



World Alliance of YMCAs

Geneva, January 3rd, 2011

Dear friends and colleagues,

Greetings from Geneva, where I am honoured to have begun working recently in the handover process from the previous Secretariat.

As your newly appointed leadership, Ken Colloton's and my commitment to you is to advance the movement through processes that are inclusive, engaging, connecting, serving, and empowering,

Our goal is to serve the whole YMCA movement, not to create a stronghold in Geneva. We want to build on the strengths of the past, with our values and practices deeply rooted in the Christian ethos, learning from Jesus Christ and his life and teaching to be inclusive of all humankind, irrespective of their faith, culture or political convictions. We also want to build on the accomplishments of the leaders who have come before us, and who have shepherded our movement through a truly dynamic period – a time when the world has seen dramatic changes religiously, politically, and economically.

From the above platform, we want to thoughtfully, collaboratively and boldly advance a new version of WAY, meaning World Alliance of YMCAs, a NEW WAY. The NEW WAY will be a joint venture together with all the worldwide leadership to grow stronger, lift our visibility, and establish our presence and voice as a committed movement to our Christian values and our promise and potential to empower youth. We will reveal ourselves for our unique capacity to change minds and positively influence lives of children, youth, and families for the greater good of humankind. Together with each of you we will renew our movement and soar to new heights of vision, leadership, and service to all. This will be the new direction of the WAY.

The NEW WAY will address our interconnected goals to be stronger as a movement and to be visible and recognized as a powerful movement for empowering youth and strengthening communities.

1. NEW WAY will lay the groundwork for a unifying vision and direction towards a common message and clearer identity. At the same time as we are embracing the rich diversity of our movement, we aim to go a step further and seek to identify a contemporary expression of what it is that binds us together in the YMCA in the 21st century and what makes us proud to belong to this movement. We want to formulate a simple, easy understandable message about what it means to belong to the YMCA. This message will strongly help us to identify with the movement, be proud of the movement and help the movement to grow strength and outreach and prosperity in service for mankind all around the globe. We do not need to initiate another mission review process, because it is possible to extract from the mission statements (Paris Basis, Kampala Principles, Challenge 21) and from our impressive history and our widespread traditions of this movement a practical and unifying message about what the YMCA is and can become in our time.
2. This vision message will make it easier for us to explain to the outside world what kind of organization YMCA is, and will make it easier for all of us to recruit members, leaders and to ask for donations and all kinds of strategic assistance.
3. NEW WAY therefore means a new brand, a stronger brand, a brand, which will reflect the strong relevance of this huge movement for the years to come. In searching for this NEW WAY we have already initiated Partners in Progress, a process of discovery and revelation to help one another to know more about our global movement and how we are transforming lives through mind changing experiences and innovative youth festivals around the world. We will be able to extract the essence of all of this to share with the rest of the world and demonstrate this relevance for the present and for the future.
4. NEW WAY will also mean an evolved World Alliance of YMCAs. Our family is ready to go to a new level, through a vibrant partnership of National Movements, Area Organizations, and the World Alliance. We envision all contributing to, supporting implementation of, and gaining direct benefit from a global strategy for our historic movement. Ken and I are working very closely to make this a joint venture between staff and volunteers and Ken and the Executive Committee are working hard to continue enhancing the governance system and especially making sure that the voices of the young adults will be heard on all issues as we are developing a new strategic plan for the world movement. WAY shall draw on and collaborate with the resources of Area Organizations and National Movements. The Global Staff Team will be more needed than ever before.

We will operate in a joint-venture mindset in which no new claims will be made for transfer of money or other resources from National Movements to the NEW WAY. WAY will extend an open invitation to the whole family of YMCAs to give its best for the common good. A relevant example which has value right now, might look like this:

- * We will ask Africa to help us explore the exciting programme “S2C” From Subject to Citizen and see if this can be of relevance to YMCAs in other parts of the world in a new focus on Youth Empowerment.
- * We will ask Asia and Pacific to help us explore Global Citizenship to see if this can be combined with S2C, or if this is a further development and what it can do to assist YMCAs in shaping more relevant programmes for Youth Empowerment.
- * We will ask Canada to help us set up the right process towards a more focused work on branding of the YMCA world wide, a crucial priority to make NEW WAY happen, and not just remain an idea.
- * We will ask Europe to contribute with their YERT – Programme (YMCA Europe Resource Teams for Movement Strengthening), their peace building programmes and experience in running big Youth Events.
- * We will ask Latin America and the Caribbean to share their Líderes Programme with us for Leadership Development, their Youth Initiatives as well as the web based training and communication which is functioning so well in their Area.
- * We will ask the Middle East to share their experience in running programmes for the poor and unemployed as well as programmes for traumatized youth in conflict areas.
- * We will ask YMCA of the USA to help us to further build capacity for Resource Mobilization and ask for staff and volunteer expertise to assist us in training and pilot projects all around the globe. We will also ask for strategic partnership with different YMCA related structures like NAYDO (North American YMCA Development Organization), WUN (World Urban Network), NAUG (North American Urban Group), Y Care International, Y’s Men International as well as structures outside of the YMCA, like the Foundation Centre in New York.

