

↑Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

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Monthly eNewsletter of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs  
Sep-Oct 2015

19th General Assembly & 3rd Youth Assembly of APAY

Nov 2-29: 33rd Advanced Studies Programme, Wu Kwai Sha, Hong Kong

19th General Assembly & 3rd Youth Assembly of Asia & Pacific Alliance of YMCAs

The city of Daejeon in Korea has secured its name in the history the of APAY by successfully hosting the 19th General Assembly and 3rd Youth Assembly of Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs held during 6-11 September 2015. This auspicious event of APAY took place at Daejeon Convention Center. Jointly hosted by the National Council of YMCAs of Korea and the YMCA of Daejeon, the General Assembly was attended by 364 delegates representing 23 YMCA movements of the Asia and Pacific, delegates from Y's Men International, YMCA of USA, Christian Conference of Asia and delegates from the World Alliance of YMCAs, including Mr. Peter Posner and Mr. Johan Vilhem Eltvik, President and Secretary General, respectively, of the World Alliance of YMCAs attending as guests of honor.

On Tuesday 8 September in the morning the General Assembly commenced at Dajeon Convention Center with the opening worship. Rev. Dr. Chang, Yoon-Jae, delivered the key note address during the worship on the theme of the Assembly "Anchored on our Rock: Building a Sustainable Future".

At the Opening Ceremony, Mr. Kohei Yamada, General Secretary of the APAY introduced all the participants; the welcome address was delivered by Rev. Lee, Shin Ho, Co-Chair of the Assembly Host Committee and Mr. Yau Chung Wan, President of APAY delivered his opening remarks, Mr. Peter Posner, President of the World Alliance of YMCAs delivered words of felicitation, while Mr. Lee, Hack Young, Member of the Parliament, Korea (ex NGS of NCYK) delivered his words of greetings. Mr. Kim, Young Ju, the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Korea and Ms. Cha, Kyung Ai, President of YWCA of Korea, Rev. Grace Moon, Executive Secretary of Christian Conference of Asia were also present at the occasion along with Mr. Wichian Boonmapajorn, International President, Y's Men International, Mr. Takao Nishimura, Secretary General of Y's Men International, Mr. Sung, Kwang Mun, President of Y's Men International of Korea Area and Mr. Edward Ong, President, Y's Men International Asia Area.

Strategic Dialogues were held on 10 topics in two parallel rounds in the afternoon of Tuesday 8 September on Issues and Concerns we are facing in our YMCAs and in our region. These were (i) Renewing the Mission of YMCA, (ii) Good Governance in the YMCA, (iii) Christian Witness in a Pluralistic Society, (iv) Resource Mobilization in the YMCA, (v) Youth Empowerment, (vi) Social and Solidarity Economy, (vii) Environment & Climate Change, (viii) Gender

Mainstreaming in the YMCA, (ix) Global Alternative Tourism Network and (x) Global Citizenship Education. Each participant was able to participate in two of such Strategic Dialogues, these dialogues were presented by competent resource persons, the participants were able learn more about these issues and also share their own perspectives with other participants.

The honorable mayor of the Daejeon City Mr. Kwon, Sun Taik hosted the Welcome Dinner on Tuesday 8 September 2015. Rev. Johan Vilhelm Etvik, Secretary General of the World Alliance of YMCAs delivered words of greetings along with Dr. Park Jai Chang, former President of APAY. A colorful Korean cultural soiree was presented by renowned Korean artists during the Dinner.

The exposures arranged by the host committee on Wednesday September 9, 2015 provided opportunities for the participants to learn more about the historical heritage, the art and culture, the environmental program, traditions and customs, food, recycling industries of Korea and also the various program activities of the Korean YMCAs. These exposures took place in the cities of Daegu, Daejeon, Suwon, Bucheon, Guri and Seoul. The delegates had the choice to participate in one of the eight exposure sites.

One of the highlights of the General Assembly was the morning worship held on Wednesday 9 September 2015 at Imjingak at the Demilitarized Zone, between the borders of North and South Korea. This special devotion was dedicated for peace in the Korean Peninsula and North East Asia.

In order to understand more about these issues, on the morning of Thursday 10 September, Group Works in small groups were held, where each of the participants had the opportunity to give their views on particular issues and also suggestion to APAY for future possible programs.

