WACC UK Board meeting
Online, 3 July 2025

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Management Actions Document

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Proposed Management Actions on Going Concern and the Changing Political and Economic Climate

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Summary

The rapidly changing global political and economic situation, together with the financial analysis of risks, demand a comprehensive reassessment of WACC's mission, activities, and structures to develop a strategic plan that ensures WACC remains a leading voice for communication rights over the next decade.

WACC has always faced financial pressures as funders have shifted priorities and organizational costs have increased. The sale of the London office building and the move of the secretariat from London to Toronto in 2006 was one of the most dramatic attempts to address financial stability. However, while establishing a substantial financial reserve, it did not reverse the trend, in most years, of negative financial results.

Fundraising has long been a priority for WACC management and program staff, with some success for project funding but not sufficient to cover the core costs required to manage and administer projects and programmes, leading to an organizational reliance on Bread for the World both for project and core funding. Deficits have been most often met with reductions in expenditure for governance, staffing, in person meetings, and regional associations, which provided short-terms savings but reduced network engagement, visibility and, at least for some, relevance.

Over the years, WACC board and staff have also wrestled with questions around WACC's name and identity as potential inhibiters of further funding; decentralizing and maintaining registered offices in the UK and Canada; finding further savings in staff consolidation; expanding outreach to members, partners and new audiences.

To provide a wider and potentially fresh assessment of WACC's position and opportunities, staff requested external reflections in the form of a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). These were requested from board members, regional executive committees, honorary members, funding partners,

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and individuals with experience in different sectors – some with historical involvement in WACC and some with very little direct contact but an interest in what WACC is about. *A summary of responses can be found in Annex 1.*

While not an overwhelming response numerically, the reflections and perspectives both reaffirmed key qualities of WACC and pointed to strengths and opportunities to build upon.

Interviews conducted as part of the SWOT emphasized the need to pursue a multiyear (3-5 year) strategic development process that takes a comprehensive view of the organization, rather than piecemeal actions. Actions taken without such analysis risk being ineffective or having unintended negative consequences. The approach would entail data collection and analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and updating the development plan on a rolling basis.

The timing for such a strategic development analysis and plan would coincide well with the anticipated processes for the next Strategic Plan (2027-2030).

Based on the input from SWOT responses and regional outreach, the proposed areas for re-evaluation are:

A. Communication and visibility, including the WACC brand
B. Strengthening governance, membership, and networking
C. Business development for self-generated funding
D. Strengthening existing funding and pursuing new funding
E. Assessing WACC's organizational structure
F. Development of WACC's Strategic Plan (2027-2030) and board elections

Proposed areas for re-evaluation and forward planning

a) Refine the WACC brand and unique selling point (USP) (12-18 months development before launch)
   a. July 2025 Board decision on the direction of the name (see Annex 2).
   b. Ideally, consultation with external branding experts on approach and look (could include outreach to current and potential audiences).
   c. Assessment of any legal implications (e.g. changing charity name).
   d. Restructure/redesign of website, social media channels, interpretation materials.
   e. Launch of refined brand.
b) Strengthen membership and networking (3 years)
   a. Pilot stronger staff support for 3 regions (to be selected)
   b. Explore capacity building for regional associations, including cross regional communication.
c) Business development for existing or potential services or products (18 months)
   a. Work with external business developer to assess current and potential services, markets, platforms.
   b. Includes: *Media Development*, publications, learning platform, workshops and trainings, individual donor development
   c. Requires collection and analysis of data on costs, time, return, etc.
d) Strengthen existing funding and pursuing new funding. (ongoing)

