ASIA PACIFIC KAIROS

A prophetic call to journey together with the PCT in pursuit of justice and peace for the people of Taiwan and the Asia-Pacific

**Press Release November 2018**

**Faith community urged to journey with people of Taiwan and its churches**

[TAIPEI]: Preparations are well underway for the first meeting of the Taiwan Ecumenical Forum for Justice and Peace (TEF) to be held on 27 to 30 November 2018.

TEF is being hosted by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) at the Presbyterian Bible College in Hsinchu, Taiwan.

Some 150 participants from Taiwan, Asia-Pacific, Americas, Europe and other parts of the world are expected to attend the forum.

It will begin with an opening worship in the morning on 28 November. Rev Dr Collin Cowan, TEF co-convener and general secretary of the Council for World Mission will be the preacher at the worship.

The President of Taiwan, H.E. Tsai Ing-wen, will bring her greetings to the gathering.

The three-day TEF program is designed to highlight contextual Bible studies, theological reflections, inputs from partner churches in Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and the Philippines, presentations on various topics, including Transitional Justice, Indigenous People, Taiwan’s International Status, Broadening Ecumenism. Testimonies and reports also will be presented. The closing worship and closing formalities are scheduled to be held in the evening on 30 November. The preacher for the closing communion service will be Mr. Sandy Sneddon of the Church of Scotland.

As the voices of youth are integral to TEF, a Youth Pre-Meeting will be held on 27 November.

The geo-political context of the upcoming TEF is the simmering political and diplomatic tensions involving Taiwan, unresolved denuclearization issues on the Korean peninsula, and military brinkmanship and skirmishes in the South China Sea that has the potential to threaten regional security and pose grave challenges for world peace and people’s security in the region.

TEF was established early this year as a response to a recommendation by an international consultation on “the mission of the Church in Taiwan today,” held in this Northeast Asia country in February 2017.

TEF serves as a cooperative endeavour of the ecumenical movement in accompanying the PCT mission priority for justice and peace in Taiwan and in East Asia. As the PCT seeks to be faithful to God’s calling to identify with the suffering of its people and to give an account of its faith (1 Peter 3:15), it seeks the support of its partner churches, regional, global mission and ecumenical agencies. TEF represents an ecumenical quest and pilgrimage for peace and justice in Taiwan, East Asia and beyond due to the serious regional security challenges and their implications for world peace.

TEF is set up in the spirit of the ecumenical accompaniment programs, such as the Ecumenical Forum on Korea, Palestine-Israel Ecumenical Forum and the Colombian Peace Process.

Among the objectives of TEF are to strengthen and widen ecumenical participation in the pilgrimage for justice and peace in North Asia with Taiwan as a case study in conflict management and resolution; to serve as a platform of common ecumenical action and advocacy in solidarity with the PCT, as its seeks national dignity, national sovereignty and a Taiwanese society built upon a solid foundation of love, justice and mercy; to mobilize and broaden ecumenical and Church support for the transitional justice process for the rights of indigenous peoples and victims in the context of the global ecumenical commitments; and to support PCT priorities for renewing relationships with the Chinese churches and the China Christian Council.

The tasks and functions of TEF include initiating dialogue and cooperation among participating churches, ecumenical bodies and Church agencies for common action for justice and peace in East Asia with specific emphasis on Taiwan; gathering and mobilizing financial resources for the TEF process; and developing and maintaining systematic communications among TEF members.

The co-conveners of TEF’s steering group are Rev Dr Chris Ferguson, general secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and Rev Dr Collin Cowan, general secretary of the Council for World Mission. Other steering group members represent PCT, Mission 21, World Student Christian Federation, Berliner Missionswerk, Presbyterian Church in Canada, United Reformed Church, United Church of Christ in Japan, and the partner churches in Korea, and the Philippines.

The upcoming TEF is an invitation to the national and international faith community to journey together with people of Taiwan and the PCT.

Contact:

Dr Victor Hsu, TEF Steering Group Member; and Coordinator, PCT-TEF Task Force

Mobile Number: +886-978004992

Email: chivongtze@gmail.com