In this way NEW WAY will be a thriving hub for the best initiatives in the YMCA, a meeting place for resource people from the YMCA and a facilitation centre for an impactful worldwide movement strengthening process.

The NEW WAY will empower and foster belonging and ownership. NEW WAY will significantly increase the potential for resource mobilization and an effective branding process will be in place. Ken and I draw inspiration and direction from the Geneva Statement signed in 2008 by nearly thirty YMCA leaders.

All young people face unprecedented challenges and choices that will determine their conditions of life and their ability to positively contribute to their communities. The YMCA will engage youth in leadership, education and other activities to enable young people to make positive choices.

We commit, consistent with the GOP and the World Alliance Strategic Plan, to the following actions:

- To raise the urgent issues of youth before the world community and the YMCA's capacity to address these issues.*
- To raise the necessary resources to increase the capacity of local/national movements to increase youth participation by 50%.*
- The World Alliance of YMCAs will develop a resource mobilization plan to allow us to fulfil our commitments.*

(Extract from Geneva Statement, 2008)

Introduction of Staff Team:

To support our vision, we are pleased to share with you the good news of our new professional staff team at the World Alliance of YMCAs (WAY). The team is comprised of experienced leaders from various geographic regions of the worldwide YMCA movement. In addition to the excellent group of professional staff working in the WAY office in Geneva already, the following two fulltime Executive Secretary positions have been recruited and two part time advisors on short-term contracts have been appointed.

Selma Zaidi, (Full-time) Senior Executive Secretary for Movement Strengthening and Resource Mobilization. Selma will be responsible for advancing our efforts in strengthening the movement. She will work in close coordination with all Areas and National Movements on the Global Operating Plan for Movement Strengthening. Selma will also expand our work in resource mobilization and will work on securing new resources, developing strategic alliances, and strengthening

collaborations. Selma comes to us from YMCA of the USA where she served as Vice President for International. She has 20 years of service for the YMCA.

Romulo Dantas, (Full-time) Executive Secretary for Youth Empowerment. Romulo will be responsible for advancing our leadership in youth empowerment and strengthening our collective capacity to lead the youth agenda. Romulo will work in collaboration with the Areas and National Movements and will focus on identifying signature youth programmes and empower youth to expand our voice, leadership, and authentic presence on key youth issues. Romulo is 28 years old and comes from the YMCA of São Paulo, Brasil, where he served as Executive Secretary for Youth Related Issues.

Carlos Sanvee, (25% time) General Secretary, Africa Alliance of YMCAs. Carlos will be an *advisor to the Secretary General*. Carlos will advance our work in branding and communications leading our redesign of the communications materials (World magazine) and providing a voice and presence on critical youth issues and especially share with us the high potential programme from Africa called S2C, From Subject To Citizen.

Jose Varghese, (25% time) Executive Secretary, Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs. Jose will be an *advisor to the Secretary General*. Jose will advance our understanding of global citizenship and will be a resource for collecting and sharing the best practices and experiences in programmes of the worldwide movement.

Consolidated Work Plan for Resource Mobilisation/Highlights from the Work Plans:

To launch resource mobilization for the 2011 to 2014 period, each of the regional Areas developed a work plan. A consolidated work plan was then developed to provide a comprehensive overview of the specific activities of each region (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean). In addition, the plan includes areas of cross regional collaboration and focus for the World Alliance. In each Area, funds and technical assistance were requested to support human resources and capacity building. The World Alliance will invest staff time and funds to help building capacity to strengthen and expand the resource base.

An estimated USD 1 million is anticipated from within the movement as investment from the Investors Circle. An additional USD 3 million in new financial resources (in cash) is expected by the Areas and the World Alliance collectively over the next 4 years. In addition, the consolidated plan will include strategic alliances and collaborative agreements with networks such as NAYDO, WUN, NAUG, Y Care, Y's Men International and others.

Results from the Investors Circle:

We are pleased to report and extend our gratitude to the Investors Circle for their support to strengthen the WAY resource mobilization efforts. As of December 2010, more than USD 300 000 has been pledged to support implementation of the consolidated work plan. Thanks and recognition to the YMCAs and to individual donors that have supported this critical area of focus. A number of National Movements and individual donors are just now discussing their own contribution to the Investors Circle, and we are planning to call all of them in the next couple of weeks to receive their pledges. The consolidated work plan will be distributed to all of you soon after you have received this message.

With this brief summary of the state of the world YMCA movement, I am pleased to take this opportunity to thank Ken and the Officers, Helen and Fernando, members of the Executive Committee and of the GST and each of you in the National Movements for your support and I look forward to strengthening our partnership as we work together.

In my next communication I will share with you the highlights of the NEW WAY strategic plan that will be presented for approval at the Executive Committee meeting in March 2011. I also hope to be able to report further pledges for the Investors Circle.

God bless you and God bless the worldwide YMCA movement as we approach a new year.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Johan V. Eltvik', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Johan Vilhelm Eltvik
Secretary General
World Alliance of YMCAs