a. Current efforts to attract new partners and funders continue.
b. Depending on progress of brand and business development, develop outreach under corporate social responsibility.
e) Consider WACC structure to ensure it is fit for purpose including location (see Annex 3) and staffing. This includes scenarios for outsourcing, redefining responsibilities, regional connections and support. (3 years)
a. July 2025 Board decision to keep existing *registered offices* at least until 2028 (taking into account the closure of the physical ACC building in Toronto, which is likely by the end of 2027). Issues relate both to the legally registered offices and the relationship between them which requires a consolidated audit in the UK since the changes approved in 2018.
b. Explore staff roles and new ways of working, potentially leading to recommendations for revised role descriptions/restructuring.
c. Discussion with regional associations with legal entities on strategic ways to leverage funding and outreach.
d. Officer and Board elections (2027), preceded by review of role, expectations and capacity building plan.
e. Scenario planning with detailed cost and benefit analysis (to be done 2026, updated 2027).
f) Development of next Strategic Plan 2027-2030 (to begin mid 2026).
a. The input, analysis and progress of the work above informs the elements of the plan.
b. The process of refining the strategic elements, drafting, and testing with members and partners starts with new board term.
c. The strategic plan should be followed with annual implementation plans.

This is not an exhaustive list of the actions that could or would be taken, but it must be recognized that this will be an additional demand on staff time, and that it should be accompanied closely by the Board.

> **Recommendation: That the Officers plus one member from the WACC Canada Board accompany the re-evaluation and strategic planning process.**

There will be points where we need outside expertise and/or facilitation to ensure we have the necessary expertise and experience, or in some potential discussions, remove conflict of interest and allow all participants to input equally.

Timeline needs to consider that a new board, including President, will be elected in May 2027, a process that starts before the end of 2026.

Annex 1: WACC SWOT – Summary of Responses

To provide a wider and potentially fresh assessment of WACC's position and opportunities, staff requested external reflections in the form of a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). These were requested from board members, regional executive committees, honorary members, funding partners, and individuals with experience in different sectors – some with historical involvement in WACC and some with very little direct contact but interest in what WACC is about. Two were conducted by interview on request (one later sending in an additional SWOT response). Responses were received from:

Africa (Global)
Association for Progressive Communications (funding and advocacy partner)

Asia
Young Cheol Cheon, Mission Secretary for Communications, Council for World Mission (honorary member)

Europe
Priyanka Bamford, Sales Director, X-Lab (tech company; also in business development and strategy, UK)
Marianne Ejdersten, Director of Communication, World Council of Churches (Institutional member and funding partner)
Erin Green (personal member, WACC consultant for digital justice resources)
Tim Fieldsend, On Purpose Sarl (fundraising consultant)
Soledad Muniz, Director of Programmes, InsightShare (UK)
Ralf Peter Reimann, Agnieszka Tarnogórska, Jane Stranz, Katherine Shirk Lucas (Officers of the WACC Europe Regional Association)
Seán Ó Slochrú, advocacy partner
Michaela Southworth (former investment banker at RBS, former finance director for the Anglican Communion, now Diocesan Secretary and Chief Executive officer, Diocese of Chelmsford, UK)
Christian Sterzik, in his personal capacity; former banking experience and now in the national secretariat of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)
Corinna Waltz, EMW (funding and advocacy partner)

Latin America
José Luis Aguirre Alvis (honorary member)
CER WACC América Latina
Cirenia Celestino Ortega, Comunicación e Información de la Mujer A.C (CIMAC) (Project and advocacy partner)
Laura Sales, Witness (funding and advocacy partner)

North America
Clemencia Rodriguez, Professor and director, Master of Science in Communication for Development and Social Change, Klein College of Media and Communication, Temple University (academic and advocacy partner)

While not an overwhelming response numerically, the reflections and perspectives both reaffirmed key qualities of WACC and pointed to strengths and opportunities to

build upon. The following are the points most often mentioned, with quotes from the responses that make more specific suggestions or develop the points further.

> *Strengths and Weaknesses relate to factors internal to the organization.*
> *Opportunities and Threats relate to factors external to the organization.*

Strengths

Most often mentioned:
-WACC is unique because of expertise and long history on the full range of communication rights
-regional networks
-ecumenical character
-commitment, expertise, and networking ability of staff
-connection to communities around the world

Communication rights

WACC is the only organisation that has at the core of its identity the right to communicate as a human quality for all.

