crisis in mid 1997, Indonesia experienced a rapid economic growth of more than 6 percent per year. This has been primarily due to over-exploitation of natural resources and mobilisation of foreign direct investment and loans.

However, particularly after the monetary crisis, Indonesia remains a low-level-income country and faces a high level of unemployment and under-employment. Wages are relatively low. Only a small portion of the gains of economic development is shared with the workers. With the total population of about 215 million people, the Indonesian labour force today accounts for about 110 million. However, the unemployment rate is over 10 percent or more than 11 million people. About 19 million households are poor families. In other words, the standard of living of many Indonesian workers is still very low.

The Indonesian economy is still predominantly characterised by the traditional agricultural sector. About 70 percent of the labour force works in that sector with relatively low productivity and a low level of income. About 30 percent of them work as employees in the formal sector economy. They are generally protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international labour standards and Indonesian labour laws.

International labour standards

Indonesia respects the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognises the inherent dignity and equal rights of all people as the foundation for freedom, justice and peace in the world. International labour standards are generally adopted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in terms of Conventions and Recommendations. So far, Indonesia has ratified 17 of 188 ILO Conventions including the 8 ILO Core Conventions and 2 Priority Conventions, namely No. 81 of 1947 concerning Labour Inspection and No. 144 of 1976 concerning Tripartite Consultation. Most of these Conventions were ratified through Acts and several of them were ratified through Presidential Decrees. These ratifications then became part of Indonesian labour laws and regulations.

Most of the basic principles of these Conventions have been restated in national laws and regulations to ensure enforcement for the implementation by providing sanctions for those who violate them. These ratifications have covered a wide range and the basic principles of the International Labour Standards. Most of those principles have also been covered by several national labour laws and regulations.

It should be noted, however, that the implementation of these laws and regulations still faces a number of limitations and challenges. The main problem does not lie in the coverage of convention ratifications but more in the implementation of labour laws and regulations including the implementation of these ratified Conventions.

The ratified ILO Conventions

As mentioned above, Indonesia has ratified 17 ILO Conventions including the following 8 Core Conventions.

- a. Convention No. 87 of 1948 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise was ratified through Presidential Decree No. 83 of 1998.
- b. Convention No. 98 of 1949 concerning the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining was ratified through Act No. 18 of 1956.
- c. Convention No. 29 of 1930 concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour was ratified by the Government of the Netherlands on 31 March 1933 and was applied to Indonesia through the State Gazette No. 261 of 1933.
- d. Convention No. 105 of 1957 concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour was ratified through Act No. 19 of 1999.
- e. Convention No. 138 of 1973 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment was ratified through Act No. 20 of 1999.
- f. Convention No. 182 of 1999 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour was ratified through Act No. 1 of 2000.
- g. Convention No. 100 of 1951 concerning Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value was ratified through Act No. 80 of 1957.

h. Convention No. 111 of 1958 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation was ratified through Act No. 21 of 1999.

The principles of Conventions No. 29 and No. 105 are restated in Articles 5 and 6 of Act No. 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower. The principles of Conventions No. 87 and No. 98 have also been incorporated in Act No. 21 of 2000 concerning Trade Unionism and in Article 104 of Act No. 13 of 2003 which states that nobody is allowed to prevent any worker from forming or joining a trade union. Anyone who violates this principle is subject to a criminal sanction in jail for a minimum of one year to a maximum of five years and/or a fine of a minimum of Rp 100 million to a maximum of Rp 500 million.

Likewise, the principles of Conventions No. 138 and No. 182 are restated in Articles 68 through 75 of Act No. 13 of 2003. Anyone who employs children without meeting certain prescribed working conditions is subject to a criminal sanction in jail for a minimum of one year to a maximum of 5 years and/or a fine of a minimum of Rp 100 million to a maximum of Rp 500 million. Beside those Core Conventions, Indonesia has also ratified 2 ILO Priority Conventions and 7 other general Conventions. There are 3 general Conventions, which were ratified by the Government of the Netherlands and applied also to Indonesia.

As mentioned above, even though Indonesia has ratified only 17 or about 10% of the ILO Conventions, their coverage and range is quite wide, particularly because Indonesian has ratified the 8 ILO Core Conventions and additionally 2 Priority Conventions. Most other principles of the International Labour Standards have been incorporated into the existing national laws and regulations.

National laws and regulations

In addition to the ratified ILO Conventions, Indonesia still has a number of labour laws and regulations. The most important laws among them are:

- a. Act No. 3 of 1951 concerning Labour Inspectors;
- b. Act No. 1 of 1970 concerning Occupational Safety;
- c. Act No. 7 of 1981 concerning Employer Obligation to Submit a Company Report;
- d. Government Regulation No. 8 of 1981 concerning Wage Protection;
- e. Act No. 21 of 1992 concerning Workers Social Security;
- f. Act No. 11 of 1992 concerning Workers Pension Scheme;
- g. Act No. 21 of 2000 concerning Trade Unionism;
- h. Act No. 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower;
- i. Act No. 2 of 2004 concerning Industrial Relations Dispute Settlement;
- j. Act No. 39 of 2004 concerning Protection of Migrant Workers; and
- k. Act No. 40 of 2004 concerning National Social Security System.

It can easily be recognised that these national laws cover the wide range of the ILO Conventions. Act No. 13 of 2003 alone covers a wide range of subjects. It incorpo-

rates the contents of 6 withdrawn Ordinances and 7 old Laws in the field of manpower and industrial relations.

In addition, Act No. 13 of 2003 also includes several subjects, which have not been specifically regulated by law, such as on manpower planning and information, occupational training, placement and industrial relations. In other words, Act No. 13 of 2003 covers a very broad area of subjects in the field of manpower and industrial relations, including the basic principles of the International Labour Standards (ILS).

Acts No. 13 of 2003 and ILS

As mentioned above, Act No. 13 of 2003 has a very broad coverage in the field of manpower and industrial relations and includes most of the basic principles of the international labour standards. Act No. 13 of 2003 contains among others:

- a. General provisions, statutory basis and basic objectives of the law;
- b. Principles of equal opportunities or non-discriminatory treatment on employment. These articles reflect the principles of ILO Conventions No. 100 of 1951 and No. 111 of 1958 concerning the abolition of discrimination;
- c. Manpower planning and information which may relate to ILO Convention No. 122 of 1964 on employment policy and No. 160 of 1985 on labour statistics;
- d. Occupational training which may refer to ILO Convention No. 142 of 1975 on human resources development;
- e. Employment and placement which may relate to ILO Convention No. 168 of 1988 on employment promotion and protection against unemployment;
- f. Employment of foreign workers may not directly relate to particular ILO Conventions;
- g. Employment relations including contract work stated in the ILO Convention No. 94 of 1949;
- h. Basic principles of working hours and special protection for the handicapped, children and youth, and women workers;
- i. Occupational safety and health;
- j. Principles and protection of workers' wages and welfare;
- k. Industrial relations which contain the principles of the establishment and the roles of industrial relations, means and institutions, such as bipartite forum, trade union, company regulation, collective labour agreement, dispute settlement, strike and lock-out;
- l. Principles of employment termination and its compensation.

Other international standards

Besides the above-mentioned ILO Conventions, Indonesia also respects other international conventions and recommendations, such as the United Nations Conventions and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The OECD Guide-

lines adopted in 1976 and then renewed in 2000 have been aiming at ensuring the operations of multinational enterprises are in harmony with the government policies of the host country. Multinational enterprises among others should contribute to sustainable development, respect human rights, encourage human capital formation, and respect the rights of workers to establish a trade union, contribute to the effective abolition of child labour, eliminate any discrimination on employment and observe the standards of employment and industrial relations system in the host country.

Law implementation and enforcement

The implementations of the labour laws and regulations are generally enforceable with sanctions and/or fines. Articles 183 through 189 of Act No. 13 of 2003 contain the types of sanctions and/or fines against the violation of a number of articles with or without direct relationship to industrial relations disputes. For example, anyone who employs children in the worst form of employment shall be subject to a criminal sanction in jail for a minimum of two years to a maximum of 5 years and/or a minimum fine of Rp 200 million to a maximum fine of Rp 500 million.

The main problems that Indonesia is facing today lie in the labour laws implementation and enforcement rather than on the coverage of the international labour standards within the national labour laws and regulations. With regard to the implementation and enforcement of the labour laws and regulations, there are still a number of limitations.

First, several articles and paragraphs in the existing laws and regulations have a number of different understandings and interpretations. For example:

- Article 59 of Act No. 13 of 2003 concerning the extension and or renewal of work agreement for a specified period of time;
- Articles 64 through 66 of Act 13 of 2003 concerning work sub-contracting or outsourcing.

Second, the newly established Industrial Relations Courts (IRCs) have a limited authority and can only investigate and adjudicate industrial relations disputes in the field of civil law proceedings. In other words, the IRCs are not authorised to adjudicate and take decisions on criminal acts with or without direct relationship to the industrial relations disputes.

Third, it is found that mediators, conciliators, labour inspectors, officials of both Labour Services and Industrial Relations Courts quite often have misperception and different interpretations on several articles of the laws.

Fourth, the industrial relations disputes that used to be settled by the Regional Committees for Labour Dispute Settlement (RC-LDS) and the National Committee for Labour Dispute Settlement (NC-LDS) have been moved to be settled by the Industrial Relations Courts (IRCs). Both the State Juries and Ad-Hoc Juries gene-

rally have a very limited background and understanding in the field of industrial relations dispute settlement.

Fifth, many employers still have a limited understanding industrial relations, so they cannot easily resolve every potential dispute which arises at company level.

Sixth, many leaders of trade unions at the company, regional and national levels still lack professionalism, so they are not able to contribute effectively to resolve industrial relations problems.

Conclusions

Existing labour laws and regulations generally cover a wide range and basic principles of the international labour standards. Indonesia has ratified 17 ILO Conventions including the 8 core Conventions and 2 Priority Conventions. These ratifications become an important part of the Indonesian labour laws.

The main problem that Indonesia is facing today is the implementation and enforcement of these laws and regulations. There are a number of limitations to this, among others: multi-interpretations of several articles and paragraphs of the laws, limited authority of the IRCs to settle industrial relations disputes and violations, misperception among the actors, and the lack of understanding of employers and trade union leaders. Therefore, based on the above analysis it is recommended to intensify social dialogues between employers and trade unions and or workers at the bipartite level to have mutual understanding and the same perception on labour laws and regulations.

A shared fate of the Great-Lake Region with the DR Congo as focal point

KAKULE MOLO

The Great Lake Region between hope and uncertainty

In 1994 and in 1996, two events occurred respectively at the border between Uganda and Rwanda and in a small village called Lemera in Eastern Congo. The first one was an incursion into Rwandan territory by a rebel movement called the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and the second was the uprising of the Tutsi Banyamulenge. These two events, which actually were seen as minor political crises, ignited major conflicts that affected the whole of the Great Lake Region; that is Rwanda, Uganda, Congo, Burundi and to a lesser extend Tanzania and Kenya, who had to host millions of refugees from Rwanda.

While in Rwanda the war waged by the RPF resulted in the genocide of the Tutsi, the Rwandan invasion of the Congo drew in troops from Uganda, Burundi, Zimba-

bwe, Namibia and Chad and therefore was termed the Third World War. Even though for the time being Rwanda enjoys political stability, consequences of the war are still present: human loss, the wounds in the hearts of the survivors, the spread of AIDS, broken relationships, ethnic mistrust etc. Given the ethnic polarisation of Rwandan society, which has been the cause of major crises in the past; the country has to work hard to achieve a sustainable peace and security.

Although Rwanda and Congo share almost the same fate and therefore face almost the same challenges, it is worth noticing that in order to ensure stability the Rwandan political leadership is inclined to refrain from any pluralist democracy that might lead to too much freedom of speech and action. But the question remains: How long will the Rwandan political leadership, living in a context of globalisation, be able to withhold what many consider to be basic civil rights? Conversely, political headway in Congo has been slow and exhausting. One of the reasons seems to be the fact that Congo has chosen to walk the hazardous but reliable way of democracy. Indeed, in democracy, it is not easy to bring many people to agree to an idea, but once they have come to an agreement, then genuine progress has been achieved.

But, above all, the reflections made above seem to merge into one great challenge that faces both countries and even the whole Region of the Great Lakes; namely combating poverty, which is in essence the cause of social, economic and political instability. In fact it is a contrasting reality that, while Congo is counted among the poorest countries of the world, its natural resources, especially its minerals are fuelling high technology industries worldwide. As long as the question of poverty has not been properly dealt with at the Great-Lake Region level, one has to fear that the countries of the region will remain prey to the development of armed groups that find a fertile soil for recruitment among the desperate youth. Under such circumstances, it will also remain impossible to ensure social stability, the protection of human rights and of the environment.

Main challenges

At the civil and political level

Although the long lasting process of political negotiations in Congo has been a painful one, it should however be recognised that it has given way to positive democratic developments. The culmination of this occurrence was the organisation of the legislative and presidential elections in 2006, which allowed the establishment of the parliament. The presence of opposition parties in parliament keeps a relatively reasonable balance in the handling of state laws and issues. The freedom of speech is guaranteed in parliament as well as in society as a whole. Nevertheless, several of the bad practices of the past have not yet completely disappeared: namely impunity, corruption, injustices etc. The justice system is the most corrupt and will have to be deeply reformed. The first government after the election, being in power just a few

months, has shown a lot of weaknesses in tackling urgent issues such as security in Eastern Congo, the formation of a national and efficient army etc.

At the social and economic level

Generally speaking, there are signs of economic recovery. In 2007 economic growth was estimated at 6.5 % against 5.1 % in 2006. On the one hand, investors are pouring into the country; China taking the lead with 8 billion US dollars to be invested in the building and repairing of roads, railways and in mining. On the other hand, there is fear that the current competition between Chinese and Western investors might have a far reaching negative outcome, especially when one remembers that it is the European and North American countries that financed almost the whole democratic process and have been giving humanitarian aid throughout the difficult times in the Congo. The inclination of the Congolese government toward China is in fact dictated by the fact that China is swifter to release funds while the European investors always want to ensure that all conditions for sustainable development have been fulfilled. Under such circumstances, a country like Congo, coming out of the war and facing urgent social and economic needs, is tempted to go the easier but not necessarily the safer way.

At the human rights and peace level

Never before has the constitution of the Congo ever given so much attention to the rights of the Congolese people. In article 48 it even states that “the right to decent housing, access to clean water and to electricity is guaranteed”. Nevertheless, not only in rural areas but also in big cities like Kinshasa located on the banks of the big Congo River and Goma at Lake Kivu, there are areas where over months not a single drop of water has come out of the faucet. Also, on an everyday basis, human rights are continuously being violated. The situation is even worse in conflict stricken zones where armed groups as well as the regular army are engaged in combat. In the provinces of South Kivu and North Kivu especially, tens of women are being raped daily and thousands of displaced people live in desperate conditions. Recently, a peace conference for both the provinces of South Kivu and the North Kivu was held in Goma, which culminated in the armed groups signing a contract to end the armed conflict. Should the belligerents hold to their commitment, this should pave the path for sustainable development in an area where the inhabitants are known to be hard-working.

At the environmental level

The environment has not been spared by the long lasting war and the inefficiency of the government to enforce environmental laws. Areas where intensive mining and logging are practiced present serious environmental problems. Also the daily emis-

sion of ashes by the Nyiragongo volcano in Goma is a permanent source of pollution. Even though it is recommended not to use rainwater for household purposes, many people have no other choice because of insufficient water supply. Furthermore, the Kivu Lake contains enormous gas potential that is not being exploited. It could in the long run pose a serious threat to the people living in Goma and in the vicinity.

Needs to be addressed by the churches

In 2006, our church, the Baptist Community in Central Africa, held a workshop that dealt with the problems of the relationship between the exploitation of natural resources and the persistence of the war in eastern Congo. The workshop was inspired by a study carried out by a German non-governmental organisation called “Südwind”, which demonstrated that the war in the Congo and especially in the eastern part had more to do with the pillaging of natural resources than with the will to secure Rwanda against Rwandan armed groups living on Congolese soil. Südwind’s study was carried out after a UN panel had conducted research on the issue. Besides Rwanda and Uganda being involved in that exploitation of the natural resources in the Congo, Congolese nationals and international companies were also cited.

In the face of such a situation, where the resources of the country were used to boost a war economy, the participants at the workshop endeavoured to reflect on ways of utilising natural resources to promote an economy that alleviates poverty and make peace sustainable. In order to play their prophetic role efficiently with regard to such a great challenge, it was their wish to help church leaders as well as members of the churches and civil society in the area. Until then, the following needs were identified and should be addressed:

- Capacity building in advocacy roles;
- Workshops on democracy: rights and duties;
- Workshops on lobbying for human rights and for the protection of the environment, campaigning against corruption, capacity building in mediation, conflict prevention and transformation versus war (which is always destructive), education of the youth on mentality change, judicial assistance to the needy, the building up of a strong civil society capable of spearheading alternatives to plans of the state.

Conclusion

Never before, it seems, have there been better opportunities for the churches in the Congo to participate in the process of restoring law and order in the country. To that end external expertise is needed. But above all the churches should engage more in changing peoples’ mentality, which seems to be even more difficult than building up a prosperous economy. In this regard, they should keep in mind Gandhi’s observa-

tion: “We must be the change we want to be in the world.” If church leaders are themselves transformed, they will be able to contribute to the transformation of our respective societies.

The situation of human rights, justice, peace and the integrity of creation – a European perspective

HANS JÜRGEN STEUBING

Coming from the federal state of Hesse and being a pastor of the Evangelical Church in Hesse and Nassau, my view of the human rights situation in Germany and Europe comes from a very special perspective. It is the perspective of a citizen of one of our federal states, who has just had to experience, for a second time, how a political leader of my own federal state took refuge in blunt xenophobic ideas, when he found out that he needed the support of conservative voters to be re-elected. Fortunately, what was successful four years ago was not honoured by the voters this time. It seems that Hessian voters are more intelligent than Roland Koch and his political party considered them to be. His political defeat (which was rather dramatic) has started a broad discussion within the ruling Christian Democratic Party, that is widely reflected within society in general. The whole discussion was triggered by a few – but rather drastic – cases of youth violence that the media gave intensive coverage to. It happened that some of these young people had a background of migration in their family history. However, most of them were born in Germany and I personally think that the violence observed is just the flipside of the picture that German society sees for example in the statistical data of the last PISA study on education.

For years and years, our society has been doing a bad job when it comes to the task of integrating migrant people into our society. And violence is often nothing other than an expression of hopelessness and despair. And the fact that young people in such situations tend to express their anger and frustration in acts of violence is not only true for people with a background of migration, but can also be applied to many young members of right-wing groups in my country.

My perspective is also that of a pastor coming from one of the middle-size Protestant churches in Germany: “Hesse and Nassau”. We have roughly 1.8 million members and about 1,800 pastors in 1,200 parishes. The situation people live in, ranges from predominantly rural areas in the north to heavily urbanised areas such as the Rhine-Main area with its capital Frankfurt. At the same time, many remote areas are suffering severely from the effects of globalisation. Jobs and whole factories are being lost to Eastern Europe and Asia, and young well-educated people are leaving the area. Those who stay often live in fear for their jobs or are already unemployed. Some Neo-Nazis have now tried to instrumentalise this situation and gain

footholds in such areas. However, members of our partnership networks, together with trade unions and democratic parties have for example started an initiative in the Gladenbach Region of our church. They call themselves “Gladenbach ist bunt – nicht braun” – “Gladenbach is colourful – not brown” and have started to celebrate partnership days or demonstrations against intolerance on days and in places that tended to be attractive for Neo-Nazi events. By showing the courage of their convictions, they have succeeded and the Nazis seem to be losing more and more interest in that area.

In the Rhine-Main area with its capital Frankfurt, the situation is very different. It is highly industrialised and therefore attracts job seekers not only from Germany. We have estimates that there are more than 180 nationalities represented in the Greater Frankfurt Area. Frankfurt Airport is one of the most important airports on the European continent and the gateway for many people seeking entrance into Europe. Thus, working with migrants and lobbying for the rights of migrant people have, for a long time, been prominent areas of work in my church. However, the focus of this work has shifted dramatically over the last few years, from a more charitable approach to an approach focusing on human rights. Europe’s and also Germany’s approach to dealing with issues of migration is predominantly to be seen under economic aspects. Migrants are seen either as a mere threat to our welfare system or jobs, or are considered welcome experts for certain highly qualified jobs in the field of software engineering and programming. This economisation of thinking makes it even more important for us as a church to be advocates of every man’s and woman’s human dignity and human rights. They should never be subordinated to economic, tactical or political considerations.

Our German churches failed once in this regard and kept silent for mostly tactical reasons, when we should have cried out loud: between 1933 and 1945! May God grant that we shall not fail a second time. However, in describing the situation, I must say that the rights of asylum-seekers and people with a migrant background (consider that this only applies to people from the global South and East) have seen some dramatic changes. And only very few of them have been to the benefit of those who are affected by them. Some of these changes are not even compatible with human rights standards and our German constitution.

Some examples:

- While according to our old legal rulings all direct family members of an officially accepted refugee or immigrant were also allowed to move to Germany, our new immigration law has severe restrictions in this regard. These restrictions are so narrow that many experts consider them to be neither in accord with our German constitution nor with the charter of human rights. For example, they are expected to already speak and understand a considerable amount of German before they

are allowed in. For many of them this is a huge problem, especially if they only have limited experience of learning foreign languages and do not have the money to pay for language courses.

- Another severely unjust development has to do with the so-called war on terrorism. Many Muslim people in Europe find themselves placed under a general suspicion of being terrorists, without even having the right to be told what they are accused of. They are not allowed to travel and some of them even find that their bank accounts have been frozen. This is a situation that would have been considered totally unacceptable only a few years ago.
- A third example: While according to our old legal standards no refugee or asylum seeker could be jailed for more than four weeks in a row, during the time his case was being dealt with by the German courts, according to new plans of the European Union, this regulation will be changed. While officials are trying to figure out if a person passed through other European countries before they entered Germany (which would mean these people had to seek asylum there and not in Germany) these people shall be kept in jail. This process however may take several months.
- A fourth and last example I would like to mention is the fact, that refugees and asylum seekers, who are not yet accepted, are denied the right to travel in the country and may only stay in the area assigned to their “aliens department”. This takes away from them their right to visit family members and friends and threatens to put them into reclusion and despair. If they are given permission to travel, for example to visit a sick family member, even a small timely violation of their permit regulations may be punished with the withdrawal of their food vouchers. And given the fact that they already receive 30% less than what is considered to be the minimum social security standard for the German poor, it is clear how this threat affects not only their human rights but also their nutritional needs.

These are only a few examples, and I could add many more that show how the situation of migrant’s human rights within Germany and Europe are severely threatened. The most severe threat however is definitely how deportations are practiced. There are about 180,000 people living in Germany who have a legal status called “tolerated” describing a zone of legal uncertainty. About 120,000 of them have already lived in Germany for more than five years. Many are refugees, who fled civil wars, who have no chance of being accepted as asylum seekers. Most are well integrated into society. Their children have visited German schools and even graduated from them. They consider Germany as their new home and yet they are constantly threatened by deportation.

Even worse than their situation however is the status of those people who are considered to be living in Germany as so called ‘illegals’. These people always live in fear of being identified and then being deported to what is considered to be their

home country. For this reason many of them have thrown away their ID papers, in the hope of not being able to be repatriated. This however makes them extremely vulnerable to anyone who wants to exploit them. Many of them do not even dare to visit a doctor or a church-based assistance agency for fear of being detected. Our church and our diaconal services are therefore heavily involved in lobbying and advocacy work to inform our society about the difficult situation of refugees, illegals and tolerated people in our country. In addition, we and the other German churches offer pastoral and legal counselling in deportation prisons and observe the deportation practice on Frankfurt Airport.

Within the UEM I think we should combine our efforts and share our experience, to find out what we can do to protect the human rights of migrants, because it seems that they are always one of the most vulnerable groups of society. At the same time, their numbers are growing year by year, because the effects of globalisation and poverty are contributing to the hundreds of thousands who are fleeing wars and civil conflicts.

But there are also other issues arising from the effects of globalisation, issues that have to do with the role of our churches as important players in civil society. In order to give you an example, I would like to inform you briefly about our work in the “Joint Conference of German Churches on Development” - GKKE. Coming from Roman Catholic and Protestant development organisations, we hold biannual meetings with representatives of the “Research Based Pharmaceutical Companies” organised in the “VFA”. While Germany was once called the “pharmacy of the world”, more and more of these companies are now part of international holdings and multinational structures. But still a whole lot of important research is done in our country, and being one of the most important pharmaceutical markets in the world these companies cannot just ignore the churches’ position when we question their immense profits in the light of decreasing budgets for research on tropical poverty diseases. And in these discussions many of the CEOs show that behind their often very business and shareholder-value oriented facades they share many of our concerns for the situation of the poor.

Don’t get me wrong, these companies are still not welfare organisations but profit-oriented companies. But still we have come to a common understanding of what is needed and what has to be done, that has not only led to remarkable increases in research budgets for tropical diseases and to some promising new medications coming up soon. It has also led to the fact that global players like the Hesse-Nassau based company Boehringer Ingelheim are not enforcing their patents in poor and developing countries for medications like Nevirapine, which is part of the first line medication used to treat AIDS. Now we are looking for projects where we can cooperate with them in Public Private Partnerships to enable more people to get the much needed treatment soon.

This is only one small example of what churches can achieve when they stand together and bring in their expertise and their strong and widely-accepted position of being advocates for the poor and the sick. But now we are running into new problems as the costs of medication in many countries is the biggest problem no longer. It is the limited amount of trained medical staff. For years and years North America and European countries have considered Africa and Asia as recruiting ground for health-care workers. Some experts say that there are currently more Ethiopian doctors and nurses working in some US medical centres than in the whole state of Ethiopia. I am sure this issue is one of the most important problems we will have to solve in future – not only to fight HIV and AIDS but also to improve the overall health status in many developing countries. And since many of the UEM’s member churches are supporting their own hospitals, training centres and dispensaries, we have to think what can be done to allow well-trained people to stay and work at home.

Churches in Germany are also starting to do more to protect the environment. We see this as a part of our stewardship for God’s creation. So my church for example is offering energy consultancy for all parishes, to help them to find out where they are wasting precious resources. While this not only sometimes saves them a lot of money it also saves the environment from being polluted with carbon dioxide. Solutions are sometimes as easy as installing new and more effective heaters or energy-saving light bulbs.

Right now, we are just starting to do similar things in the framework of our official church partnerships. We have – among others – helped the North Western Diocese of the ELCT to build a secondary school for girls in a remote area. While the initial plans relied on diesel generators for electrification, we now have agreed to seek professional advice. Right now, an energy consultant is preparing a study on how this building complex can be electrified using alternative resources such as solar panels or biogas. These methods may be more costly during implementation, but we hope that they will not only save precious resources but also running costs. Our churches have a lot of buildings; they maintain churches, schools, hospitals, administration centres and so on. Energy consultancy should be implemented as a standard procedure in all our member churches, not only for the benefit of our planet but also to protect us from ever rising energy costs.

Within the UEM, we need to co-operate and learn from each other in all fields of JPIC. No one has the solution for all our problems but everywhere in our constituency new and innovative approaches are being developed to tackle these issues. We must make sure that even if the structures of the UEM change in the years to come, this process of sharing our concerns and sorrows and of learning from each other’s efforts and successes will be continued.

Sermons

Worship in Batam Stadium with labourers and members of Batam congregations

ZEPHANIA KAMEETA

Sermon Text: Psalm 25 v.6

Please, Lord, remember Your mercy.

Dear sisters and brothers, may the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

The Latin name of the Sunday of tomorrow, the second Sunday in Lent, Reminisce, is taken from verse 6 of this Psalm of David. The people of old, in their faith and complete reliance on God, were talking to Him as a friend to a friend. Also David in his afflictions and troubles was doing the same.

God is reminded not to forget, as if He were a human being. Yes, indeed that God who tells the prophet Jeremiah

Jeremiah, I am your Creator,

And before you were born,

I chose you to speak for me to the nations. (Jer 1 v.5)

How can such a God forget and need to be reminded to remember His mercy!!

Moses confesses to Him in Psalm 90 verses 1 and 2:

Our Lord, in all generations You have been our home.

You have always been God – long before the birth of the mountains.

Even before you created the earth and the world.

This prayer however does not perceive God removed far away, hidden somewhere in an unknown place. No, the person who is praying this prayer walks hand in hand with God, day after day. She/he doesn't let Him go, whatever the circumstances they find themselves in in this world.

The mercy of God lifts up the poor and oppressed people of the land from the dust and mud of injustice, liberates both the oppressed and the oppressors and in particular changes the hearts and ways of the rich, as He did with Matthew and Zacchaeus the tax collectors. The mercy of God renews His Creation.

David knew the greatness of God's mercy. As an insignificant little shepherd, who

later was persecuted by King Saul and who, in extraordinary circumstances, was anointed King of Israel, he experienced throughout his life God’s miraculous mercy, which many times saved him from fear, danger and death and lifted him up with forgiveness from the mud of sin and shame. Knowing what God’s mercy can do, David calls upon God in prayer to put that into action.

This prayer of David, prayed many thousand years ago, is still fresh and very much relevant to our situation today in our One World.

We continue to pray this prayer in the context of our world today.

Lord, remember your mercy in our living conditions today in your world and remind those in power and the rich that safe drinking water, adequate nutrition, housing, health-care and education are not for some who are fortunate, but for all people on this planet. Let your wonderful mercy in turn remind and teach us to use the resources of our planet not in a selfish and irresponsible way but in a way, which remembers and cares for the next generation and the generations yet unborn. O Lord, let your mercy teach us to be merciful towards one another. Touch the hearts of those who are ruling us in the states and those in leadership positions in industry, society, church and all religious institutions, not to cause fear and insecurity, physically or mentally among the people, and to eradicate all violence from the face of the earth.

Lord, your mercy is just and does not discriminate, therefore teach us to make time for those who need us, but also to give time to those who need to rest, to play, to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd, and to proclaim hope for our world and the world to come. As you do with us, Lord, remind us to give equal rights and opportunities to all.

