

# Anglican Alliance draft strategy for east and south east Asia

**“To the greater glory of God  
and for the betterment of the lives of people of  
east and south east Asia”**

## 1. Challenges of the region

East and South East Asia includes some of the most vibrant countries, combining fast growing economies, diverse cultures, sharp inequalities and complex social issues. Anglicans in the region have responded to these challenges with ministries such as the peace and reconciliation work of Korea, the advocacy for migrants in Hong Kong, outreach to communities in conflict in Sri Lanka and community development work in the Philippines. By drawing together and sharing this mission, East and South East Asia can play a major role in strengthening the ministry of the Anglican Alliance and the Communion. For the regional forum meeting in Malaysia, our purpose was to find how we could best share the strength of the Anglican ministry in the region for the greater glory of God and for the better of the lives of people of east and south east Asia.

Over recent years, the countries of East and Southeast Asian have experienced some of the highest levels of economic growth. If on the one hand, the good economic performance in many of these countries has contributed to reducing social problems such as extreme poverty and to achieving the targets set in the Millennium Development Goals, on the other hand, the different levels of economic development have created a new social dynamic within the region.

There are three issues in the region, linked to some of the economic and social dynamics which have elicited a strong response from Anglicans and were identified as the focus of attention of the Anglican Alliance forum meeting:

- i) **Migration, refugees and people trafficking** As a consequence of the disparities in economic growth we observe the rise of a dynamic migration in which people leave their countries, crossing borders, looking for better work opportunities. However the conditions faced by those migrants generally is not easy. There are many cases in which individuals find themselves exposed to degrading working conditions, as well as cases of forced migration, and of human trafficking, especially of women and children.
- ii) **Peace and reconciliation:** Conflict has been a feature of the countries in this region, and has made peace and reconciliation a key ministry for Anglicans. In some countries the conflict has been between different ethnic groups, sometimes the result of generations of colonisation and occupation, including in Sri Lanka. In others, including Korea, there are ideological reasons for the conflict. In others, migration is a factor in the conflict, such as the recent unrest in Malaysia.
- iii) **HIV and Aids** The incidence of HIV and Aids is also being driven in part by migration and the opening up of corridors of economic activity across the region. Thailand, has 530,000 people living with the virus, the highest incidence in south east Asia.

Alongside the economic successes, there are some areas of profound and complex social and economic disadvantage. People and communities may be excluded or marginalised by political factors, bad governance, or because of gender, different abilities or stigma attached to their health or social status. The forum focussed especially on the exclusion and marginalisation of people with disabilities, people who are living with HIV and people from particular ethnic groups. The forum reflected on the need to bridge the inequalities within the region so that everyone could share in the community and economic development. These realities set the framework for our discussions in Malaysia, and are central to this draft strategy for the Alliance’s work in the region.

## **2. Policy priorities - Development:**

### **2.1. Peace and reconciliation**

The forum meeting discussed the range of different conflicts within the region: including the division of Korea, the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and the continuing difficulties within Myanmar. We reflected on the peace conferences organised by Topik, arising out of the 2008 Lambeth Conference, first in Korea and then in Japan. We said that peace needed to be more than just an absence of war, discussing the notion of “active peace” and concluded that the Anglican Alliance should work for active peace through the following measures

- Recognising as our key partner, TOPIK and noting that this initiative grew out of the same Lambeth conference that gave rise to the Anglican Alliance.
- Working for reconciliation inside church – recognising that if the church is in conflict it cannot act as a symbol of reconciliation in the wider world: working for this by identifying and sharing good practice in the region.
- Working for reconciliation in the relationship between church and state.
- Identifying as focal areas for our work advocacy, education and health. Looking at how Anglican education institutions, especially schools, can work for peace and reconciliation, identifying educational resources for schools to share, and exploring ways that Anglican health services can build bridges between communities in conflict.
- Learning from the experience in Japan, and the importance of its constitutional constraint on militarism, considering advocacy on constitutional reform in other countries affected by conflict to work for similar commitments to peace and recognition of the rights of all citizens and ethnic and language groups.
- Establishing Peace internships through exchange or placement programmes with churches working for peace and reconciliation in their communities.
- Sharing best practice of Anglicans and other faith-based organisations involved in peace and reconciliation work, including:
  - looking at the experience of the Church of Ceylon in using prayer groups to reconcile communities, and documenting this to include on the Alliance website.
  - Identifying ways to work more effectively alongside inter-faith groups for peace-building and reconciliation.
  - Considering the position of diaspora communities.
- Identifying developmental problems resulting from conflict and focusing on those, especially affecting women and children, including infant and child mortality.
- Recognising and affirming the role of women in peace and reconciliation and advocating for their inclusion in negotiations.

