



**World Student Christian Federation
WSCF-FUMEC
Latin American and Caribbean & North American Regions
Intercultural Exchange Program and Cultural Trip
Havana, Cuba, November 18-25 2011
“Students on an Encounter for Solidarity and Justice:
Celebrating 50 Years of SCM Cuba”**

I. Introduction

The world is at a significant crossroads today. Poverty and violence constitute social inequalities that continue to rise every day. At the same time a carbon-fueled development paradigm is gradually destroying the planet; permanent war and militarization expansion are instigated to control scarce resources needed to maintain the global economy, indigenous people are being displaced in order to give access to their lands and waters to the extractive industry; human life and the earth are being threatened in all aspects in the name of progress and to benefit a few of society.

Amidst this global situation, the Latin American and Caribbean and the North American (NAR) Regions of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) are issuing a call to respond to these current global realities and through its members move forward actions of solidariousness and justice, as part of a new global strategy with which the WSCF has recently engaged. A bi-lateral regional program for the two regions will occur to discuss this call; this event will take place in Cuba on November 18-25, 2011. At this conference, we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our host movement, the Cuban Student Christian Movement (SCM).

Who we are

As members of the WSCF, a global ecumenical federation of 107 national Student Christian Movements spread throughout the world, the North American and Latin American regions want to emerge from this encounter with a strengthened partnership in our work for a vibrant ecumenical movement committed to working towards social transformation, liberation, and justice for all peoples and the earth. To move forward, we reaffirm collectively the WSCF's commitment to offer trainings, resources and opportunities for grassroots student activists to advocate effectively in their regions and provide opportunities to send young grassroots activists to advocate at a global level. This will be done by placing our current regional structures with a common bi-regional

agenda on advocacy and solidarity and connect it to the ongoing advocacy and solidarity work of the whole Federation.

Planning Committee

Beidy Casas, Prepcom chair; Horacio Mesones, WSCF Chairperson; Regional Secretary, NAR, Luciano Kovacs, Marcelo Leites Regional Secretary, LAC, Alice Glaze; NAR EXCO, Hieraald Kane Osorto, chair ASC NAR; Sarahi Garcia Gomez, LAC EXCO and member of host SCM Cuba; and Belkys Teheran, LAC EXCO member.

Location

Cuba has been selected as the location for this encounter because SCM Cuba will be commemorating its 50th anniversary. It will be important to learn from the ecumenical, political, academic and social contexts of Cuba while at the same time emphasize the experiences that we represent through our own individual traditions.

Cities:

- **Varadero** (5 days) and
- Visits in the cities of **Habana** (2 days including the arrival day and a 1 day visit at the end of the encounter) and
- **San Nicolás de Bari** (1 day for exchanges with youth in a rural context)

Dates

November 18-25, 2011

Visa Requirements for North Americans will be outlined after you have been accepted to participate in this encounter. September 10 will be the deadline to send in list of participants.

II. Purpose of solidarity and justice encounter

This bi-regional encounter will provide an opportunity for students to discern collectively two of the themes that the WSCF chose for the 2008-2012 quadrennium at its last General Assembly, Climate Justice and Economic Justice. During this conference, students will have an opportunity to analyze structural causes of injustice and develop an understanding of how these are linked to the paradigm of violence that humanity and the earth are currently experiencing.

In addition, the encounter will serve as an opportunity to explore key themes lived out through Christian leaders such as Rev. Lucius Walker, who promoted an important solidarity movement between Cuba, the U.S., and the rest of the world.

This encounter is part of a need and desire to create places of dialogue between students from North America, Latin America and the Caribbean based on their cultural, historical, and social exchanges that accompany every region and country in our hemisphere.

This encounter is an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the two regions and to find common strategies of work aimed at addressing the current realities impacting communities on both sides of the border and at developing a common vision for the two regions.

The major objective of this event, together with its leadership training component, will be the formation of a common bi-regional agenda based on discussions, analysis, political and theological reflections and the drafting of a strategic plan to fit the wider advocacy and solidarity work of the WSCF.

