



General Synod issue 10/2007

Economic globalisation as a challenge to churches

God wants justice and has made us manage the resources of the earth for the best of all human beings. We humbly confess that we have failed. Our faith in Jesus Christ gives us hope and strength to continue our efforts for a just management of the resources that God has entrusted humankind.

1. We confess that as a church in the north we are part of a tradition that makes us responsible for a political and economic development based on gross exploitation of human beings and natural resources in the south. We need to recognise more profoundly how this injustice has come about, and what we can do to create a more just world.
2. We acknowledge that the present global trade and finance institutions (the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) do not sufficiently protect the needs and interests of the poorest. These global institutions must be reformed and democratised in order for the poorest countries really to have their say.
3. As a church in the north we want to be in solidarity with those who are suffering under the injustice caused by the present global trade and finance system.
4. We urge Norwegian authorities, business, organisations and other actors to have a holistic and concrete approach to the challenges of globalisation:
 - where reduction of poverty and environmental efforts are seen in relation to each other
 - where efforts are made to reach a binding global human rights regime and democratic and legitimate supranational arrangements (UN and others).
5. We urge Norwegian authorities to work for a reformed global trade system:
 - where improved market access is combined with trade-related development aid that enhances the export capacity and competence of poor countries
 - where a just and ecologically sustainable global trade regime is developed, and where all countries have the same possibility to influence the rules
 - where subsidies favouring exports from rich countries are removed
 - where efforts are strengthened to increase Norwegian imports from developing countries rather than from industrialised countries
 - where an end is put to all dumping in poor countries of subsidised products from rich countries, and to the pressure on poor countries to open their markets
 - where poor countries are no longer drained of labour and competence
 - where poor countries may protect their own food security in fisheries and agriculture
 - where poor countries are given access to cheap quality medicines and possibilities to fight epidemic and other deceases threatening large population groups.

6. We urge Norwegian authorities to work for a reformed global finance system:
- where all illegitimate debt and debt that in other ways is unsustainable, is cancelled without conditions, and outside development aid budgets
 - where development aid and loans to poor countries are not linked to conditions of economic liberalisation and privatisation
 - where support is given to the fight against corruption and tax paradises
 - where support for international conventions for human and labour rights must be the aim of loans and development aid
 - where global financing mechanisms for development are set up, as for example currency taxes or CO2 taxes.

7. As one of the richest countries in the world, and with our large petroleum assets, Norway has a particular moral responsibility to contribute to a more just world. We ask Norwegian authorities:

- to see to it that Norwegian oil and gas companies stick to the highest standards of labour rights, ethics and environment protection, to secure real transfer of competence to poor countries and to see to it that local communities may influence decisions concerning them
- to bring into view and take responsibility for environmental and climate effects of the government funded "Oil for Development"- programme
- to develop the Norwegian Petroleum Fund in a direction where it may be of increased benefit to the poorest of the world

8. We see that we as a church have a responsibility to work for a more just world:

- by building alliances with global and national social movements and trade unions working for a just trade and finance system
- by seeing to it that the inter-religious dialogue where the Church of Norway takes part, may also treat matters of global economic justice
- by spending money and managing resources in line with ethical and social guidelines for global sustainability and justice
- by using Fair-Trade certified goods from developing countries
- by challenging the The Norwegian Church Endowment (Opplysningsvesenets fond, OVF) to see to it that a considerable amount of the Fund's means can be invested in international development programmes
- by continuing theological reflection on poverty, wealth and justice, and by increasing the Church of Norway understanding and ethical reflection on these issues.

9. We ask that the Church of Norway Councils continue their active contribution to the World Council of Churches` AGAPE process, that the matter is particularly followed by the Church of Norway Committee on International Affairs (KISP) and the Church of Norway North/South Information (KUI) in its activities towards the parishes, and that work in this field be reported to the General Synod in 2008.

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Passed unanimously.