Remind the employers that everything does not end with the payment of a salary but that they have the responsibility towards their employees with regard to their security, health, housing, nutrition and education, etc.

Remind us to be merciful, so that we can live our lives in a way, which is caring and loving for ALL PEOPLE, and create societies, shaped by true democracy where people will live and take decisions about issues that affect them.

When David was praying this prayer, he was not doing it in general and abstract terms, but he was asking specific things at a specific time and a specific place. We are doing the same this afternoon. The things we have asked about, we want to happen so that we can experience it and see it in concrete terms, here where we are and not somewhere in an abstract way or in the minds of other people. This is a challenge for all those people of goodwill, that God will answer our prayer through their words and actions for the realisation of *Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation*.

REMINSICERE

PLEASE LORD, REMEMBER YOUR MERCY

AMEN.

Sermon for the Opening Worship in Batam, 11th February 2008

MANGISI S.E. SIMORANGKIR

Seed on good soil

(Mat. 13:9) NIV

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keeps our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ!

God’s word for the opening worship of this international UEM-JPIC workshop in Batam is the Gospel of Matthew 13:9, “Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

It is a quotation from Jesus’ “Parable of the Sower” (Mat. 13:1-23). The early Christians remembered it as having come from the mouth of Jesus. The early witnesses of this parabolic teaching passed it on to the early believers, who retold it in their worship preaching and teaching. They allowed it to move their hearts to spread it to whoever they met in their lives. And Matthew the evangelist, recorded it in his Gospel, I am sure, because he too wanted to spread it to whoever would record it, first the Jews and then the rest of humankind, so that many more would come to Jesus and be moulded by him.

You know that parable very well, but allow me to summarise it. A farmer went out to sow his seed. The *first seed* fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. The *second seed* fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and they withered because they had no roots. The *third seed* fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. The *fourth seed*, the seed spoken of in the verse which I began with, fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. This is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

So there are four different types of people. Those who love God with all their heart, with all their soul and with all their might are the seeds that fell on good soil. I think, we can ask ourselves which types we are and let us pray that all of us who are gathering here may become good soil.

But on the other hand, this parable has a message about the kingdom of heaven and its rejection and reception. Because this parable speaks about the rejection and reception of the Good News of God, I think this is also a parable about *mission*. Mission has an enemy, like birds, path, rocky places and thorns. Mission has also

failed in one place but has a good yield in another place. Mission is a failure in one country but has a good yield in another country. And good mission work can produce a good crop, 100, 60, 30 times what was sown. We may have many examples from history where there was very bad mission work and its results in one place but a good one in other place. I would like to take two examples from my country, which tell us of the fiasco of mission work.

Firstly: Some people believe that Christianity was brought to the west coast of North Sumatra Province, Barus, by the Nestorian Christians from India who wanted to buy camphor and incense on the west coast of North Sumatra around 600-700 A.D., about 1,300 years ago. They said the best camphor and incense came from that area at that time. Historians are sure the Nestorian Christians built a church there and held regular worship services.

But where is that Christianity now? I think, the seed of the Gospel fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Not until 1861, 1,100 years or 11 centuries later, when the German Lutheran missionaries came to North Sumatra under the leadership of Ingwer Ludwig Nommensen, was there a good crop.

Secondly: In the history of the Indonesian church we can find some stories about mass baptisms in East Indonesia, where missionaries baptised many people - a hundred or a thousand at a time. The mission experts report that people were even baptised by a missionary from a coconut tree. Because there were too many people, he climbed up a coconut tree and from there he “sprinkled” down the water. He walked from village to village to baptise the people in big numbers. When he reported his success to his mission organisation in Europe, it became prime news. But this method and strategy of mass baptism carried no good fruits because the fruits did not remain. After the missionaries left the villages there was very little of the faith left. There might have been one or two people who could recite the Lord’s Prayer as a token of Christianity, but that was all. So again we can say, the seed of the gospel fell along the path and the birds came and ate it up. Or it fell on rocky places. Or it fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the church.

Let us take another example from China, a country where the Gospel was spread long ago, but did not produce a good crop. God opened the door for the Gospel in China almost two thousand years ago. There is a story about a Chinese Emperor who had a dream, which led him to send messengers to the West in search of a new faith. His dream was without doubt inspired by reports concerning Christianity in Central Asia and by the work of St. Thomas, Jesus’ disciple in India. However, the new faith, Christianity, fell on the path or on rocky places or among the thorns in China.

And again, when China was the mightiest empire on earth, around 600-700 A.D., welcomed Nestorian missionaries to come to China. The conditions for Christianity were distinctly favourable. However, the Nestorian missionaries used Buddhist

phraseology in their translations and literature, thus compromising their Christian faith with Buddhism and bringing about confusion. Christianity therefore failed to make a positive witness to the uniqueness of the Gospel and to the love of Christ. And again, in 19th century, God sent Hudson Taylor from England to China. But the unfortunate Opium War and successive wars between China and Western powers sowed the seeds of hatred and prejudice against Christianity. So again, the Gospel seed fell along the path or on rocky places or among the thorns. The same thing happened in Japan. Nestorian Christianity disappeared from Japan because the Nestorian Christians preached only doctrine and did not try to teach the love of Christ, did not feed the hungry and clothe the naked. I mean, here in Japan, as in China more than thousand years ago, the seed of the Gospel fell along the path.

So now our question is: Why did the Gospel fall along the path and on the rocky places in Asia? Why has Christianity not become the religion of Asia? This is a big challenge for the churches in Asia. Many thought it was due to the rise of Islam and its replacement of Christianity. But this was the “effect” instead of the “cause”. Besides political and other aspects, the main cause was *lack of spiritual depth*. There was a lack of love for the poor, for the thirsty, love for the needy people. So the invaders of other religions found little inner resistance from Christians who lacked spiritual depth and found no stronghold in the society and culture. This is a good lesson from mission history to us now. Christians, who have a lack of spiritual depth, have no social and economic responsibility and yield no enthusiasm for justice, and no love for the needy people.

Secondly, people say Christianity was rejected in Asia because Christianity is a religion of the West. It is true that by and large people in the world think that Christianity is a religion of the West. But it is not true, because, *intrinsically*, Christianity is God’s plan for the salvation of all humankind. *Historically*, Christianity had its early setting in the East rather in the West. At first, Christianity came to Rome and Greece as an Asian religion. *Culturally*, Jesus Christ and all the apostles were Asian. But again, why did the Gospel fall on the rocky places in Asia? I would like to refer to the first option, that besides political, cultural, economic and other aspects, the main cause was *lack of spiritual depth*. Therefore, there was no spiritual stronghold.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! I just told you about mission on the path, rocky places and among thorns. Now, we ask, where is the good soil? I think, that we can say, the good soil and the fourth seed is Europe, since the Roman Emperor Constantine issued a decree in 313 A.D. that made Christianity an official religion. This brought about an incredible transformation in Europe. Christians were able to practice their religion freely without persecution. So Europe is a good soil, it yields 100, 60, or 30 times what was sown.

But allow me to say, good soils are not only regular church attendance, praying daily, knowing the Apostles' Creed, tithing, having a good church building or even confessing. All that counts in Jesus' assessment is helping those in need. *That is the core spirit of mission.* In the end Jesus will say to the righteous, to the good soil, “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me.” (Mat. 25:31-46) It means, when we support the needy we are not only supporting the needy, we are glorifying God; when we reject the needy people we are not only rejecting the needy people, we are rejecting God.

Before the King separates the sheep from the goats, the good from the bad, all nations will be gathered before him (Mat. 25:32). This is very interesting! If we take this seriously we must re-examine Jesus' vision. He gathers and asks all nations, not only individuals. So let us make a reflection: Does my nation, Indonesia, feed the hungry and gives drink to the thirsty? Does your nation welcome the strangers? Do other countries clothe the naked? Does our nation visit the sick? What did my nation, Indonesia, do for human rights for the labourers on Batam Island, for the people of East Timor and for the Christians in Ambon? Does our nation open the door to the Gospel and open its heart to the poor? This is a challenge to the churches in Asia, how they can influence their nations to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked and to help the labourers in their struggle, as we have seen in the labourer drama of the GBKP youth.

Many individual Christians try to do good works. Albert Schweitzer left Europe to become a doctor in Africa. Mother Teresa joined a religious order working among the poor of Calcutta. Ludwig Ingwer Nommensen left Germany and came to us in North-Sumatra, etc. The list can go on and on. But the King also needs the responsibility of all the nations. We and all nations cannot take refuge in a theology that says: “Don't worry. If you haven't done enough, God will forgive you and Christ has already atoned for your sins.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer rightly called such a view “*cheap grace*”. Because the message of the Gospel is radical, it not only says “Change your mind,” but “Let Christ change your mind and think of your needy sisters and brothers”. Salvation is not only for eternity; it begins now with a new mind in our Lord Jesus Christ. I think that loving and helping as the mission of the church is a complicated one. It needs concentration, strength, unity, etc. It is not only the responsibility of a good person or a good congregation, or a community; it could be also a nation's responsibility. Batam could be the victim of an unjust international and globalised economy.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! This is my last point. The parable tells of Christ's own experience. He is the Great Sower, who has come forth from heaven. All who follow Him, are sowers in their turn. So we Christians are the sowers, who

do the same work. In the parable there are four sowings and only one ripening – a sad proportion. We, Christ servants, have to go on sowing and sowing and sowing, in endless hope that the unreceptive hearts and all nations in the *world* may become good soil. Let us scatter the seed everywhere, let us scatter the Word of God, let us scatter the Good News, in the most unlikely places, let us scatter Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation on Batam Island and pray that God will allow it to grow and be fruitful. Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Sunday worship service on 10th February 2008

UWE HUMMEL

Meditation on Psalm 147

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Here on Batam, in a context of extraordinary development and economic growth, the words of Psalm 147 have great relevance and significance. I can imagine how enthusiastic both labourers and business people are about the prospects of this special economic region. The words of this Psalm must have moved many a Christian's heart when starting a career here, praising the graciousness of God, singing Hallelujah to the LORD with hymns, for he has given work and prosperity in this place. Batam, the pride of the New Order Regime, the much honoured achievement of Soeharto and Habibbi, still seems, at first sight, to be richly blessed. A blessing with unlimited capacities for development.

But soon the first enthusiasm fades away, especially among the migrant workers. Soon they become aware of the fact that they are being exploited and that their humanity does not count at all. Migrant workers are extreme vulnerable. As long as they are strong and healthy and complacent they are welcome, but as soon as they fall ill or pass a certain age or voice their demands they are kicked out and thrown on the rubbish heap of the economy.

In their misery some may then notice the undertones of Psalm 147, which are often neglected when we are full of enthusiasm and optimism: according to the Word of God development, law and order must at all times be based on justice and mercy, otherwise they become inhumane. The graciousness of the LORD is not a matter of economic growth as such, but growth rooted in justice and compassion. God's order challenges all economic orders, which exploit the strength of workers with-

out taking care for their wellbeing. In God's good order nobody is considered worthless!

On the contrary, only when the outcasts are being included in the community, when the hopeless and sick are being comforted and nursed, and only when the down-trodden are being lifted up, then – and only then! – may we speak of blessing. Blessing (Indonesian: *berkat*) is often misunderstood as material wellbeing only. But without justice and compassion development becomes inhumane and destructive to life.

In God's good order not only humans are treated with respect and compassion, but also nature.

*"He makes grass grow upon the hills
He gives to the beasts their food
and to the young ravens which cry." (verse 9)*

God's justice and compassion include the whole of creation. If the forests are being cut down irresponsibly and the habitat of the orang-utan and the tiger destroyed, this indicates that economic growth is not a blessing but a curse.

Dear sisters and brothers, what can we do about this?

Surely, as Christians, God wants us to co-operate with Him in building up a good order. A good order, in which economic development does not take place at the expense of justice and compassion. As churches here on Batam, we should not be blinded by the superficial glamour of the wealthy few, but rather focus on the many who have lost their dignity and hope. As God's co-workers we have the duty to restore the integrity of creation.

The church is called not to boost the economy, but to tend the wounds of its victims; to restore the faith of the disappointed, to comfort with hope those who despair, to cure the wretched with love. Jesus Christ is our guardian. He shows us the way. He proved his steadfast love by humbling himself to the level of the poor, the outcast, and the sinners. Jesus gave his life, so that they could have life abundantly.

*Are we ready to follow Jesus?
Are we on the side of the poor and downtrodden?
Are we investing our lives for the sake of others?*

Sisters and brothers, this world needs salvation. Batam needs God! Not a "pie in the sky when I die", but "ham where I am": salvation has to have an impact on everyday life; both in the factories and in the executive offices. Let us therefore co-operate with God, to bring about a good order of life. Amen.

Bible Study

Economic justice text: Jeremiah 22:16

MANGISI S.E. SIMORANGKIR

He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the LORD (King James Version).¹

Introduction

Helping the poor and needy people

The life and preaching career of Jeremiah fell between the years 627 and 587 B.C., between the fall of the Assyrian Empire and the rise of Babylon.² He was sent to a nation that was running away from God. By His calling (Jer. 1:4-19), Jeremiah dedicated his whole life to the task of reclaiming the nation of Israel for God's purpose. For 40 years, Jeremiah stood for his calling³ to keep on preaching a warning, which Israel hated to hear and refused to heed.

John Guest writes: "Jeremiah has always been a fascination to Christian hearts, because of the close similarity that exists between his life and that of Jesus Christ. Each of them was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; each came to his own and his own received him not."⁴

NIV used the word "defended" instead of "judged": "*He defended the cause of the poor and needy.*" The defender of the poor here is Josiah, the father of Jehoiakim, to whom God now speaks. It says that to help the poor and needy people is a

¹ Contemporary English Version, "That's what it means to truly know me. So he lived a comfortable life and always had enough to eat and drink". Today's English Version, "He gave the poor a fair trial, and all went well with him. That is what it means to know the LORD". The Holy Bible Easy-to-Read Version, "Josiah helped the poor and needy people. Josiah did that, so everything went well for him. Jehoiakim, what does it mean 'to know God'?". The New International Version, "He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. is that not what it means to know me?" declares the Lord. Bahasa Indonesia; "Serta mengadili perkara orang sengsara dan orang miskin dengan adil. Bukankah itu namanya mengenal Aku? demikianlah firman TUHAN".

² Peter C. Craigie, P.H. Kelley, Joel.F.D. Drinkard, Jr, Word Biblical Commentary, (Dallas: Word Books, Publisher), 1995, Introduction.

³ "Jeremiah: Introduction" in The Devotion Study Bible, (Japan: The Bible League, 1998), p. 640.

⁴ John Guest, Mastering The Old Testament. Jeremiah, Lamentations, (Dallas, London, Vancouver, Melbourne: Word Publishing, 1988), p. 18.

way to know God. Here we see Matthew 25:40 in Jeremiah 22:16 (Anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me). It means, the relationship of God with Israel is justice. To know God is to enter into a covenant with God, a covenant that is a justice-oriented relationship. So for Jeremiah (OT prophets) to know God is to do justice.⁵ The Bible has a strong commitment to promote justice and righteousness. God is a God who is utterly committed to justice.

Jeremiah's attitude toward economic justice

Jeremiah sees the poor and needy being oppressed by the wicked but protected by Josiah. The king Josiah, head of the government, made a positive contribution to society by supporting the poor. To understand it in a present-day context, the government is required to provide opportunities for suitable employment, graded to the capacity of the workers. The government must make sure that working men are paid a just and equitable wage, and are allowed a sense of responsibility in the industrial concerns for which they work. The government must ensure that everyone has an opportunity of sharing in cultural benefits as far as possible. Justice must be the guiding principle in the administration of the government. Justice must be administered impartially. The government must be wholly incorrupt and not influenced by the solicitations of interested parties. The good order of society also requires that individuals, especially the poor and the needy, be protected in the affirmation of their rights.

Jeremiah refuses to separate his people's attitude toward God from their attitude toward their neighbour. The sin of the people is their failure to share a life marked by justice. The result of fellowship with God should be reflected in the daily life of God's people. "Any religion that professes to be concerned with the souls of men and is not concerned with the daily problems that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them is a *dry-as-dust religion*. Such a religion is the kind that Marxists see – an opiate of the people".⁶

Economic justice

Economy means "the production and consumption of goods and services of a community regarded as a whole" or "aspects of the supply of goods and structure of wealth"⁷. From these definitions we can say, economic justice is justice in production and consumption.

5 CCA, *Christ Our Peace: Building a Just Society*, Osaka: CCA, 1990, p. 3.

6 Garth Hewitt, *Neros Watching Video*, London; Hodder Stoughton, 1987, p. 13.

7 This word „economy“ is derived via French or Latin from Greek *oikonomia*, from *oikonomos* "steward of a household," from *oikos* "house" and *nemein* "to manage". And "justice" means "fairness or reasonableness, especially in the way people are treated or decisions are made." (Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2005, s.v. "Economy").

As the primary cell of human society the family must be taken into especial consideration in social and economic matters. Therefore, it is evident that a man has the right to work and also to be allowed to exercise personal initiative in the work he does. He has also the right to engage in economic activities suited to his degree of responsibility. The worker is likewise entitled to a wage that is determined in accordance with the precepts of justice. The wage a worker receives must be sufficient, in proportion to available funds, to allow him and his family a standard of living consistent with human dignity.

Functionally, “justice” is a set of universal principles, which guide people in judging what is right and what is wrong, no matter what culture and society they live in. Economic justice, which touches the individual person as well as the social order, encompasses the moral principles, which guide us in designing our economic institutions. The ultimate purpose of economic justice is to free each person to engage creatively in the unlimited work beyond economies, that of the mind and the spirit.⁸

We see here in Batam the unjust relationship of workers, employers, people and political communities with the world community. Since all the churches in the world are called to form one Christian family, they must appeal to the more wealthy nations to render assistance to those states, which are still in the process of economic development. Progress in technology has a profound influence that has led to relationships between nations; therefore, there is a growing economic interdependence between states. Economic justice, justice in production and consumption depends on all nations, and many of them spend billions for bombs but only pennies for economic justice. If the money devoted to our vast military establishment were given to global education, then it would foster peace and justice.

The economic system today

Capitalism

The economic system, which rules the world nowadays is capitalism. Capitalism is an economic system, in which private individuals and business firms carry on the production and exchange of goods and services through a complex network of prices and markets. There are many definitions of capitalism. One of them says that capitalism is: “1) an economic system where production and distribution of goods depends on invested private capital and profit making, 2) the possession of wealth or capital, and 3) the dominance of private owners of capital and production for profit”.⁹

⁸ Center for economic and social justice.org, <http://www.cesj.org/thirdway/economicjustice-defined.htm>

⁹ Reader’s Digest, Complete Wordfinder, Oxford University Press, 1996, in “www.timothygartonash.com”.

Capitalism is primarily European in its origins. From Europe, capitalism spread throughout the world as a hostile competitive system. The originator of capitalism was Adam Smith. He said that the combination of self-interest, private property and competition among sellers in markets would lead producers “as by an invisible hand” to an end that they did not intend, namely, the well-being of society. For this reason basic production facilities are privately owned. Capital in this sense means all equipment used to produce goods and services that are ultimately consumed. Economic activity is organised and co-ordinated through the interaction of buyers and sellers in markets. If competition is present, economic activity will be self-regulating. The government will be necessary only to protect society from foreign attack, uphold the rights of private property and guarantee contracts.

It was Adam Smith who opened the way for industrialisation and the emergence of modern capitalism. The development of industrial capitalism had serious human costs, which led Karl Marx to produce his own indictment of the capitalist system. Marx believed that capital should be owned collectively and that the products of the system should be distributed according to need.¹⁰

Globalisation

In common understanding, globalisation is a term which refers increasingly to the connection and dependency in international and interpersonal spheres throughout the world, by means of trade, investment, trips, popular culture and other forms of interaction, which make country borders increasingly vague. Nations separated by geography, culture and ideology are linked in a complex commercial, financial, technological and environmental network. These links have direct consequences: hope for a new form of community among peoples built on dignity, solidarity and justice, calling for greater attention to the severe injustice across countries in the standards of living and control of resources. What can be seen as a growing interdependence in some countries is regarded in the less developed countries as a pattern of domination and dependence.

Even a highly developed country like Germany also faces the impacts of globalisation. At the 3rd International UEM JPIC Consultation in Iserlohn, Germany, 26th January-19th February 2004, the participants were made aware of some victims of globalisation in Germany.¹¹

10 Wallace C. Peterson, *Capitalism*, Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2005.

11 E.g.: nursing homes and water works. (1) Old people who are often “forced” to move into nursing homes are victims of the system and cultures such as globalisation, materialism, individualism, mobility of society, etc. Lack of creativity and rising prices in nursing homes are some arguments in favour of the so-called privatisation of nursing homes in the future – as one face of globalisation. (2) The privatisation of the water supply and liberalisation of the water market leads to competition in the market, which entails third party access to existing

IMF, WB and WTO

Three key institutions helped shape the current era of globalisation: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The WB’s mission is to help developing countries grow faster and provide a higher living standard for their people. The WB made loans to developing countries for large projects. These projects were intended to lower costs for private businesses and to attract investors, while the IMF makes loans so that countries can maintain the value of their currencies and repay foreign debt. However, this approach is not without its critics, and many people are not familiar with the operations and objectives of the IMF and blame it for a lack of transparency within the IMF. Other critics say that the IMF is a way of rich countries dominating poor countries.

Another key institution shaping globalisation is the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which works to lower tariffs (taxes on imported goods) and to encourage trade. The WTO has faced much criticism as well. This criticism is often directed at the rich countries in the WTO, who possess the greatest bargaining power. Critics say the rich countries have negotiated trade agreements at the expense of the poor countries.¹²

Credit Union: a proposal for an alternative

As we have seen before, the cause of economic injustice is that too much capital and other means of production are owned by too few people. People are poor, not because there are too many people in the world, but because of unequal access to resources and the distribution of wealth. Therefore, there is a vast difference separating the owner class and the poor in the world now. Another characteristic that is a common cause of economic injustice is the presence of foreign owned MNCs (Multi National Companies) that dominate the economies of the poor nations. Another element con-

networks. Lack of technology, lack of hygiene and liability control and the privatisation of the water supply may result in grave problems, such as loss of quality and use of poorer raw water due to the cost effects of purification techniques, abandoning ecologically valuable water protection areas, etc. But because of the financial crisis of local municipalities, they sell the water works to private companies. This privatisation is also coming to the third world countries, due to the lack of capital.

12 The agricultural subsidies granted by wealthy countries to their own farmers have earned the strongest and most sustained criticisms, especially from developing countries. They also cause inequalities. By the late 1990s, the 20 percent of the world’s people living in the highest-income countries had 86 percent of the world’s income, the bottom 20 percent had only 1 percent of the world’s income. An estimated 1.3 billion people, or about one-sixth of the world’s population, have incomes of less than a dollar a day. Inequality is growing worse, rather than better. More than 80 countries had lower per capita income (income per person) at the end of the 1990s, than they had at the end of the 1980s. These inequalities in living standards and participation in the global economy are a serious political problem.

tributing to the unjust situation in our world is that the system of trade between rich and poor nations is itself often unfair.

Which economic system can help the poor and the needy? We have to look for the grassroots community, who will become the community of the poor that stands up against the economic injustice in society. It is the Credit Union (CU) or Micro Credit (MC), because a CU is a financial co-operative and credit association that provides loans to its members at lower rates of interest than would otherwise be available. The capital funds of a CU come from the purchase of shares by members, who receive yearly dividends on the basis of their investment. CUs are operated for the mutual benefit of their members and are usually formed by persons who share a common bond.¹³

The best recent example is Muhammad Yunus and his Grameen Bank from Bangladesh. He and the Grameen Bank were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. His discovery was that a tiny bit of money had a great impact if it was lent to the women of Bangladeshi families. Yunus’ methods have been applied to Burma and in Kosovo, with success. He is now embarking upon an effort to “eliminate poverty entirely” in Bangladesh and by extension via the UN to other places, by using these and similar techniques.

Capital is power, but the traditional banking sector cannot reach millions of poor for whom small loans could make huge differences. CUs are the extension of very small loans to the unemployed, to poor entrepreneurs and to others living in poverty that are not considered bankable.¹⁴

If people all over the world have been very eager for a permanent peace, and therefore nations made efforts together to found the United Nations Organisation (UN), why can’t they make every effort to create economic justice? Some UN agencies such as the FAO have been working on the special problem of hunger in the world, UNESCO for education, UNICEF for children, and it is possible for CUs to create economic and social justice.

Church for the poor

In presenting this great challenge, church for the poor, Jesus never called us into a comfortable life. He called us to take up the cross and follow Him (Matt. 16:24). It should never be some easy spirituality that warms our hearts, while neglecting to deal with the real-life problems.

Will the church become the church of the poor? Will it keep faith in Jesus who liberated the poor? Will it stand up against oppression and economic injustice?

13 Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2005, s.v. “Credit Union”.

14 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microcredit>

In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke describes the grassroots Christian community as a church of the poor. “They would sell their property and possessions and make a general distribution as the need of each required” (Acts 2:42-47). And, “The whole body of believers was united in heart and soul. Not a man of them claimed any of his possessions as his own, but everything was held in common” (Acts 4:32-35).

Asian culture and Christian faith

Four months before Independence Day of Indonesia, in April 1945, the “Body for Investigating Efforts in Preparation for Independence”, chaired by Soekamo, discussed the basic principles upon which the future state of Indonesia should be founded. On 1st June 1945, Soekarno delivered the *Pantja (Panca) Sila* (Five Principles) as the basic principles of the State of Indonesia: 1. Belief in One God, 2. The Principle of Humanity, 3. Nationalism, 4. Sovereignty of the People, 5. Social Justice. Soekarno said these Panca Sila must not be seen as five separate principles; it is one principle, *gotong royong*, mutual co-operation.¹⁵ Panca Sila has the spirit of CU, or the spirit of the grassroots ancient Christian community.

Dr Masao Takenaka, a Japanese theologian, in his book “God is Rice - Asian Culture and Christian Faith”, took the Chinese character “wa”, peace, (see below) as an interesting illustration to give us a clear understanding towards economic justice. “Wa” consists of two words, which mean “rice” and “mouth”. So, peace means “our mouth full of rice”, or “to share rice or food with our neighbours”. Economic justice means that everybody has enough food.

禾 □ = *Wa* (Peace) 禾 = Rice □ = Mouth

In the Asian context, Dr. Takenaka wrote that it is exactly better for us to say that “God is Rice”, rather than “God is bread”, because rice has been the Asian main food since long ago. In addition, he quoted a poem of Kim Chi Ha, a Korean Christian, I translated it from Bahasa Indonesia into English, and hopefully it can come near to its original.

*Heaven is rice
 For we can't go to heaven alone
 we have to share rice together
 For we all receive the light of stars in the sky
 we have to share and eat rice together
 Heaven is rice
 If we eat and swallow rice
 heaven dwells in our body*

15 Kosuke Koyama, Waterbuffalo Theology, Maryknoll: Orbis Book, 1976, p. 13.

*Rice is heaven
Yes, rice is the primary matter
We have to eat together.¹⁶*

This poem surely reminds us of the meaning of the Lord’s Supper, as a chance to share our daily food with all people. The pursuit of economic justice takes believers into the public arena, testing the policies of governments against the principles of the Bible. As a member of the church and state, the believers should become more informed and active persons, using our voices and votes to speak for the voiceless, to defend the poor and the helpless.

Grows through the crack

The text of our Bible Study could now mean a call for us to repentance and to common action, to a new form of stewardship, service and citizenship. Together with all the member churches of the UEM, we need to turn back to the sources of our faith in order to resist the economic injustice in the world. This is not easy. Therefore I would like to close this Bible Study with a song from Malvina Reynolds, *God Bless the Grass*, verses 1 and 4:

*God bless the grass that grows thru the crack
They roll the concrete over it to try and keep it back
The concrete gets tired of what it has to do
It breaks and it buckles and the grass grows thru
And God bless the grass
God bless the grass that’s gentle and low,
Its roots they are deep and its will is to grow
And God bless the truth, the friend of the poor
And the wild grass growing at the poor man’s door
And God bless the grass.¹⁷*

Discussion

1. Plan some action together to confront the economic injustices you see around you.
2. Try to change the structure, or at least to make its economic injustice known.
3. What solutions do you propose in the economic order?

¹⁶ Masao Takenaka, *Nasi dan Allah – Kebitdayaan Asia dan Iman Kristen*, trans. (Jakarta: BPK GM, 1993), p. 19.

¹⁷ Tony Newman and Peter Stone, *Traveling to Freedom - A Journey of the Spirit*, Sidney: Halstead Press, 1971, p. 74.

Challenges to the churches in a changing world – country inputs

Cameroon

FRIEDA MOUTNGUI NGI

Basic facts on Cameroon

History: Portuguese sailors were the first Europeans to reach Cameroon in the 15th century; the European and American slave-traders were active in the area. German control lasted from 1884 to 1916, when France and Britain divided the territory, later receiving a League of Nations mandate and a United Nations trusteeship. French Cameroon became independent on 1st January 1960. One part of British Cameroon joined Nigeria in 1961; the other part opted for Cameroon. The two areas became component areas of the United Republic of Cameroon in July 1972. Since 1975, it has become merely the Republic of Cameroon.

Geography: Surface area: 475,442 square kilometres or 183,569 square miles; the relief is very varied: low-lying plains in the North, a fairly high plateau of volcanic origin to the South, coastal lowland plateau and in the West volcanic formation (highest point with 4,095 is Mount Cameroon).

Vegetation zones: steppes in the North, savannah and open forest in the West, closed forest with coconut trees, coastal palm groves and mangroves in the South.

Population: In mid 1999, 15.5 million inhabitants, nearly 20 million in 2010.

Ethnic groups: Highlanders, Bantu, Kurdi, Fulani (more than 200 tribes).

Principle languages: French and English (official), Ewondo, Bassa, Douala, Bulu, Bamilike.

Main Towns: Yaoundé (capital), Douala, Garoua, Bafoussam, Bamenda, Buea, Maroua, Nkongsamba, Kumba.

Agriculture and Forestry: Cocoa, coffee, tea, cotton, natural rubber, tobacco, timber, subsistence crops such as maize, sorghum, rice, cassava, sweet potatoes, yams, tomatoes, fresh fruits, avocados, peas; cash crops: sugar cane, pineapple, sesame seeds, kola nuts (beer, soft drinks, soap).