Specific objectives

- Encourage students to think critically
- Foster intercultural dialogue
- Build solidarious networks in support of peace and justice
- Nourish commitment in participants to take concrete actions within the framework of peace and justice
- Promote alternatives to empire, the systems it delineates for people, and the systems of oppression it perpetuates
- Facilitate theological reflection on promoting the movement's prophetic voice in the regions

Requirements for Participation

To participate in this event, students will need to demonstrate prior involvement in social action addressing poverty and injustice in their own community and country. In addition students must demonstrate the following:

- Involvement in and awareness of the current realities within their countries and regions.
- Commitment to utilizing their own experiences and to promoting social justice and a just peace for all humanity
- Willingness to enter into a dialogue that empowers both regions and encourages north-south, north-north, and south-south conversations, which are crucial for the work ahead in the WSCF.
- A desire to strengthen their ecumenical leadership in the WSCF and beyond

III. Methodology

Pre-Encounter

- **Readings**
Solidarious Economy in Brazil and Mexico, the Common Security Clubs in the United States, the World Social Forums around the world and other movements that are making change happen that can inform the WSCF's work in the two regions. These can be discussed via virtual exchanges.
- **Publications**

Each region will prepare for this event by using their communication and publication systems and by highlighting specific themes that SCMs and the WSCF around the globe are tackling.

- **Dialogue**
Develop opportunities for the SCMs in both regions to participate in conversations before the encounter. Students should begin to ask the necessary questions to understand their contexts and how this applies to their region.

Encounter

- **Know**
Create spaces where experiences and history between the movements will be shared (student experiences and leaders in social action). This will allow us to exchange ideas and support our struggles for local, national, and global justice.
- **Reflect**
Allow space for a social-political, theological and biblical reflection that will question and demand a commitment of solidarity in our contexts.
- **Action**
Encourage concrete commitments for and from the individual contexts from which students come that respond to the shared needs analyzed in the encounter through strategies that will create a common agenda.

Post Event

- **Commitments**
Participants in the encounter for solidarity and justice will commit to take concrete actions steps that will respond to the reflections and conditions analyzed throughout the encounter.

It is required that the participant be able to take action in the following areas:

- University/College
- Church
- Community
- National SCM
- Regional WSCF (the possibility of accompanying regional workgroups)
- Global WSCF
- Final publication that will synthesize the encounter, include specific articles that will highlight the work of SCMs in the regions and the collective commitments agreed upon at the encounter.

The regional offices commit to developing the strategic plan and common agenda that empowers and encourages students and raising awareness of the various levels of work at the national and regional levels.

Necessary Support and Costs

PrepCom has developed a budget to secure funding for program through the Regional Offices.

We are working on a collective strategy to raise funds needed between the two regions. Students selected to participate will be asked to help in raising funds for their travel expenses in their local communities.

IV. Project Description: “Students on an Encounter for Solidarity and Justice”

Biblical References (suggestions):

Jonah

Joel 2:29?

Ezekiel 47

Isaiah 65: 17-25

Isaiah 32: 15-20

Methodological Components:

1. Contextual Analysis: Life stories, local, national, regional, global contexts
2. Systematization of experiences
3. Encounters with activists
4. Development of strategic actions plans
5. Liturgy, music and prayer
6. Central themes of justice: climate and economic justice, violence

Event topics:

1. Analysis of common problems and contexts
2. Thematic workshops as starting points for generating strategies (with synthesis of work from each day) - sharing of experiences, and interactive workshops within the local community.
3. Development of Advocacy and Solidarity action plans for bi-regional work that will guide the work after the meeting and

V. Conclusion

In planning this event, the WSCF reaffirms its regional and global commitment to solidarity and action. As students committed to living out our faith we come to the table ready to act, to think differently, realizing that we can indeed transform and be transformed by the renewal of our minds. Through our theological commitments we move forward prepared to build alliances, collaboration, and a collective movement that truly transforms our society. We commit to living in solidarity, intentionally, consciously, believing that we are laying the foundations for future generations and the care of mother earth.