

WOCATI
World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions

**Minutes of the WOCATI Executive Committee Meeting held on March 17-20,
at Erdman Center, 20, Library Place, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton,
New Jersey 08540, USA.**

TUESDAY MARCH 17TH (EVENING)

WOCATI: 2009/1 Opening Welcome and Introduction

Dr. Namsoon Kang offered a welcome to the members present and gave a self introduction.

WOCATI: 2009/2 Roll Call

A. Present

1. Dr. Namsoon Kang, USA – Canada, President.
2. Dr. Nestor Miguez, Latin America (EETELA), Vice-President.
3. Dr. James Massey, Asia (BTTESSC), Executive Member.
4. Dr. Isabel Phiri, Africa (CIRCLE), Executive Member.
5. Dr. James Amanze, Africa (ATISCA), Executive Member.
6. Dr. Ivan Z Dimitrov, Europe (COTS), Executive Member.
7. Dr. Dietrich Werner, ETC/WCC, Consultant.
8. Dr. Daniel Aleshire, ATS, Consultant.

B. Special Invitees

9. Dr. Adam DJ Brett, Web Master.
10. Dr. Lester Ruiz, ATS, Observer.
11. Dr. Ioan Sauca, WCC, Observer.
12. Dr. Iani Torrance, President, Princeton Theological Seminary, Guest/Resource Person.

C. Absent

13. Dr. Dora de Lourdes Canales Nunez (ASIT)

WOCATI 2009/3 Appointment to take Notes for the Minutes

It was unanimously agreed to request Dr. James Massey to take the notes for the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

WOCATI 2009/4 Morning Reflections

Reflections based on the biblical texts were offered on each morning for three days (March 18, 19 and 20) by Dr. Ivan Z. Dimitrov, Dr. James Amanze and Dr. James Massey respectively.

WOCATI 2009/5 Session 1: Vision for the Future Direction of Theological Education in the Age of Globalisation.

The Session was moderated by the President WOCATI, Dr. Namsoon Kang, who after introducing the guest speaker Dr. Iain Torrance invited him to speak on the main theme ‘Vision for the Future Direction of Theological Education in the Age of Globalization’. Dr. Torrance in his introductory remarks laid special emphasis on the point that “Theology of the Future” is going to be less colonial in nature; meaning thereby that it is going to be less dominated by Europe and North America, because it will come more from the southern countries, which include, Latin America, Africa, Asia, India and so on. In main parts of his address Dr. Torrance dealt with the history of theological education with reference to the special role of seminaries like Princeton Theological Seminary. This he did by drawing resources from different contextual situations from all over the world.

Dr. Nestor Miguez responded to Dr. Iain Torrance and in his response he stressed upon the liberative aspect of theological education. Following by Dr. Miguez’s response, the other members of the Executive Committee took an active part in the discussion.

WOCATI 2009/6 Session 2: Setting Agenda and Reports

6.1. Examining of the Agenda

The proposed agenda was adopted with the following additions:

- a. Question of Hon. President
- b. Selection of the New Secretary/Treasurers because the Secretary/Treasurer in office at present has resigned.

6.2. 2008 Congress in Greece Report

A brief oral report of 2008 Congress held in Greece during June 2008 was given by the President of WOCATI.

6.3. Introduction of New Website

WOCATI recently partnered with the WCC in regards to the hosting of the WOCATI website. The WCC agreed kindly to host the site for WOCATI and to design a new site for WOCATI that is in keeping

with the uniformity and design standards of the WCC. The new site features an interactive map replete with the most up to date list that WOCATI has of member organizations. The future of the WOCATI site is to have two main forums on the site one a general forum to discuss issues in higher education that is open to all member institutions and their associated theological institutions. The second forum is to be a closed and private forum that is open only to WOCATI executive committee members and consultants. This forum is intended to be used for a variety of uses by the EC such as planning, drafting of documents and discussion of EC business.

WOCATI 2009/7 Session 3: WOCATI and its Works: Retrospect and Prospect

This session was led by Dr. Daniel Aleshire, Executive Director, ATS, who made a written presentation on the theme “WOCATI and Its Works: Retrospect and Prospect” (*see the complete text, appendix 1*). Dr. Isabel Phiri gave an oral response to Dr. Daniel Aleshire’s presentation, which followed a discussion from the floor with an active participation by the members present. The session was chaired by Dr. Nester Miguez, Vice chairperson of WOCATI.

