

**WORLD FAITHS DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE**  
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*With our fourth Bulletin, we are sending you a copy of the WFDD booklet "Poverty and Development: An Inter-Faith Perspective". This is an abbreviated and free-standing version of the text of our Comment on the first outline of World Development Report 2000. Our hope is that it will be widely used as educational material, for discussion, and also as a guide for inter-faith development work. **Please test it out with people you work with. We would very much welcome your comments on it.***

*Enclosed, too, is a leaflet encouraging you to participate in an electronic conference on the first full version of the WDR 2000, which will be published early next year. **If you are able to take part in this, WFDD would appreciate a copy of your contribution.***

*The WFDD's vital input into conceptual discussions and policy papers at a global level will continue, but we have now entered a period of our work which is more country-focused and action-orientated. You will see from our new leaflet, which is also enclosed, that we are calling for active support in carrying out work on our four priority themes. Opportunities for an action-based dialogue among the faith communities and between them and the World Bank and other agencies abound. It is the responsibility of us all to make the most of them!*

**Second WFDD Conference, World Bank, Washington, 11 November 1999**

This was a sequel to the founding conference held at Lambeth Palace, London, in February 1998. The Final Statement and a list of participants are enclosed. Probably the most important outcome was the unanimous agreement that the WFDD should continue, initially within a time-frame of about five years.

A significant new step was the inclusion of the International Monetary Fund into the Dialogue. A review of the work hitherto and a vision for the future is under way. Both fuller "Summary Notes" of the meeting and also the Progress Report on the work of the WFDD presented at the conference are available on request.

**Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF)**

The CDF was launched by the World Bank in January 1999. It is an effort to provide a framework within which governments lead their own national development process, bringing together

donors, the private sector and civil society to plan and implement it. The CDF is initially being carried out in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, West Bank and Gaza, Vietnam, Kyrgyz Republic and Romania.

Vitaly important is the participation of people from the religions, who are well informed about development issues and can argue on the basis of the values of their faith tradition. One of WFDD's main tasks in the year 2000 will be to ensure that this happens in at least five countries.

**Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP)**

At the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Washington in September 1999, it was decided that these institutions should focus on the reduction of poverty in the Highly Indebted Poorest Countries (HIPC), which are due to receive debt relief. The process will be similar to the CDF one, with the government concerned calling together all the actors in the

development process to plan a strategy. Here again, people from the faith communities have a key role to play in helping to determine both what the goals should be and how to reach them. WFDD will help to facilitate the participation of the faith communities in as many PRSP processes as possible.

The faith communities in HIPC countries could also join other civil society organisations in acting as watch dogs to ensure that the money released by the debt relief is used in favour of the poor.

### **Engagement with the World Bank in Tanzania and Ethiopia**

Inter-faith groups have been set up in Ethiopia and Tanzania. In Ethiopia faith-based organisations working on development will draw up a literature-based inventory of existing organisations and their work. Regional and national workshops will also be held, where experiences will be shared and conclusions drawn as the basis for recommendations for a multi-donor programme on food security.

In Tanzania a similar process is focusing on national health provision and on the Social Action Fund. We shall provide a full report of these initiatives at a later date.

### **Chennai Meeting on Culture and Development**

On 3-4 October 1999, the Veda Vyasa Sabha Trust organised an inter-faith conference in Chennai, India, with the special blessing of the Pujyashri Kanchi Sankaracharyas and co-sponsored by the WFDD. Representatives of Hinduism, of Ramakrishna Mutt, of the Bahá'í faith, of Christianity, Sikhism and Jainism were present.

Participants stressed the importance of the combining the depth of spiritual wisdom with modern technological progress. The valuable work of religious organisations in the field of social services was highlighted. Research needs to be carried

out to document the work being done. There was a call for funding organisations to ensure that their money benefits the poor by taking into account faith-based organisations which are working with integrity and a selfless spirit.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP), Amman, 24-29 November 1999**

This conference for religious leaders and members of WCRP from all over the world, was attended by about 500 people. The WCRP's focus on peace necessarily includes issues of social justice and development. The WFDD was invited to participate in a plenary session on the Economic and Developmental Factors related to Common Living. A paper is available on request.

### **Parliament of the World's Religions (PWR) Cape Town, 1-8 December 1999.**

The PWR acts as a catalyst to bring together people from a wide range of faith traditions. The focus of this Parliament, which was attended by about 5,000 people, was on a commitment to bring about changes in the world. A significant outcome was a call to the world's Guiding Institutions (religions, intergovernmental organisations, governments, business, media etc.) to take action on the critical issues facing us, as we enter the next millennium. Joint action between the faith communities and the World Bank in the framework of the CDF was one of the commitments made.

### **WFDD in India**

A WFDD staff member visited about eight different places in India between 22 November and 10 December 1999. He met faith based organisations already involved with the WFDD and others who are interested in being so. The main outcome was a decision to set up a WFDD network to plan future action.

### **New website**

Please visit <http://www.wfdd.org.uk!>