### **2.2. HIV and Aids –**

Forum participants reflected on the good practice of the HIV and Aids ministry at St Johns Cathedral in Hong, and the people living with HIV who we met in Kuala Lumpur. This was identified as one of the groups economically and socially excluded, and the forum recommended that it should be a priority for the Alliance’s work in the region, for example by:

- Building on the good practice and specialist ministry in Hong Kong and elsewhere, and participating in events happening in the region such as those scheduled in Busan (WCC) and Bangkok. (ICAAP, the International Congress on Asia and the Pacific)
- Provide capacity building tools to develop community awareness of HIV, starting with a simple tool on the community empowerment page of the Alliance website, and developing this as the basis for a distance learning module as part of the Alliance’s Agents of Change programme with The Open University.
- Developing a theology of HIV, including as part of the Alliance’s theology of development.
- Providing resource material, and especially production of a video in which people who are living with HIV talk about their status, and which includes messages from leading Anglican figures for World Aids Day.
- Working with the Anglican health Network on its HIV and Aids programmes, and developing a work stream around access to testing and treatment.

- Putting the HIV and Aids policies of St Johns Cathedral, Hong Kong, the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa and Hope Africa onto the Anglican Alliance website and encouraging others to adopt them with the aspiration that every province in the region has a policy.
- Sharing resources with Anglicans regionally to amplify the voice of the Church in speaking out on HIV and Aids.

## **2.2 Support for marginalised people and communities**

Some people and communities are isolated from the rapid economic growth in the region, and the Alliance felt that the Church's development, relief and advocacy ministry should have a special focus on these groups and people including by taking the following steps:

- Under the Alliance's focus on economic and community empowerment, focussing especially on empowering marginalised and excluded communities to enable them to participate in the region's emerging economies.
- Sharing best practice in education and training especially for people with disabilities.
- Taking part in the Alliance's global access to finance activities especially for people who are HIV positive and migrants and refugees .
- Working with churches to provide spaces for vulnerable and marginalised groups to meet, speak out and find support.

## **3. Policy Priorities - Relief**

Forum participants considered the Alliance's work in the area of emergency relief, looking especially at the focus areas of working with women affected by gender-based violence and people with disabilities. The forum agreed that the Alliance should:

- Work with ERD and other Anglican agencies, and the Alliance relief manager in London, to share best practice and develop capacity building tools for communities affected by natural and conflict-related emergencies.
- Also work with regional agencies working on relief including Amity and Across and with ecumenical partners.

## **4. Policy Priorities - Advocacy**

The challenges facing migrants and trafficked people were identified as a priority for the region in the Alliance's founding consultation in Hong Kong. The forum discussed the different stages of migration, challenges in preparation of migration, recruitment, arrival, the need for common standards, the problems of migrants in countries with no effective channels of advocacy, and problems of reintegration when they return home. The forum strongly supported the existing international conventions and the need for their effective enforcement, and agreed to priorities the following areas of work, along with the Anglican network:

- Develop and run a strong regional advocacy campaign on migrants, refugees and trafficked people, connecting with other regions of the Communion, and with the Network, specialist ministries and ecumenical partners.
- Recognise that the issues that affect migrants between countries - discrimination, lack of access to services and legal rights, exploitation and HIV and Aids - may also affect people who migrate internally within their country. .
- Develop a toolkit of where there is good practice in dealing with migrants, eg and Australia and St Johns Cathedral, Hong Kong - in terms of access to services and promotion of migrants' rights.
- Look at what church does well - providing a safe space, hospitality, inclusion, justice and equity.
- Focus our advocacy on five key areas:
  - o Pay; abuse; recruitment; status; services.
- Work towards the following meetings:
  - o Working with the Anglican Communion UN Office in New York and the Migrant and Refugee Network to make an input to the High level dialogue in UN in October and with the NGO parallel conference. And to mark Migrants Day on Dec 18th with an Xmas card.
  - o Work towards ASEAN meeting and IOM meetings