Dr. Aleshire gave brief but comprehensive historical background of WOCATI, after which he discussed in details, the issues related to ‘Mission of WOCATI’; ‘Money’ which included the past and present financial position of WOCATI, the nature of ‘membership’ and how (Method and Structure) WOCATI till now tried to carry on its Mission. At the end of his presentation, Dr. Aleshire put forward the following three proposals in the form of questions for the future working of WOCATI:

1. Might WOCATI focus on the accreditation of theological schools and focus on those associations that have accrediting as part of their work? With this question he also added: WOCATI could be a forum in which strategies, practices, and approaches for accrediting theological schools could be shared and improved.
2. Could WOCATI develop viable strategies that are not international - meeting focused, given the inability of member organizations to fund these kinds of events?
3. Could WOCATI identify strategies that are much closer to on-the-ground needs of schools and their associations: strategies in distance learning and extension education and related to school administration, fund raising, and other forms of work in which schools must engage? After this he also pointed out: In many ways, the papers and presentation at WOCATI meetings have been of higher order, theological and academic — have not addressed the fundamental skills that are needed for running theological schools.

Dr. Aleshire ended his presentation with a challenge to the Officers and Executive Committee Members by saying: “WOCATI represents an important mission that holds the potential for benefiting theological

education. The question is: Can it find a strategy for programming that maximizes its potential benefits and a pattern of funding that assures continued work over time?"

The WOCATI Committee received with appreciation the presentation and the proposals put forward by Dr. Aleshire.

WOCATI 2009/8 Sessions 4: The Revision of Constitution/Bylaws-I

During this session Dr. Namsoon Kang introduced the procedure of revision and led the Executive Committee members through the text of the Constitution and invited the members to make suggestions for the amendments by reading each article, clause by clause.

Sub-Committee which included Dr. Kang, Dr. Miguez and Dr. Dietrich Werner was requested to take notes of the changes proposed and agreed upon in order to prepare an amended draft to be considered in the next day at morning session.

WOCATI 2009/9 Session 5: Sharing the Regional Works

In a special session on March 18 at late evening at 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm after the dinner members representing different regions shared the report of their work carried on in their regions.

Dr. Massey about doing theology in context and working with the Senate. He spoke to the nature of ecumenical theological education in India. Spoke of the Dalit Bible Commentary the New Testament volumes have been given.

Dr. Miguez shared about what is going on in the Caribbean and also in Latin America

Dr. Amanze and Dr. Phirii both commented about what was occurring in higher theological education in Africa

THURSDAY, MARCH 19

WOCATI 2009/10 Session 6: Constitution / Bylaws-II

In this Session-5 the revision of Constitution including on the Bylaws continued. With few more minor amendments including the suggestions on the structure of the constitution, the working group was requested to prepare the revised draft for the circulation to all the member of WOCATI, for their approval, which they did.

WOCATI 2009/11 Session 7: Reshaping/Redesigning/Reconstructing/Revising –I

In this session two presentations, first on the WOCATI relationship with ETE/WCC and second, with ATS were made by Dr. Ioan Sauca and Dr. Lester Ruiz respectively.

11.1 Dr. Ioan Sauca's Presentation:

Dr. Sauca after giving the background of changes, which have taken place in WCC with regards to the whole work and status of ETE, made following points:

- a. WCC will continue to be interested in the ETE legacy, but not at the present level. In fact there will not be ETE existing in the present form after December 2009. WCC will not be able to support a full time staff position in future for such a work. There will be one Bossey staff assigned for the coordination, who will be able to give 50% of his/her time with help of one assistant.
- b. Programme level Regional Associations such as CCA, AACC, MECC etc. will be requested to appoint consultants to coordinate the theological works at these levels.
- c. In the new scenario WOCATI needs to become a full coordinating body in order to take up its full responsibility with its own staff and resources.
- d. *Reference Group* comprising of representatives of WCC, WOCATI and Regional Bodies like CCA, ACC, MECC etc will be formed as a decision making body.

Dr. Sauca after making his presentation requested the WOCATI Executive Committee to take its decision in this meeting, so that he could take the same back to WCC. But the Executive Members after having some discussion, told Dr. Sauca, that they will discuss it further and by next day on 20th March will communicate to him their decision.

