



**Conference of International Catholic Organisations
Conférence des Organisations Internationales Catholiques
Conferencia de las Organizaciones Internacionales Católicas
Konferenz der Internationalen katholischen Organisationen**

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EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CICO

Paris 19 and 20 June 2008

GENERAL POLICY REPORT

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Considerations as reflected by the Coordination Committee since the GA of June 2007

The Coordination Committee has been responsible for the implementation of the decisions of the last GA (work on the “Grouping”) as also for the involvement of certain Members in the preparation, organisation and follow up of the Forum of Catholic and Catholic inspired INGOs.

A. THE « GROUPING »

1. The Coordination Committee based its work on the decisions of the Paris GA (June 2007)

1-1 The Conference of ICOs had decided at its Jerusalem General Assembly (November 2005) to engage in the **transformation** of the Conference. A working group was set up for this purpose, which had many contacts with ICOs. President and vice-president met at the Secretariate of State with Mgr Parolin, Mgr Caccia and Dotteoressa Fermina Alvarez (4th May 2007) to speak about the future of the Forum and of the CICO as the Forum shall not cover the whole range of expectations.

The proposals of the WG were discussed and amended during the Paris General Assembly (June 2007). The role of this future grouping is to :

- Determine the major challenges confronting the INGOs, the world and the Church;
- Be able to voice the daily experience and commitments of the secular world ;
- Be the leading force behind long term coordinated measures;
- Offer services to facilitate international work (training, exchange, strengthening and mutual support intellectual, spiritual and theological);
- Set up a dynamic and interactive thematic network with minimal structure. No duplication with the Forum but true complementarities.

1-2 During the June 2007 General Assembly, Dotteoressa Fermina Alvarez recalled the **main values** which has been the foundation of the Conference for the last 80 years:

- Ability to represent the organisations within the International System;
- Reference to the Social Doctrine of the Church;
- Study of the main topical issues;
- Contact between Catholic organisations and NGOs of other inspiration.

These values are encouraged by the Holy See and the purpose of the Forum project is to translate them into reality through all the Catholic inspired INGOs.

Prof. Guzman Carriquiry gave the Holy See's priorities for the immediate future:

- Pursue and intensify bilateral relationships with each of the former ICOs;
- Make use of the Forum's experience which will require a period of discernment;
- Enter on discussions with the Centres on their role and activities.

- 1-3 **The decisions voted upon by the June 2007 General Assembly** were the following:
- a) Maintain the Conference giving it a new impetus calling it a "Grouping" (result of the vote: 22 for, 0 against, 5 abstentions);
 - b) Entrust the Coordination Committee with the task of gathering the ideas of the working group and those of the General Assembly with a view to formulating a clear project for a "Grouping"; the outcome document to be ready by the end of September. Each ICO will submit their comments by the end of October. The Coordinating Committee to meet end of November preceding the Forum (result of the vote : 24 for, 0 against, 3 abstentions).
 - c) Extend the mandate of the Coordinating Committee to the end of March 2008 with the probability of a GA during the first quarter of 2008, (Result of the vote : 23 for, 0 against, 4 abstentions).

2. As follow up to these events and decisions, the Coordinating Committee has prepared a draft document on the "Grouping"

According to the new Canon Law, the denomination ICO is no longer used and the organisations are henceforth called "International Public or Private Associations of the Faithful". The Conference of ICO is doomed to disappear. **The aim is to transform the Conference to become a new organisation** better suited to globalisation and international challenges with regard to the orientation of the Church and also with regard to the possibilities (human and financial) of Catholic inspired INGOs.

2-1 In **July 2007** four people discussed this concept of a "Grouping" at which three ideas were selected: Catholic identity, visibility and efficiency. Their proposals were submitted last Summer to the Coordinating Committee.

2-2 On **August 30th and 31st 2007**, the Coordinating Committee revised the text and sent it to all ICOs in **September**. Their main vision was the following: "the Catholic INGOs wish to participate better in the multilateral dialogue to defend the evangelical concepts. The network's aim is to initiate, support and give life to common working themes in setting up strategic partnerships able to respond to the major challenges of our times so as to place the **human being** at the centre of the international work (political, economic, etc) and at the heart of any development efforts".

The project is based on **thematic groupings** within which a small group of experts with a wide vision of the international situation would formulate draft resolutions, action plans for lobbying while also supervising implementation and follow-up.