WACC's work is very unique. There are many organisations that focus on, for example, advocacy for freedom of expression, journalism, media development, etc. But I don't know of any other organisation focused on communication rights. Moreover, the network format with members in all regions has a very big advantage over the traditional model of INGOs or foundations that only provide grants.

Global reach and networking

WACC goes all the way to find the local community orgs and invests its resources there, with local communities, NOT with organizations that fund or support local organizations.

One of WACC's key strengths lies in its flexible and respectful approach to managing funding. The organisation grants autonomy to the initiatives of groups and organisations, allowing communities to design and execute their own processes, while offering technical and strategic accompaniment. This model promotes the sustainability and empowerment of organisations, while ensuring alignment with WACC's objectives.

WACC's involvement in networks, and its ability to work collaboratively within them, significantly enhances its visibility and influence beyond what it could achieve alone.

A positive reputation among church communications professionals

Ser una organización sin fines de lucro que se mantiene como espacio comunicacional con independencia de opinión de los poderes políticos- religiosos- económicos de turno, y que las personas que mayormente trabajamos en WACC, somos voluntaria (no hace falta un presupuesto elevado para llevar adelante

acciones puntuales) [Being a non-profit organisation that maintains itself as a communicational space with independence of opinion from the political, religious and economic powers of the day, and that the people who work in WACC are mostly volunteers (it is not necessary to have a large budget to carry out specific actions).]

Communication and Visibility

The profile of WACC has been upgraded and sharpened over the last 5 years.

Media Development has views on media that are not available elsewhere, that are very accessible and diverse. I am not sure how widely it is distributed to read but it deserves to be a strength!

WACC is widely recognised for its leadership and specialized expertise in addressing key communication issues globally.

Regular publications, seminars, and participation in high-profile events raise WACC's profile.

It maintains a global presence—with particularly strong visibility from a European perspective

Weaknesses

Most often mentioned:
- Branding
- Visibility
- Weakened networks with Christian communicators
- Limited staff resources to support regional associations
- Membership management, although improved in recent years, remains under-resourced
- Financial dependence on one major donor, limited unrestricted funds

Networking

WACC's historically strong networks with Christian media institutions, primarily established in Europe and North America, are not adequately integrated with emerging Christian media institutions from the Global South.

There is a need for better and more effective cooperation among the regions, as well as more regular and transparent communication from the board to the regional associations.

Branding

It's hard to understand from WACC's materials what its real purpose, it's USP is. After reading through it, I realised that what you are about is justice and human rights – and communication is a means to that. Funders will support justice and human rights, not necessarily communication.

Some organizations that previously collaborated effectively with church-affiliated groups have since adopted policies against supporting "any organization whose main goal is to distribute its religious beliefs." WACC Global's primary backlinks come from two distinct groups that could, in the future, impose incompatible demands as a condition for continued cooperation: A) Church-based organizations and B) Non-religious organizations such as apc.org, iamcr.org, and unwoman.org

I think we could be more innovative still. I see the newsletter, and I find it rather long and not skimmable. I am really committed to the mission of WACC and know the organization well, but even then I'm not actively following or consuming the communications output. I also think the name WACC is a hinderance. When I try to tell people outside our circles about my WACC projects I just say "a really cool organization that does a lot of great stuff on communication rights".

Opportunities

Most often mentioned:
- Communication and visibility
- Alliances and networking
- Strengthen the regional work
- Corporate social responsibility
- Fundraising opportunities tied to key communication ethics issues of the day

Communication and visibility

Strengthen the online presence, digital formats for materials

Rebranding WACC as the leading expertise on communication rights and digital justice

A feature of its identity and commitment should be alternative and popular communication, including indigenous peoples, indigenous communication, community media, alternative press, communication by and for people with disabilities, and other invisible sectors

WACC could position itself as an early adopter of Responsible AI; and employ Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategies to increase its online visibility and outreach.