Livestock: cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry, and fisheries.

Mining and Industry: Natural gas, bauxite, iron ore, ruffe, tin, limestone and uranium, aluminium, local mining of gold; oil refining work has started on the Diba (Chad Kribi oil pipeline to transport oil from Chad to the Cameroon port of Kribi). The production of electricity is sufficient to meet the needs of the main towns but not sufficient to cover the needs of the whole country.

Communication and Service: National airline: Cameroon airlines. 3 international airports (Douala, Yaoundé, Garoua) and eight subsidiary airports with regular services; main seaport at Douala; three secondary ports: Kribi, Limbe, Tiko and the river port of Garoua; railways, vehicles and passenger cars; telephone network (also cell phones); radio, television; hotel industry, several national parks (Beme, Waza, Faro) nature reserves (Dia, Douala, Edea ...) and supervised game reserves.

Currency: CFA Franc, 100 CFA = 0,15 Euro.

Motto: Peace, Work and Fatherland.

Flag: green, red and yellow vertical stripes with a single yellow star on the red stripe representing the union of East and West Cameroon.

National Anthem: O Cameroon, land of our ancestors.

Religion: Christianity, Islam, Animism.

Local Divisions: 10 provinces.

Head of government: Ephraim INONI.

President of the Republic: Paul BIYA.

Main Challenges

Civil and political

Cameroon is a democratic country. Since 1991, it has many political parties. But there is a main ruling party which has been in power (RDPC). The President of Cameroon is at the same time the president of the ruling party. Cameroon is characterised by the liberty of religion and Cameroonians are very tolerant among themselves. Discrimination pertaining to any religion has no influence among them at any level at all. The country is also characterised by the freedom of the press. There are more than 50 newspapers and journals.

Socio-economic and cultural human rights

Cameroon is a country with many natural resources; some of them are exploited and processed on the spot, i.e. in the country. There is food-sufficiency for the citizens. Local cultures are expressed through languages, customs, habits, ways of building and behaviour, showing the differences between the cultures. The rights of each Cameroonian is guaranteed by the constitution. Cameroon promotes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the constitution of Cameroon which does not make differences between men and women.

Fighting HIV/AIDS is a priority for the Government of Cameroon. A special sub-programme activity has been decentralised on the operational level. The Evangelical Church in Cameroon is the first church to assist the government in the execution of this programme.

There is also a programme called “ESTHER”: “Ensemble pour une Solidarité Thérapeutique Hospitalière en Réseaux” put in place to fight the disease.

Peace

In Cameroon, there is freedom of choice, freedom from repression, of belief, of settling everywhere, of exercising a profession, no discrimination between religions and equality between men and women. It can then be said that a Cameroonian is blessed to live in peace in his country. But here and there, in a savannah part of the country, from time to time, certain problems arise between shepherds and peasants over cultural issues and grassland. This uprising has not been extended to other parts of the country. I also want to mention a political debate on the late former and first President of Cameroon Ahniadou AIMJO, who was not buried in his country where he was born and had lived. Some religious people (Christian and Muslim) are discussing how the corpse could be transferred from Senegal to Cameroon. Such a step will probably help to maintain peace in our peaceful country where the motto starts with PEACE.

Environment and climate

As all African developing countries, Cameroon experiences some environmental problems. These are due to natural and climate events such as drought, which for many years was only a concern of the northern part of the country (Sahel region). But now it extends to the southern part of the country, probably due to the global climate changes. In fact, the climate splits the country into two zones: in the North we have a dry tropical system with just two seasons, in the South a humid sub-equatorial climate with four seasons, Environmental problems are also due to timber exploitation, farming and the growth of towns. These are accompanied by the destruction of nature and of fauna and increasing climatic problems. The Ministry of Environment was created to take environmental consequences.

Response of the churches

The churches have to be reminded in this changing world that they are the body of Jesus Christ, Their mission has not changed and that mission is summarised in the following words: “The Spirit of the Lord has come to them because He has chosen them to tell the Good News to the poor. He has sent them to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers and to say: this is the year the Lord has chosen” (Lk 4:18-19).

That means concretely that this millennium is a millennium of responsibility. Jesus Christ, the greatest physician, speaks through men and women in the churches: “Those who respond to the Gospel must themselves renounce any form of greed, exploitation, manipulation and oppression.” Christians in churches at all levels should continue to contribute to the breaking of structures, which dehumanise and oppress people. Christian education is the real guarantee for social and spiritual transformation. Christians have to move from words to actions, because until now

little has been done by them either in the government or in the churches. There are inadequacies between what is said and what is really done. All are supposed to know that “THE GRACE OF THE LORD” Jesus Christ does not mean “GRACE A BON MARCHE” as it seems to be throughout the planet.

While fighting for peace and justice for the poor, the poor should be trained and educated to know that they play a central role themselves in the process of overcoming poverty or reducing it. GOD the Creator has not created men and women to be irresponsible creatures.

Needs to be addressed by the churches

- Emphasising the notion of justice and peace through the teaching of human duties and human rights at all levels in the churches;
- People have to be taught about the fact that liberation is no longer a question: they SHOULD LOVE. This means concretely to “treat others as you want them to treat you” (Mt. 7:12). Practicing LOVE is practicing JUSTICE. The practice of justice is not only a political programme with no significance. It has to be accompanied by reconciliation.

Let us take as an anthem for our JPIC Workshop in Batam 2008 these words:

“We will listen to the LORD.

The Lord promises peace to those who are faithful and no longer foolish;

Love and loyalty come always together;

Justice and Peace unite;

Justice looks down from the sky above;

Justice marches in front, making a path for us to follow.”

(Extracts from Psalm 85 adapted at our workshop)

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Challenges to the churches in a changing world: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

ÖKUMENISCHES NETZ ZENTRALAFRIKA

Basic facts:

- Capital (and largest city): Kinshasa
- Neighbouring countries: Republic of the Congo (Congo Brazzaville), Central African Republic, Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, Angola
- Official languages: French; Recognised regional languages: Lingala, Kongo/Kituba, Swahili, Tshiluba
- Congolese Government: Semi-Presidential Republic
- President: Joseph Kabila (elected 2006), Prime Minister: Antoine Gizenga
- Independence from Belgium: 30th June 1960
- Area: Total 2,344,858 km² (as large as Western Europe)
- Population: 2007, United Nations estimate 62.6 million – Density 25/km²

Main challenges:

- The DRC is a so called “failed state”; after years of war with millions of dead and many displaced people, the Congolese are challenged to (re-)build a democratic political system.
- The judicial system has to be rebuilt, as it is still failing mostly due to a lack of resources and cases of corruption.
- Institution-building and the Security Sector Reform should be priorities.
- The transport, electrical and other infrastructure systems have to be improved.
- The illegal mining, especially in eastern DRC has to be brought to an end, which is very difficult due to a multitude of different interests in and outside the country.
- The DRC needs to invest massively in education and in the youth.

Response of churches:

- The churches play an important role in the DRC. Over 2/3 of the population belong to a Christian congregation and so the influence of the church leaders is quite high.
- Some church leaders are members of the Senate or Congolese Parliament.
- During the different peace conferences (Sun City 2002, Goma 2008), church members took over the role of the chairpersons and facilitated the peace talks. During the transitional period, a Protestant church leader was appointed as the president of the Senate. At the same time, the president of the Electoral Independent Commission came from the Catholic Church.

Needs to be addressed by the churches:

- The churches are an important, stabilising factor in the DRC.
- The churches help improve things with social, medical and educational projects.
- They have great influence in the different regions; church leaders are highly respected and have a good reputation. In the political field they are seen as trustworthy.
- Because of the many different tribes and ethnic groups in Congo, one of the advantages of the churches is, that they can unite people across all the interethnic borders

Namibia

ELFRIEDE KATJIZUMO

When Namibia gained its independence in 1990, one of the most prominent social problems in society was poverty among the majority of people at grassroots level. Poverty in Namibia is caused by unemployment, large families and a high degree of illiteracy and semi-illiteracy. This characteristic of Namibian society presents itself most starkly among the rural poor, in particular among rural women.

The hope of the poor that independence of the country, the shedding of the yoke of an oppressive colonial past, would bring wealth or at least a little more prosperity to them, still remains an unfulfilled dream. Poverty easily becomes the breeding ground for crime, corruption, violence and conflict within the family circle.

About 40% of the “white” farmers have retrenched or dismissed workers in the last three years (Karamat, farm workers study 2006). Squatter camps around the main urban areas are growing continuously.

Single mothers are confronted with a very challenging and more complicated life. They are struggling as protectors and providers for their children. Because of these difficulties it sometimes happens that children of single mothers become street kids. On the other hand, it is sad to share with you that women become prostitutes

or are forced into abusive relationships (sugar daddies, transactional sex) to be able to support their children and to pay their school fees. Some children eat from the garbage dumps. Generally, most single mothers are double-burdened with little chance of escaping the poverty circle.

There are still some men who believe that leadership positions are only for them claiming that this is their cultural right. But after independence more women have come strongly to the front for leadership positions. These women often have to face psychological pressure both from men as well as from women, because they are considered to be unduly dominating.

Many single women are domestic workers and are earning a low income and face insecure working conditions. This results in financial insecurity, which often means, that they cannot give adequate education to their children. Therefore, most of their children do not have a career, not because they cannot perform at school, but because they do not stand a chance to get proper education.

People living in formerly disadvantaged communities still continue to carry a burden to care for other poor people.

Since independence in 1990, Namibia has been a stable and peaceful multi-party democracy, where civil and political rights are protected and enjoyed fairly. In March 2005, the second President of the Republic of Namibia was inaugurated and hence the democratic system proves to be strong. Namibia has a progressive constitution and is signatory to many international conventions. The statistical figures behind the situation described above can be summarised as follows:

The population is about 1.8 millions. The official language is English. The population growth is currently 2.1%, and 44 % of the population are under 16 years. 62.6% of the population lives in rural areas and 37.4% in cities. In 1998, Namibia had an unemployment rate of 35%. The official statistics by the Ministry of Labour document that unemployment has steadily risen to 36.7% by 2004. This distressing situation becomes even more aggravated for younger people as well as for women: unemployment among teenagers and young adults is dramatic. Among the 15-19 year old young people, the unemployment rate is 64.6%, and among the 20-24 year old young people, it is 57.4%.

Poverty in Namibia is prevalent throughout society. Poverty in Namibia has many different faces. According to the latest survey by the National Planning Commission of Namibia, 75.9% of Namibia's population lives below the poverty line. (LLS, 1999:vii). Calculated from the National Income and Expenditure Survey (NHIES) 93/94, the average person in Namibia spends only US\$ 1.5 per day. In addition, Namibia has a Gini-coefficient of 0.7, meaning that Namibia is the most unequal society in the world.

Namibia has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world, currently around 20%. While free ARVs for the treatment of AIDS are available in the major

centres, they are practically still unreachable for the poor in rural areas due to a lack of transport and food security.

Namibia is a semi-desert country depending heavily on the annual rainfall for water supply and food security through subsistence farming. Namibia experiences extreme weather conditions with droughts and floods likewise. In the last years, these extremes seem to be becoming more frequent. While there were very dry years in the nineties, the beginning of the century has seen some of the worst floods in the South and currently in the North, where informal settlements have been destroyed by them and lives lost, mainly of children, who were drowned and lost. Given this situation, Namibia is prone to weather changes due to climate change.

Response of the churches

With pride, I can share that my church (ELCRN) plays an important role in the life of the poor women. Semi-literate women are trained and employed at church hostels and kindergartens all over the country. Nevertheless, to improve the living standards of the majority of Namibians remains a major challenge.

HIV/AIDS

In response to the increasing HIV epidemic in Namibia, ELCAP (Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia AIDS Programme) was established by a resolution of the ELCRN Synod in 1999. At that time the ELCRN determined that a comprehensive approach to HIV/AIDS should be undertaken with a focus on:

1) caring and counselling for persons infected with HIV/AIDS, 2) special care and support of orphans and families affected by HIV/AIDS, 3) prevention of HIV/AIDS through awareness raising and education, 4) outreach to all congregations, institutions, farms, communal and mining areas where the ELCRN exists and beyond and 5) networking with existing organisations to accomplish these goals.

Our mission is to evangelise our members on all aspects of life such as HIV/AIDS, which has already caused devastation and death. Hence, the church has established the ELCRN AIDS Programme with the aim of responding to the present AIDS crisis by enabling ELCRN congregations, institutions and communities to become a source of faith, hope and love as well as instruments of God’s redeeming love and caring action.

ELCAP operates out of its National Office in Rehoboth. Additionally, ELCAP has established and is operating four Regional Offices, which are responsible for the work in the respective congregations.

Since 2005, ELCAP in partnership with German and South African churches has established a workplace programme, which is called “Churches and Business against AIDS”. It looks at the AIDS problematic in the workplace.

ELCRN plays an important role in lobbying the position for the Basic Income Grant to upgrade the living standards of Namibians.

Poverty

The proposal for a Basic Income Grant in Namibia was made in 2002 by the Namibian Tax Consortium (NAMTAX), a government appointed commission. The consortium made the proposal for a Basic Income Grant in light of the high poverty levels and the unequal distribution of income (income inequality) in Namibia. The current debate about a Basic Income Grant in Namibia is based on the following proposal: A monthly cash grant of not less than N\$100 (13 US\$) should be paid to every Namibian citizen as a citizen's right. Every Namibian would receive such a grant until pension age, from where onwards he/she is eligible to the existing universal State Old Age Pension of N\$370. The money of people not in need or not in poverty would be recuperated through adjustments in the tax system.

Spearheaded by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), this proposal was taken up by Namibian civil society and has evolved into the BIG Coalition. The Basic Income Grant campaign, which aims at achieving the introduction of a Basic Income Grant in Namibia, is to date the biggest civil society project united in fighting poverty and working towards economic empowerment in Namibia. In April 2005, a broad-based civil society coalition consisting of the Council of Churches, the umbrella body of the NGOs (NANGOF), the umbrella body of the AIDS organisations (NANASO), the Union Federation (NUNW), the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) and the Labour Resource and Research Institute (LaRRI) have formed a coalition to advocate the implementation of the BIG in Namibia. The Secretariat of the Coalition is hosted by the Desk for Social Development of the ELCRN, which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the campaign.

By the end of 2006 the understanding in the BIG Coalition grew that the BIG campaign needed to be taken a step further by starting a pilot project of the BIG in Namibia. The background is that a pilot project might be able to concretely show that a BIG can work and would indeed have the predicted positive effects on poverty alleviation and economic development. Spearheaded by Bishop Kameeta, this idea has been inspired by concrete (or from a theological perspective “prophetic”) examples, like for example, English medium schools or township clinics during the apartheid era. In fact, also more recently, this has happened with a project run by the “Treatment Action Campaign” and “Doctors without borders” and the provincial government in Cape Town. They started a treatment project in a township in Cape Town at a time when it was said that a rollout of Antiretroviral (ARV) therapy was good, but certainly not practical in a developing country. The pilot project was successful and has subsequently changed the opinion on ARV rollouts in developing countries.

The BIG Coalition argues that, while it is the ultimate goal to lobby the government to take up its responsibility to implement such a grant, the Coalition should lead by example. The BIG Coalition is raising funds in order to pay a Basic Income

Grant in one community. Thereby, it sets an example of redistributive justice through concrete action to help the poor, and to document what income security means in terms of poverty reduction and economic development. The BIG pilot programme is the first of its kind to concretely pilot income security in a developing country.

The BIG Coalition is implementing a BIG in one Namibian community, namely Otjivero Omitara settlement (about 1,000 people, some 100 km to the east of Windhoek) for a limited period of time (2 years, starting December 2007 or January 2008) to practically prove that income security indeed works, and that it has the desired effects. The BIG Pilot Project abides by the following principles in line with the BIG proposal it is advocating for:

- To be a universal grant;
- Cash-based entitlement;
- To provide some form of income security;
- Built on redistributive justice.

It is exciting to see the implementation of the BIG pilot project in Otjivero/Omitara. In January this year, the Coalition started to pay every inhabitant of Otjivero under pensionable age a Basic Income Grant of N\$ 100 per month for a period of 24 months. This BIG pilot programme is the first of its kind to concretely pilot income security in a developing country.

Climate change

In 2007, the Synod of the ELCRN acknowledged the danger and threat of climate change in Namibia and globally. It called on the government to explore all possible ways together with its counterparts as well as its citizens within Namibia, to avert a potential climatic catastrophe, through making use of renewable energy and being environmentally sensitive in order to mitigate the damage done to the integrity of God’s creation and the universe.

Needs to be addressed by the churches

The ELCRN is trying to address the problems of HIV/AIDS and poverty proactively. The Namibian government is also involved in the fight against HIV and AIDS, but is less prominent in poverty alleviation. It is a challenge for the church to get the government more actively involved in this fight against economic injustice and poverty.

Namibians are only slowly realising the impact of climate change on our lives in Namibia and that the environment must be protected in order to avoid further dramatic developments. The church needs to become an agent for awareness and needs to lead by example in the use of renewable energies and other strategies to mitigate the impact.

Rwanda

JOHN WESLEY KABANGO

Basic facts on Rwanda

Rwanda is a landlocked country located in Central Africa, but in July 2007 has joined the East African Community.

Area Total: 26,338 km²
 land: 24,948 km²
 water: 1,390 km²

Bordering countries and estimated distance from the Capital city, Kigali: To the South (Burundi) at 290 km, to the West (Democratic Republic of Congo – DRC) at 217 km, to East (Republic of Tanzania) at 217 km, to North (Republic of Uganda) at 169 km.

Climate: Temperature: two rainy seasons (February to April, November to January); mild in mountains with frost and snow possible.

Terrain: Mostly grassy uplands and hills; relief is mountainous with altitude declining from west to east.

Infant mortality rate: Total: 85.27 deaths/1,000 live births
 male: 90.41 deaths/1,000 live births
 female: 79.99 deaths/1,000 live births (2007 est.)

Life expectancy at birth: Total population: 48.99 years,
 today thought to have dropped to 39
 male: 47.87 years
 female: 50.16 years (2007 est.)

Natural hazards and environmental issues: Periodic droughts; the volcanic mountains, earthquake prone area is in the northwest along the border with Democratic Republic of Congo. Deforestation resulting from uncontrolled cutting of trees for fuel; overgrazing; soil exhaustion; soil erosion; widespread poaching in the few natural forests.

Population: Rwanda has an estimated 9,907,509 inhabitants, predominantly rural. Estimates explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2007 est.).

Religions: Roman Catholic 56.5%, Protestant 26%, Adventist 11.1%, Muslim 4.6%, indigenous beliefs 0.1%, none 1.7% (2001)

Literacy: Definition: persons of an age of 15 and above, who can read and write
 Total population: 70.4%, male: 76.3%, female: 64.7%

HIV/AIDS prevalence: Adult prevalence rate: 13%-17%
 People living with HIV/AIDS: 1,000,000 (estimate)
 Deaths: 25,000 (2003 estimate)

Languages: Kinyarwanda (official) universal Bantu vernacular, French (official), English (official), Kiswahili (Swahili) used in commercial centres.

Historical background: civil and political situation

In 1959, three years before independence from Belgium, the majority ethnic group, the Hutus, overthrew the ruling Tutsi king. Over the following years, thousands of Tutsis were killed and some 150,000 driven into exile in neighbouring countries. The children of these exiles later formed a rebel group, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), and began a civil war in 1990. The war, along with several political and economic upheavals, exacerbated ethnic tensions, culminating, in April 1994, in the genocide of roughly 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus. The Tutsi rebels defeated the Hutu regime and ended the killing in July 1994, but approximately 2 million Hutu refugees – many fearing Tutsi retribution – fled to neighbouring Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, and mainly to the DRC. Since then, most of the refugees have returned to Rwanda, but several thousand remained in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (the former Zaire) and formed an extremist insurgency bent on retaking Rwanda, much as the RPF tried in 1990. Despite substantial international assistance and political reforms – including Rwanda’s first local elections in March 1999 and its first post-genocide presidential and legislative elections in August and September 2003 – the country continues to struggle to boost investment and agricultural output, and ethnic reconciliation is complicated. Kigali’s increasing centralisation and intolerance of dissent, the nagging Hutu extremist insurgency across the border and Rwandan involvement in two wars in recent years in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo continue to hinder Rwanda’s efforts to escape its bloody legacy.

Economy overview

Population below poverty line: 69 %. GDP by economic sector (2005): agriculture, forestry, fishing 42.3 percent, industry 20.5 percent, services 37.3 percent.

Rwanda is a poor rural country with about 90% of the population engaged in (mainly subsistence) agriculture. It is the most densely populated country in Africa with few natural resources and minimal industry. Primary foreign exchange earners are coffee and tea. The 1994 genocide decimated Rwanda’s fragile economic base, severely impoverished the population, particularly women and children and eroded the country’s ability to attract private and external investment. However, Rwanda has made substantial progress in stabilising and rehabilitating its economy to pre-1994 levels, although poverty levels are higher now. GDP has rebounded and inflation has been curbed.

Despite Rwanda’s fertile ecosystem, food production often does not keep pace with population growth, requiring food imports. The government has embraced an

expansionary fiscal policy (Rwanda Revenue Authority) to reduce poverty by improving education, infrastructure and foreign and domestic investment and pursuing market-oriented reforms, although energy shortages, instability in neighbouring states and lack of adequate transportation linkages to other countries continue to handicap growth.

Main challenges in Rwanda: human rights violation

Life in Rwanda is still overshadowed by the consequences of the dreadful genocide in 1994. It is estimated that up to one million people were killed. Some four million had to flee for their lives. The population is traumatised; the process of reconciliation and dealing with the events through the courts still has a long way to go. The government has declared reconciliation and national unity to be the foundations of its policies. With the introduction of courts called “Gacaca courts”, which are based on a traditional legal system, there is an attempt being made to address the country’s brutal past. Despite the risks inherent in such a process, it is helping to bring about national reconciliation. The main challenges in Rwanda are related to the basic facts presented and the following issues are evident:

1. *Poverty* as a general problem exacerbated by the 1994 genocide;
2. *Basic human rights and peace building* initiatives in addressing the consequences of the 1994 genocide;
3. *Education*, which is still a problem for the majority of the population;
4. *Food security* facing major difficulties due to persistent hazards such as drought or floods due to environmental threats;
5. Health related problems, mainly *malaria and HIV/AIDS*.

In September 2000, the heads of governments met in New York and took an important decision: working for a world without poverty, armed conflicts or environmental destruction. In their Millennium Declaration, the heads of governments set out eight goals to improve the lives of millions throughout the world. Eradicating poverty, combating hunger and illnesses, education for everyone, supporting democracy and peace, realising human rights and gender equality, protecting the environment and natural resources are to be on countries’ agendas

The Government of Rwanda embarked on the 2020 vision coupled with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme and the decentralisation process, which is implemented today. The JPIC work in the EER (Anglican Church of Rwanda) is working towards these ambitious goals in bringing the community to work together at improving their welfare for a better future: food security, environment management by encouraging tree-planting, women’s empowerment, child and youth development and capacity-building for sustainable development.

Challenges in the sub-region

The Great Lakes region in Africa is marked by conflicts, with a decisive role played by Rwanda. The international and the DRC criticism targeted Rwanda due to accusations that the country had violated the embargo on arms and troops exports to the DRC and that it had been involved in the illegal exploitation of resources in eastern Congo. However, these allegations are problematic, as Rwanda possesses some Coltan deposits, making the smuggled mineral difficult to identify. On its side, Rwanda has shown that its interest in the DRC is to pursue former militia who are trying to infiltrate and cause insurgency in Rwanda from Congo. Since 2005, relations with the Democratic Republic of Congo have improved considerably as political leaders have shown a will to foster dialogue.

Reconciliation, economic growth and poverty reduction are vitally important for the stabilisation of this entire region. That is why a joint reflection by the churches has started since 2002, where former UEM Executive Secretary for Francophone region (Reverend Dr Kakule Molo) played a great role in bringing together church leaders and decision makers of the region. Building on that, a joint proposal has been drawn up by church employees and was submitted to the EED (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, Bonn) seeking support to continue working for peace-building in the region. For this, we are engaged in church and community mobilisation programmes for sustainable development.

Some of the churches responses

Poverty reduction interventions

Poverty reduction is the central focus of the EER policy. To achieve this, the church has been consistently pursuing ambitious reforms in order to improve the general economic conditions, and provision of basic social services to the needy community. These goals are expected to be reached through community projects:

- To reduce poverty defined as a multidimensional problem that encompasses economic, social and spiritual aspects; linking poverty reduction to church policy, addressing leadership factors such as access to power and resources, and pressing for accountable and transparent management of local church affairs;
- To bring parishes to achieve sustainable development by encouraging the clergy to practice good governance and collaborate with other institutions such as civil society organisations, especially in monitoring the JPIC animators in the process of Gacaca courts (participatory courts);
- To improve the church leaders’ capabilities and train local capacity builders on JPIC matters – with the aim of improving governance and reducing poverty.

For many years, civil society including churches and church organisations in Rwanda has traditionally been weak, and the government’s firm control of domestic politics

has left little room for them to manoeuvre. Today there is a trend towards liberalisation which can be seen, and we are being educated through JPIC structures to work with the local government structures in place, but also to challenge them for the benefits of the community.

Transitional justice in building peace, unity and reconciliation

It is important to encourage communities to speak the truth on the 1994 genocide. The *Gacaca* courts deal with those who were swayed by the propaganda of hate and who actually carried out the killings. The court is composed of 9 judges and 5 reserves. The early stage of the life of the tribunals was used to collect information relating to the genocide. Among the issues were: How many people died in a village? How many people killed others in that village? How many people committed crimes in a village and were still free? How many people committed crimes and were in custody? How much property was destroyed and to whom did it belong? After gathering all the information required, the *Gacaca* then categorise the offences committed and pass judgment. According to the law establishing the *Gacaca* jurisdictions, offences have been categorised as follows:

- Category 1:* Those involving people accused of planning, organising or supervising genocide and committing sexual torture;
- Category 2:* Those involving perpetrators or accomplices of homicide;
- Category 3:* Those involving people who committed crimes of aggravated assault without intention to kill; and
- Category 4:* Those involving people who looted or destroyed other people’s property.

The accused persons charged with Category 1 offences are to go to the normal courts of law. The rest of the categories from 2 to 4 are to go to *Gacaca* tribunals. It is anticipated that this categorisation coupled with the ICTR (International Court Tribunal for Rwanda) will make it easier and faster to deal with those involved in genocide. It is only time that can tell whether this trust in a system based on traditional dispute settlement is well founded or not.

Tanzania

CHRISTINA KABIGIZA

The United Republic of Tanzania is located in East Africa at the Indian Ocean between Mozambique and Kenya. It includes the island of Zanzibar. It covers an area of 945,090 square kilometres, an area roughly twice the size of California. The capital, Dar es Salaam, is located along the eastern coast on the Indian Ocean. The terrain includes coastal plains, a central plateau, and highlands in the North and

South. It is home to Mt. Kilimanjaro (the highest point in Africa), Lake Victoria (the second largest lake in the world), and the Great Rift Valley. The climate varies from tropical along the coast to temperate in the highlands. Natural resources include hydropower, tin, phosphates, iron ore, coal, diamonds, gemstones, gold, natural gas and nickel.

Kagera Region: Tanzania is divided into 22 regions. Kagera region is one of the larger regions, populated by 2 million people. The region lies in the North West of Tanzania, by Lake Victoria. The North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, one of the UEM member churches, is within the Kagera region.

The inhabitants of Kagera Region have for many decades depended on coffee and cotton as chief cash crops. However, the continuous fluctuation of cash crop prices has debilitated the whole economic situation. Experiments with alternative cash crops have been ongoing for several years.

Kagera region has common borders with Uganda to the North, Rwanda and Burundi to the West, Shinyanga and Kigoma regions to the South. The region's large water area of Lake Victoria forms the border to the East with Mwanza and Mara regions. Kagera has been a home for refugees from Rwanda, Burundi and Congo.

People: More than 37.1 million people live in Tanzania. Kiswahili or Swahili (Kiunguju in Zanzibar) and English are the official languages; Arabic and numerous other local languages are spoken as well. The population is overwhelmingly native African (99%), most of whom are Bantu (95%). Religious practices on the mainland include: Christian (30%), Muslim (35%), and indigenous beliefs (35%).

Government: The nation gained its independence on December 9th 1961 and Tanganyika and Zanzibar united on 26th April 1964 to form the United Republic of Tanzania. Its constitution came into effect on 25th April 1977, and underwent major revisions in 1984. Tanzania's President and Vice-President are elected by popular vote for five year terms. The move to multiparty politics has been complicated by the omnipresent ruling party of current President Jakaya Mulisho Kikwete of the Chama Cha Mapinduzi party (CCM). Although other parties have been allowed to register, the CCM maintains its dominance through a nearly absolute media monopoly, but also through a network of community and workplace cells to monitor all social activities apart from religion.

Economy: Tanzania's primarily agrarian economy is constrained by geographical and environmental factors such as low and erratic rainfall, soil erosion and deforestation. Only 8 percent of Tanzania's land is under cultivation, although about 80% of its population is employed in the agriculture sector. The principal cash crops of coffee, cotton, sisal and tobacco have been affected by instability in world market demand and rising costs of imported fuel, fertilisers and equipment.

The GDP according to the Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey of December 2005 has increased by 6.7 percent. Growth is attributed to the growth in a number of sub-sectors including tourism, communication, financial and business services.

However, despite the growth and improvement of the macro-economy, the poverty rate, especially in rural areas is still high. The macro-economy has not been effectively translated into micro-enterprises so that common people can benefit from improvements. This situation has a direct impact on the promotion and safeguard of human rights in Tanzania.

Human rights

Civil and political rights are guaranteed by various international human rights. The civil and political rights among these human rights, which are the right to life, freedom from torture, equality before the law and freedom of expression, are observed in the country. The *right to life* is the most important of all human rights. If there would be no right to life, there would be no point in having any other human right. Its violation includes the retention of the death penalty in the laws of Tanzania, extra-judicial killings, torture which leads to death, mob violence and witchcraft killings. The death penalty is one of the punishments in the penal code of Tanzania.