2-3 According to the Coordinating Committee efficiency was vital for the success of a truly dynamic network, thus it seemed wise to contract a full time Secretary General whose first task would be to draft a **strategic short, medium and long term plan** to be submitted to the General Assembly at the end of

March 2008. It would be funded through the reserves followed by fund-raising efforts in view of the implementation of the strategic plan.

The Coordinating Committee has had little feed-back from ICOs. Certain voiced criticism over the post of Secretary General given the financial situation of the Conference.

2-4 On November 12th 2007, the Coordinating Committee met to prepare the forthcoming Forum meeting in order to:

- Re-consider the “Grouping” project;
- Discuss the documents sent in preparation of the Forum by Crescendo, by the Catholic inspired INGOs that participate in the lunchtime meetings of the ICOs in Geneva and by various other ICOs.
- Receive the reports of the preparatory meetings to the Forum held in Geneva, Brussels etc.;
- Decide on common points of reference for participation in the Forum debates;
- Decide on the relationship between the Conference and the Forum in order to unify the interventions of the Coordinating Committee Members at the Forum.

3. Post Forum Period

On December 17th 2007, the Coordinating Committee met again in order to make an **evaluation of the Forum** and draw relevant conclusions. After a long discussion it decided to organise the network of INGOs while supporting the dynamic Forum decisions.

<p>3-1 The forum offered the opportunity of meeting other INGOs representing different trends of Catholic life. Its objectives were clear but limited. Its responsibilities were set by the Secretariat of State with reference to strategic United Nations objectives. It was important to participate in these activities, all the more so that the group entrusted with the implementation of the Forum was composed of the same people as those of the preparatory group.</p>	<p>3-2 The INGO Network will have to be enabled to make proposals and, through a process of capillarity, will have to manage the period between Forums. It will be different from the Forum due to the great diversity of its members and its responsibilities. It will have to define the common objectives to be implemented within a thematic framework. The members of the INGO Network will have to identify its unique characteristics on the one hand and on the other give clear reasons why they should contribute to the Network.</p>
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3-4 The Coordinating Committee decided to call to the **Extraordinary GA** beginning of April with the following agenda:

- Presentation of the situation since the Paris GA;
- Presentation and vote on the proposal: identity, mission, themes for the future Network;
- Adoption of the new Statutes;
- Election of the Steering Committee.

3-5 For **financial reasons** the Coordinating Committee no longer proposes a full time secretary General for 2008 but only a part time post to be financed by the subsidies of the agencies and the membership fees. The activities of the future Network will not be financed by the new structure. The CC

took note that the Pius XII Foundation contributed for the last time in 2007 and will no longer finance the Conference.

In view of the uncertain future of the Conference, the Coordinating Committee has not sent out requests for membership fees for 2008 in order to leave the GA free to decide on its financial policy. It also decided not to call for nominations of the Coordinating Committee.

4. During the CC meeting of January 28th 2008 minutes were drafted on the discussions of the follow-up Forum group that met on January 26th. The outcome of the discussions of the Coordinating Committee were as follows:

4-1 The position of the ICOs that participated in the Forum remains unclear – they are still observing. All those questioned are favourable to a policy of integration but in general are opposed to the parallel existence of both structures (ICCO and Forum). The Forum is an event and not a structure, whereas the ICCO tends towards becoming a network ; this should come about without precipitation.

4-2 The new structure proposed by the CC will include all ICOs and will be open to all NGOs invited to the Forum, including the religious communities. Thus the idea of only lay members is abandoned as the Network will become a global alliance with the possibility of a continuous dialogue with the Holy See. It will become a permanent structure for the implementation of the Forum decisions.

4-3 This is why the Coordinating Committee is eager for Johan K and Dominique L de T to meet with the Secretariat of State to discuss the draft. It also intends to prepare a paper describing the dynamic action of the project and the new Statutes which will be sent to the ICOs for March 15th that is 3 months before the GA which is postponed until June.

Meeting with the Secretariat of State (March 8th 2008)

Johan Ketelers and Dominique Lemau de Talancé met Mgr Parolin, Mgr Caccia and Dottoressa Fermina Alvarez. They:

- Reported on the general discussion of the Coordinating Committee since the GA of 2007;
- Recalled that the Coordinating Committee had supported the proposal of a Forum and encouraged the invited ICOs to participate and they did;
- Underscored the advantages of the Forum as well as its dynamic effect on the INGOs;
- Stressed that no ICO had either financial or human resources to belong to two networks;
- Stated its will to preserve cohesion of all Catholic inspired INGOs
- Affirmed its concern over the future of ICOs with no particular status.