11.2 Dr. Lester Ruiz's Presentation

Dr. Ruiz in his introductory remarks, made a distinction between the approach of WCC and ATS, according to which, WCC's centred around the 'churches' while ATS on 'theological schools'. After his introductory remarks, in his brief presentation, Dr. Ruiz explained that present work of ATS was based upon its two mandates which included:

1. The process of accreditation
2. Leadership Development

Keeping in mind these two mandates possibly WOCATI and ATS can work together in some programmes such as developing a "Digitalized Library"

Dr. Ruiz would like to make it known that ATS is unable to support WOCATI fiscally any more still wishes to be actively seized in WOCATI wants to help WOCATI focus on what is going

on and show what he wants to do. The center piece of the proposal by WCC to him is the churches and on the sides are the university, seminary (Divinity schools), extension programs, cert programs (non-degree), undergraduate degrees as well. The WCC understanding of education is very broad and they do support scholarships for students to go to Div schools but they also support other forms of theological education WCC is asking WOCATI to take the church very seriously and to make the church the centerpiece and to broaden the understating of theological education. ATS is structures smartly but in the center is theological schools in service to the churches a tithe center and on the sides is Seminaries, Graduate university, certificates, extension programs. the question WOCATI needs to ask itself is who is your constituency and who is your public? which structure and methodologies do you wish to go? which structure. ATS can work with WOCATI with WOCATI and theological schools. ATS is a membership institution of theological schools in North America it must work with its membership and its mandates it official relationship w/ WOCATI must come programmatically through the staff at Pittsburgh and also the association itself for the past 10 year the support of ATS for WOCATI as been through Dan Aleshire because he has a strong commitment to theological education around the world but Dan Aleshire is getting older so the relationship with ATS much change adapt and evolve. This is where ATS is and where it seeks to help WOCATI. It wishes to assist WOCATI in the role of Theological education programmatically in relationship to post-baccalaureate educational institutions. If WOCATI is to have a future it might wish to consider going towards an increased professionalization in assuring quality education and accreditation of theological institutions and lets call t a governmental move of WOCATI to institutionalize it. There is a govermental move. The funding for seminaries and universities globally is rooted in the nation state and also in the EU. The issue to ensure quality education and mutually accreditation and transference of students and monies between the institutions it makes sense to me that WOCATI to go in this direction. He can see where ATS can partner with you is to be able to in its mandate of accreditation which is two fold:

1. Accreditation
2. Leadership development

They go to schools in North America. they provide resources to assist them in addressing problems and helping them assure excellence in education for example if there is a lack of understanding of the global context then ATS will raise funds for

the school to have them go to the school and help them understand it and bring in speakers, lecturers and help them structure courses in a way to help students, faculty and staff to understand this. ATS would love to do this internationally as well but it doesn't want to become another colonial master. ATS would like WOCATI to enter in a partnership with ATS to share other resources that are non monetarily but if WOCATI wants to do this than ATS must be invited ATS must be invited. ATS is waiting for WOCATI to make a move. ATS is aware that diversity and globalization are critical to theological education in North America and would love to partner with International schools to help achieve these goals. However they would like the international community to set the agenda and to help them occur and set what is need. ATS wishes to be engaged outside of North America but to do so in a conciliatory approach and not be unilateral or bilateral but to move beyond binaryism by principal and DNA. ATS is trying to find ways to be engaged outside of NA in theological education as a body. ATS wants to incorporate the global setting and to be in conversation and dialogue with the international community of theological education to help member schools embrace and develop a diverse and global theological education methodology in curricula, pedagogy etc. Dr. Ruiz thinks that WOCATI holds a real opportunity to be engaged in theologically more globally and ATS will do its part in its North American context and wishes WOCATI to invite in it's to share with it and put WOCATI in this kind of a relationship (Points to picture) and to make sure that ATS is not being colonial. This is why a conciliatory model needs to be embraced part of moving beyond the colonialism is all sharing and partnering together.

Final note: the WCC model and ATS models are not exclusive and can be held together if WOCATI with ATS there is no binaryism

WOCATI 2009/12 Session 8: Reshaping/Redesigning/Reconstructing/Revising-II

Dr. Deitrich Werner gave a brief introduction to 'Handbook on Global Theological Education' for which he distributed two 'handouts': one printed on 'Edinburgh 2010' conference and other 'Handbook on Global Theological Education', a project of WCC/ETE, WOCATI Project (*See Appendix no. 2*). He explained that the main objectives of this handbook was "to produce a major reference work on global theological education for use in international dialogue and networking among theological educators, institutions, and agencies across denominational, cultural, educational, and geographic boundaries."