Rights of vulnerable groups: these are significant groups of people in the community who are in a weak position and can be easily hurt, either physically or emotionally. They should receive all the rights recognised by international conventions and treaties. Although both the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Zanzibar constitution contain Bills of Rights recognising that all people are equal, neither of these constitutions has clearly set out the rights of people with disabilities. The failure to explicitly refer to this group in the constitution limits the rights of people with disabilities.

Corruption

There is a common saying: whenever there is corruption, the rights of the people are neglected and denied. Tanzania is fast becoming a leading nation in this regard. Tanzania is ranked 96th among the 159 nations which are seriously affected by corruption. The current Bank of Tanzania incident is a good example that reflects the extent of corruption in the country.

Other areas of concern

Soil degradation, deforestation, desertification, droughts and destruction of coral reefs are the nation's primary environmental concerns. HIV/AIDS, with 1.3 million cases in Tanzania, represents a serious health concern. With 1 physician per 20,511 people, life expectancy is 51 years for men and 53 for women. Outside donations

have helped to fund much of the progress made in human services. For decades, Tanzania has been either at or near the top of the list of African nations in per capita receipt of international aid.

Tanzanian statistics

Geography

Area: 363,950 square miles

Capital: Dar es Salaam (pop 2,347,000)

Environmental concerns: Soil degradation, deforestation, desertification, destruction of coral reefs and marine environment

Geographical features: plains along the coast, central plateau, highlands in the north and south

Climate: tropical to temperate

People

37,188,000 people; 99 percent African; 68% live in rural areas

Annual growth rate: 2.6 percent

Major languages: Kishwahili, Chagga, Gogo, Ha, Haya, Luo, Maasai, English, others

Religions: Christian (30%), Muslim (35%), indigenous beliefs (35%)

Health and social issues

Life expectancy: Men, 51 years; women, 53 years

Infant mortality: 77.8 deaths per 1,000 live births

51% of the population lives in poverty

1 physician per 20,511 people

HIV/AIDS rate in adults: 8.09%

68% of adults are literate

Compulsory education: 7-14 years

Current HIV/AIDS situation

Overall, as per end of year 2004 NACP report

- 16,430 reported cases from 21 mainland regions, estimates that 1,840,000 people were living with HIV. Of all cases reported, 6% are in all marital categories (widows, separated, cohabiting), while 23.29% accounted for singles.
- Overall HIV prevalence was 24.8% based on VCT health facility reports.
- Prevalence among blood donors was 7.7% (males 7.2%, females 10.7%).
- The basis of estimation is that 1 out of 14 AIDS cases is reported.
- The 20-49 age group is still the most affected for both sexes. A consistent observation since the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic (about 80%).

- The infection rate is higher among women in the 20-30 age group and in the 30-50 age group among men.
- Overall HIV prevalence among pregnant mothers was 8.7 (for ages 24-34 11%).

Communication and transport

127,000 land-line telephones
2.8 televisions per 1,000 people
250,000 Internet users (2003)
52,800 miles of highway
2,141 miles of railroad
125 airfields
134,000 motor vehicles

Government

Tanzania is a republic that became independent on 9th December 1961
Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete is the head of state and government
More than 6 political parties
Universal suffrage at 18

Military

Military expenditure is 0.2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Economy

Currency: shillings
Per capita GDP: \$ 610
GDP: \$ 22.1 billion
GDP growth rate: 6.7%
Inflation rate: 5%
Labour force: 80% agricultural, 20% services and industry

Resources and industry

Natural resources: hydropower, tin, phosphates, iron ore, diamonds, gemstones, gold, natural gas, nickel
Agriculture: Coffee, sisal, tea, cotton, pyrethrum, cashews, tobacco, cloves, wheat, fruit, vegetables, livestock
Industry: agricultural processing, mining, oil refining, shoes, cement, textiles, wood products, fertiliser, salt
Exports: \$ 827 million Imports: \$ 1.55 billion

Impact of HIV/AIDS in the working area of the North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

In the 1980s, Kagera was the one region where HIV/AIDS spread fastest in the country. The fact that the disease was imported from a neighbouring country is just one more deplorable result of being the region that has the longest common borders with other countries. The influx of refugees in the 1990s exacerbated an already serious situation.

As a result of the decimation of the economically active population, farms, factories and many other economic enterprises have to continue without the labour force needed to keep them in operation. Productivity has been seriously affected. Considerable strain has been placed on available health infrastructure and other resources so that health facilities especially medical wards are flooded with patients. The demand for diagnostic equipment, laboratory reagents, HIV test kits, X-ray films and anti-TB drugs outstrip budgets leading to chronic shortages.

It is estimated that by the year 2002, there were some 200,000 orphans throughout the region. In 2000, there were 128,442 orphans made up of 70,710 boys and 57,732 girls. They were concentrated in the four districts of Bukoba Rural and Urban district, Muleba and Karagwe, which accounted for 97% of all such children.

Because of the prominence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its attendant partner TB, there are many NGOs in the region involved in work associated with this social and economic problem.

The role of the churches in combating HIV/AIDS in Kagera

Since 1989, the Lutheran Church in Kagera (ELCT-NWD) has been working with HIV and AIDS impact mitigation and prevention through the ACP and HUYAWA programmes, concentrated in the diocese working borders.

Through the above mentioned church programmes, they have been focusing on providing service to PLWHAS, orphans and their families. Communities have been involved in planning and implementing strategies to combat HIV/AIDS through sensitisation and mobilisation seminars, taking into consideration the gender issue.

- Services provided include home-based care, household visits, and support with education, legal rights, health care and social care for the orphans.
- The orphans get support where they are in their communities (homes and familiar neighbourhoods). There are no orphanages for social and economic reasons.
- The programmes work in co-operation with government, political, religious and social leaders.
- Advocacy and community participation have been part and parcel in implementing programmes' activity plans.

HUYAWA Programme

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, North Western Diocese, has been running a programme for helping orphans since 1989. The programme HUYAWA, an acronym for Huduma ya Watoto (service for children), is a unit of the ELCT/ North Western Diocese which deals with support to orphans, especially those who have become orphans due to HIV/AIDS. The unit was started to provide emergency work in dire need due to rampant deaths in the area because of AIDS. The support is provided to all orphans regardless of creed or cultural background. The programme operates within the diocese working borders in the following government districts: Biharamulo, Muleba, Bukoba Rural and Bukoba Urban. At the moment, there are around 34,262 registered orphans, but the programme cannot provide support to all of them due to financial limitations.

Main objectives of the programme

- To ensure that the orphans have the same standard of living and security as other children in society, thereby giving them hope for the future.
- To motivate community people to change their life style in order to prevent the spread of AIDS and thus prolong their lifespan.

Additional facts about HIV/AIDS

- Different surveys indicate high risk HIV infection among youths and higher vulnerability among women.
- There was a remarkable increase in the number of clients for voluntary testing. This is partly attributed to improved access to VCT services, but also reflects the growing awareness of the importance of testing for HIV.
- It is still too early to say much on the impact of ARV, however, there is a good sign of hope for the future for those who have started the treatment.

Mode of Transmission

78.1% of all reported cases are caused by heterosexual transmission

4.6% through mother to child transmission

0.5% through blood transfusion.

Impact of HIV and AIDS in Tanzania

- Decimation of dependable manpower and labour force, intellectuals, experts;
- Poverty;
- Orphanhood;
- A weakened community – affects family and national productivity;

- Disintegration of family and social structures and social cultural reversal;
- Deterioration in life quality and life expectancy;
- Lack of parental guidance;
- Confusing/contradicting social norms;
- Increase in number of street children;
- Stigma, despair and hopelessness, early adult responsibility;
- Higher infant mortality and death rates.

Factors exacerbating the spread of HIV/AIDS

- Economic factors:
 - Commercial sex, house-girl abuse, some people cannot afford to avail themselves of health services;
 - Bar work;
 - Fishermen, petty traders etc.
- Moral decay in society due to loss of God-fearing people;
- Ignorance
 - Witchcraft;
 - Self-cure (kapsozi), belief that hospital staff will kill one;
 - Pregnancy with HIV, women use some cultural religious practices;
- Polygamy, widow inheritance, cleansing rituals;
- Not being open/not breaking the silence;
- Adoption of unsuitable foreign norms/customs/behaviour;
- Imbalance in gender partnership
 - Women cannot say NO;
 - Women cannot introduce or insist on the use of condoms;
- Paralysis of the original traditional/society values unadulterated by strange or borrowed cultures;
- Unmonitored pleasures/recreation gatherings especially among the youths and institutions.

Church intervention in Kagera Region

- Breaking the silence on the epidemic and its mode of transmission including preventive measures;
- Church has been a catalyst in motivating government leadership at different levels to integrate HIV/AIDS in their development plans;
- People have faith in the church so they are assured of the services provided;
- Information on HIV/AIDS has reached all corners of the grassroots in the diocese area through advocacy and the work done by the church programmes;
- Formation of support groups for PLWHAs. Formation of youth HIV/AIDS related guilds and orphans and vulnerable group activities and life skill trainings.

Impediments encountered

- Lack of full acknowledgement of the epidemic by the government till 1998;
- Slow comprehension by communities of the gravity of the situation;
- Pocket NGOs bring false hope;
- Reluctance in transparent networking;
- Poverty hinders people’s good will to come through;
- Lack of enough funds;
- Gravity of AIDS problem transcends programme’s capacity.

Challenges

- No specific system of networking, sharing and planning together with other FBOs, CBOs and NGOs tackling the HIV and AIDS problem;
- Different HIV/AIDS organisations with a common goal have varying interests, resulting in not-so-effective service-oriented performance;
- Workshops and seminars tend to be more income-generation gatherings rather than generating progressive HIV combating strategies;
- An increasing “dependency syndrome” tendency of communities prevents them from constructive self-sustainability.
- The HIV/AIDS problematic is regarded by some communities as an “old song”.

Methods to achieve success

- Monthly and daily outreach programmes including home visits, home-based care, family counselling, and discussions with learning institutions and health centres and dialogue with leaders;
- Seminars/workshops (for communities, youths in/out of school);
- Gender sensitisation and anti-exclusivity;
- Involving and planning together with people at the grassroots;
- Collaboration and co-operation with leaders (government, political, religious, social groups).

Useful Approach

- Let people participate in the programme’s goal and objective – listen to what their need is;
- Plant an idea and help people to adopt it as their own, work on/with it and plan for it together and let them find their vision and mission;
- Let people come up with strategies and solutions depending on their environment;
- Support where/as needed required, requested;
- Talk with the people not to them;
- Start with and use what they know/have;
- People’s participation and involvement is important!

Hong Kong/China

VINCENT, CHAN HEE LUK

Hong Kong, officially the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, is one of the two special administrative regions of the People’s Republic of China. Beginning as a trading port in the 19th century, Hong Kong has developed into a leading financial centre. It maintains a highly capitalist economy built on a policy of free market, low taxation and government non-intervention. In 2006, Hong Kong’s per-capita GDP ranked as the 6th highest in the world at US\$ 38,127. The unemployment rate is low in Hong Kong (3.4% in Jan 2007).

There are nearly 7 million people living in Hong Kong. 95% of them are Chinese. A sizable Christian community of around 500,000 exists, forming about 7% of the total population.

Civil and Political Challenges

Hong Kong is a comparatively safe and stable region in the world. Hong Kong was a colony of the United Kingdom from 1842 until the transfer of its sovereignty to the People’s Republic of China in 1997. The Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law of Hong Kong stipulate that Hong Kong operates with a high degree of autonomy until at least 2047. Under the policy of “one country, two systems”, Hong Kong maintains its own legal system, police force, monetary system, customs policy, and immigration policy, and sends its own delegates to international organisations and events.

The Basic Law of Hong Kong enshrines various human rights, including: freedom of speech, of the press and of publication; freedom of association, of assembly (Article 27); freedom from arbitrary or unlawful arrest, detention or imprisonment (Article 28); freedom from arbitrary or unlawful search of, or intrusion into, a resident’s home or other premises (Article 29); adherence to the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and international labour conventions (Article 39).

The civil service of Hong Kong maintains its quality and neutrality following its tradition from colonial times, operating without dissembling direction from Beijing. Hong Kong is a success story in its fight against corruption. This success is recognised internationally.

Social, economic and cultural human rights challenges

China has shown rapid development since the early 1990s, and much of this massive increase took place in the Pearl River Delta area near Hong Kong. Also because of economic globalisation, some problems developed within these years.

The Poverty Problem: Due to economic globalisation, most of the industries moved to China for the cheaper land and labour costs. The poverty gap is now quite serious in Hong Kong. The Gini-coefficient is increasing rapidly from 0.43 in 1971, to 0.48 in 1991 and up to 0.52 in 1996 and 0.533 in 2007.

An analysis carried out by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service on the 2006 mid-term census revealed that over 20 per cent of Hong Kong’s population lived below the poverty line. Most of them were old people, new immigrants from China as well as those from other south Asian countries. It also included those aged 40-64 and 15-24. Most of the people in these age groups are low-education and low-skilled workers. They either don’t have a job or are on a very low salary.

The Family Problem: The increasing movement of Hong Kong people to mainland jobs has created cross-border social problems such as family separation. A husband might live 100 miles north of Hong Kong to manage a Hong Kong-owned factory and sees his wife and children only on weekends. This leads to infidelity, family disputes and so on. In addition, Hong Kong teenagers can cross the border for cheap alcohol and drugs. The number of Hong Kong people arrested on the mainland for drug possession is rising, while the number in Hong Kong itself is actually falling. Some of the drugs they abuse on the other side of the border are fakes or have impurities, so can be even more dangerous than usual.

The discrimination problem: New immigrants from mainland China, ethnic minorities and migrant workers in Hong Kong face systematic discrimination with abuse based on their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, class and gender. These groups are crucial in upholding the community’s prosperity, and yet they are clearly denied the same fundamental rights as other members of Hong Kong society. Studies show that racial discrimination is widespread in Hong Kong in such areas as housing, employment, politics, relations with public servants and commercial establishments.

Peace challenge

Hong Kong is a comparatively peaceful region in the world.

Environment/climate challenge

While the opening of the Pearl River Delta for export manufacturing since early 1990 has brought rapid economic growth to both Guangdong and Hong Kong, it has also brought the need for urgent rectification of the region’s serious environmental degradation.

Air pollution, in particular has become a hot issue in Hong Kong; 80% of the air

pollution comes from China, especially from the Pearl River Delta that is the industrial estate.

Water pollution is also serious in Hong Kong now. In China, there are some illegal connections of waste water pipes to storm-water pipes. In this way, the wastewater is discharged directly into the Pearl River without treatment and the polluted water flows finally to Hong Kong.

Food Safety, there is integration between Hong Kong and mainland China, and it increases the city’s exposure to hazardous foods; on two occasions, there were serious outbreaks of disease: avian flu and SARS. The list of food scares has been lengthy and covers green vegetables, fish, ducks, pork and canned and preserved produce. The actual impact on health from tainted food has been extremely limited.

Response of the churches

Hong Kong is a comparatively safe, stable and peaceful region of the world. Therefore the churches in Hong Kong put most of their efforts into preaching the gospel, training disciples, education and social welfare. In the past, the church has put less effort into social and political concerns. But there are still some responses from the churches such as:

Chinese Rhenish Church Hong Kong Synod

Foreign Domestic Workers Programme

This is a joint programme of the UEM and the CRC HK, to assist the Indonesian Domestic Workers in Hong Kong in their various needs, such as underpayment, no rest days, abuse (verbal, physical & sexual), physical exhaustion (long working hours; insufficient food), psychosocial problems (culture shock; adaptation difficulties, loneliness and homesickness) etc. The programme provides some activities, educational classes and spiritual care for them. And now there are also worship services for them.

Rhenish Family Service Centre

The centre provides some educational programmes, activities for all the family for the church, school, and social service centre in CRCHK. The centre also provides counselling service for all family members.

Other denominations in Hong Kong

There are some churches, para-churches and NGOs concerned about society, human rights, justice, environment, and discrimination. But they are still the minority among the churches in Hong Kong.

Needs to be addressed by the churches

Concern of Society

Churches in Hong Kong need to be more concerned about the poor, the broken families and the minority groups, for our Lord Jesus Christ used to preach and to teach this many times. He also took time to care for the poor, the weak and the women. We know His mission from Luke 4:18 “to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised”.

Education through the church and school

Christians in Hong Kong are only 7% of the total population. However, they have great influence. More than half of the schools and social services are organised by the churches. Therefore, it is a good way to educate towards charity, care, equality, justice etc.

Christians in working places

Most of the church members belong to the middle class. They have some power, influence and money. Church leaders need to encourage and support Christians to have more influence in their working places, such as in their business, in their factories, in their government offices, in their college etc., especially when they are involved in some policy making. For example, one can ask why the civil service of Hong Kong can maintain its quality and neutrality. One of the reasons is because there are many Christians working in the Hong Kong Government.

Indonesia/Java Region

SUKO DWI NUGROHO

Indonesia is an archipelago country, which lies between two continents (Asia and Australia) and two oceans (Indian and Pacific). Indonesia has an area of 1,904,556 km² consisting of 17,504 islands, of which 6,000 have no inhabitants. The fact that Indonesia is on the equator makes it rich in variety, including natural resources, ethnic groups and cultures.

Indonesia's native people came from Malaya and Melanesia, but there were also people from China, India and Arabia, who mixed together with the native people and made them part of Indonesia. Indonesia also consists of hundreds of ethnic groups such as Batak, Java, Sunda, Dayak, Minang, Asmat, Dani, etc.

Indonesia is divided into the following religions: Moslem (85,2%), Protestant (8.9%), Catholic (3%), Hindu (1.8%), Buddhist (0.8%) and others (0.3%). This makes Indonesia the country with the highest number of Moslems in the world, but it cannot be said, that it is a Moslem country.

Indonesia is rich in natural resources, such as crude oil, natural gas, tin, copper and gold. Indonesia is the second biggest exporter of natural gas and in addition has recently become a crude oil importer. The main agriculture products of Indonesia are rice, tea, coffee, spices and rubber.

Indonesia has five big islands: Borneo, Sumatra, Papua, Sulawesi, and Java. Java, which has a size of 138,793.6 km², is the thirteenth biggest island in the world and also the most populated island in Indonesia. It has 124 millions citizens, which mean that it has a density of 979 persons per km². The ethnically native people of Java island comprise Java, Sunda, Tengger, Badui, Osing, Banten, Cirebon and Betawi.

Compared to other islands of Indonesia, Java tends to be the island of industrialisation. This has come about not only because Java lacks natural resources, but also because Java has been made the central island of Indonesia in many respects. The best infrastructure, education and governance are located in Java. But with this centralisation combined with the number of inhabitants, Java is facing a lot of problems.

Main challenges

Political

In this season, some parts of Java are in the process of electing leaders, not only at a provincial level (such as the election of the Governor in Central Java), but also at the regency and village levels. In the preparation for the elections and during their process, it was not difficult to find the candidates practising politics which involved money and lobbying, in order to be elected. It has been established that some candidates for leadership positions have promised some amounts of money or material goods to society so that they will be elected. This happened not only at a village level but also at higher levels. After the election there were sometimes clashes between voters of the elected politician and his opponents who were not satisfied with the result of the election. This happened in Sukoharjo Solo at the end of 2007 and in Purwakarta West Java in January 2008. Election frauds also happened in the form of the duplication of voting cards, so that the results of the counting were unfair. This happened in the election in Banyumas regency.

After years of efforts to diminish corruption, the number of corruption cases is still high. In central Java itself it is known that of 148 corruption cases uncovered in the region only 66 cases were taken care of by the police, or 20 percent of the total number of cases. The same problem is also found in other parts of Java.

Social

In society there is religious revivalism. This revivalism is not coming from the mainstream religions, but from new religions or sects which have separated themselves from the mainstream religions. Since the new government regulations, the movements of Christian sects such as Jehovah Witnesses and Mormonism have been growing rapidly. They have developed their movements very well. Jehovah Witnesses were able to hold a worship service at the beginning of 2007 in Semarang, which was attended by more than 2,000 people. Mormonism is also getting a stronger stance; they have established their branch office in Solo and some “churches” in Java, including Semarang, so that they can reach more members in Java. At the same time other movements of Moslem sects such as Al Qiyadhah and Ahmadiyah have also invited many believers in many cities to join them. The theological concept of Qiyadhah is emphasising the use of local languages to pray and learn the Koran. They are not obliging their followers to pray five times a day, which is against the conservative Moslem teachings. Meanwhile Ahmadiyah, which has most of its followers among college students, also stresses the issue of liberation in its teachings. They have more than 41,000 members spread all over Java, led by Muhammad Assidieqie, who claims himself that he is the prophet of God. The increasing number of sectarians has made conservative Moslems strive to close down the “pesantren” (Moslem school) of Ahmadiyah in West Java, both by destroying the pesantren and also by threatening the government and demanding that Ahmadiyah be closed. The Moslem alliance (Aliansi Umat Islam – Atumni) in Bandung, which represents 47 Moslem organisations, has threatened the government that they will send 40,000 people to close down Ahmadiyah if the government does not forbid Ahmadiyah prior to the Moslem New Year in 2008. Members of Ahmadiyah in other cities such as Cilacap, Tegal, Solo, Pekalongan, etc. are also being arrested. They were forced to deny what they believe and return to the conservative Islam or be jailed. Many of them decided to give up their belief and convert rather than being tortured or jailed. Other movements such as Eden Community, which tend to syncretise religions including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism, have also caused controversies. Some of the leaders were caught and brought to court, including Lia Eden who claims to be the prophet of God and that her son Ahmad is the reincarnation of Jesus.

Beside religious movements from “foreign” religions, it is found that the revivalism of local religion called “Kejawen” is also becoming stronger. These are people

who claim that the wisdom of the local religion is supreme rather than other religions. They even claim that other religions should be subordinate to this religion, because all the religions can be acculturated into it. Kejawen talks about the direct relationship between human beings and God. They believe in the concept of “Manunigaling Kawula Gusti”, which mean the unification of man and God. They have reached so many people who are disappointed by the mainstream religions, which quarrel with each other, tend to be well-organised and ignore the main point of religion, that is the direct relationship between the creation and Creator.

Besides these movements, the churches in Java also have their own conflicts. These conflicts are of two kinds: straight conflict and hidden conflict. Straight conflicts happen to churches, where the members are divided into different parties, while hidden conflicts happen between two or more churches, which try to win members from each other. Some churches such as the HKBP in Bandung, have internal conflicts, which even led to an involvement of the government. Regarding the conflicts between churches, we have to confess that there is an increasing number of churches in Java, but the problem is that the number of Christians is not increasing. This means that there is only an exodus from one church to another church. David Ph. Soteman, from the East Java Religious Department, Sub-division Protestants said: “I am concerned with the increasing number of churches, which started as a prayer fellowship of a church and then turned into a new church or even a synod, due to internal conflicts in the churches.”

Economic

The high number of inhabitants on Java Island has also caused the high rate of poverty. Based on statistics, from 22 regencies in West Java, 14, or about 67%, are on a level of middle to high poverty. Meanwhile In Central Java, there are 12 regencies, which are considered as poor regencies, including Banjarnegara (52.4%), Blora (45.4%), Banyumas (44.1%) and Rembang (15.7%). On the other hand, 3 regencies (Sragen, Batang and Kudus) have the ability to reduce their poverty even though not to a very significant degree. Today’s number of poor people in East Java is about 24.6 % of the population, and the area of poverty remains the same. These are Sampang regency, Parnekasnan regency and Bondowoso regency. In the coming years this condition may not change since the life of most people depends on farming.

The number of jobless people is also increasing rapidly because of the lack of jobs. And if the people get jobs, most of them do not get a proper salary. No wonder that most people in Java prefer to move away from Java as transmigrants to other islands or become migrant workers abroad. The problems of unemployment are getting worse while the prices of basic goods are increasing at the same time. Many companies and factories have closed down, and this has resulted in the reduction of the number of employees.

The high number of people living in poverty is partly a result of the low number of educated people. The reason for this problem is that the expenses for education are also high. The people are not able to pay for such expensive education. Although the government has provided support for schools, still those who live in remote areas cannot get the direct benefits. In future this problem can cause a continuous poverty cycle. People who do not get a proper education will not get proper jobs, and they will then not be able to get proper salaries and afterwards they will not be able to pay the education expenses of their children.

The rising price of oil and gasoline also influences the prices of other basic products such as rice, cooking oil, sugar and soya. This brings panic to society, many lines of queues before the shops of traders of basic products. Although the government has offered the option of providing gas tubes for free in replacement of oil, still a society that is used to using oil for cooking cannot change its habits.

The high level of poverty supported by the rising price of goods has resulted in a higher number of poor people in Java. This high number has caused trafficking and prostitution to grow fast. Even though the government has cleaned the street of trafficking children, street dwellers, beggars, vendors and sex workers they still exist and are even getting more numerous. The trafficking of children can be seen almost at every corner with traffic lights, and sex workers are easily found in every corner of the city. The trafficking of children results in crime and low education, while prostitution contributes to the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in Java.

Cultural

The richness of culture in Indonesia has made other countries try to adopt the original culture of Indonesia and claim it as their own original culture. A month ago some expressions of Indonesian culture, including reog (dance from ponorogo, East Java) and angklung (musical instrument from West Java) were claimed by Malaysia. Indonesia expressed its protest to the Malaysian Government and finally Malaysia withdrew the claim. This situation shows that Indonesia has a lack of consciousness of the richness of its culture. Although in some parts of Java, people are preserving the native culture, the present generation seems to ignore its culture. It is hard to find a building for art now, because most of them have been converted into malls or other buildings that are considered more profitable. Java, as the centre of government in Indonesia, has become the filter of all trends and new cultures from other countries. The lack of a sense of belonging to the native culture has made the native culture disappear over the years. And popular culture from other countries has infiltrated into Java and destroyed the original native culture. No wonder that the native culture of Java is disappearing or being claimed by other countries.

Human rights

Java as the biggest exporter of migrant workers in Indonesia is also facing a high number of legal cases, especially cases of migrant workers' oppression. There are cases that have no clear resolution and many of the victims have been tortured so brutally that they become physically and mentally disabled for life. But it seems that the legal system of Indonesia cannot do much to help them.

Many other human rights cases such as Priok cases, Munir cases, abduction and killing of people in certain areas are not properly taken care of. The involvement of some “important persons” has caused legal cases to be dealt with slowly.

Cases of violence also occur in Java, especially in the case of clashes on land issues. The cases are caused by attempts of local governments to plan the development of towns. By using the “local police”, the government relocates some areas such as traditional markets and vile houses in order to clean the town. But the problem of violence also occurs due to land conflicts between two sides. One side claims that the land belongs to them, and the other does the same. After the case is brought to the court and a judgment has been made, the people who are dissatisfied start to gather a mob and attack the other side. This also happens to those who want to be relocated to the new location.

Peace

As it is the most densely populated island of Indonesia, the number of Moslems is also automatically the largest. There are some Moslem only areas in Java, especially in West and East Java. This large number unfortunately is also causing strong fanaticism and militancy, as the result of the establishment of new Moslem mass organisations in Java. Some of the fanaticism, which is developed by Moslem organisations like Forum Pembeta Islam (Moslem Defender Forum), Forum Betawi Rempug and Jemaah Istamlyah, tend to go in the same direction, i.e. the proclamation of Indonesia as a Moslem country. No wonder that this movement is not only moving to military training, but also indoctrination of the Moslem students for organisation purposes.

Terrorism, although almost never heard of in the past in Indonesia, is becoming a problem with internal and external dangers. In the meantime it has developed like an active volcano, which is gathering new power ready to explode. The suspects of the Bali bombings, Imam Samudra and friends were brought to court but in reality the case is stuck, up to this day in the name of justice.

After the reformation era, mass demonstrations have become popular activities, not only involving college students, but also labourers, public transport drivers and other groups in society. On one hand it is a form of freedom of speech, but on the other hand this action can be used as a tool by particular people in order to reach their aims. In the case of some demonstrations, the demonstrators have to face the police in order to reduce the mass chaos, but in reality, the police have to

face the demonstrators in the form of mass fights, and some of them are injured or even die.

Environment/climate

After the earthquake in Yogyakarta the conditions on Java are not getting better. Some locations in Java are also distinctly hit by natural disasters, although some of the disasters are the result of human actions. Human beings have contributed to an invitation to natural disasters. Seawater overflows have flooded Muara Baru Jakarta and downtown Semarang. The rise of sea level was the main cause. Due to heavy rains in recent months, some locations on Java, such as Bandung, Kudus, Tuban, Ngawi and Surabaya were also struck by floods. Based on the Climate Change and Global Warming’s Bali Summit, some experts have predicted that in 2035, Jakarta airport will be drowned and it will not be possible to use it any longer. In 2050, 24% of the area of Jakarta will disappear due to the rise of sea level. There is even a prediction that some of the 17,000 islands of Indonesia will sink.

Besides the global warming effects, one big case that has not been resolved is the case of the Lapindo Braiitas hot mud in Porong East Java. This case seems to have become a never-ending problem, although the case was brought to the public already a year ago. Many refugees from this area have no idea what to do, since the government cannot do much about this problem.

Java Island is part of the chain of volcanoes which make up the “Ring Of Fire”. Java has 30 volcanoes and some of them are still active. This makes Java very susceptible to volcanic eruptions. As well as the worrying situation of the Krakatoa volcano in the Sunda Strait, Java has to be on the alert about the Merapi volcano in Central Java.

The extinction of local animals has also become a problem. After the extinction of Javanese tigers, Java has to face the extinction of some other animals such as rhinos, deer and bulls. Java has at least two big reserves in Ujung Kulon West Java and Bawean Island in Central Java. Nowadays, the number of rhinoceros sondaicus or Javanese rhino at the Ujung Kuton reserve is only 40 to 50, and the number can decrease even more if they are not protected.

Response of the churches

Political

Before the presidential elections in Indonesia some churches implemented training programmes dealing with political life, including the election procedures and political campaigns. During the election process of regency representatives, some pastors campaigned as candidates to be elected. This was done in order to show Christian responsibility toward the nation.