They presented the suggestions that the renewed less cumbersome structure of the Conference should be put at the disposal of the Forum in order to bring together gradually the whole group of former ICO and other Catholic inspired INGOs. Hence the proposal of the Coordinating Committee of a new “grouping” and simplified statutes which had been elaborated step by step since July 2007.

This proposal was not accepted. The Holy See wanted to reflect on the new Forum structure. **It was clearly stated that the Conference had become obsolete.**

B. THE FORUM

1. Preparation for the Forum

The preparations for the Forum of the Catholic inspired NGOs called by the Holy See began early in 2007 and was entrusted to a Group whose members were Hélène Durand Ballivet (ICCG), Johan Ketelers (ICMC), Kevin Ahern (Pax Romana) and Dominique Lemau de Talancé (MIAMSI and President of the Conference).

2. The Forum (November 30th to December 2nd 2007)

The Forum with its 120 participants (90 Catholic inspired INGOs) was a great success: Excellent statement by representatives of the Secretariat of State, a panel chaired by KEVIN Ahern with 13 very diverse statements (INGOs and Nuncios), working groups in different languages and a Papal audience. The summary prepared by John Ketelers was received with applause.

2-1 The Forum will be a privileged platform for exchange of information on global challenges and important issues to be identified and discussed. The next Forum could be convened within 2 years.

2-2 The present Working Group will be modified and/or enlarged in order to represent the different groups (NGOs, movements, congregations) participating in the Forum.

2-3 During the next three months the Working Group will be entrusted with the following tasks:

- (a) pursue the study of the meeting's outcome;
- (b) identify the first priority themes;
- (c) identify persons to lead these groups (such as on the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights or on the Rights of the Child).

2-4 The possibility of a small secretariat will be contemplated. Funds will be raised for this purpose without affecting NGOs.

2-5 The Centres will play an important facilitation and communication role.

3. Meeting of the Forum Working Group (January 26th and April 5th 2008)

The Working Group made an evaluation of the Forum and discussed the setting and an agenda for the new WG; The main issues of its reflection have been the following :

C. PREPARATION OF THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Coordination Committee took note on [March 31st](#) and [April 1st 2008](#) of the conclusions reached during the March 8th 2008 meeting with the Secretariat of State. It discussed at length the various options to be submitted to the General Assembly on [June 19th](#) and [20th 2008](#).

The report on “General Policy” will be presented by the President who will also report on the implementation of the June 2007 decisions: the project for the new “Grouping” and the Statutes will be submitted to the GA. Then the CC will formulate recommendations on the future of the Conference after which the General Assembly will discuss them and proceed to a vote. After the vote its practical modalities will be decided.

The second day of the GA will be the opportunity to discuss the **participation in different thematic networks. This will be an important moment for entering into a new dynamic process.**

After the debate, the Coordinating Committee will ask the General Assembly to decide on keeping the Conference in abeyance or on its dissolution.

Dissolution of the CICO ?

- Its international impact is minimal and it has failed to open to new organisations;
- According to the Holy See the Conference is redundant;
- Its financing is uncertain;
- The ICO consulted are opposed, for lack of funds, to two parallel structures (CICO and Forum).

Keeping the Conference in Abeyance?

- To maintain a meeting possibility
- To pursue collaboration between ICO/INGOs and laity, the genuine representatives of our Church in the Civil Society
- To keep an institutional set up awaiting the structuring of the Forum.

Towards the Forum?

- There is clear agreement between the Coordinating Committee and the Group on the follow up of the Forum on the future of the new “Grouping”;
 - The Forum will widen the work possibilities of Catholic INGOs;
 - The Forum will largely rely on the International Catholic Centres which will become the most favourable environment for a renewed and more dynamic cooperation (training, information, meetings, thematic work etc);
 - The Holy See has high hopes for the Forum’s ability to reflect, leading to positive action and is willing to participate (State Secretariat, Council for the Laity and other dicasteries);
- This will offer the opportunity to ICOs and INGOs to find enrichment through new partnerships

Remaining Questions, in particular

Those ICO without Consultative Status with intergovernmental organisations;
The financing of the Forum activities.