



**Christian Conference of Asia
International Consultation on Ecumenism in Asia:
Emerging Ecclesial and Ecumenical Landscapes
1-3 June 2026 | Chiang Mai, Thailand**

Communiqué

‘Ecumenism in Asia: Emerging Ecclesial and Ecumenical Landscapes’

We, the participants of the International Consultation on Ecumenism in Asia: Emerging Ecclesial and Ecumenical Landscapes, convened in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 1–3 June 2026, offer our gratitude to God for gathering more than 70 church and ecumenical leaders, including specially invited representatives of mission and ecumenical organisations, from many churches, traditions, countries and cultures across Asia, as well as from North America and Europe. We came from diverse Christian traditions and confessional families of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and from partner organisations of the CCA in Europe and North America, together with representatives of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC) of the Catholic Church and the Asia Evangelical Alliance (AEA), to be woven together as diverse strands into the community of God’s love. We gathered in worship, prayer, biblical reflection, theological discernment, fellowship and dialogue, seeking to read the signs of the times and discern the future of the ecumenical movement in Asia.

We give thanks to God for the witness of the Christian Conference of Asia as it approaches its 70th anniversary in 2027, and we honour the churches, national councils, theological institutions, and women’s and youth movements. We affirm with gratitude the faithful witness of the churches in Asia, whose ministries have embodied the Gospel through service, compassion, prophetic engagement, and dialogue. Amid diverse cultures, religions, and social realities, Asian churches have nurtured contextual expressions of faith, advanced justice and peace, promoted reconciliation, strengthened ecumenical fellowship, and borne witness to God’s transforming love among the peoples of the continent.

Churches across Asia and their institutions have made substantial contributions to education, healthcare, community development, and humanitarian assistance to all people, regardless of their faith or ideology. Churches have increasingly engaged in a range of ministries to serve people and communities at large, responding to urgent challenges and humanitarian needs during times of crisis. Many churches have stood alongside marginalised communities, advocating for their rights and dignity, human rights, social justice, climate justice, care for creation, peacebuilding, and reconciliation in contexts marked by conflict and oppression. Through their commitment to a holistic mission and care for creation, they continue to participate in God’s mission to renew all life.

We remember with gratitude the many Asian churches and their leaders, theologians, women, youth, pastors, and other faithful, whose witness has enriched and sustained the ecumenical movement in Asia. As we discern with renewed vigour God’s call to the churches in Asia, we are deeply aware of the urgent challenges confronting us today.

Our Theological Foundation

We affirm the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ “that they may all be one” (John 17:21) and the apostolic call to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3). The unity of the Church is a gift of God in Christ, deeply rooted in the perfect harmony of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This divine oneness compels believers to transcend divisions, fostering a diverse yet single body of faith bound together by shared grace, love, and united witness of participation in God’s mission.

Baptism is the foundation of Christian unity and mission. Through baptism, the whole people of God—laity and clergy, women and men, young and elderly, and all those on the margins—are called to discern what the Spirit is saying to them and to the churches, and to participate faithfully in God's mission in the world.

Recognising Our Landscape

We recognise that the ecclesial landscape in Asia is undergoing profound transformation. Christianity, which began in Asia, is growing in many parts of the continent, even though Christians remain minorities in most Asian countries. We recognise that while the global centre of gravity of Christianity is shifting toward the Global South, certain Asian countries have emerged as the largest missionary-sending countries in the world rather than remaining primarily missionary-receiving countries. New and diverse forms of Christian community have emerged across Asia, including independent Pentecostal and charismatic churches, house churches, diaspora congregations, cyber churches, and other flexible worshipping communities. While these expressions reflect vitality and missionary commitment, they raise urgent questions about ecclesial identity, accountability and participation in the wider conciliar fellowship of the churches.

We recognise the changing patterns of “belonging, but not believing” and “believing, but not belonging” across Asia. We acknowledge that in many contexts, migration and the growth of the Asian diaspora are reshaping the lives, mission, and self-understandings of churches in Asia.

The ecclesial landscape in Asia is also changing due to diverse forms of migration. Migration takes many forms and occurs for many reasons, including poverty; internal and international movement; cross-border labour migration; forced displacement; fleeing the home country and becoming refugees and asylum-seekers; climate-induced migration; and migration for educational or economic opportunities. Migration also includes the emigration of families seeking better lives overseas. Churches around the world have likewise been enriched by the growth of diaspora churches.

The growth of Asian diaspora communities and churches has increased over the past decade. These realities present both pastoral challenges and missional opportunities, calling the churches to ministries of hospitality, accompaniment, protection, and advocacy. Migrant families carry their faith with them and constitute mobile communities of witness. Such churches and fellowships embody the shared life in Christ across cultures and generations, enriching the mission of the Church. At the same time, migration creates additional pastoral challenges for churches in places of origin, where elderly family members are left behind when younger family members migrate overseas. Such situations call for accompaniment, care, and solidarity, especially for older persons who may face isolation, vulnerability, and the absence of essential support. It also warrants pastoral attention to spouses, children, and other family members who carry the burdens of separation, sustaining family life across distances with resilience, sacrifice, and hope.