Social

The increasing number of HIV/AIDS positive people in Java has become the major concern of the churches, so that some churches in Java have started HIV/AIDS awareness programmes for their members and society. Some churches have even opened VCT Clinics in joint programmes with the health institutions of the area. The other social programme which is being developed by the churches is the ministry “Stop-By House” for trafficked children. Some of these “Stop-By Houses” which were built in Semarang and some big cities in Java are managed by the churches to offer education and to assist the children to be autonomous, so that they will not spend the rest of their life on the street.

Economic

In co-operation with the local congregation or donor institutions, churches open new working sites for young people, such as motorcycle workshops, kiosks, motorbike transport, etc. In the beginning, the target of the programme was the youth of the church, but in the process, it has also been opened for everyone. Besides being a form of job-provision, this action is also part of an income-generating project for the church.

Cultural

Churches in Java, especially the traditional churches that still keep the local culture alive, are using the local language for worship and are also using traditional instruments. On special occasions, the church also holds a traditional performance in order to help every generation recognise their local culture. The main problem is the decreasing interest among the youth regarding the use of traditional language and instruments.

Peace

Many efforts have been made by the church to recover and maintain peace within the church. The numerous cases of church splits have caused the church itself to work to cure relationships within the church.

The difficulty faced by the church when involving itself in reconciliation processes is the reality that the church is still not really allowed to communicate its existence. Every effort that has been made by the church to get involved was considered as an effort to Christianise people. Thus, many efforts at reconciliation made by Christians tend to be individual efforts, rather than efforts organised as a church.

Environment/climate

The church is willing to participate in aid for victims of natural disasters by directly being with these victims. Some of the natural disasters such as Yogyakarta earthquake and Tapindo Brantas hot mud in Porong have encouraged the church to help the victims.

In order to prevent global warming, some churches co-operate with nature protection institutions to initiate tree-planting programmes, as in Wonosobo, Kopeng, Temanggung, Semarang, etc., where the congregations worked jointly with a Greenpeace programme.

Needs to be addressed by the churches

Political

The churches need to develop a better understanding of politics in the minds of the congregations, so that the congregation will have a proper perception of political matters. This includes a willingness to get involved in national life.

Economic

Because of the many jobless people, present society needs to make provisions for more jobs. For this reason the church needs to focus on developing and providing more jobs for people in their own areas, and a network between different churches, government and private organisations needs to be developed in order to strengthen any provisions made.

In addition to providing job opportunities, efforts to strengthen the fulfilment of basic needs can be supported by encouraging people to cultivate their land and to build up their own farm or husbandry.

Human rights

Churches have never involved themselves in defending efforts for justice and peace for those who suffer under injustice and oppression. It is necessary for the churches to get involved in this field, although it can be difficult or even dangerous for churches as a minority to get involved in human rights activities.

Peace

Churches need to get involved in society as part of society. Building good communication is also part of peacemaking. As individuals, church members need to be part of society and get involved in activities of society.

Environment/climate

The churches need to build more awareness among their members about nature conservation and being environmentally-friendly in order to avoid the danger of global warming and other natural disasters. It is not only necessary to build awareness but also to encourage church members to get actively involved in programmes to preserve nature.

Indonesia/West Papua

UWE HUMMEL

What's in a name?

Papua means curly hair, referring to the Melanesian features of the Papuan people. During Dutch colonial times (1667-1800 VOC; 1828/1848/1898 –1962 Kingdom of the Netherlands) the western part of the island of Newguinea was called *Nederlandsch Nieuw-Guinea*. Towards the end of Dutch rule, the name *Papua* came into use. Under President Soekarno, who, in 1963, incorporated *Papua* into the Republic of Indonesia, it was called *Irian Barat* and under his successor Soeharto (1966/1967-1998) it was renamed *Irian Jaya*. In 2002, President Abdurrahman Wahid reintroduced the name *Papua*, thereby satisfying one of the major aspirations of the Papuan people. In 2003, President Megawati Soekarnoputri, by Presidential Decree divided Papua into two (actually three) provinces, thereby disregarding the Special Autonomy Law for Papua introduced a year earlier. The two disputed provinces are *Papua* in the east (bordering the Republic of Papua Newguinea) and *Irian Jaya Barat* in the western Bird's Head region. In 2007, *Irian Jaya Barat* renamed itself as *Papua Barat*. On January 22nd, 2008, the Indonesian parliament accepted a draft for a law creating yet another three provinces in West Papua, namely *Papua Selatan* (South Papua in the Merauke region), *Papua Tengah* (Central Papua), which was successfully obstructed by the Papuan people in 2003. *Papua Tengah* will incorporate the industrial region of Timika and the strategic island of Biak, as well as *Papua Barat Daya* (South West Papua, which will include the largely Muslim region of Fak Fak). This division is rejected by the Papuan Council (*Majelis Rakyat Papua*), the local Parliament in Jayapura, the Customary Council (*Dewan Adat Papua*), and major religious institutions. Most international solidarity groups use the name *West Papua* to indicate the whole region of Indonesian ruled *Papua*.

Population

Indonesia has some 237 million people. West Papua, which makes up 22% of the Indonesian territory, houses about 2.5 million citizens, more than half of whom are Papuans. These Papuans belong to more than 250 distinct ethnic communities. More than 40% of the inhabitants of West Papua are settlers from other parts of Indonesia. In the 1980s, in the course of the *transmigrasi*-programme, thousands settled here. After this policy was abandoned in 1998/1999, the influx of migrants into Papua did not stop. The economy, which is controlled almost completely by non-Papuans, attracts many more from Sulawesi, Java, Madura and other parts of Indonesia. The Papuans see in this migration a threat to their existence as a people.

Economy

Papuans are either farmers producing sweet potatoes and raising pigs (mainly in the highlands), or fishermen (along the coasts), or nomadic hunters and gatherers (in the marshy lowland belt between the highland and the coast). The most important economic branches, however, are based on natural resources. Already the Dutch found oil off the coasts of the Bird's head region. For 40 years, American Freeport McMoran has been mining copper, gold and other minerals in Timika. British (now Beyond) Petroleum will begin with massive exploitation of gas from the bottom of the Bintuni Bay this year. Big businesses from the Southeast Asia region cut down the huge rainforests (altogether 41 million hectare), plant huge palm oil plantations and catch the fish off the coasts of Papua. The economic interests of these big investors are protected by the military and the police, often at the expense of the human rights of the Papuans.

Human Rights

Papuans are treated as second-class citizens in their own land. They are being controlled by a massive military and police presence. Their so-called sweepings, aimed at catching separatists, cause much distress in the population. There are many documented cases of illegal killings, torture, rape and other crimes against humanity. The perpetrators generally enjoy impunity. Although a lot of revenues are flowing back to Papua, education and healthcare is at a very low level. The infrastructure in the interiors is underdeveloped, if not nonexistent. The rate of HIV infections is the second highest in the country (after Jakarta). There exists a lot of distrust between the Papuans and the Indonesian authorities.

Religion

Traditionally, Papuans adhere to primal religions, which differ from tribe to tribe. Islam started entering through the contacts with the neighbouring Moluccas. The Sultan of Tidore claimed parts of the Bird's Head and especially Biak Numfor as part of his kingdom. Today, less than 10% of Papuans, but more than 80% of the settlers in West Papua are Muslim. In 1855, the first Christian missionaries began their service on Mansinam Island near Manokwari. It took more than a hundred years for Christianity to reach the Jayawijaya highlands. Today, about 90% of Papuans are Christian, of which the majority belong to the Protestant Churches and about 20% to five Roman Catholic Dioceses. In the Papuans' struggle for a greater degree of self-determination and the survival of their identity, the Christian faith plays a significant role. Although there are numerous NGOs advocating human rights, the churches are seen as the real guardians of Papuan consciousness and pride.

Philippines

JULIET SOLIS

The Philippines are an archipelago of 7,107 islands of which only 2,000 are inhabited. It has a total land area of 300,000 sq kilometres. The Philippines are a tropical country with fascinating landscapes, active volcanoes, splendid beaches, coral waters and tropical forests. The Philippines is rich in minerals and forest resources. The country is divided into three main islands: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Luzon is the northern main island of the country where in Metro Manila, the national offices of the United Church of Christ (UCCP), is located. The middle cluster of islands is known as Visayas. The southern island is Mindanao. On this island is the greatest concentration of indigenous peoples, of Muslim communities and the ever-worsening effects of the invasion of foreign mining corporations.

A mixture of cultures could best describe the population of 85 million people. Much of its culture was influenced by Islam, by the Spanish, Japanese and Americans. Some segments of the population struggle to maintain their indigenous culture as they continually resist the culture of foreign domination.

The Philippines are predominantly Roman Catholic. Catholicism claims 85% of the population and continues to have a powerful influence on the lives of Filipinos. Protestants make up 7% of the population and Muslims 5%. The indigenous people are now 2% of the population.

On the socio-economic situation

During the first cabinet meeting of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, together with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board and the National Anti-Poverty Commission on January 8th 2000, she said that over 90% of Filipinos would have a bright future in 2008. She also said that poverty alleviation was the “overreaching goal” of her administration. In reality, the country is facing record joblessness, worsening poverty, severe inequality and persistent economic deterioration after seven years of her administration.

The Philippines are confronted with problems of deep poverty and great inequality. Filipinos remain desperately poor, looking for work and struggling to survive on inadequate pesos every day. The past years, including 2007, have definitely been good years for foreign corporations and local big business elites closest to Malacañang. You can observe the multi-million peso luxury cars on the roads, hundred-million peso homes in exclusive subdivisions and multi-hundred million peso accounts in the banks, but all of these have been earned at the expense of millions of workers, peasants, fisher folk, urban poor and indigenous people who continue to remain poor. The mass of Filipino people suffer from joblessness, wage repression,

higher taxes, miserable social services and being outright driven abroad as economic migrants.

According to IBON Foundation, in 2007, there were 4.1 million jobless people and an average annual unemployment rate of 10.8 percent. This is the worst period recorded in the country’s history. Despite the propaganda about rapid economic growth, the 861,000 net additional jobs created in 2007 is only a 2.6% increase in employment from last year. Most of the jobs created in 2007 were in domestic household help, transport, communication, wholesale and retail trade, real estate and construction. These are among the lowest paid, mostly temporary and insecure jobs in the country.

The 7.1% gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the first three quarters of 2007 was hailed as the highest in 30 years. But unfortunately, the sources of growth do not indicate a “strengthened” economy and instead highlight the continued erosion of the productive sectors and increasing dependence on unsustainable sources of growth. The fastest growing sectors, which also had the biggest increases in contributing to growth, were construction, trade and mining and quarrying. In contrast, manufacturing and agricultural growth remained moderate and even slowed down from last year. Agriculture has the smallest share of the economy in the country in history. Construction grew much faster by 19%, making the biggest overall additional contribution to growth. Trade made the overall next biggest additional contribution to growth. The last major contributor is mining, which was the fastest growing sub-sector with 24.2%. This simply reflects the administration’s thrust to completely sell-off the country’s natural resources in its bid to please and attract capital at all costs. But the liberalisation of the mining industry, with up to 100% foreign ownership allowed, means that whatever investments or value is created in the mining sector will mainly go to big mining firms and their local partners – with an irreversible loss of resources for any future domestic-led national development.

The high number of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) is one of the clearest signs of the country’s economic backwardness. Some 8 to 10 million Filipinos are abroad, most of all because the domestic economy has totally failed to give them opportunities for jobs and incomes that can support their families. On the other hand, the government fiscal crisis remains and is expected to rise in 2008, leading to the administration’s efforts to impose more and higher taxes. There are basically two main reasons for this. The government has not been able to improve its revenue collection and the Arroyo administration is involved in or at least tolerates large-scale graft and corruption as well as corporate tax evasion. Last year there were continued exposures of the administration’s inherent and widespread corruption and President Arroyo ended 2007 with the label of “the most corrupt President in Philippine history”. The second reason is that the administration is running out of assets to sell off due to the economic policy of privatisation.

On the Political Situation

President Arroyo is the most unpopular president since the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos. President Arroyo acknowledged this with the claim that she “would rather be right than popular”. Locally, she is isolated from the working sectors that make up the largest share of the population. She is distrusted by most of the middle class and at most tolerated by the country’s elites. Internationally, the administration’s miserable human rights record and far-reaching corruption have been publicly criticised.

The deepening unpopularity of President Arroyo and her administration is unmatched in the post-Marcos dictatorship time and goes far in setting a political tone for 2008. IBON Foundation opinion survey in 2007 saw a sudden decline in her net satisfaction rating from minus 47 in January to minus 66 in October 2007, and those desiring her removal increasing from 47% to 61%.

The Arroyo administration in 2007 continued to openly use the vast resources of the state for its own partisan purposes, testing even the limits of its broad executive powers. The most extreme form was the continued use of military, paramilitary and police forces. The armed forces of the state were systematically used to violently suppress unarmed civilians, social and mass movements. This also had the accompanying effect of intimidating even the anti-Arroyo general public and traditional political opposition. These were combined with other repressive legal and political measures against their opponents.

Last year, we saw waves of international condemnation. The administration was publicly rebuked even by the United Nations (UN), whose Special Rapporteur on extra-judicial, summary and arbitrary executions, Philip Alston, submitted his final report to the UN General Assembly. The report clearly identified the Armed Forces in the Philippines (AFP) and the administration’s counter-insurgency programme as being behind the wave of extra-judicial killings that is extraordinary since the Marcos dictatorship. The political violence was also denounced by the European Union (EU), the World Council of Churches (WCC), United Evangelical Mission (UEM) and other faith-based groups, prominent non-governmental bodies such as the Europe-based Permanent People’s Tribunal (PPT), Amnesty International (AI), and many others. Even the United States Senate went as far as making part of the US aid contingent dependent on the Arroyo administration taking credible steps to address the problem.

The independent human rights group KARAPATAN recorded 69 killings and 26 enforced disappearances in the January–October 2007 period (*see Table 14*). The number has decreased in comparison with previous years, which is a triumph of determined and courageous campaigning by victims and their families, church people, human rights groups and other advocates and allies. However, the state sponsored and sanctioned violence still clearly continues. Shortly before the end of 2007,

there were already some 1,100 victims of extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances since President Arroyo came into power in 2001. These include political activists, human rights workers, church people, students, professionals and progressive journalists.

Table 14: Victims of Political Violence under the Arroyo Government, 2001-2007

Victims of Extra-judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Execution under the Arroyo Government (Annual Totals)

Year	Total	Organized	Women
2001	99	35	11
2002	118	44	13
2003	123	32	14
2004	83	41	9
2005	187	101	14
2006	209	108	25
2007 (Jan-Oct)	68	34	11
Total	887	395	97

Victims of Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance under Arroyo Government (Annual Totals)

Year	Total	Organized	Women
2001	7	1	2
2002	9	3	2
2003	11	2	1
2004	26	10	5
2005	28	6	0
2006	78	26	16
2007 (Jan-Oct)	26	14	5
Total	185	62	31

Source: *Karapatan*

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines also documented an increasing number of human rights violations among UCCP church workers, lay church workers and members since the time of President Arroyo. For extra-judicial killings – 20 victims (6 of these were church workers), frustrated killings – 4 victims (2 church workers), enforces disappearances – 2 victims, tortured and illegal detention – 5 victims (2 are pastors) and we also documented 6 cases of harassments and death threats. (see last page of this article for the exact data).

The general human rights situation remains disappointing. Overall, there were also 330 incidents of human rights violations involving 16,307 victims in the period January-October 2007, on the sides of violations of civil and political rights, of economic, cultural and social rights, as well as international humanitarian laws.

Last year also saw the extraordinary Supreme Court (SC) take efforts to protect, promote and uphold human rights. The SC convened a summit on legal responses to

the political killings, which potentially opened up avenues for more positive court and legal action. The summit has so far resulted in the legal remedy of a *Writ of Amparo*, undercutting the ritual denial of state armed forces when asked about disappearances, and compelling them to take more active and credible actions regarding the missing. Ruel Moñaque, a UCCP youth leader who was abducted, tortured and detained in the military camp last November 2007, was the first to benefit from the writ of Amparo.

Church Response

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines has the vision to be a responsible, empowered, self-reliant and caring community of Christian believers, and commits itself to the mission of establishing and uniting the community of faith to the proclamation of the gospel towards the transformation of both the church and society for an abundant and meaningful life for all.

The UCCP translates its mission into a life work, to enable the local churches to engage in the community ministries that are appropriate, relevant and responsive to the needs of the people. It emphasises awareness and capability-building of UCCP members on peace and environmental issues and concerns. The UCCP has provided several venues for its members to be aware of the situation confronting the country, such as forums and discussions on various issues like human rights, peace and environment at all levels. We have also conducted several training programmes and seminars on human rights orientation and doing para-legal and advocacy work. The UCCP also issued Pastoral Statements and appeals to churches and partner institutions on a local and international level. Resolutions regarding human rights and human security law have been approved by the General Assembly and the National Council.

The UCCP is also involved in the widespread promotion, advocacy and networking for human rights in the Philippines like KARAPATAN, HUSTISYA (families of victims under Arroyo administration united for justice) and other sectoral organisations and international communities like the World Council of Churches (WCC), Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) and other church partners. We have also conducted several dialogues with the Philippines National Police and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on human rights concerns. Last July 2nd 2007, UCCP together with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) and the Philippines National Police signed a Joint Statement of co-operation and dialogue on the issue of human rights.

UCCP Victims of Human Rights Violations		
Name	Date	Place
<i>Extra Judicial Killings</i>		
Ray Corpin	2002	Samar
Rev. Loreto Macalanggan	2003	Davao
Elvis Ading	2003	Davao del Sur
Abe Sungit	Feb. 5, 2004	Palawan
Vicente Olea	Nov. 2004	Palawan
Isaias Manano	April 28, 2004	Mindoro
Joel Baclao	Nov. 10, 2004	Bicol
Alfredo Davis	April 15, 2005	Leyte
Rev. Edison Lapuz	May 12, 2005	Leyte
Rev. Raul Domingo	Aug. 20, 2005	Palawan
Juancho Sanchez	Nov. 16, 2005	Tarlac
Junico Halem	Dec. 6, 2005	Misamis Occ
Nestor Ariñque	March 7, 2006	Bohol
Rev. Jemias Tinambacan	May 9, 2006	Misamis Occ
Ptr. Andy Pawican	May 21, 2006	Nueva Ecija
Noli Capulong	May 27, 2006	Laguna
Madonna Castillo	July 20, 2006	Isabela
Rei Mon Guran	July 31, 2006	Bicol
Renato Pacaida	March 2, 2007	Davao
Rev. Filomino Catambis	Jan. 23, 2008	Leyte
(Note: 3 UCCP members reported to be victims of EJK but not yet documented)		
<i>Frustrated Killings</i>		
Alden Ambida	April 9, 2005	Samar
Rev. Billy Austin	Nov. 9, 2006	Bagiuo
Rev. Marilou Tinambacan	May 9, 2006	Misamis Occ
Evelyn Davis	April 15, 2005	Leyte
<i>Enforced Disappearances</i>		
Abner Hizarsa	March 22, 2007	Zambales
Rev. Carlos dela Cruz (released)	March 30, 2007	Cavite
<i>Tortured/Detained</i>		
Ruel Marcial	May 22, 2006	Nueva Ecija
Fidel Palting	May 22, 2006	Nueva Ecija
Rev. Jun Bunoan (released)	April 21, 2007	Abra
Ptr. Berlin Guerrero	May 27, 2007	Cavite
Ruel Moñasque	Nov. 2007	Pagadian

UCCP Victims of Human Rights Violations		
Name	Date	Place
<i>Death Threats/ Harassments</i>		
Perido Family	Sept. 2006	Nueva Ecija
Priel Booc	2006	Davao
Rev. Reveche	2006	Surigao
5 UCCP local churches	Aug. 2007	Palawan
Rev. Marma Urbano	May 2007	Laguna
Rev. Joel Tendero	Aug. 21, 2007	Laguna

The UCCP also provides direct assistance to victims of all forms of human rights violations and their families – networking, solidarity and the provision of needed support services like fact-finding missions, relief distribution, counselling and sanctuary for people under threat, legal assistance, scholarship assistance to children, psycho-social therapy, medical assistance and burial assistance.

The UCCP is working in the direction of an intensive and intentional process of institutionalising the human rights programme with the three components: (1) education and awareness building among UCCP constituents, (2) advocacy and networking; this includes policy advocacy involving a network of lawyers, media persons and individuals in government service at different levels and (3) direct assistance to victims and their families.

Lastly, the UCCP seeks the continued accompaniment of Christians and churches all over the world on this journey, until we shall all have found meaning and reality in the Prophet Isaiah’s hope that “Everywhere in the land righteousness and justice will be done. Because everyone will do what is right, there will be peace and security forever. God’s people will be free from worries and their homes peaceful and safe.” (Isaiah 32:16-18)

Sri Lanka

W. P. EBENEZER JOSEPH

The situation in Sri Lanka is a complex and complicated one. It is difficult to draw attention to all aspects of the issues it is confronted with. One example is the unfortunate conflict, which has become a full-scale war, which clouds and impacts all aspects of social life. This paper intends to present some glimpses to help better understand the present situation in the country.

It is my hope that the issues raised in this presentation are NOT used for any generalisation that leads to blaming certain communities or sectors of people.

I have always believed and I am convinced and live in the hope that there is so much good among the people of all communities, including the people of all faiths and their clergy, that one day such good will prove itself for the common good of all and triumph over evil and violence.

The war and its direct consequences

Civilian casualties

The increasing number of civilian casualties and the direct impact on the rural poor communities is on the increase. According to ICRC reports during the first six weeks alone, 180 civilians have been killed. This is due to areal bombing of the security forces and claymore attacks and bombs set off by the LTTE. The fear gripping the people in vulnerable areas is immense. “We are concerned about the impact the heightened violence has on civilians”, said the Head of the ICRC.

Internally Displaced Persons

A large number of IDPs is the direct result of the intensified war. People are forced to abandon their villages due to shelling; the war in the Eastern province provided ample evidence of this, where nearly 650,000 were in camps. Some of the IDPs have been forced to return, while some settled in new areas as their original abodes have been now declared high security zones. Now, that the threat of the war has moved to the North, many thousands are expected to be displaced.

Restrictions on transport

The Jaffna Peninsula continues to be cut off from the rest of the island. It is impossible for the poor to travel, as sea and air travel is expensive. This also results in the escalation of the cost of essential items. The Wannu, which is under the control of the LTTE, has only restricted access to the rest of the island, where there are heavy controls on both sides.

Now for security reasons, direct road transport is not possible beyond Medawachchiya. Major parts of the district of Mannar and Vavuniya are directly affected. Again, the war affects the poor, who need medical attention, and whose livelihood is hampered as their produce cannot be transported easily and quickly.

The intensity of the war

The intensity of the war has increased due to the use of highly sophisticated equipment such as

- Multi-barrel shelling
- LTTE using aircraft
- Claymore attacks and suicide bombing
- Modernisation of the Army, Airforce, Navy etc.,

The cost of all this is borne by the people and the civilians have become the most affected sector.

The humanitarian agencies

Many restrictions have been placed on the role of the humanitarian agencies who normally help the displaced people and people in conflict zones with relief and rehabilitation programmes. The activities of such humanitarian agencies have come under severe surveillance and some of these agencies have even been subjected to propaganda claiming that they are supported by the LTTE. The restriction on their movements into areas of high intensive conflict also prevents authentic information from flowing out. Sri Lanka has been declared one of the most dangerous places in the world for humanitarian workers.

Media

The media has been effectively controlled. News of the war front is generally that of the State version. Intimidation and threats, murder of journalists and media institutions is rampant. Sri Lanka is described as the third most dangerous place in the world for journalists in the year 2007.

Disappearance and extra-judicial killings

Disappearances and extra-judicial killings are rampant. All parties to the conflict are guilty of this. The State, Military, the LTTE and other militant groups. The numbers are hazy. One report said that in the Jaffna Peninsula alone six people disappear daily. Some abductions also take place in order to demand a ransom.

Fear and suspicion

A climate of fear and suspicion has dawned on the people. A lack of trust among people and fear of what could happen is dividing the communities. The climate is also affecting the children as school life is gradually being disrupted.

A culture of violence

The above factor creates a highly militarised atmosphere where all citizens have an active role to play. The negative effects of the war mentioned above, are not confined to the geographical areas where the war is taking place. The spill over is now seen in all aspects of Sri Lankan society; the opposition is silenced, any form of legitimate opposition to the State, even on matters not related to the war, is suppressed by the same means, the trade unions are under attack, and the culture of violence has also invaded even simple domestic disputes.

Forced conscription

Forced conscription is carried out by all militant groups. This includes children. The LTTE and the other armed militant groups are responsible for this. The people have no one to turn to. All the above concerns can be attributed to the military, LTTE and other militant groups in relation to the activities they are involved with. The immediate impact of the war on other social realities can be summarised as follows:

Economy

Many analyses exist on the economic situation in the country. Whatever the pros and cons are, the impact on the ordinary people is what matters. Some of the indicators are as follows:

- inflation approximately 26%,
- cost of living for essentials has increased by at least 50-80%,
- unemployment is on the increase,
- increased borrowings from private banks.

The cause for the above is usually attributed to the following:

- unprecedented increases in the oil price coupled with the weakening of the Dollar; however, the cost of the war has direct implications on the cost of living,
- the direct impact on the economy due to the war,
- the cost of arms and ammunition,
- the human cost and compensation paid,
- the impact of the refugees.

The above economic impact directly affects the following sectors:

- fishing and farmer communities,
- plantation sector.

The worse affected sections are the rural farmers.

Social

The social fabric of the country is collapsing and the indicators are as follows:

- the high rate of suicide (probably the 5th highest in the world),
- the culture of violence (increase of thuggery, and intimidation and the underworld),
- extreme manifestation of violence (even to solve minor domestic issues),
- the breakdown in traditional values.

Hence to summarise: the actions of the State and its military, the LTTE and the other armed militant movements are all guilty of the above trends. It is the civilians from the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities that are forced to pay the price for all this.

Other national issues that need urgent attention

Amidst the long drawn-out conflict many other serious problems confronting the nation are often overlooked such as:

The impact of the climatic changes:

- being an island it is estimated that considerable low-lying coastal areas will be submerged in the next century,
- the possibility of refugees coming from the Maldives as the smaller islands submerge,
- the present war is being fought over land, of which approximately 40% will be submerged in the waters in the next hundred years,
- the increase in the frequency and intensity of floods, landslides, etc.

HIV-AIDS:

The increasing threat of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its social consequences

Migrant domestic workers:

The increasing number of migrant domestic workers and the social consequences of the same.

The role of the churches

The church has still the distinctive advantage due to the following:

- Both Sinhala and Tamil communities are its members.
- It is spread all over the island.
- It is involved in significant relief and rehabilitation work both in relation to the conflict and the tsunami.

The following are significant aspects of its ministry amidst the situation in which it is placed:

The Ministry of Presence

The church is present with the people. The church community is part and parcel of the affected community. The presence among the people, in their difficulties, problems and obstacles is a great source of strength to them. The church is not to be separated from the affected people but it is part and parcel of the people. The church is also not seen as an external agency that comes and goes at times of crisis. This ministry of presence is of vital importance.

Ministry of relief and rehabilitation

The church continues to be involved in relief and rehabilitation to the maximum possible within its means of financial and human resources. Although major activities are not undertaken like the NGOs, it is the agency that very often brings the first needed support to the affected people

The ministry of peace and reconciliation

It strives to build bridges among estranged people and communities. It is involved in community integration, promoting values of trust and respect to others, reconciling divided groups and facilitating contact among divided communities. The motive being that whatever happens on the political and military front people should relate to each other. This ministry is connected to the issues of justice and fairplay to all. This leads the church to be involved, wherever possible, in advocacy work among all parties involved in the conflict and at the national level.

The ministry of hope

This ministry strives to sustain hope among people through various interactions. It motivates people to work for positive change, giving them hope that the social conditions of today can be changed and will be changed. Finally, violence will not have the last word, rather harmony and understanding among people will lead the entire community into parts of peace and righteousness.

In all the above work, the church strives to implement them in partnership with other religious groups and to promote interfaith harmony and facilitate interfaith relations however small or difficult it may be.

Ministry of prayer

The church is also involved in prayer campaigns for peace on the island and strives to bring both Sinhalese and Tamil communities to pray together. This results in a spirituality of trust, understanding and harmony so that people can make options for non-violence and promote harmony among all people.

In all its endeavours it strives to raise the awareness among people of the futility of violence. The church is dedicated to contribute with other faith partners to creating the basis for a non-violent culture and society, where the aspirations of all communities are met and all can live as Sri Lankans with dignity.

Argentina

NICOLÁS ROSENTHAL

What can I say about the situation in Argentina that I haven't already said when I reported on Latin America? Let's start with some data and a brief history, so that you can understand our context.

Argentina is a federal state in South America with an area of 2,780,000 km² and a population of 36,955,128 (June 2000). After a dark period of military dictatorship in the 1970s, which ended in 1983, the country now has a democratic system with regular elections at all levels. As a federal constitutional democracy, the country has an executive branch headed by an elected president, a bi-cameral legislature and a separate judiciary. Argentina has a mixed agricultural, industrial and service economy. It is a huge country with a lot of natural resources (oil, gas, minerals, extended agricultural land and a long coastline on the Atlantic full of fish). It comprises all climates and geographies, from tropical jungles to high altiplane deserts, from temperate rain forests at the foot of the snow-ridden Andes Mountains to the extended flat green Pampas in the East, from windy Patagonia to the long coastline, home of whales, penguins and sea lions.

Brief history

During the 20th century Argentina was governed in alternate form by the Radical Party, the military and the Peronist Party. The Radicals and the Peronists achieved power through popular elections and the military through the destitution of the governments called democratic. Each one of these groups had to count on the support of the Catholic Church, the economic and financial corporations and, from industrialisation onwards, the unions.

The Radicals began as the political voice of the children of the immigrants, opposed by the landowner oligarchy governing until the beginning of the 20th century. After the reform of the electoral law in 1912, the Radicals came to power in the first popular election in 1916. In 1930 the Radicals were overthrown in the first coup of the military corporation.

