

Economic Empowerment: Consultation, Networking and Partnership within Global South - May 2006

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Introduction

From the [Third Communiqué](#) (October 2005)

38. A dimension of responsible stewardship and accountability is the clear call to be financially self-sustaining. We commend the new initiative for financial self-sufficiency and development being studied by the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa (CAPA). This is not only necessary because of the demands of human dignity; it is the only way to have sustainable economic stability.

One of the greatest challenges facing the Anglican Provinces of the Global South is the lack of financial resources at every level – from individual parishioners to provincial structures. The passion and vision for the gospel is present in abundance but the economic realities hinders their translation into realities. It is not that the countries in the Global South all lack natural resources but these resources are not harnessed effectively to serve the church.

We can identify a few causes. The widespread cultural dependence can be traced to the way mission work was done, where both human and finance resources were poured in without long-term efforts at building up the local manpower and finances. Added to that, Government instability and corruption, natural disasters and wars have affected the sustainability of the development. The result has been that many of the Global South provinces and people are still very dependent on others (especially the West) for their survival.

We are now aware that there are many top level initiatives in progress, spearheaded by governments and NGO agencies. As fellow Anglicans, we should pitch in as well. It is proposed that a consultation on economic empowerment be arranged that will provide training and resources to help Provinces to move from economic dependence to financial freedom. It will initially be aimed at provincial leadership – lay and ordained – but the expectation is that the training will be transferable to all levels of the church.

Goals for the consultation will include:

1. Establish what resources are already present within provinces

We will conduct an Economic/Socio/Political assessment for each province: where are they what are their gifts, experience with economic development etc. This will be done both by gathering data but also through presenting case studies to encourage people to think more creatively about their own available resources.

2. Clarify what we believe

Establish a coherent theology of Biblical stewardship at all levels – this will include importance of wealth creation, economic empowerment and financial integrity together with discussion of the role of church in economic enterprise and principles for resource sharing in a non-coercive way. Personal stewardship as well as corporate ethics for those involved in government service and business will also need to be addressed.

3. Examine the wider economic context for each province.

Attention will be given to the wider economic context for each of the provinces. Some provinces are in settings known for an enthusiastic embrace of the concept of economic growth – others are in places of extended conflict and systemic poverty. These differences need to be acknowledged.. The impact of global economic changes must also be addressed. For example consideration must be given to China's rapid economic growth and growing demand for global energy resource.

4. Develop and implement an action plan for economic empowerment for each province

As a first step it is proposed that the development of an action plan be directed towards an identifiable sub group of provinces, like those in CAPA. One possible approach would be through the establishment an Economic Empowerment Center (EEC) for each province. This would be a small team of national business/admin leaders who would be the focal point of the Province for training resources for a range of business skills, MED programs, assessment tools, connection to global business networks, connection to financial resources, coordination etc. Such a center is about to be established in Kenya and this will be a timely case study. Seminar discussions about specific local needs for the Center would be essential. These EEC's would also offer a means of continuing a Global South focus on Economic Empowerment without the cost of having more overseas conferences. The leadership teams would have a common language and could easily establish an ongoing network to share ideas

resources etc. They can benefit from advice or training from the network of established business leaders in other Provinces. **Next steps**

1. It is proposed that a small team of consultants be formally established to fully develop the program, choose a location, develop the necessary funding, establish communication strategy, set guidelines for invitees, and identify resource persons.

2. As the Consultation would realistically require 12 to 18 months to organize, it is proposed that each Province/Primate begin this process immediately and identify/nominate an 'economic liaison officer' with a view to meet concurrently with the next Global South Primates meeting. This separate track will, through its deliberations, work toward the GS Consultation on Economic Empowerment. The possible program could be along the following lines:

a. An initial paper presentation on the theology of Biblical stewardship with interaction and discussion. b. Workshops designed to enable each Province to firstly 'begin to identify/discover their resources' and "think creatively of the possibilities available.. c. Regional grouping of Provinces where those in need would identify these areas and Provinces ready 'to be a blessing' could begin to identify tangible ways to partner assist. This model of intra Province partnership need not be limited to a regional approach. This process can kickstart with of GS partnerships leading up to the GSCEE. This process need not replace assistance from the West but provide a necessary bridging period as financially weaker Provinces work toward self sufficiency. d. Presentation of some existing initiatives to help economic development such as Five Talents/CMED

Conclusion

At the heart of economic empowerment is a transformed mind – from hopelessness to possibilities, receiving to giving, plunder to investment, a low self-image to confidence, corruption to responsible wealth-creation, governed by a desire to live a life to the glory of God. *Presented by Mr Keith Chua (Singapore) and his team*