Confessing Our Brokenness

We recognise with gratitude that the ancient churches of Asia bore witness to the faith for centuries and embodied a shared understanding of the Church as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. Yet, subsequent missionary expansion often introduced denominational divisions and parallel ecclesial structures.

We acknowledge that we have too often perpetuated these divisions by building institutional silos, nurturing denominational loyalties at the expense of Christian fellowship, and choosing competition over cooperation. In doing so, we have weakened the visible unity of the Church and diminished the credibility of our common witness to the Gospel.

We admit that our churches have too often retreated into safety. At the same time, people at large continue to suffer from polarisation, far-right extremism, religious extremism, politicisation of

religion, authoritarian rule and military dictatorship, rampant militarisation, violence, poverty, forced migration, mental health crises, shrinking of democratic and civic spaces, human rights violations, ecological crisis, and environmental degradation.

We confess our failure to accompany those in need of the healing of memories and to help overcome the historical trauma inflicted by authoritarian regimes and enduring structures of domination; our failure to stand alongside religious minorities and vulnerable communities, especially women and children, who continue to suffer discrimination, displacement, insecurity and fear; our failure to engage deeply with young people, to empower their leadership, and to receive their spiritual gifts; and our loss of ecumenical memory and tendency to allow external forces to shape our agenda.

Challenges for Ecumenism in Asia

We are concerned by the growth of “ecumenical archipelagos” in Asia, isolated networks, parallel structures and alternative platforms that fragment the ecumenical movement in Asia. Some arise from renewed denominationalism, funding imbalances or changing missional strategies of former mission agencies operating in Asia that do not sufficiently respect local churches or enable them to be united in mission and witness. We call on churches, mission agencies, and ecumenical partners to strengthen local churches and conciliar fellowships rather than bypass them. Yet our conciliar structures must not calcify into mere institutional bureaucracies. We call for a new ecumenical paradigm rooted in transformative praxis, in which councils facilitate dynamic advocacy networks capable of swift, prophetic responses to the crises of our time.

Ecumenism is weakened when it is detached from common missional engagement and confined merely to participation in the worship life of the Church. Evangelism is weakened when missional engagement becomes individualistic and competitive. The Church is gathered in Christ so that it may be sent into the world, proclaiming the Gospel and bearing witness to justice, mercy and truth, so that persons, communities and societies may be transformed by the reign of God. The churches must speak coherently and credibly to cultures that idolise economic growth at the expense of human flourishing, while remaining faithful to the Gospel.

Moving Forward Together

We affirm that synodality and ecumenism are inseparable, as we walk together in the Spirit through prayer, listening, dialogue and shared responsibility. We call for a renewed synodal ecumenism: one that listens before it speaks, includes before it decides, and discerns before it acts. We are called to embrace an “ecumenism of alliance” and collaborative diakonia, recognising that the pursuit of justice, peace, reconciliation, and care for creation can strengthen our fellowship even as we continue to engage faithfully with the theological questions that both unite and distinguish us.

We affirm that the visible mark of Christian discipleship is love. We therefore call on the churches of Asia to renew discipleship as a way of life rooted in communion, expressed through contextual witness, and sustained by mission-oriented formation. Christians must be equipped to engage faithfully with the realities of poverty, human trafficking, ecological degradation, digital transformation, migration, and interfaith relations.

We further affirm that Christian mission is more than conversion or institutional expansion. Participating in the mission of God, the Church is called to proclaim the Gospel, heal the broken, reconcile divided communities, uphold human dignity, and share its resources in sacrificial love. Through word and deed, the Church bears witness to the reign of God and serves as a sign of hope, justice, and peace in the world.

It was heartening to reflect on a contextual theological image shaped by the suffering of the people of Myanmar: the *Pyit Tine Htaung*, the Burmese tumbler toy that rises whenever it is pushed down, which is seen as a sign of Spirit-given resilience. In the spirit of 2 Corinthians 4:7, “we have this treasure

in clay jars,” we call the churches of Asia to become communities of resilience and sanctuaries of healing: places of consolation for troubled souls, spaces of hope where lament is welcomed, and bridges of reconciliation.

We call on the churches of Asia to move from a “my church” mentality to a “we are together in God’s Kingdom” mentality. Unity does not require uniformity. Churches may retain distinct worship styles and theological emphases while sharing the essentials of faith in Christ and love for neighbour. The question before us is not only “How can my church grow?” but “How can God’s Kingdom advance?” This calls us to move from competition towards collaboration, from institutional self-protection to shared mission.