During World War II and afterwards, a period of industrialisation began with factories located in belts of the bigger cities, especially Buenos Aires and Rosario as overseas ports. The workers of the factories were the children of the immigrants and the Creoles of the countryside and mountainous regions. The Peronist Movement arose with that working-class coming "out of the closet" during the days of the recognition of their social rights and the building of a welfare state on the initiative of general Juan Domingo Perón during his first presidency (1945-1951), followed by the second, until its overthrow in 1955 by the military. Eva Duarte de

Perón, call affectionately “Evita”, played an important role in this process until her death in 1952.

The period of military governments began with the overthrow of Yrigoyen in 1930, followed with the overthrow of Perón in 1955 and the following military coups. The last one (1976-1983) was characterised by:

- State terrorism, a true genocide where more than 30,000 disappeared; that means the kidnapping, torture and secret extermination of thousands of socially committed people (teachers, trade unionists, lawyers, journalists, catechists, etc.), who were labelled “subversive leftist”;
- Gains for landowners and financial corporations with the open and total installation of a neoliberal economy and the creation of external debts that cannot be paid back;
- The attempt to cause a war with Chile for the continental ice in 1978, deactivated by the intervention of Pope John Paul II.;
- The military occupation of the Malvinas/Falklands islands in 1982 with the consequent lost war against the United Kingdom.

After the Malvinas/Falklands war, democracy returned in 1983. Today we have had 24 years of democracy with a succession of Peronist and Radical governments.

Neoliberal policies and resistance

What is important to highlight is that during the 1970s and 1980s, military dictatorships were used by the establishment¹ to introduce neoliberal policies in a forced and bloody manner, and indebtedness that destroyed the social balance and the fair distribution of wealth that Argentineans had gained through the Peronist welfare state.

With the excuse of development, the dictatorship brought the Argentine external debt from 6 billion US\$ in 1976 to 43 billion US\$ in 1983. But the money was not used for that goal and ended on Swiss and offshore accounts of the “establishment”.

The weak democratic Radical government that took over after 1983 was forced to refinance this debt at more onerous rates and so the debt grew to 63 billion US\$ by 1989. In that year Carlos Menem, a very corrupt Peronist, was elected president, and in contradiction to his promises during the election campaign, he became the best pupil of the neoliberal finance system, doing everything the International Finance Institutions demanded², increasing the external debt to a staggering 190 billion US\$ in ten years.

1 The finance corporation, the upper class and the transnational companies.

2 Privatisations of the public utilities, deregulation of the economy, opening to the external markets, fiscal adjustment by means of the increase of taxes and services and the reduction of social policies and governmental personnel, increase of interest rates, labour flexibilisation and policies of deficit zero.

Of course that bubble had to explode, and it did so in 2001. Argentina entered into default, people's bank accounts were frozen, unemployment soared and poverty grew to 57%. Big mass demonstrations forced the Radical president of that time to resign. Our currency, the peso, had to be devaluated from a 1:1 ratio to the US\$, to a 3:1 ratio.

Finally, the new Peronist president who was elected in 2003, Nestor Kirchner, did exactly the opposite of what the neoliberal establishment gurus and the IFIs suggested, and so Argentina came out of the crisis: He promoted a strong intervention of the state in the economy, weakening the peso so that exports outnumbered imports, raising taxes on successful exports so that the extra gains could be better distributed and local prices would not soar high, raising pensions and salaries to stimulate spending while pressing business not to increase prices, re-negotiating the external debt at better rates with a decrease of capital, not reducing taxes and producing a surplus budget, launching a huge subsidies and self-employment programme for the poor.

What happened is that Argentina's economy has been growing for 5 years at a 9% rate, poverty has come down from 57 to 25%, and unemployment is a one digit figure.

Not all is rosy. Distribution of the income between the richest 10% and the poorest 10% has not changed and continues to be around 30 to 1. But the human rights record of the government is good, the judiciary has been uplifted by the presidential appointment of independent and respected judges to the Supreme Court and Argentina's foreign policy strengthens the relationships within South America and its common market, the MERCOSUR.

The attitude of the churches

The ecumenical evangelical churches reaction has been mixed. While they welcome all the positive changes the government has steered, churches still insist on some changes that are in their opinion crucial for the future. For example, in the case of foreign debts, the churches believe that it cannot be entirely re-negotiated, but that an audit is urgently necessary to identify the great part that is illegitimate, to denounce it and turn it down. Also, although some very progressive laws have been approved or are being formulated³ enforcement is too slow. And environmental issues still need to be put on the agenda.

One aspect very positively evaluated is that in the midst of the crisis the government convened a consultative body, called the Consultative Council for Social Policies, that

3 Migration rights, refugees' rights, ownership of communal lands by the original peoples, religious freedom, etc.

still meets weekly. All stakeholders in the social field have seats there, three for each sector: the government⁴, the employers associations, the trade unions, the NGOs, the religious organisations⁵. The council, which exists also at provincial and local levels, oversees the government social policies, dialogues about the needs of the different sectors and tries to find solutions on social issues using the expertise of all the participants. Subsidies for the poor, self-employment programmes, workers rights, measures to stimulate employment; all these topics are discussed there. It’s a place where the Protestant churches can do advocacy work and know they will be taken seriously.

One last point I would like to share with you is that being far away from the economically powerful countries helps to perceive better that the economic system behaves like an empire in the biblical sense. And maybe at the centre of the empire, churches could exercise pressure on TNCs; but what we perceive very clearly are the enormous lobby abilities and pressure skills the northern resourceful neoliberal think tanks can exert. It’s a phenomenon that has, as we feel it, not been very much analyzed by our partners in the North. In other words, many times the neoliberal economy behaves like a rolling snowball, but sometimes it gets “a little help from its friends”. Some “little conspiracy” indeed is going on and churches must stand firm against it and show its disguise.

Germany

PETER OHLIGSCHLÄGER

Basic facts

- size: 357,021 km²
- population: 82.5 million
- migrant population:
 - 7.3 million foreigners living in Germany (8.8%)
 - 1.5 million with German citizenship
 - 4.5 million repatriates of German descendant (Russia, Romania and Poland)
- 2005 mini census: 19% people with migration background
- age structure: 14% under 15, 19% over 65
- religions:
 - 26 million Protestants
 - 26 million Roman Catholics
 - 0.9 million Orthodox

⁴ Departments of Labour, Human Development, Economics.

⁵ One representative of the Catholic Church from Caritas, one for the Jewish Welfare Organisation, one for the Argentine Federation of Protestant Churches (me).

- 3.3 million Muslims
- 0.23 million Buddhists
- 0.1 million Jews
- 0.09 million Hindus

Main challenges

- Migrant population: challenge of integration, avoiding dual societies and ethnic ghettos, enabling dialogue and co-operation, in particular with Muslim communities;
- Refugees: numbers diminishing due to protective European asylum policy and police and military forces (FRONTEX) at the EU-borders (Europe as fortress); result: human catastrophes at the frontiers e.g. Canary Islands;
- Human trafficking, in particular of women, has increased since the borders to Eastern Europe opened: estimated 140,000 women per year, mostly from Eastern European countries and beyond. Trafficking in women and forced prostitution go hand in hand;
- Economic globalisation: the closure of the Nokia production unit in Bochum (2,300 workers) and the move of Nokia to Romania have stirred up a new debate on the negative effects of globalisation: people don't matter, only profit matters. Public subsidies and free infrastructure are to attract industries to come in;
- Climate Change/Global warming: ambitious greenhouse gas reduction objectives of our government and the EU, but they are reluctant in implementing them, avoiding confrontation with energy and car lobby:
 - Power: building big new coal power plants instead of fostering renewable and decentralised power units;
 - Buildings/heating: programmes to promote insulation of buildings, private and public, to reduce energy costs;
 - Transport: Because of big car production in Germany (Mercedes, BMW, Volkswagen, Opel, Ford) and corresponding employment potential, private transport is still given priority to public transport (e.g. by means of subsidies);
 - Fuel: in order to reduce consumption of petroleum and emissions of carbon dioxide, petrol is mixed with bio fuels (like bio diesel and bio ethanol): target 17% in Germany, 10% in the whole EU by 2020; problem: there is not enough bio fuel available in Germany/Europe to meet this target; bio fuels have to be imported from abroad; this results in competition of land use: production of food vs. biomass, food security vs. bio energy supplies.

Responses of the churches

- The churches are pleading for more efforts for integration: both sides have to open up and to change. The churches themselves have not really opened up their own structures to integrate Christians from other parts of the world. There is co-existence, sometimes co-operation between German speaking congregations and migrant churches. Often the co-operation with Muslim communities is more advanced;
- Official church statement “Clarity and good Neighbourhood” (EKD) stirred up debate;
- Churches have spoken out clearly against the present EU-policy at the frontiers, which is clearly in contrast to international law. The churches have lobbied for “people without papers” who have lived in Germany already for years to receive legal status;
- Trafficking in women as a modern form of slavery is condemned by the churches. Church-related advisory centres assist victims and co-operate with similar organisations in Eastern Europe. A European ecumenical network was established with the assistance of the CEC;
- Two German member churches have officially passed synod papers on economic globalisation: EKvW: “Globalisation - Economy in the Service of Life” (2004) and “Shaping Globalisation: State and Church, Challenges to Justice and Peace” (2007) and EKIR: “Economy in the Service of Life” (2008);
- Several German churches have become members of the “Climate Alliance” together with environmental and one world organisations in Germany, fighting against global warming and for global justice, demanding a consistent climate policy and implementation on national, EU and global level and funding adaptation measures to global warming:
 - Power: Churches are pleading for a moratorium on erecting new coal power stations to give alternatives such as renewable energies, energy efficiency and small decentralised power units a chance;
 - Buildings/heating: Churches have introduced the programme “Green Cock”, an eco management and audit scheme for churches in order to save energy and reduce emission of green house gases;
 - Transport: The churches advocate for the taxation of kerosene for planes. They ask their own personnel to use more public transport and to reduce the number of flights. For unavoidable flights carbon dioxide compensation can be paid into CO₂-reducing projects in the south (organisation atmos-fair). Telephone-conferences have also been introduced to reduce amount of travelling;
 - Fuel: A few churches (e.g. EKvW) have taken a clear stand against bio fuel import in big scale from developing countries. Food security and reducing

poverty in developing countries (MDGs) must have priority. A change of our western lifestyle is necessary.

Needs to be addressed by the churches

- What can the churches do together (UEM member churches in Asia, Africa and Germany) to mitigate global warming?
- What can the churches do together to work on the root causes of people fleeing their countries?
- What can the churches do together to strengthen the (power of) dignity of human beings and creation in a globalised and changing world?

Research paper

Batam: Ecological and social rifts of industrialisation

A research paper written by SÜDWIND e.V.

FRIEDEL HÜTZ-ADAMS¹

Basic data, legal status and economy

Location, size and population

The island of Batam is part of Indonesia and belongs to the Riau archipelago. The island is only 415 km² in size and is located only 20 km away from Singapore. Following an administrative reform in 2004, the Riau archipelago became an independent province with Tanjung Pinang as capital, which is located on the island of Bintan (figure 1).

Just 40 years ago, Bantam had only approximately 2,000 inhabitants who lived mostly off fishing. When the island opened up for investment from Singapore and other countries, the growth of population soared. In 1995, there were 196,080 people living there and this number had doubled by the year 2000 (462,293). In 2007, 720,834 inhabitants were counted by the authorities of which 370,159 are women (men: 350,675) (figure 2).

It remains unclear how many more people live there who are not registered with the authorities. Observers estimate that in 2006 approximately 1 million people lived on the island of Batam (Mun Heng 2006: 5).

Despite this growth Batam is a very small area compared to the entire country: in 2006, the population of Indonesia amounted to approximately 224 million people on a total area of 1,860,000 km² (figures 3-5).

Changing Status

The initial plans for the construction of an industrial area on Batam were made in 1969. The establishing of companies was accompanied by set backs and the legal status of the island changed several times. The state-owned Indonesian oil company Pertamina planned to develop the Riau archipelago into a central oil processing region – and that not only because of the vast oil resources in the archipelago. However, these plans failed in the mid-1970s due to financial problems of the company.

¹ Translation: Daniel Müller Thór

In 1978, the Indonesian President Soeharto declared Batam a Special Economic Area, where export oriented industries were to be established. In order to attract companies, they were permitted to import raw materials more or less free of custom fees and tollage, if they were to be re-exported after processing. However, few investments were made. Therefore, in the 1980s, the Indonesian government went one step further: While in other parts of Indonesia all foreign investors had to build joint ventures with Indonesian companies and while they were only allowed to hold minority stakes in these joint venture companies, foreign investors could fully and independently run and control companies in Batam (Abschlag/Barkow 2003: 10-20).

The special status of Batam was criticised over and over again until, in 2005, tollage and customs exemptions were abolished. Observers estimate that the reason for this was abuse of custom exemptions: goods that were imported toll free for processing and re-exportation were supposedly forwarded to other parts of Indonesia, thus tax benefits were abused and tax fraud committed (Guerin 2007).

In 2006, another contract between the governments of Indonesia and Singapore was signed and Batam, Bintam, Karimun and Singapore were declared a Special Economic Area. Now goods could be transported again between the islands, more or less unrestricted and exempt from tollage and custom fees.

Free Trade Zone

In June 2007, the government of Indonesia declared all of Batam, and parts of Bintam and Karimun a Free Trade Zone. The parliament confirmed this decision in September. Since this decision was made, the exemptions in the Free Trade Zone on the levying of import taxes, tollage and other fees have gone further than ever before. However, complaints about a massive abuse of these special regulations continue to be raised (cf. chapter 1.6).

Principle partner Singapore

In December 1989, then Vice-Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore suggested developing Singapore, the island of Batam and the Malaysian province Singapore into a "triangle of growth". In 1990, Indonesia and Singapore signed an agreement of co-operation, in 1992 "BatamIndo Industrial Park" was founded as a joint venture and in 1995 a trilateral contract was signed and the "SiJoRi (Singapore-Johor-Riau) Growth Triangle" was developed.

Singapore soon turned out to be the most important investor for the industrialisation of Batam: 45% of all investments until 1992 originated in the rich neighbouring island (Abschlag/Barkow 2003: 16). With this development of relationships with Indonesia and Malaysia, Singapore is reacting to changes in their own economic structure. The country had developed from being a producer of cheap mass goods to

an industrialised country. Wages had increased massively. In 1997, the salary per hour was 8.37 US\$ in Singapore, 2.2 US\$ in Malaysia and 0.39 US\$ in Indonesia. Companies from Singapore could thus profit from drastically lower wages by shifting production of labour intensive products to a place only 30 kilometres away (Abschlag/Barkow 2003: 11 and 15).

Besides the salary issue, the number of people available on the labour market plays an important role for companies. According to data from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the rate of unemployment was below 3 % in Singapore at the end of 2006. In the same year, the work force grew by 6 %. Half of this growth has to be attributed to the employment of labour migrants.

This number would have to be drastically increased, had labour intensive production not been shifted to Batam – as well as Free Trade Zones operated by Singapore in China and India. At the same time, Singapore could solve the problem of lack of space on the island: 4.5 million people and a great number of companies are elbowing on 704 km².

Even if companies from Singapore produce their goods in Batam they also profit from free trade agreements established between Singapore and the US. According to this agreement many of the product lines produced in Batam have the same status as products produced in Singapore and can thus be exported to the US free of tollage. Most of these products are IT equipment (Mun Heng 2006: 7).

Economic data and work force

Investments in Batam have almost quintupled since 1990. According to information of the administration of the industrial zone of Batam (“BIDA – Batam Industrial Development Authority”) investment amounted to approximately 12.86 billion USD in 2007 (in 1990, 2.7 billion US\$). 2.5 billion US\$ of this amount originate from the Indonesian government, 4.6 billion US\$ from foreign investors and 5.7 billions US\$ from Indonesian investors. As of 2006, 894 of the 10,000 companies registered in Batam are of foreign origin. Over the last years, the value of exports made was just below 4 billion US\$ (not including crude oil and natural gas). Since 2001, economic growth rates are at about 7% p.a. (figures 6-8).

“Of the 256,131 workforce 145,999 are women, and 110,132 are men. The number of foreign workers is 2,464 people. Most of them work in the industrial sector” (UEM 2007: 2). Business is done in a variety of economic areas: “There are some 40 shipyard industries and other heavy oil rig fabrication and steel fabrication plants. But most of the enterprises consist of electronics and computer related manufactures like audio and video equipment and printed circuit boards. Other products include leather goods, shoes, garments, toys, household products and health care products. Tourism is emerging as a major industry with around 1.3 million visitors a year, making Batam Indonesia’s second most popular destination after Bali. There are

more than 6,000 hotel and resort rooms, many of international class. There are two marinas and six international standard golf courses.” (Mun Heng 2006: 6)

Batam's importance for Indonesia

Indonesia is facing severe problems. A decade after the end of the dictatorship of Soeharto, his heritage is still prominent in politics and economics. The military continues to have much influence on politics and public life, massive human right's violations by government authorities, stagnant judiciary, police and army reforms, as well as unresolved and partly military conflicts in several provinces are a burden on the future of the country.

Potential investors criticise still prevalent corruption and long bureaucratic procedures. Of 178 registered countries, Indonesia is only in place 123 in the World Bank's "Doing Business" ranking (www.doingbusiness.org, on 3rd January 2008).

In Transparency International's corruption index 2007, Indonesia is in place 143 of 179 registered countries. At the beginning of 2005, a survey amongst business people from all over Indonesia revealed that bribes are demanded and paid in all areas and for many business and administrative procedures. According to the survey, this also applies to Batam (TI-Indonesia 2005).

Attractive Batam

However, Batam is attractive for investors as it is located far away from the power centres and very close to Singapore. The administration, offices and logistic centres of companies from Singapore and other parts of the world can remain in Singapore while the production of their goods can be moved. Half an hour's journey with the speed ferry is needed to get from the modern, organised and expensive Singapore to the cheap Batam.

The attraction becomes obvious when taking into consideration that, according to information from UNCTAD, the amount of all foreign investment in Indonesia amounted to only 19 billion US\$. Even though it is not clear if the authorities in Batam use the same statistic standards, the indicated 4.5 billion US\$ of foreign investment in Batam highlight the importance of the island in this area of economics (UNCTAD 2007: 257, figure 6).

The salary, which is considerably higher in many other Asian regions, is of vital importance. This includes, in particular, coastal regions, which are particularly suitable for production for the world market due to their accessibility for high sea vessels. In January 2007, the average salary for a factory worker including all associated costs was approximately 100 US\$ in Batam. Salaries in Bangkok (150 US\$), Manila (200 US\$) and Shenzhen (China, 250 US\$) were considerably higher (The Economist Online, 11th January 2007).

Export engine

Establishing of factories in Batam helped Indonesia to develop its export of ready-made products. This contributed to making Indonesia less dependent on exporting raw materials and agricultural products. In addition, the country is in desperate need of acquiring foreign currencies as the Indonesian government is still highly indebted (figure 9).

Statistical import and export data of Indonesia differ considerably. It depends on the source of data if “crude oil and natural gas” are included in the statistics. Another problem is that many statistics do not include import and export data of Special Economic Areas.

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) assumes that Singapore is the most important destination of Indonesian exports, amounting to 8.9% of all exports. Singapore is also by far the most relevant provider of products to Indonesia, amounting to 16.4% (figure 10).

Information on the significance of Batam for Indonesian exports differs a lot. Official numbers state that Batam obtained about 4 billion US\$ of Indonesia’s total exports of 80 billion US\$ (not including crude oil and natural gas). That would equal 5% of all exports. But research from Singapore states seriously higher numbers: “Batam reportedly generates about 14 per cent of Indonesia’s export income other than oil and gas.” (Mun Heng 2006: 6)

It is unclear if this disparity is merely a result of differing import and export items included in the statistics. Another problem is illegal import of goods. Some observers assume that Indonesian import of goods is considerably higher than the 80 billion US\$ quoted by the World Trade Organisation.

In July 2007, Suryadharma Ali, minister for “Co-operatives and Small and Medium Entrepreneurs” in the Indonesian government stated that illegal import of undeclared goods poses a great threat to small and medium sized companies in Indonesia. He emphasised, in particular, Batam as an important source of smuggled goods. (Antara New Online, 17th July 2007)

Widespread poverty and weak government structures

According to the World Bank, more than 37 million (16.6%) Indonesians were considered poor at the end of 2007. The rate of poverty is thus reduced back to the level where it was before the economic crisis of the late 1990s. But another 12% of the population lives just above the poverty line. Therefore, the rate of poverty could quickly increase again to 29% in case of another economic crisis. This means that almost one third of the Indonesian population is either extremely poor or has to survive just above the poverty line. (World Bank 2007: 19)

The high rate of poverty explains the attraction Batam has for many Indonesians: the island with its increasing number of businesses and a growing middle class

promises jobs and, with that, income. But, on the other hand, many immigrants can't find a job. “What is staggering is that the number of job-seekers in Batam in the year 2006 was 40,033, of whom 22,805 (56.97%) were women, and 17,228 (43.03%) were men. The number of job opportunities available was only 2,269 men and 7,239 women. The number of unemployment in 1999 was 8.44%, but in the year 2006 it was 13.45 percent. The number of people living under the poverty line is 33,442 families.” (UEM 2007: 2)

Meanwhile, the government of the island is not capable to coping with the social problems. The Joint Secretariat of UEM Churches and Local Committees states in a summary on the situation on Batam that the government is weak and lacking of human resources. Furthermore, the welfare and the education system are “not sufficient to face the huge challenges.” (UEM 2007: 4)

Ecological and social problems of Batam

Ecological exploitation

The fast growth of Batam's industry led to severe damage to the environment: forests were chopped down, large areas sealed through construction of buildings, and natural river beds modified. Coherent research still needs to be done; however, there are numerous issues pointing towards the existence of serious problems:

- Visitors to the island frequently complain about bad air and tickling of the throat. It remains unclear how much this is caused by forest fires in other regions of Indonesia. However, the plants and companies have a considerable effect in this situation. Critics blame, in particular, companies from Singapore for dislocating environmentally harmful production segments to Batam, thus avoiding more strict environmental laws of Singapore. (Colombijn 2003: 10)
- Visitors to the island repeatedly report of polluted rivers and lakes. In 2003, an environmental report accused plants and companies of the Riau province – of which Batam was a part at that time – of systematically inducing industrial effluent into the rivers (Jakarta Post Online, 3rd November 2003).
- According to the Indonesian Ministry of Environment, the waters around Batam are not very contaminated. However, reports of the United Nations mention severe oil contamination in the waters. In 2001, severe oil contamination in the waters around Batam and Bintan was proofed (Ministry of Environment 2005: 129, UNEP 2006: 163). In January 2008, the oil related pollution was so severe that hundreds of fishermen of Batam and neighbouring Riau islands had to give up their fishing. According to the fishermen, the pollution is caused by oil vessels that clean their tanks. Between the islands of Batam and Singapore they pump the used water into the ocean together with considerable amounts of oil sludge and the poisonous chemicals used for cleaning the tanks. A spokesperson

of the All-Indonesian Fishermen Association (HNSI) presumes that the authorities purposefully ignore this pollution. “He said he suspected the reason authorities had turned a blind eye to the oil dumping was because they were receiving bribes from oil tankers during their passage through Indonesian waters.” (Jakarta Post Online, 23rd January 2008)

- Environmentalists accuse sand exporting companies of destroying coastal regions in the process. Amongst other factors this destruction is believed to be responsible for the reduction of fish stock. The extraction of sand was repeatedly prohibited and legalised again. According to estimations in early 2007, the Riau islands export 300,000 cubic meters of sand per month to Singapore. (The Straits Times Online, 28th January 2007)
- From 1996 to 2002, the mangrove forests of Batam shrank from 13,106 to 6,691 hectares. Construction of buildings and production of char coal are the main reasons for the forest decline. The biggest part of the charcoal is exported to Singapore. (Ministry of Environment 2005: 128, Jakarta Post Online, 2nd July 2006)
- The amount of garbage in Batam is rising. Of the 590 tons of garbage produced in Batam daily, only 450 tons can be carried to a garbage dump (UEM 2007: 3). The Indonesian Ministry of Environment describes the condition of the garbage dumps of Batam as “relatively poor”. (Ministry of Environment 2005: 179)
- Reports about the illegal import of poisonous products and waste are repeatedly published. For example, in summer 2004, a dispute with Singapore developed around 1,149 tons of imported waste. The Indonesian government classified the waste as highly contaminated with heavy metals. Singapore had to take the cargo back. (Ministry of Environment 2005: 207)

The ecological costs of the industrialisation of Batam still need to be calculated. However, it is obvious by now that the negative impact of industrialising a previously barely inhabited island is irreversible.

Poor housing conditions

The social situation of inhabitants of Batam in terms of health system, education and access to clean water etc. is better than in most regions of Indonesia, according to statistics of government authorities (BPS/BAPPENAS/UNDP 2004). Visitors to the island, however, report serious shortcomings. The rapid growth of population was not accompanied by a similarly rapid development of infrastructure. Schools and childcare are missing and the health system is insufficient. (Abschlag/Barkow 2003: 17)

The water provision on Batam is managed jointly by the local government and a British company. Source of the water is rainwater, which is collected in basins. According to the company, 1,500 new households are connected monthly to the supply system. But with 50,000 new settlers every year this is not sufficient.

If the population grows at the same rate as at present the water resources will not be able to satisfy the needs of the people by 2014. The problems are deepened by companies, which pollute the basins with their sewage. The responsible companies are usually not prosecuted by the local authorities due to corruption.

A considerable amount of the population is living in extremely poor conditions. “Settlements of squatters, piles of trash alongside the streets and visible poverty leave a highly contrasting impression to the nearby Singapore.” (Kiese/Schaarschmidt 2004: 24)

“There are 57,000 houses and kiosks that are problematic.” (UEM 2007: 3) Many of the existing houses were constructed illegally and are called “Ruli”. “This is deducted from ‘rumah liar’, which can be translated as unlawfully, wildly built house. They seem to be glued to slippery mountain slopes or gather near the factories that swallow the inhabitants once they go to work.” (Weinbrenner 2003)

In view of the obvious contradictions between government data and reports of eyewitnesses, comprehensive research into the living conditions of the population is imperative. Such research also needs to take into consideration the many migrants who are not registered legally.

Problematic working conditions

The working conditions in many Indonesian companies are very poor despite relatively well-elaborated labour legislation. It is common practice to pay wages considerably below the legal minimum wage, demand overtime way beyond legal regulations and neglect labour safety provisions.

Indonesian law foresees mandatory minimum wages depending on the region of the country. However, most small businesses are not aware of this legislation (Widarti 2006: 31). And even if this legislation is known, there are ways around, as the legislation is valid only for employees with a regular work contract. But only one third of employees have such a contract:

- 30.3% of employees have “regular wage employment”,
- 44.3% are “self-employed”,
- 7.1% have “casual wage employment” and
- 18.3% are considered “unpaid workers”.

Frequently insecure labour conditions are purposefully created: employers award a contract to a sub-contractor who pays home working employees according to the number of products delivered. (Saget 2006: 5 and 34)

Due to high unemployment rates, employers can enforce such models on their employees. According to information of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), at the end of 2006, unemployment was 10.4% of the population of 109 employable (by age) million Indonesians. In other words, more than 11 million people are looking for jobs. (ADB 2007a: 237)

Unions to combat these conditions are relatively weak in Indonesia. During the Soeharto regime, unions were mainstreamed in the interest of the government or were broken up. During the past 10 years, many small unions have been created but their co-operation is insufficient. At the end of 2006, 87 umbrella organisations and 40 associations not belonging to any of these umbrella organisations were competing. The unions are further weakened by hostility between unions, inexperience and often very close relationships between union officials and employers. (Abdullah/Aneta/Zulkarnaen 2008)

The condition of unions is further aggravated by violence imposed by government security forces or hired groups of goons in cases of conflict. In a corrupted legal system it is difficult to win cases against such violent infringements. (ICFTU 2006) An entrepreneur summarised the potential for negotiation in the following way: “No question of higher wages or bargaining. If they bargain they would be out. There are others who are ready to work.” (Saget 2006: 34)

Reports from Batam point out that the working conditions are by no means better than in other parts of Indonesia. Even though higher wages are paid in the Riau archipelago compared to other parts of Indonesia, living costs are also high for Indonesian standards because of the location close to Singapore and many foreign visitors (Hammelrath 2000: 21).

The 2004 National Human Development Report states that an average of 108,889 Rupiah available as income per person per household equals slipping off into poverty. With 205,909 Rupiah this value is almost double in Batam, the reference for other Riau islands is 151,423 Rupiah. (BPS/BAPPENAS/UNDP 2004: 181 and 187)

In addition, many employers in Batam ignore the legal minimum wage and labour safety regulations. Salaries way below the already insufficient minimum wage, a large number of overtime hours and refusal of days off during weekends are very common. (Weinbrenner 2003)

During the negotiations on a free trade treaty between Singapore and the US, massive criticism was voiced about the direct inclusion of Batam in the regulations (cf. chapter 1.3). A statement was issued in front of a senate committee of the US government: “In the export processing zones of Bintan and Batam there have been widespread violations of basic labour rights. Both the State Department Country Report on Indonesia and recent reports from Indonesian trade unions indicate continuing problems, ranging from failures to pay even the minimum wage to corruption by labour inspectors, to attacks on union supporters by thugs hired by companies or local government.” (Polaski 2003)

Child labour

According to official estimates approximately 4 million children under the age of 15 do not go to school despite compulsory education, i.e. 19% of this age group. The Indonesian government estimates that 1.5 million of these children are forced to

work. A survey of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) revealed that only about half of the parents are aware of the existence of 9 years of compulsory schooling. (ILO Jakarta Newsletter – May 2006: 1-2)

According to some reports, children are sold to the Riau islands in order to work in particularly dangerous industries (ICMC/Solidarity Center 2006: 90). However, current and interdisciplinary information about the situation of children in Batam does not exist. The suspicion that a considerable amount of children are working is at hand: in many cases, their parents do not make enough money to support the family. In addition, the inadequate infrastructure of schools further reduces the rate of school enrolment of children from unregistered migrants.

