



Christian Conference of Asia

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CCA General Secretary's Message

It is with great joy that I extend best wishes and congratulations to the CCDB family on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), and appreciate the role and contributions of all those who have been part of CCDB's journey during the past fifty years.

The memorable occasion of the commemoration and celebration of the Golden Jubilee with the participation of well-wishers and companions in CCDB's journey for more than five decades will be yet another milestone in the history of CCDB. It is also an occasion to give thanks and praise to God Almighty who has enabled the churches and ecumenical fraternity in Bangladesh and other parts of the world to be instruments of His witness in Bangladeshi society where Christians live as a microscopic minority, but the witness that has been demonstrated, especially extending support to multitudes of all God's people irrespective of their religion or faith, is commendable.

On this occasion, I am privileged to recollect my memories of association with CCDB for more than thirty years, ever since my first visit to CCDB in 1993 in my capacity as a staff member of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), which was then based in Hong Kong. Subsequently I became a frequent visitor to CCDB in my official capacity as the Asian Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) responsible for ecumenical diakonia and coordination of WCC coordinated Round Tables in Asia. I became the coordinator of the CCDB's Round Table for ecumenical sharing of resources and served as the coordinator of CCDB Round Table for more than ten years, and those valuable occasions gave me an immense opportunity to work closely with CCDB, especially to be in liaison with CCDB and all its funding partners to bring together around a Round Table platform where it was proved that we are no longer givers and takers, but through the ecumenical sharing of resources we mutually learn and gain from each other's experiences and strength. It is with this background that I recollect now my deep involvement in the life and witness of CCDB. I thank God Almighty for enabling me also to be part of CCDB's journey and to be involved in some of the pioneering initiatives CCDB had undertaken in the past, including the establishment of the HOPE Centre of CCDB.

The metamorphosis of CCDB as a professional ecumenical development agency in Bangladesh has been considered and proved as one of the best and unique models of implementation of ecumenical diakonia over the past five decades. The genesis of the CCDB was an outcome of the worldwide churches' concern and solidarity for the suffering people and communities in a war-torn area and subsequent happenings where millions of people were pushed to the margins, where they suffered extreme poverty. It was in such a context and situation that the forerunner of the CCDB, the Bangladesh Ecumenical Relief and Rehabilitation Services (BERRS), was initiated by the WCC in collaboration with several church and ecumenical partners from different parts of the world. The global ecumenical community came forward with helping hands to share the burdens of millions of Bangladeshi people who were undergoing traumatic experiences during the war of independence in 1971 and its aftermath.

The then WCC leadership took the initiative to respond to the cry and sufferings of the affected people, and initiated a process of post war reconstruction in the new born country, Bangladesh. Subsequently, the BERRS was transformed as a national Christian development agency and as an auxiliary of the National Council of Churches in Bangladesh (NCCB) and continued its ongoing tasks of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the newly born nation that had been totally shattered during the liberation war.

For a large part of its life and witness during the past five decades, the WCC and the global ecumenical family have increasingly contributed to CCDB's efforts in community and human development with emphasis on developing the much-needed human potentials, people's participatory process to support the poverty alleviation programmes and projects and uphold the human dignity and human rights. Even before multilateral organisations started focusing on sustainable development, CCDB emphasised the concept that that sustainable development is not possible without putting the people at the center of development. Since the early 1980's, CCDB extensively introduced the idea of people's participatory process in poverty reduction and sustainable development. The approach and policies of CCDB always emphasised the principle of ecumenical sharing of resources for all God's people irrespective of their faith or religious identities.

Today, when CCDB has reached this stage as a seasoned, and professional development agency and is celebrating its historic Golden Jubilee, I recall all those church and ecumenical leaders in Bangladesh, who provided leadership for CCDB in the past. I wish God's richest blessings upon the current leadership of the CCDB who are now guiding the CCDB. I would also take this opportunity to extend greetings and best wishes on behalf of the members of the Asian ecumenical family who are spread across in the vast Asian continent.

May God Almighty continue to bless CCDB as an instrument that works for all God's people and may it demonstrate its leadership in the spirit of stewardship and good governance while being engaged in its ongoing mission and witness.

Yours along the journey,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mathews George Chunakara', written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Mathews George Chunakara
General Secretary, CCA

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