- o Work with the WCC meetings on its meetings that are relevant to these subjects.
- o Mark World Aids Day on December 1<sup>st</sup> with a special video.
- o Work towards the CCEA meeting in October

### **5. Sharing and participating in global Alliance programmes**

The Forum endorsed participation in existing Anglican Alliance programmes such as:

- Agents of Change – a distance learning programme that is central to the Anglican Alliance’s capacity building mandate.
- Developing internship schemes across the region, especially through our partnership with Amity.
- Participating in capacity building global webinars
- Taking part in global advocacy campaigns on World Food Day - October 16th and International Women’s Day March 8th.
- When the G20 is hosted by a country in the region, supporting the framing of the Anglican input, especially on the key issues such as migrants rights.

### **6. Structures for East and south east Asia’s involvement in the Alliance**

Forum members considered the options for involvement of churches and agencies in the region in the structure of the Anglican Alliance. These decisions are for the Provinces to make through their own decision-making structures. However, it noted the following opportunities set out below and set out the views of those at the forum meeting:

#### **6.1. Representation on the Anglican Alliance board and Advisory Council**

There is an opportunity for the Anglican Alliance board to have a trustee from the region. The forum suggested that there could be an observer from the region to the Anglican Alliance global board until there is a suitable vacancy which someone from the region could fill. There is an opportunity for representatives from the region to sit on the Anglican Alliance Advisory Council which is being set up to provide a sounding board for future strategy. Forum members suggested that the region could put forward two members for the Advisory Council, in discussion with the council’s chair and vice chair, with regard being paid to a gender balance and inclusion of young people, to reflect the region’s lead on youth issues in the Communion.

#### **6.2. A regional steering group.**

The governance review of the Anglican Alliance recommended the establishment of regional forums to ground the Alliance in the work of the churches and agencies around the Communion, and to allow for regional networking and sharing of best practice. The forum looked at these recommendations from the governance review and felt that East and South East Asia is one of the regions best placed to develop a regional steering group, not least because of the good regional transport networks. A regional steering group could work alongside the CCEA, meeting in alternate years, to complement the CCEA’s meeting cycle. It could consist of about 12 to 15 people – to fully reflect the churches and agencies in the region. Care would need to be taken over the composition of the steering group so it could operate effectively as a decision-making forum, with a gender balance, and a proportion of young people to reflect the composition of the community.

**The Forum conducted its deliberations in an atmosphere of prayer and reflection, and commends these conclusions to the Churches and agencies in the Philippines, China (Amity Foundation), Korea, Japan, Myanmar, Ceylon, Hong Kong and South East Asia, to whom we are most grateful for the very kind hosting and hospitality.**

**The participants at the Anglican Alliance East and South East Asia Forum meeting in Kuala Lumpur were: Annamaney Arumanayagam, Diocese of West Malaysia, Revd Desmond Cox, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, Revd John Deane, Executive Director, Anglican Board of Mission, Sally Keeble, Director of Anglican Alliance, Rt Revd Shantha Francis, Diocese of Kurunagala, Church of Ceylon, Elijah Fung, St. John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre, Hong Kong SAR, Revd John Lee, TOPIK, Laura Ocampo, Episcopal Church in the Philippines, Michael Roy, Asia regional facilitator, Anglican Alliance, She Hongyu, Amity Foundation. Rev Saw Philipo from Province of Mynamar was unable to attend due to visa problems. Nagulan Nesiiah of Episcopal Relief and Development, and Revd Catherine Graham, participated via Skype. The event was kindly hosted by the Diocese of West Malaysia, and we were grateful to Rt Rev Ng Moon Hing for his hospitality and presence.**