Migrant workers in Batam

Despite existing problems, Batam is the destination of many Indonesians seeking employment. A large group of migrants originates from Sumatra, but also people from other regions migrate to Batam. In particular, young women use the help of recruiters who then take advantage of the situation: "As a place of employment, Batam has advantages over Bintan or Karimun in luring women or in convincing parents to send their daughters there. Types of jobs offered are as workers in factories and hotels, and as waitresses in restaurants. Often, the recruiters offer to take fresh recruits to Batam by plane. Other than being a source for great excitement for a village girl who has hardly ventured out of her kampung before, air transportation also helps the recruiter to put a bigger debt on the recruits in terms of cost of bringing them to Batam." (ICMC/Solidarity Center 2006: 85) In many cases, the women are indebted when they arrive in Batam. They have to take on any job and thus are in danger of being forced into prostitution. (cf. chapter 2.7)

Turntable for human trafficking

People wishing to legally leave Indonesia have to use licensed agencies. Many of these agencies demand extremely high fees and reimbursement of travel costs, work permits, medical examinations etc. These "costs" of about 1,500 US\$ on average have to be covered by the person wishing to leave the country. Many of these people have to pay back a considerable amount of their income to the recruiting agency (HRW 2004: 21). Many of the recruiters are therefore accused of human trafficking as they keep their clients indebted or sell them the worst jobs (US Department of State 2007: 118).

Batam plays a key role in this business: The government of Singapore decided that people coming from Indonesia and seeking employment have to immigrate through Batam. People seeking employment in Malaysia also use Batam as an important stop over. This applies for both legal and illegal migration. 40,000 to 60,000 working migrants leave Indonesia per year through the Riau islands. The large majority of them move to Singapore. (ICMC/Solidarity Center 2006: 49-51, 89)

In May 2006, Malaysia and Indonesia signed a treaty which further worsens the situation of migrant workers: Malaysian employers are allowed to retain the passports of working migrants and they can deduct up to 50% of the salary in order to pay off the debts of their employees (U.S. Department of State 2007: 119). This holds the great risk that recruiters demand high fees for poorly paid jobs and subsequently receive this money directly from the employer.

This situation is further aggravated by the fact that in many cases employees have to agree to contracts for several years. If they wish to leave the job sooner, “penalties” have to be paid. The following statement from a female worker who was recruited to work in Singapore shows how much employees feel to be at the mercy of their employers. “One Indonesian domestic worker said that her labour agent imparted the following message: ‘We must finish the contract. If we want to go home before two years, then we would have to pay five million rupiah (US\$ 495). If the employer returns me to the agency and they can’t find another employer, then they will send me to Batam. We would be given work in Batam, I don’t know what type. I heard rumours, if sent to Batam, they would make prostitutes out of girls like me, but I don’t know if it’s true. That’s what happens if we do not finish the contract. There is lots of pressure.’ These threats prevent many domestic workers who confront workplace abuse in Singapore from seeking help because they fear the consequences if they do not finish their two-year contracts.” (HRW 2005: 22)

In April 2007, the Indonesian government passed a bill to suppress human trafficking, but in order to implement the regulations the authorities for criminal prosecution have to be strengthened and their awareness of the problem raised. Until today, the authorities are not effective when pursuing human trafficking. (US Department of State 2007: 118-119)

Besides legal migration, many Indonesians attempt to leave the country illegally in order to find employment. One of the most important destinations is Singapore. Batam is also an important departure base for this illegal migration. Therefore, the borders and, in particular, the ferries to Singapore are forcefully policed. Many inhabitants of the Riau islands are furious about the fact that inhabitants of Singapore can freely visit their islands without any restrictions, while they are barred from the rich neighbour. (Ford/Lyons 2006)

Child trading

Batam is a trading place for infants sold into illegal adoption. Partly, the children come from other parts of Indonesia; others are probably the children of prostitutes and migrant workers. Reports from January 2006 reveal how profitable this business is. One dealer was supposed to receive 3,300 US\$ in Singapore for every delivered infant. In addition, children from other parts of Indonesia are deported to Batam for begging. (ICMC/Solidarity Center 2006: 42-43 and 76)

Prostitution

Exact figures on prostitution and related crimes do not exist for Indonesia. According to estimates published by the International Labour Organisation, 30% of the 240,000 Indonesian prostitutes are under the age of 18 (ILO Jakarta Newsletter – September 2005: 14). Similar numbers have been published by UNICEF.

Local research carried out in early 2006, revealed that at least 3,782 prostitutes are exploited in Batam. 25% of them are younger than 18 years old. Other sources speak of 6,300 prostitutes on the Riau islands, 5,000 of them in Batam. A considerable number of the women live in brothels (*lokalisasi*) surrounded by walls and protected by guards. (ICMC/Solidarity Center 2006: 80-83)

UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) Singapore estimates the number of prostitutes in Batam to be 19,000 of which 40% are supposedly younger than 18 years old. Some are even only 12 years old. (The Straits Times Online, 15th June 2004)

The Riau islands have developed into an important trading point for human trafficking of prostitutes (US Department of State 2007: 118). Women and girls from various Indonesian provinces are lured to Batam by promising jobs in factories or hotels. In other cases, they pay substantial amounts of money for travelling to Batam in the hope of getting a well-paid job in Singapore or Malaysia. However, many of them end up in karaoke bars or massage saloons, which often are disguised brothels. Others work in officially registered brothels. In the officially registered 95 brothels alone, 1,096 women from various Indonesian provinces were accounted for in early 2006. 830 women who were not native to Batam were found in the 74 registered bars and karaoke bars. Cases of women are documented who were sent to Singapore and Malaysia where they were forced into prostitution. (ICMC/Solidarity Centre 2006: 66-68, 86-87)

Men from Singapore and Malaysia form the largest group of sex tourists visiting the Riau islands (US Department of State 2007: 118). “The average tourist stay on Batam is 1.3 days, a typical weekend away from Singapore complete with sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll.” (Colombijn 2003: 10) Low prices for the prostitutes and for drinks, food, drugs and hotel rooms allow even average workers from Singapore to spend a weekend in the red light quarters of the Riau islands (Ford/Lyons 2008).

But not only women from Indonesia are sold as prostitutes. Women from all over the world are deported to Indonesia and Batam is a particularly important destination. Prostitutes from China, Thailand, Hong Kong, Uzbekistan, the Netherlands, Poland, Venezuela and Ukraine have been arrested. (US Department of State 2007: 118)

The legal regulation of the business of prostitution in Indonesia is vague. Prostitution is illegal if profitable. Human trafficking is as illegal. However, authorities often receive bribes. Various groups make money with this business in Batam: “Every month prostitution bosses have to pay off local government officials, the

police, the navy and the army with money and women if they want to stay in business. According to some reports, the navy is also directly involved in running a number of the brothels.” (Ford/Lyons 2008)

HIV/AIDS

In 2005, the International Labour Organisation estimated the number of people affected by HIV to be between 90,000 and 130,000, “of which 75% were male and 25% female. In addition, up to 20 million Indonesians are at direct risk of HIV infection. Due to some enabling factors as a large mobile workforce, a growing commercial sex industry and very low rates of condom usage, it is estimated that the number infected could double by 2006.” (ILO Jakarta Newsletter – September 2006: 15)

In 2002, the official number of people carrying the HI Virus in the Riau islands amounted to 2,448. 20% of drug addicts were infected with HIV. Due to prevalent prostitution, ILO estimates that a further 236,000 people are in direct danger. Therefore, ILO and employers attempt to hinder the further spread of HIV and Aids through joined pilot projects. (ILO Press Release, 13th December 2004)

In the meantime, the number of people affected by HIV continues to rise. According to UNAIDS, 170,000 people were infected in 2006. Compared to other countries of the region, the infection rate of 0.1% of the population is still relatively low (UNAIDS 2006: 375). However, epidemiologists predict a fast increase and expect 400,000 cases by 2010 and by 2015 one million infected people and 350,000 casualties. Drug users and prostitutes are the most affected groups. (National AIDS Commission 2007: 45)

International crime

The exposed location together with the social problems of Batam make the island an ideal location for international criminal networking. The connections to smuggling of goods and people as well as business with prostitution are only a part of the overall problem. As no comprehensive research has been done in this area, the following examples may serve to highlight the situation:

- In 2001, the fishermen of Batam gathered and formed, with government support, a so-called “private task force” aimed at taking action against illegal fishing in coastal areas, smuggling and piracy. (Samudra March 2002: 51)
- In the past, Batam was repeatedly the departure point of pirates for their attacks. The criminals could count on the support of some fishermen: since the ocean is over-fished and parts of the ocean are polluted, many fishermen find themselves in economically desperate situations (Liss 2007). In January 2008, the US government donated 15 speedboats to the Indonesian government, four of which will be based in Batam. Their specific task is to fight piracy. (Jakarta Post Online, 18th January 2008)
- In October 2007 a ring of drug dealers was broken up once again: amphetamines

had been produced in Batam and sold globally. (The Brunei Times Online, 24th October 2007)

- A large number of the drug dealers arrested in Singapore in 2007 came from Batam. (The Straits Times Online, 15th January 2008)

In order to fight crime effectively, police and security forces need to fight these crimes more firmly.

Prospects

The development of Batam into a centre of industry awakens many people’s hopes for employment and better living conditions. But the potential of Batam will only lead to a lasting improvement of the living conditions of the people of Batam if developed in a sustainable way. Doing so would imply a stop to the exploitation of natural resources and of the ruthless exploitation of so many of the workers of Batam.

Many of Batam’s problems are the result of the shortcomings of the political system of Indonesia. Therefore, a fundamental reform of the state, as such, is needed. This includes fighting corruption, curing the deficiencies in the administrative sector and strengthening the rights of civil society and non-governmental organisations.

Only such reforms will lead to execution of existing laws, which are continuously breached in Batam. Most urgent areas of action are environmental protection, supplying the population with basic services, complying with existing labour regulations, fighting human trafficking and prostitution as well as fighting crime in general. Strengthening public and government structures in Batam has to go along with this process.

Civil society and non-governmental organisations can play an important role in this process by demanding the necessary changes. Networking of the migrants of various origins would emphasise these demands: the development and consolidation of non-governmental organisations, labour unions and congregations could bring together people of similar conviction. This should include the involvement of people who are not registered in official statistics of the authorities but are living in slums and ghettos. A possible starting point could be the development of structures that can assist people to demand their legitimate rights: raising awareness, education, counselling and pastoral care can create the knowledge of existing rights.

A central aspect of the efforts of various organisations can be to demand the implementation of basic labour regulation of the International Labour Organisation in all factories and companies of Batam.

Raising awareness and spreading the knowledge of basic human rights would stabilise the weak democracy of Indonesia and could be used to improve the living conditions of people if concrete legal advice is provided. It would equally contribute to making sure that the demands of the population are more and more heard by the responsible political authorities in Batam as well as Jakarta.

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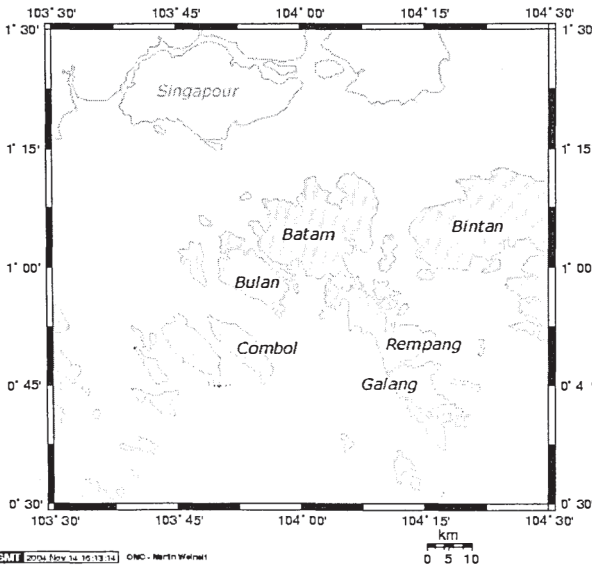
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Source Wikimedia.org: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8f/Batam.png>

Figure 2: Population Data Batam

Year	Male	Female	Total
2007	350,675	370,159	720,834
2005	332,720	353,067	685,787
2000			462,293
1995			196,080
1968			2,000

Source: www.batam.go.id, January 2008

Figure 3: Indonesia: Key Development Indicators

2006	Indonesia
Population, mid-year (millions)	224
Surface area (thousand sq. km)	1,860
Population growth (%)	1.3
GNI (2) (Atlas method, US\$ billion)	316
GNI (2) per capita (Atlas method, US\$)	1,410
GNI (1) per capita (PPP, international \$)	3,950
GDP (1) growth (%)	5.5
GDP (1) per capita growth (%)	4.0

Source: World Bank

(1) GDP: Gross Domestic Product: Value of all goods and services produced in a nation within a year

(2) GNI: Gross National Income: Gross Domestic Product plus income received from other countries (interest and dividends etc.), less similar payments made to other countries.

Figure 4: Indonesia: Economic Indicators (% of GDP)

	1980	1990	2000	2006
Agriculture	24.0	19.4	15.6	12.9
Industry	41.7	39.1	45.9	47.0
Manufacturing	13.0	20.7	27.7	28.0
Services	34.3	41.5	38.5	40.1

Source: World Bank

Figure 5: Indonesia: Human Development Data

Human development index value, 2005 (1)	0.728
Human development index (trends), 1975 (1)	0.471
Life expectancy at birth, annual estimates (years), 2005	69.7
Adult literacy rate (% aged 15 and older), 1995-2005	90.4
Fertility rate, total (births per woman), 2000-05	2.4
Under- five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births), 2005	36
Population, urban (% of total population), 2005	48.1
Population, urban (% of total population), 2015	58.5
Population under age 15 (% of total population), 2005	28.4
Population using improved sanitation (%), 2004	55
Population using an improved water source (%), 2004	77
Population undernourished (% of total Population), 2002-2004	6

Source: Human Development Report 2007/2008, http://hdrstarts.org/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_IDN.html

(1) Human development index: The HDI (Human Development Index) was created by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and is calculated from social data: life expectancy, education, income etc.

Figure 6: Investment on Batam

Indicators	Remarks	2001	2003	2005	2006	2007
Investment	US\$ Billion	8.80	10.28	11.89	12.42	12,867
Government Investment	US\$ Billion	2.10	2.19	2.34	2.45	2,518
Foreign Investment	US\$ Billion	3.40	3.63	4.08	4.47	4,640
Domestic Investment	US\$ Billion	3.30	4.46	5.47	5.50	5,709
Ratio of Government to Private Investment	Ratio	1:3.2	1:3.7	1:4.1	1:4.07	1:4.11

Source: www.batam.go.id, January 2008

Figure 7: Batam's economy

Indicators	Remarks	2001	2003	2005	2006
Economic Growth	Percent	6.56	7.73	7.60	-
Foreign Companies	Companies	531	688	813	894
Small&Medium Enterprise	Companies	9,700	9,886	10,020	9,900
Non Oil & Gas Export	US\$ Billion	3.79	3.91	4.83	3,869
Foreign Visitors	Visitors	1,145,578	1,285,192	1,043,418	1,012,711

Source: www.batam.go.id, January 2008

Figure 8: Batam: Population and Work Force

Indicators	Remarks	2001	2003	2005	2006
Population	People	527,151	562,661	685,787	713,960
Indonesian Work Force	People	161,648	185,095	221,391	252,667
Foreign Work Force	People	2,116	2,747	2,988	3,464

Source: www.batam.go.id, January 2008

Figure 9: Indonesia: External Debt and Resource Flows

	2000	2006
Total debt outstanding and disbursed (US\$ million)	141,693	125,846
Total debt service (US\$ million)	16,622	30,675
Total debt (% of GDP)	85.9	34.5
Total debt of service (% of exports)	11.2	24.9
Foreign direct investment (net inflows) (US\$ million)	-7,896	2,877

Source: World Bank

Figure 10: Indonesia – Merchandise Trade

	Export	Import
Merchandise (million US\$)	103 487	80 333
Breakdown in economy's :		
Agricultural products	17.7 %	9.3 %
Fuels and mining products	38.3 %	24.9 %
Manufactures	42.9 %	65.7 %
	By main destination (%):	By main origin (%):
	Japan: 21.6	Singapore: 16.4
	European Union: 11.9	China: 10.9
	United States : 11.2	European Union: 9.9
	Singapore : 8.9	Japan: 9.0
	China : 8.3	United States: 6.7

Source: www.wto.org, October 2007

Report on the 4th International UEM-JPIC Consultation

HANS-JOACHIM SCHWABE

A summary of my impressions to begin: it was absolutely positive that the detailed analysis of the economic situation in the individual countries all came to the same conclusion, although, of course at different levels. On the one hand, it was shocking to witness the catastrophic conditions in which people have to live, because income returns have absolute priority over adequate living conditions. Personal experience is so much more categorical than theoretical knowledge of the same thing. The fact that luxury and poverty co-exist side by side, is of course scandalous. On the other hand, it was a real joy that all participants amicably agreed on recommendations for the churches there, which were then also accepted by the churches in a way that, for us, was barely conceivable.

The island is practically split in two. One part is that of the rich – I think, especially, for the rich Singaporeans – with lots of golf courses and luxury hotels. We were also accommodated in such a hotel, which, given our theme, may indeed be regarded as questionable. On account of the fact that we needed conference rooms for our consultation, it would not otherwise have been possible. One positive thing was that it was a hotel building that at least attempted to copy something of the local way of building and was not just the usual concrete monstrosity. But even in this luxurious setting, the world of poverty and the destruction of the environment were apparent to anyone with their eyes open. We were able to observe how the same people working on the neighbouring building-suite began work again at 7.00 a.m. although they had not stopped work until 10.00 p.m. the previous evening - and that seven days a week! As is the case when the poor and the rich are alongside each other, we were protected and isolated from the “poor” by security guards.

Our hotel was directly by the sea. It was very tempting to go into the water. One participant just dipped his hand in the water – and it changed colour immediately. Another one went barefoot into the water and clumps of oil attached themselves to his skin. The big oil tankers clean out their tanks, particularly off the coast of Batam, using very aggressive cleaning fluids. It is forbidden of course, but bribery makes everything possible.

A good overview of the social and ecological problems was presented by the local preparation team and in a study commissioned by the UEM from Südwind.

The conference of 44 participants from 12 countries (Asia, Africa, Latin America and Germany) began with a service that was taken by the local congregations in the presence of the Asia Chairperson of the World Council of Churches, Dr Soritua Nababan, and the Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance of the German Government, Mr Günther Nooke. Guest of Honour was Governor Abdullah of the Riau Islands. His presence gave cause for dissent. Dr Nababan, while taking part in the opening ceremony, refused to stand up when the Governor entered, as he views such shows of deference as unacceptable submission of the churches to the state. In this way, Dr Nababan again took a critical position at this conference about the relationship of state and church in Indonesia. From his point of view it is the task of the churches to talk openly about outrages and things that are not right, and to stand up for the rights of disadvantaged groups.

The local organisation committee justified the invitation, saying that by inviting the Governor to open the consultation, there was a much greater chance of being able to carry out the conference to the end, and less necessity to fear intervention by the state.

The consultation commenced each day with a morning devotion, and closed with an evening devotion – each held by one of the consultation participants – clearly demonstrating the diversity of the worldwide churches and their very different backgrounds. These devotions were of course also a source of strength for us to do our work. It was impressive that within the framework of these devotions it was possible to discuss essential questions in small groups.

On Monday, we heard a series of lectures on the subject: Challenges to the churches in the context of economic globalisation in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe followed by discussions. To put it in a nutshell, the result was that people suffer under the neoliberal economic order throughout the world, although there are, of course, very different levels of suffering.

The second series of lectures was concerned with the subjects: Religion, Culture and Human Rights – How can we strengthen human rights in a globalised world? – with contributions from G. Nooke, I. Kasim, Z. Kameeta, S. Nabadan and the Moslem human rights advocate M. Mulia.

On Tuesday, we were given an introduction to the problems of Batam. As representatives of the state and private business institutions were among the speakers, this led to a series of critical enquiries. The water supply is managed by a subsidiary firm of an English private company. In their contract with the government it lays down 25% as the maximum profit they can make. Previously, water was made available and distributed by state institutions. But all these have, in the meantime, gone bankrupt, for whatever reason. The water supply is exclusively from rain water. The

government does nothing whatsoever to prevent the water from being naturally polluted. The water reservoirs are freely accessible to anyone, absolutely an invitation for terrorists. In 1995, 50% of the population had piped water, today it is 90%, whereby it must be observed that the water for the poor people is distributed by the company to a central point and then further distributed to the very poor by sub-contractors. This means that the poorest people have to pay a higher price for water than the official set price of 0.20 USD per m³.

In 1970, there were 5,000 inhabitants, mainly fishermen. In 1978, it became a free trade zone. So far, 2,200 companies have settled here; among them European companies. The company Siemens Hörgeräte in Batam could not decide to allow us to visit. The branch in Singapore refused it. (“Batam is not scheduled for such a visit.”) Batam has 230,000 places of work, which has made it a focal point for the whole of Indonesia, even though there are also a considerable number of unemployed on Batam.

A difference is made between those in permanent positions, and those in temporary positions with a limited time contract that does not usually run longer than three months. The latter group are most likely in the majority. Legally, workers must be 18 years old or more. When critical questions were put to a government employee about this, he answered that he did not have the right to express private opinions, but was only allowed to represent the official government opinion. Of course, occasionally people falsified their age on their identity papers. It seemed to me that there was a large number particularly of young girls under eighteen. For female employees on temporary contracts, their employment contract regularly ends when they reach 24 years of age; particularly with the foreign companies. Prostitution is then the only alternatives for the girls, or employment as so-called “house girls” in one of the Arab countries. Active trade unionists are often dismissed. Officially, the minimum wage is the equivalent of 100 USD per year, but often the firms do not pay this amount. This is a particular phenomenon that must also be recorded: in many areas while there are legal regulations, they are very rarely imposed, in order not to frighten the firms away. On the other hand, corruption plays an enormous role in Indonesia. For temporary employment contracts only people who have a high school certificate need apply; anyone with lesser qualifications does not have a chance.

HIV and AIDS are very widespread. This has to do with the fact that approx. 233,000 Indonesian women work in the sex-industry. There are 8.2 million people who pay to have sex, and another 6.1 million of their partners who are threatened by the virus.

We divided up into four workgroups: 1) Environment, 2) Work, 3) Health and Living Conditions and 4) Trafficking, in which we prepared our visits together with local church representatives. As I was in the third workgroup, I can only give short reports on the other groups, as told to me later.

First of all, we visited a hospital that specialises in infectious diseases, mainly AIDS and HIV. There are three more such hospitals on the island with the same task. This hospital has 165 beds and is the largest. In 2007, 1,448 people were tested in this hospital – 193 were HIV positive, 61 had AIDS, 26 were under eight years old, 199 under 18 years old, 56 people died. The financing, except for medicines, came through donations from abroad. While the medicines were made available free of charge by the state, they were also supplied to the state free of charge through a certain fund.

Next, we had a discussion with the manager of a shipyard (Java Holdings Ltd., 1,300 employees). He emphasised the social commitment of his firm. The previous day, they had received a visit from a group of children from the orphanage. However, he only allowed us to put questions that had to do with the AIDS Programme of his company. Once a month, an information meeting is held on the subject of AIDS in his company. Besides the usual information, it is hammered into the employees not to turn right on the way home, because that is the way to the brothel. The company pays for medical insurance, employs two nurses and we got the impression that the necessary labour protection regulations were being enforced.

Now we turned to look at the housing situation. We visited a government housing project for migrant workers from Batam and the whole of Indonesia. 2,500 single people live here at very close quarters. There are also a few dwellings for families. Four male or four female workers live here, separated according to sex, in one-room partitioned areas of 24m² with a tiny bathroom and kitchen unit. The minimum age is supposed to be 18 years. Visitors are allowed until 9 pm. The cost for a ground floor room is 10 USD per person per month excl. electricity and water costs. Each floor up, the amount is reduced by 2.5 USD. There are no social or church institutions here except for a room for the Moslems for prayer.

Directly next to this housing project on government land, there is an illegal settlement of small hovels thrown together from whatever materials are available. There is no infrastructure whatsoever. Paths or roads do not exist. For every 90 persons, the people have set up an open latrine, and there is a generator for light for about every five houses. The state accepts this situation as long as they do not require the ground. In such a hovel of around 27m², two men and a married couple with two small children are living. Only one of the men has work. The young woman tells us that she has no choice but to work in a bar at night in order to be able to feed the children.

Next morning, we visited another workers' settlement. As we arrived, we noticed that here alongside each other there was a Catholic church, a Pentecostal church, two churches of the HKBP and two mosques. Churches are only allowed to be built where the government permits it.

The housing standard here was slightly better. Six young girls from other islands, between 18 and 22 years old, live here together in around 27m². There are no beds

because there is no room for them. Together they pay a rent of 50 USD and they earn between 100 and 130 USD. About once a year, this flat is flooded. It takes quite a lot to understand that the girls accept their social position as it is, and are only afraid of having to go back home when they are 23 years old, where the situation is even more catastrophic. I think it is a form of self-protection. And yet all of them missed contact with their families. Some of the churches in Indonesia help recruit workers for Batam. From what we learnt, it seems very questionable whether the young women had been correctly informed about what to expect when they were recruited. They were allowed to have visitors until 11.00 pm, but guests were not allowed to stay overnight.

Should a young woman become pregnant, the churches are only prepared to perform a marriage service if the pregnancy is not more than into the 7th month. After that, it is no longer possible to have a church marriage service, because the churches consider pregnancy outside marriage as a sin. Then only a traditional marriage ceremony is possible. After the child is born, the woman is permitted to attend church services again.

Around 50% of church marriages take place as the result of a pregnancy. In case there is no marriage, a young woman has no alternative but to return to her village. Often, she must then leave her child behind with her parents or grandparents, in order to return to Batam to work. She then sees her child perhaps once a year. One young woman, who was visiting there, was already 31 years old but was still working because she was highly qualified. Another woman told us that she was married and had three children. Her husband worked in a hotel, and until recently they had been able to live more or less from what he earned, as there was a gambling paradise in the hotel and he received good tips there. But this was no longer the case and she had no chance of getting a job. Now her husband worked from 7 o'clock in the morning to 11 o'clock at night, and then he drove a moped taxi until 3 o'clock in the morning.

Sensitivity for the problems of the workers seems to be usually lacking in the congregations, although as a rule they are working-class congregations, for the church elders usually come from the small middle-class.

One group visited a project of the UEM for the re-integration of prostitutes. And then a rehabilitation centre for former prostitutes, where they were supposed to learn domestic science. However it appeared that representatives of state institutions had turned the rehabilitation centre into a brothel. A piquant situation, as prostitution is officially forbidden.

On Wednesday afternoon, we concerned ourselves with the question, of how we should react to human rights violations in the different countries and continents: Asia: Indonesia, Africa: Congo and Europe: Germany.

Thursday was marked by lectures on the human rights situation in Indonesia, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Tanzania, Rwanda, Namibia and Germany, followed by

working groups that concerned themselves with the specific challenges of the individual countries. These resulted in recommendations for the UEM, for the member churches of the UEM, and for the churches on Batam.

On Friday, we visited the firm of Varta. 800 employees, mainly women, work there in three shifts, 60% have a permanent position and 40% have temporary contracts. Of course the minimum wage of the equivalent of 100 USD is paid, whereby those with a permanent position receive approximately 100 USD more. There are 12 days paid holiday. The dismissal notice period is 14 days. Workers are permitted to go to the toilet during working hours. The ILO Convention is respected. Moslems are permitted to observe their prayer times. Health and safety protection standards are guaranteed, the workers do not have to deal with any dangerous materials. (It was apparent that all the answers were within the framework of the law.)

After that, we visited a private business promotion corporation. On Batam, there are 22 industrial parks. In this industrial park 63,000 people are working in 73 firms (among others Varta, Infineon, Siemens Hörgeräte, Novartis). 19,000 people live in the industrial park in “little boxes” (see above). Most of the workers, men and women are on temporary contracts. Usually, only office workers (“White Collar”) have a permanent position. The business promotion corporation hires the people for the firm if required. On Batam, there are only three work inspectors who can check that the legal requirements for work protection are being kept. The business promotion corporation that we visited, understands itself as a mediator between the firms and the trade unions. Once a month, the business promotion corporation meets with the managers of the companies.

Our conceptional work culminated in a final document that contained recommendations for the member churches of the UEM, for the office of the UEM and for the General Assembly of the UEM.

In addition, a catalogue of recommendations was made for the member churches on Batam with 12 Points. These recommendations were then discussed with the local clergy. All except one person were in agreement. He was afraid that if he took this up, he and his church would get into considerable difficulties with the government. It cannot be denied that there is something in this argument, as Bishop Kameeta and Uwe Hummel were requested to present themselves at the Foreign Office in Djakarta after the conference on their way to Papua. (As was later established, Bishop Kameeta and Uwe Hummel were accompanied and observed throughout their journey to Papua by a representative of the Foreign Office).

It was impressive to me that Bishop Kameeta stated that he would present our recommendations to the Foreign Office quite openly and show them the paper, accepting that he could possibly be taken into custody or deported from the country. Incidentally, the worried clergyman was in my work group, but made no contribu-

tion there whatsoever. What depressed me, however, was that one person told me he had only been able to give information about human rights violations on Batam in a very limited way at the consultation, as he could not be sure that there were no government spies present, and such openness could have brought him into considerable danger.

On Friday afternoon, the leaders of all the churches in Indonesia were present. Our paper was presented to them. They discussed it internally until Saturday afternoon. On Saturday afternoon, a service took place in a sports hall with more than 3,000 participants from all the churches present. The preacher, Bishop Kameeta reminded the employers that they had more responsibility towards their workers than just the payment of their wages. That they were also responsible for their safety, their health care and decent living conditions for them. Bishop Kameeta called upon the churches in Batam to preach the Gospel and at the same time to stand by the poor. A church that only puts value on spirituality, but does not concern itself with the needs of the people, has mistaken its task: “If the Spirit has no body it is a ghost.” I have never experienced such a service (lasting three hours), in which charismatic elements and clear political demands were presented both at the same time.

The Indonesian participants of our consultation demanded of each individual church leader – inconceivable in our country – that he make a public statement there before the believers, stating his position on the recommendations in the paper. They all did as requested and publicly welcomed the recommendations.