FRIDAY, MARCH 20

WOCATI 2009/13 Session 9: Remaining Issues.

13.1. Next Meeting at WOCATI

The issue of next meeting of WOCATI Executive Committee was discussed and was suggested that efforts should be made to have it either immediately before the Edinburgh 2010 Conference or after it, because some of the members' names are already among its invitees list and for other request may be sent by the President of WOCATI and Dr. Dietrich Werner to the organisers of the conference if they can be invited also. In this way the Executive Committee's members travel expenses can be taken care of.

13.2. Secretary/Treasurer of WOCATI

Dr. Namsoon Kang, as in her capacity President was requested to send a request to Dr. Kathleen William to reconsider her decision for resignation, which she has submitted on health ground. In that way there will be no need at this stage to elect a new Secretary/Treasurer.

13.3. Dr. Dora de Lourdes Canales Nunez

For some reasons Dr. Nunez was unable to respond to any of the communication which have been sent to her by the WOCATI President and also she could not attend the Executive Committee Meeting. Therefore Dr. Nester Miguez, Vice President was requested to contact Dr. Nunez and find if Dr. Nunez would like to continue to be member of the Executive Committee. In case she says 'no', then Dr. Miguez will suggest an alternative name(s) for her replacement also.

13.4. Honorary President of the Advisory Group

Dr. Petros Vasileiadis' name was proposed to be the Honorary president of WOCATI Advisory Group, which was accepted unanimously by the members of the Executive Committee.

13.5. Edinburgh 2010 Follow Up

Dr. Namsoon Kang, President was requested to write a follow up letter to the organizers of the Edinburgh 2010 Conference on behalf of the members of Executive Committee members for the invitation to the Conference.

13.6. WOCATI Constitution and Bylaws Revision

Dr. Namsoon Kang and Dr. Lester Ruiz were requested to do final editing of the Constitution and Bylaws by 15th April 2010. (*see the present revised amended draft appendix no. 3*)

Dr. Nester Miguez, Vice President was requested to write a covering

letter for the Constitution and send the same to all the members of WOCATI for their suggestions and approval by 15th April 2010.

It was also resolved that members should be given at least one year notice with a date as deadline for their postal approval and all the procedure should be completed before the end of May 2010.

WOCATI 2009/14 Session 14: Wrap Discussions

14.1. WOCATI – WCC/ETE Dialogue

Executive Committee members without the presence of Dr. Ioan Sauca discussed about his presentation (minutes 11.4) on the future relationship of WOCATI – WCC/ETE. After having a thorough discussion, it was decided that at this stage Dr. Sauca should be informed by the president orally that WOCATI is not ready to undertake the responsibility as suggested by WCC and it also need to have a dialogue with the partners (donors) particularly with EMW along with WCC before taking the final decision. Meanwhile the President WOCATI, Dr. Namsoon Kang was requested to write a letter to Dr. Ioan Sauca, copies of which should be sent to De. Samuel Kobia, General Secretary, WCC and Dr. Venera Grueter, Executive Secretary for Theological Education and Theological Studies EMW, Stating the following four points:

- a. WOCATI would like to receive an official letter of proposal for the future working relationship between WOCATI and WCC.
- b. WOCATI would like to have a joint meeting of WOCATI, WCC and EMW on 1st May 2009, which will be attended by the President and Vice President to represent WOCATI.
- c. Outcome of 1st May 2009, the joint meeting of WOCATI, WCC and EMW, the officers of WOCATI will take to Executive Committee for further consideration.
- d. It should be also made clear that attending the joint meeting of WOCATI, WCC and EMW by two officers should not be considered as WOCATI's final decision.

14.2. Response to Dr. Ioan Sauca

The Executive Committee members met Dr. Ioan Sauca after their above deliberations and Dr. Namsoon Kang, the President informed him orally about the views of the WOCATI Executive Committee. Dr. Sauca agreed with the Executive Committee.

14.3. Adjournment of the Meeting

Dr. Namsoon Kang, President WOCATI with her thanks to Executive Committee members for their cooperation, for the

hospitality to the President, Princeton Theological Seminary and all other who made this meeting successful adjourned the meeting.

(Notes: Dr. Namsoon Kang may add a note here her closing remarks)

(Notes Taken and Prepared by Dr. James Massey)