There is potential for corporate partnerships (corporate social responsibility) but we need to be able to "sell" WACC in two slides.

WACC is perhaps the ONLY international, global organization that could demonstrate with real-world evidence, why communication rights are central to social justice. Or, said in another way, how a liveable life is conditioned on access to communication/media. WACC operates at the global level, but WACC is inserted at such local levels, that it has first-hand access to the experience of people with their media. Very few global, international orgs have such access to local experiences.

Networks – global and regional

Bring together leading communication experts in a special forum - UN family in New York, Geneva and in leading cities as xx xxx
Interreligious networks – a new forum to be stablished
An annual online communication symposium with leading partners.
Guest professor in communication rights and digital justice in Bossey (2-8 weeks/year)

Strengthen the regional work

Working alliances with regional networks, e.g. ALER

En el caso de WACC AL, toda la juventud que hoy es muy fuerte en la Amazonía (tanto Brasil, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú y Venezuela) de pueblos indígenas que ya son influencers de alcance internacional con las cuales, no tenemos conexiones fuertes. Del mismo modo varias organizaciones basadas en la FE que ya están trabajando el tema de movilidad humana donde, el aporte comunicacional de WACC es clave. [In the case of WACC AL, all the youth that today is very strong in the Amazon (both Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela) of indigenous peoples who are already international influencers with whom we do not have strong connections. In the same way, several organisations based in the FE are already working on the issue of human mobility, where WACC's communication contribution is key.]

WACC is well positioned to engage with ethical issues informed by a Christian worldview—an area that aligns with its values and mission. It also plays a key role in amplifying voices from the Global South in international discussions.

Churches could serve as effective multipliers in disseminating WACC's work and expanding its reach.

The people of the networks are certainly your strengths. I think civil society is under enormous strain so we need to think about where there is healthy corporate or for-profit partnerships. Mozilla foundation? Universities as well. Higher education is certainly undergoing a shift, but if we can partner more with "drag and drop" kind of content, that could also be an avenue.

Raising funds
Growing concerns about disinformation in society may increase the demand for trusted organizations and strengthen the willingness of donors to support institutions like WACC, which are committed to ethical communication and truthfulness.

While there may be theological compatibility questions regarding topics and certain fundraising strategies, it is worth noting that organizations such as the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) have experienced substantial growth in donations in recent years. ADF now manages a significant budget and employs hundreds of staff, demonstrating the potential for faith-based organizations to expand their reach and impact through effective fundraising and resource management.

In parallel to the critical situation, we see in the support coming from the public sector, we see an increase in support coming from resources that are generated through the

internet and other sources that are also interested in strengthening community processes, autonomy and digital decentralisation.

Global digital transformation, climate change, migration, and gender issues create ongoing demand for WACC's expertise and advocacy.

Opportunity to align with corporates aligning with their charitable vision.

More Global South alliances; more local sources of funding in the Global South; less dependence on Global North orgs

In today's funding environment, we need a business development process - don't just cut costs.

Threats

- *Funding landscape is changing*
- *Current global climate is marked by uncertainty*

The spread of "fake news" and misinformation, online abuse, digital poverty, and digital surveillance are just some of the challenges we are increasingly facing. Political, cultural and civil society actors are all struggling to respond effectively. What is still lacking is a comprehensive approach, based on social justice, to the challenges and opportunities of the digital age

The rise of right-wing extremism, along with the growing reliance on technologies from ethically or politically compromised companies, poses serious challenges to WACC's work.

Lo económico va de la mano de lo político sin dudas. Las nuevas tendencias de las ultraderechas que niegan derechas y promueven pensamientos unívocos sobre la realidad que se vive, hace que la pobreza, la marginalidad y la movilidad humana más que ser un tema a tratar y resolver, se vuelva una amenaza creciente para los grupos acomodados social y económicamente. [The economic goes hand in hand with the political without a doubt. The new trends of the ultra-right that deny the right and promote univocal thinking about the reality that we live in, makes poverty, marginalisation and human mobility more of a growing threat to socially and economically well-off groups than an issue to be addressed and solved.]