On Sunday, we visited local congregations in groups of four or five. For someone from Europe, the members’ commitment to their church was hardly conceivable. The congregation that I visited had around 1,000 members – a working-class congregation. Sunday service was attended by around 450 people. I was told that another service would also take place attended by around 100 people. Two services are necessary because congregation members must also work their shifts on Sundays. Is that conceivable in Germany – 55% of the congregation attending services and those working-class people? We would not have to close our churches, but rather build new ones!

For me, this was an unparalleled experience. Once more, it made very clear to me that the churches must fight decisively against the economic form of neo-capitalism, which believes itself to be a structure without alternatives. Certainly, first and foremost, to take sides with suffering human beings, but also because neo-capitalist ideology lays an almost theological claim to sole representation. Anyone, who might even be prone to toy with this form of economic ideology, should be recommended to travel to Batam. Whoever then does not just live in luxury hotels and play golf, will come back healed of this whim, if he or she has not lost the last trace of his or her humanity.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank the UEM preparation team led by Dr Motte and the local preparation team for their excellent work. Although formerly in my profession I have taken part in many international conferences at various working levels, I have never experienced a conference that was prepared in such an excellent way, and so comprehensively, yet also so sensitive to the concerns of people from very different cultures.

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Rev. *Dr Fidon R. Mwombeki* (born 1960) has a Bachelor of Divinity, a Master of Sacred Theology, a Master of Business Administration and a Ph.D. He was General Secretary of the ELCT/NWD and Executive Secretary for Evangelism of the UEM. He is General Secretary of the UEM. Dr. Mwombeki has written on: globalization, church leadership, missionary practice and theology.

Soritua Albert Ernst Nababan, Ephorus em.D.DR – LLD (born 1933) studied from 1950 to 1956 at the Theological Seminary Jakarta, 1957-1958 at the Kirchliche

Hochschule Wuppertal and 1958-59 at the University of Heidelberg. From 1961 to 1963 he wrote his Doctor Theologiae. He worked as youth pastor from 1956-57 in Medan, as student pastor in Stuttgart (1960), as Youth Secretary of EACC (1963-67), as General Secretary, Council of Churches in Indonesia (1967-1984), as General Chairperson Communion of Churches in Indonesia (1984-87) and as Ephorus of the HKBP (1987-98). Honorary positions: Vice-Chairman and Moderator of the WCC-CWME (1968-83), Vice-President of the LWF (1970-76 and 1984-90), Chairperson of the LWF Programme Committee on World Service (1990-97), UEM Moderator (1993-2000). Present honorary position: WCC President (2006 – 2013).

Günter Nooke (born 1959) grew up in the former German Democratic Republic. Upon completion of his studies of Physics at Leipzig University he started his professional career as academic assistant. Later he became Acting Head of Department at the Cottbus District Occupational Medicine Inspectorate followed by a post-graduate degree in Medical Physics. From 1987 until 1990 he was an active member of a church-based dissident group in his hometown Frost. His political career started in 1989 upon the fall of the Berlin wall. Among other appointments he became a member of the Volkskammer and later Member of Brandenburg Landtag (regional parliament). From 1998 to 2005 he became a member of the German Federal Parliament. In March 2006 he was appointed as Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin.

Suko Dwi Nugroho (born 1981) studied English literature majoring on Public Relations in Indonesia and continued his studies on Communication. At present he is working as research development and marketing officer in a private hospital besides serving as youth advisor in the church. He is a council member of UEM representing the youth in Asia since 2004 and is member of GKJ TU (Christian Church of North Central Java).

Rev. *Peter Ohligschläger* (1947) studied theology and pedagogic in Wuppertal, Heidelberg and Bonn. He worked as local pastor in Düsseldorf (1976-1981), missionary in Botswana (1982-1985) and pastor in the Parish Service for Mission and Ecumenism in Ruhrdistrict (1986-98). Since then he is head of the Institute for Mission, Ecumenism and Global Responsibility of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, located in Dortmund.

Lic. *Nicolás Rosenthal* (born 1963) completed his studies in Argentina as Social Psychologist (1995), Bachelor in Theology (1997) and Master in Theology (1999). Since the mid-eighties he is active in church youth counselling. He was coordinator of a missionary and diaconic project in the second “poverty belt” around Buenos Aires

from 2001 to 2005. From 2001 to 2004 he was a member of the Executive Committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. From 2005 to 2007 he was assistant for Ecumenical Relations of his church. Since 2006 he is president of the Argentine Federation of Protestant Churches (FAIE). He is also working as social psychologist for the Buenos Aires City Government Social Service as Coordinator of a Youth Empowerment Program for slum youth, which trains young people in community leadership. His master thesis has the theme “Between rebelliousness and post-modernity. The search for an incarnate spirituality among metropolitan youth of the Evangelical Church of the La Plata River”, ISEDET, Buenos Aires 1999 (in Spanish).

Hans-Joachim Schwabe (born 1946) is a retired Senior Vice President and has worked for one of the big German banks in investment banking (foreign exchange, treasury, derivatives). At present he is a member of the board of the Council for Refugees in North-Rhein-Westfalia and of Südwind, Institut for Economy and Oekumene, Siegburg. In his parish he is responsible for finances, which includes a therapeutic pedagogy centre in Pskow/Russia. In his district church he has a responsible position, and for the Protestant Church of the Rhine Area he is one of the associate members of the board. His latest publication as a co-author is the book in German: Globalisation - blessing or bane? - deciding and confessing - a district church accepts its challenges.

Imelda Astri Rosalin Simangunsong (born 1972) took part in a Master programme of the Architecture School, Bandung Institute of Technology. Her special fields were History, Theory and Architectural Critics. She is currently working as an architect and musician (pianist, vocalist, composer). She has a classical music education in Bandung Center of Music Education (1980-1992); learning and playing jazz piano autodidacts. She released her first album "Di Ladang Stroberi" in 2002. The album was a soundtrack for the TV serial "Strawberry". She produced the album “Jan Cornall Singing Srengene” in 2006, distributed in Australia. Soon she will release a double jazz album “I’m On My Way” and “I’m In Love”. She is actively involved in church and human rights activities, belongs to HKBP Church (Protestant Christian Batak Church) as lay member and is currently Vice Moderator of United Evangelical Mission (UEM).

Prof. *Dr Payaman Simanjuntak* (born 1939) began his career at the Indonesian Ministry of Manpower since 1966, in which he reached his top career as Assistant Minister (1986), Director General of Industrial Relations and Labour Standard (1991) and Senior research fellow (1994) until his retirement in August 2004. He obtained his PhD in Economics from Boston University in 1981. Until today, Prof. Simanjuntak is active in lecturing at several Universities. As a member of HKBP he was active in the youth movement and mission. In 2000 he was appointed as the chairman of HKBP evangelical mission for Jakarta Metropolitan area.

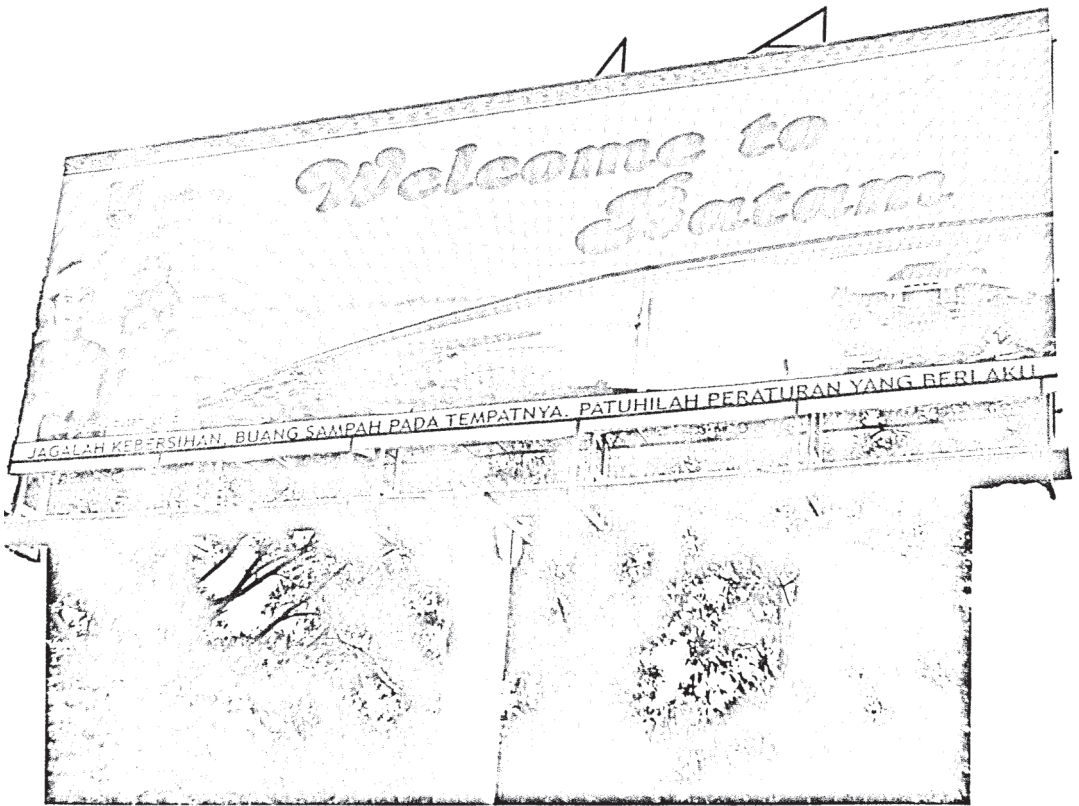
Pastor *Juliet Solis-Aguilar* (born 1976) is a graduate of Bachelor of Theology at the Divinity School Silliman University. From 2001 to 2004 she was National Program Assistant for Christian education and Nurture Program of the UCCP. From 2005 to March 2007 she was executive director of the Task Force on Urban Conscientization of the Mission Partner, Association of the Major religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP). Since April 2007 she is National Program Coordinator of the Justice, Peace and Human Rights Program of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

Rev. Dr *Mangisi S.E. Simorangkir* (born 1952) served as parish pastor in Lubuk Pakam, North Sumatera from 1978 to 1981. Afterwards he was sent to the Ev. Church of Rhineland, Bonn, Germany as exchange pastor (1982-1987). He has a Bachelor of Theology of the Jakarta Theological Seminary (1977), a Master of Theology from Luther Seminary, Australia (2002) and a Doctor of Theology from SEAGST (2008). He has produced some books in Indonesian and has translated "The Book of Concord" into Indonesian (2004). Now he serves as bishop of the Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia/GKPI (2005-2010).

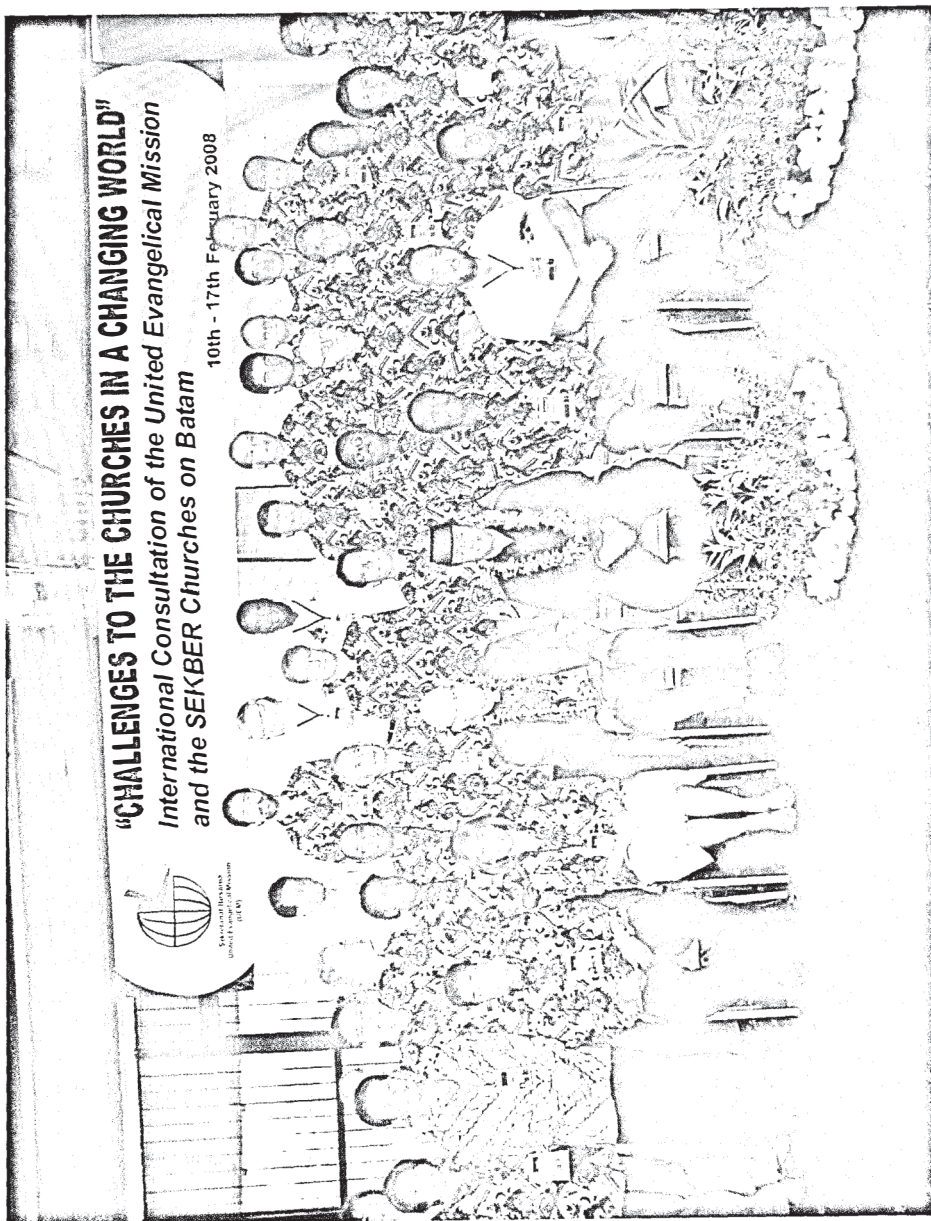
Rev. Dr. *Hans Jürgen Steubing* (born 1961) studied theology and diaconical sciences in Marburg and Heidelberg, Germany. He received a PHD in Theology in Heidelberg in 1992 with a study on “AIDS as a Challenge for Churches and Theology after the first Decade of the HIV Epidemic”. He was Case Manager HIV/AIDS, Project Ahead, Long Beach, CA, USA (1989/90) and afterwards vicar in the Unter-Widdersheim Parish, Hesse and Nassau. Afterwards he worked in the Public Relations Department and as Youth Officer (“Diaconal Year Abroad”) in the Diakonisches Werk Palatinate, Germany from 1991 to 1994. He served as pastor in the Beerfelden Parish, Hesse and Nassau from 1995 to 1998 and at the Desk for Church Development Service, Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau, from 1999 to 2006. Since 2007 he is Secretary for Ecumenical Diaconia, Centre for Ecumenism of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau 2007. He has published his dissertation and a number of articles in books and journals.

Photos

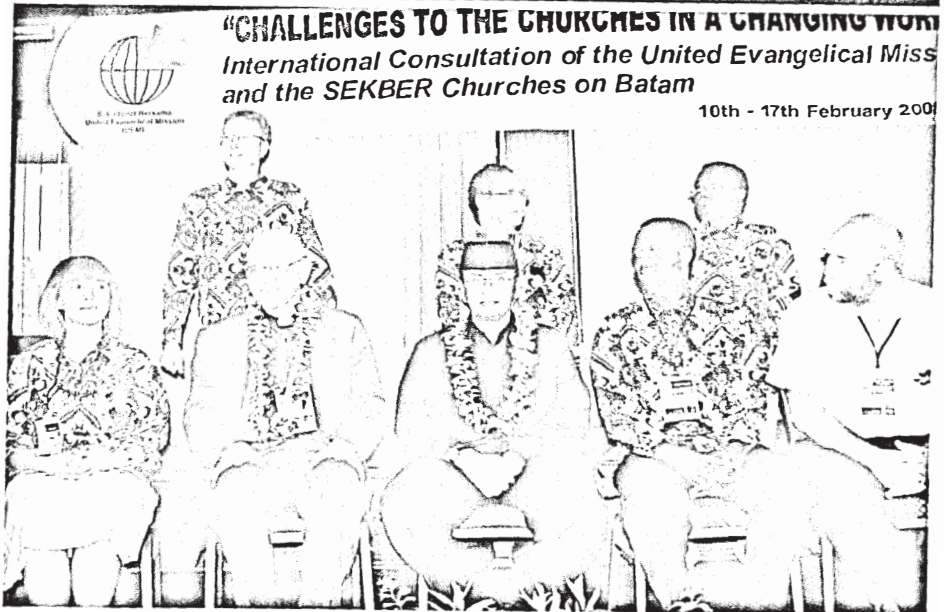
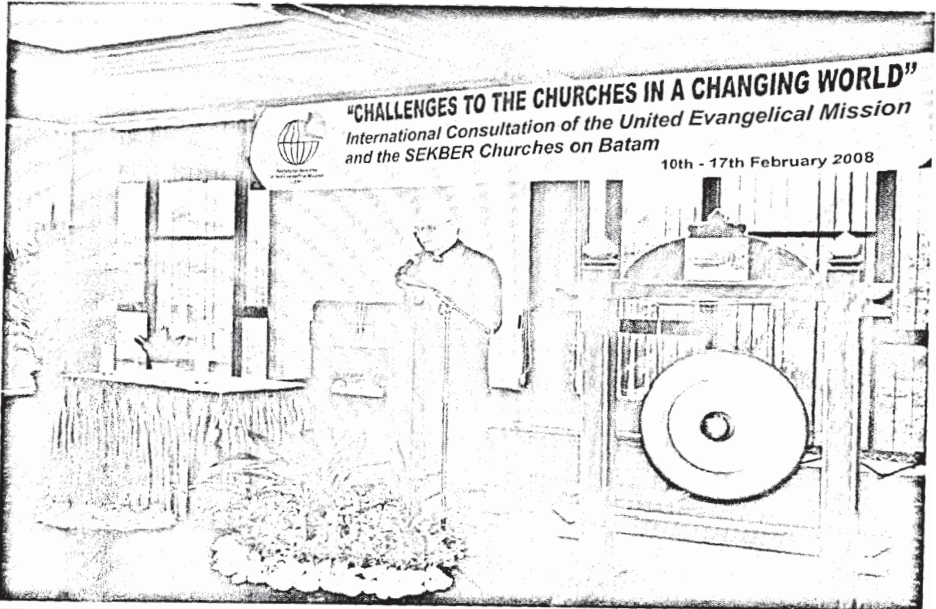
taken by the participants of the fourth International UEM Consultation
on JPIC on Batam – February 2008



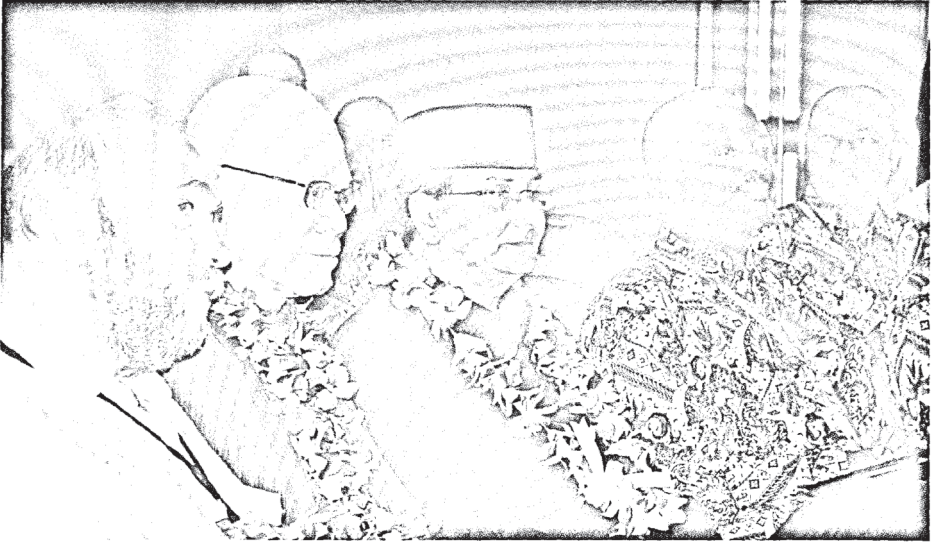
Participants of the consultation



Opening worship and opening ceremony



Günter Nooke - Commissioner on Human Rights of the German Government, Bishop Dr. Zephanja Kameeta, Dr. Ismeth Abdulla – Governor of the province of Riau, Dr. Fidon Mwombeki



Rev. Willem Simarmata and Rev. Rudi Sembiring – chair persons of the SEKBER Regional and local preparatory committees



Dr. Kakule Molo, Hans Jürgen Steubing during plenary session



Participants during plenary session



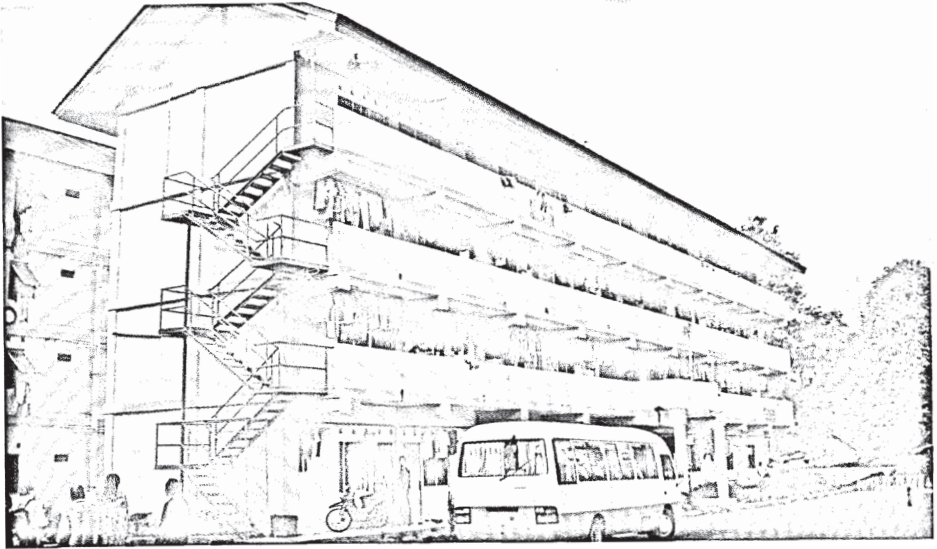
Members of an exposure group on labourers concerns



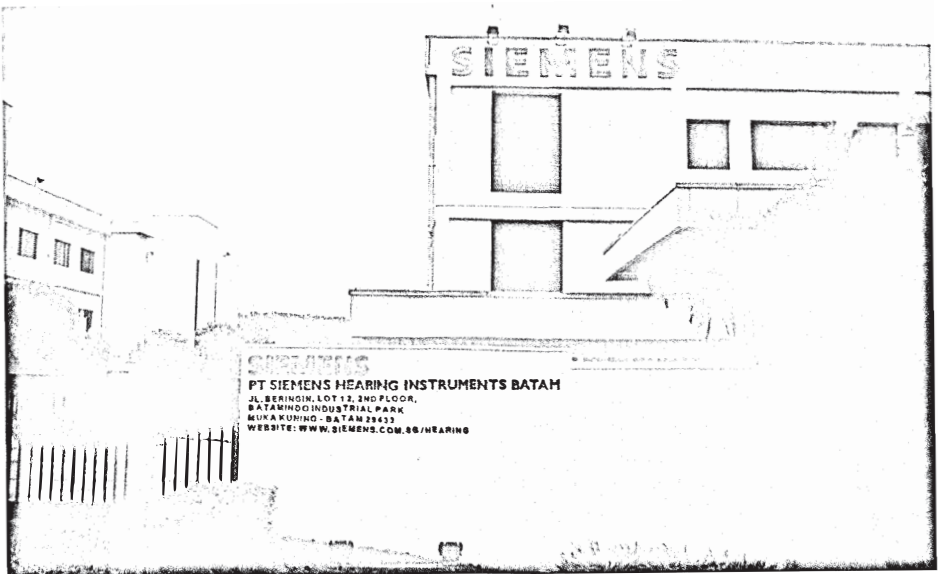
Members of an exposure group together with young labourers



Labourers' dormitories



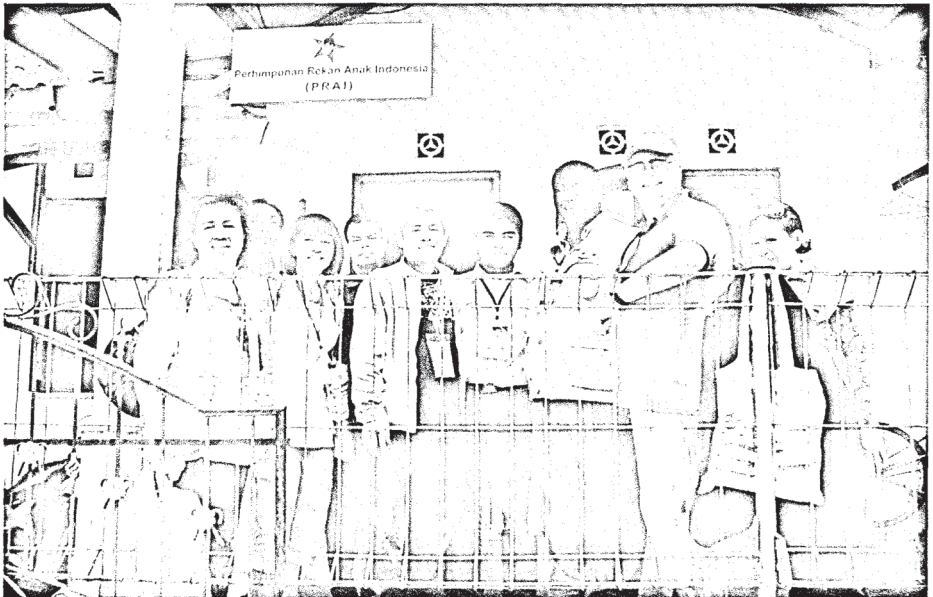
German based company Siemens operating on Batam



Members of an exposure group on environment



Members of exposure groups



Members of an exposure group



Impressions from Batam



Impressions from Batam



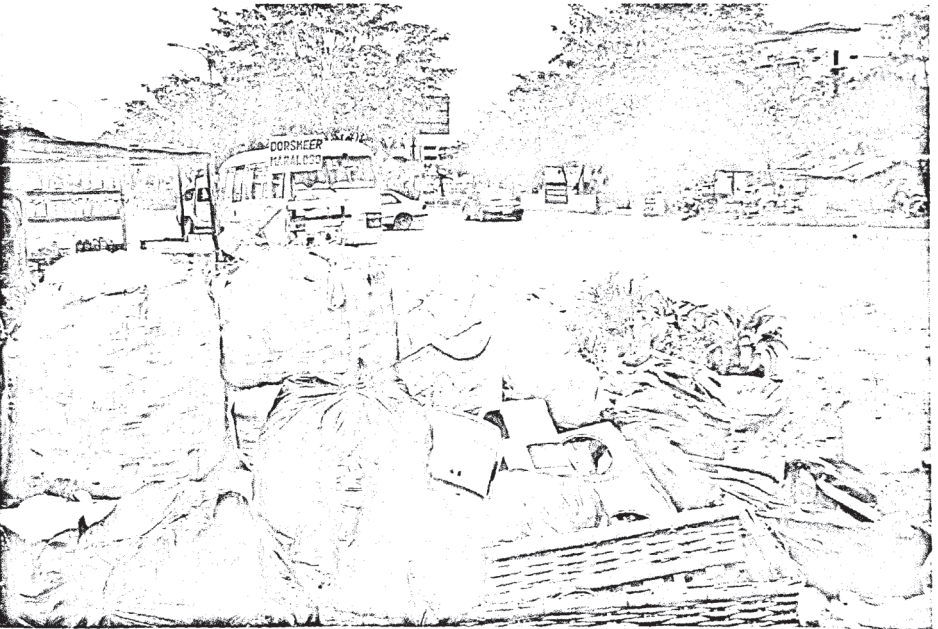
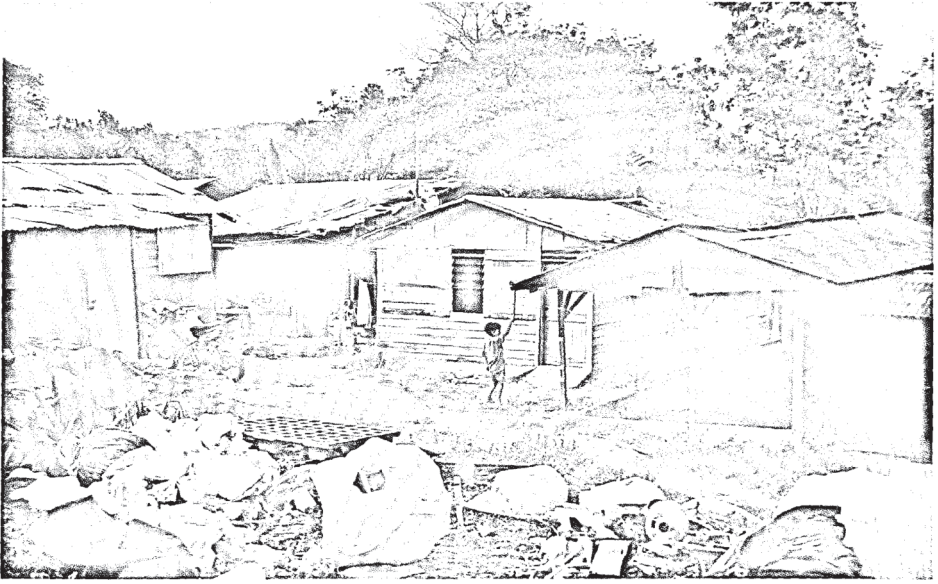
Housing areas on Batam



Housing areas on Batam



Housing / squatters areas on Batam



Bishop Zephania Kameeta and Dr. Robinson Butarbutar at Batam stadium during the closing worship



Closing worship