We recall the rich legacy of the Asian ecumenical movement and its prophetic calls to common witness. We remember the message of “Witnessing Together” which has echoed on several occasions since the second CCA Assembly in 1959, as well as subsequent ecumenical engagements and initiatives that have sought to unite the churches in responding to people’s aspirations for unity, reconciliation, peace with justice, and human security across Asia.

We lament the suffering of people in the West Asia region, especially as a result of the war and indiscriminate bombing by Israel in Gaza and Lebanon, and the Israel–US war against Iran; militarisation and systematic human rights violations in Myanmar, West Papua, the Philippines, and Pakistan; atrocities against religious minorities in Bangladesh and India; and conflicts and violence in countries and regions across West Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

We are concerned about the mass displacement of people and communities due to political repression and humanitarian crises across Asia. We call on the churches to move beyond silence and to accompany displaced people and communities, victims of violence and conflict, and those living under authoritarian and repressive regimes. We are reminded that we are called to bear witness to the Gospel through solidarity, accompaniment, advocacy, reconciliation, and peacebuilding.

We recognise that Asia is the birthplace of many of the world’s great religious traditions. Christian witness must be humble, dialogical and committed to peace. We reject the misuse of religion to justify violence, domination or exclusion, and call for deeper inter-religious dialogue, interfaith cooperation and public witness for just peace and human security. We must recognise that the transformative work of the Holy Spirit extends beyond our own religious boundaries.

We affirm the leadership, wisdom, and witness of women in the churches and the ecumenical movement, and call for their fuller participation in churches and the ecumenical movement at a time when the ecclesial and ecumenical landscapes in Asia are changing.

We recognise young people as bearers of fresh vision and resilient hope. We affirm the need to recognise the voices of youth and ensure their participation at all levels in the Church and ecumenical movement amid the profound changes taking place in the ecclesial and ecumenical landscape.

We call on churches and ecumenical councils to welcome migrant, refugee and diaspora churches into ecumenical fellowship, creating sanctuaries of hospitality and shared witness.

Our Commitments

We commit ourselves:

- to renew ecumenism as a spiritual movement grounded in prayer, repentance and openness, and to beseech the divine gifts and inward fruits of the Holy Spirit that guide, empower, and comfort us;

- to strengthen conciliar fellowship at all levels by moving beyond institutional maintenance toward a dynamic and lived ecumenism of communion, witness and action; to resist denominationalism;
- to cultivate a spirit of mutual accountability and cooperation to practise synodal listening and communal discernment;
- to hold together proclamation and the pursuit of justice, pastoral care and prophetic witness; to move from “my church” to “God’s Kingdom”; and
- to uphold human dignity and defend human rights; and to care for creation as faithful stewards of God’s household.

From Discernment to Action

Having listened together to the voice of the Spirit, reflected on the changing ecclesial and ecumenical realities of Asia, confessed our failures, affirmed the gifts and opportunities before us, and lamented the suffering of our peoples, we commit ourselves, our churches, and our ecumenical institutions to the following priorities for common witness, service, and action:

The fulfilment of these commitments calls for the participation of the whole ecumenical movement.

We, therefore, call on:

- Local churches and congregations to be the primary communities of discipleship and witness, forming believers in faith, nurturing communities of love and hospitality, and embodying the Gospel through service, justice, and reconciliation in their local contexts;
- National Councils of Churches and other conciliar bodies to foster common action and fellowship; strengthen relationships among churches, and coordinate collaborative witness and service;
- Theological institutions and seminaries in Asia to provide formation and theological reflection;
- Specialised ministries and civil society partners to contribute their expertise in service, advocacy, development, peacebuilding, migration, human rights, and ecological stewardship; and
- Christian Conference of Asia to continue to demonstrate its leadership in the Asian ecumenical movement as a convenor, catalyst, facilitator, and regional coordinator, contributing to the coherence, unity, and integrity of the Asian ecumenical movement and strengthening our shared ecumenical journey.

Journeying Forward in Hope

Trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the faithfulness of God, we go forward in hope. As we journey together toward the Platinum Jubilee of the Christian Conference of Asia, we recommit ourselves to the pursuit of Christian unity, participation in God’s mission, and faithful stewardship of all creation.

With gratitude for the ecumenical pioneers who have gone before us and with hope for future generations, we pledge ourselves anew to walk together in faith, witness together in love, and serve together in God's mission.

We leave this international consultation with gratitude, humility and hope. We commit ourselves to life together, work together and witness together. We commit ourselves to be listeners with the ear of the heart, attentive to the voice of God and the cries of suffering humanity, and to be witnesses

who speak with the courage of the Spirit. “Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches”. (Revelation 2:7)

We pray that our gathering may be more than words: a witness of listening, a fellowship of courage, and a seed of hope for the Church in Asia.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit rest upon us as we walk together, so that in our diversity God’s love may be seen, God’s justice may be done, and God’s peace may be shared.

‘And what does the LORD require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.’

(Micah 6:8)