Risk of discrediting and accusations of promoting Christianity in communities because of their religious background.

Securing funding is becoming increasingly complex, requiring specialized expertise to both obtain grants and administer projects.

Any reduction in staff could significantly impact support to the regions and threaten WACC's overall operational capacity.

The role of WACC might be even more needed in the next 2-10 years.

In some political contexts, civil society organisations are under pressure, with legal initiatives seeking to limit their capacity for action.

In this context, we also see it as important that WACC can also continue to support advocacy efforts to advance legal recognition and strengthen public policies for community and rights projects.

Annex 2: WACC's name and "branding"

There have long been questions about the potential confusion that the name "World Association for Christian Communication" creates both within the Christian community (that we help shape Christian communicators' expertise, including theological reflections) and secular entities (that we are an evangelical association). There are also strong considerations both to keep the name (virtually all our current funding comes from ecumenical entities) and to change the name (we have had examples of funders and potential partners distancing themselves from us because of their perception of our Christian identity).

1. In a consultation with regional associations in which issues with the name and potential alternative names were proposed, there was a general sense that retaining the acronym WACC offers historical continuity, but that the full name itself might need to change to better express what the organisation is actually about.

2. Over the decades, WACC has used three taglines ("Taking sides", "Communication for all", and "Enabling people to be seen and heard"). The first was controversial (whose side and why?). The second could seem obvious (doesn't everyone communicate?). The third came nearest to saying something about what WACC does.

3. Complicating WACC's identity is that there are in reality three identities, with three websites – WACC, Centre for Communication Rights, and GMMP (whomakesthenews). The CCR has its own tagline: "Many voices, one world", which echoes the title of the 1980 MacBride Report. Forty-five years later, while the concept remains valid, it may also be time to move on.

Responses to the idea of a name change from WACC regional executive committees

WACC-Caribe: The REC is in favour of a name change. The name that found favour with the group is World Association for Communication Rights (WACR). The committee is aware of the implications of such a change and that it would have to be thoroughly explored, bearing in mind the goodwill associated with WACC, as well as the expense associated with rebranding.
WACC-LA: A majority voted for World Association for Community Communication (Asociación Mundial para la Comunicación en Comunidad) so as not to lose the corporate identity of so many years (branding); accentuating the capacity of community communication (a major factor in Latin America); and the fact that we continue to be a global organisation with members rather than a network in itself.
WACC-Europe: The name 'World Association for Christian Communication" does not effectively communicate WACC's mission of fostering communication for all. Renaming WACC and omitting the adjective "Christian" could be perceived as distancing the organization from its Christian heritage and perspective, which may also make it more difficult to secure support from churches. The use of the abbreviation "WACC" could be helpful in branding the organization's identity. By adopting "WACC" alongside an appropriate tagline (e.g.

"Communication for All"), we could transition to using the abbreviation instead of the full name, reserving the full name for specific contexts and explaining WACC's mission when necessary.

Therefore, the consensus was that rather than renaming the World Association for Christian Communication, we should switch to using the abbreviation "WACC" with a relevant tagline.

WACC-NA: The consensus was that retaining the acronym somehow, would be preferred, but we also liked World Association for Communication Rights. As in the past, there continues to be equal part concerns about losing the Christian identity of the organization and hindering the organization's work by keeping Christian in the name. We thought both concerns could be overcome with better and coordinated donor communications. All that said, there was good agreement that we'd like to retain the global nature of the communications work, so some version of the name with World, Association and Communication embedded may be best.

WACC-Africa is not opposed to a change. We acknowledge the limitations of the present name in fully projecting WACC's expanded aims and objective to guarantee the organisation's future financial viability.

Our executive based on the consultation with our members would, however, prefer that the new name does not allow for anything that will deny WACC's heritage and history or violate the original principles of the WACC and what it stands for. We have no objection to any of the suggested names as long as they capture the new focus of WACC's programmes and projects.

6. There is no unqualified consensus around altering WACC's name. In addition, the global geopolitical and economic scene is changing rapidly in the light of cutbacks to development assistance and humanitarian aid, and reductions in church-related revenue. WACC is also facing challenges when it comes to securing ongoing core budget and programme funding, as well as in striking up new funding partnerships. Changing WACC's name would require constitutional and governance revisions. For these reasons, the following **Motion** is proposed:

> **That over the next 12 months WACC devise a model in which WACC's three "brands" (WACC, CCR, and GMMP) are consolidated under the umbrella of "Communication Justice for All", tying into WACC's history and maintaining recognition with WACC's various networks.**

This overarching identity is about pursuing justice, sustainable development, and democracy through communication rights. WACC is about capacity building and local to global advocacy. CCR is about education. GMMP is about research and evidence.

This trajectory, its impact and visibility, any unforeseen constitutional and governance as well as budget implications, will be assessed within the strategic development process over the next 12 months.

Annex 3: Office location

Against a background of cost-cutting and constrained income, WACC staff have made an initial review of its structural dependence on two legal identities: WACC UK and WACC Canada.

As far as possible we considered the advantages/disadvantages and implications of closing WACC Canada or WACC UK as registered offices and consolidating the structure. Various aspects were considered:

- Legal: The WACC UK Articles, as revised in 2018, defines WACC's global structure, governance and membership. The sole member of WACC Canada is WACC UK, with the major part of income and expenditure passing through WACC Canada. This set-up now demands three institutional audits. Governance questions (who elects whom) would have to be revised, requiring changes to the Articles in both the UK and Canada, approved by the membership.
- Financial: Currently all core budget funding and most programme funding goes through WACC Canada since the physical move of the WACC secretariat from the UK to Canada in 2006. Closing WACC Canada might risk connections to North American funders. Closing WACC UK might alienate European partners. Discussions with the North American and Europe Regional Associations, with their own legal entities, should be held for potential synergies for WACC identity and regional funding. Initial calculations indicate that closing WACC UK might save CAD 35-50,000 p.a.; closing WACC Canada might save CAD 60,000.
- Staffing: A fully decentralised staff has been on the cards for some time. Staff contracts could be fulfilled under either jurisdiction, but there are important questions around health coverage, pensions, and working practices.
- Retention of financial records and other materials: WACC is obliged to keep financial records for ten years, and there remain other archives following the move from Hope United Church requiring physical storage.
- Physical location: WACC Canada has a small physical office in Toronto, located within the Anglican Church House. Our hosts anticipate closing their offices by the end of 2027 requiring a decision by then on the future of a physical office. WACC UK exists as a virtual registered office.
- IT: Closing WACC Canada and/or decentralisation would raise the question of where to locate and maintain the WACC servers.
- Aqueduct Foundation: If WACC Canada were to close, its monetary and other assets would ultimately have to go to a Canadian charity.

In addition to the practical considerations, closure of a registered office is also a question of WACC's identity and relationships. The 2018 change in the legal relationship between the two entities was driven by revisions required by Canadian charity legislation that created difficulties in WACC's membership and regional association model as well as the different processes required to elect and run the organization's board. Any change in legal status would require making sure that the governance, membership, and regional association model would meet WACC's longer term structure and needs.

In the light of the above and the pressing concerns that WACC needs urgently to address, the Staff recommend:

"Having assessed the ramifications of altering the structure of WACC Global, the likely considerable cost of making legal changes against the savings to be gained from closing down one or the other entity, and with due consideration given to the unexpected consequences of taking such a step at a time of global chaos and uncertainty, Staff recommend that (a) no action be taken at the present time, and (b) the issue be revisited in 2028 following the comprehensive analysis of WACC's proposed strategic development plan and in the light of prevailing circumstances."