Shaping our future strategies were sessions on five important issues that APAY needs to engage in the next quadrennial. These were Interfaith Cooperation Forum, Youth Empowerment, e-Learning on Climate Change, Governance in the YMCA and YMCA & Y's Men International. Delegates had the opportunity to participate in any of these workshops and voice their opinions about APAY's future role in these areas.

On the same day, in the afternoon, elections were held for the new leadership of APAY who shall hold office for the next quadrennial. Mr. Babu Markus Gomes, from Bangladesh was elected as the President of the APAY, Ms. Hiromi Nagao from Japan, Mr. Russel Keith Leech from New Zealand, Mr. Romeo Calubaquib from Philippines, Mr. Kiwan Gunawardene from Sri Lanka were elected as Vice Presidents. Mr. Roland Yam Tak Fai from Hong Kong was elected as Treasurer, Ms. Betsy Merlin Williams from India and Mr. Stephen Loh Sur Yong from Singapore had been elected as Board Members. We take this opportunity to congratulate the newly elected Board and especially the President Mr. Babu Markus Gomes.

The Y's Men Partners' Meeting was held with a view for promoting further collaboration between YMCA and Y's Men. During the meeting it was urged for better communication between the two organizations especially National level with Y's Men regions and/or districts, creating joint projects by both YMCA and Y's Men, especially in national level, review the existing funding system of Y's Men International such as TOF, ASF, etc. for further supporting YMCA programs especially in the field of youth empowerment and environmental projects. YMCAs need to feel and understand the benefit from the partnership with Y's Men and YMCA will need to help extend the Y's Men movements by introducing potential members and jointly creating a new club where Y's Men does not exist but YMCA exist.

Executive Committee Meeting and Council Meeting were held during the General Assembly. The Annual Report of APAY was presented at the Executive Committee Meeting, while the Quadrennial Report was presented at the Council Meeting. Mr. Nam Boo Won, the National General Secretary of National Council of YMCAs of Korea was appointed as the next General Secretary of APAY at the Executive Committee Meeting and ratified at the Council Meeting.

Daily worships were held each day with specific themes, worship messages were delivered by Rev. Dr. Chang, Yoon-Jae, Rev. Ahn Jae Woong, Dr. Bart Shaha and Rev. Johan Vilhelm Eltvik.

The Closing Dinner was held on Thursday, 10 September 2015 hosted by the Mr. Hwang, Yin-bang, President of Daejeon YMCA. During the dinner, APAY awards were handed over to the recipients. Letters of appreciation were presented to outstanding volunteers of APAY, Mr. Ron Coulombe, Canada and Mr. Colin Lambie, Australia. The recipients of George Williams Award were The National Council of YMCAs of Japan, The Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong and The YMCA of Hong Kong. The John R Mott award was presented to Mr. Yau Chung Wan and Macau YMCA. The Youth for Youth Award was presented to Mr. Sukhen Joseph Gomes and Mr. Alvin Kan Cheung Heng. The recipient of the APAY Green YMCA Award for the year 2014 was Chaingmai YMCA, Thailand. The local hosts of the General Assembly the Daejeon YMCA and the National Council of YMCAs of Korea were also appreciated with commemorative plaques.

In the morning of Friday 11 September, the Assembly Mandate was presented by Ms. Ong Sooi Gaik, Chairperson, the Assembly Writing Team and accepted for adoption. During the Closing Ceremony, the outgoing Board Members and the outgoing General Secretary of APAY were acknowledged for their outstanding contribution to the APAY and the newly elected members of the Board of APAY were inducted with a prayerful ceremony. The new President of APAY Mr. Babu Markus Gomes also delivered his speech. Mr Nam Boo Won the newly appointed General Secretary of the APAY delivered his speech of acceptance. The ceremony was moderated by the former President of World Alliance of YMCAs Dr. David Kwang-Sun Suh.

The 3rd APAY Youth Assembly was held during 6-7 September 2015 at YuSeong Youth Hostels in Daejeon, Korea prior to the holding of the General Assembly. 112 Youth leaders participated from 17 national. During the youth Assembly the youths were engaged in search of Asian youth realities and how they could overcome those through various programs initiated by the YMCAs. They had the opportunity to experience Korean youth realities through field trips. They had also the opportunity to experience Korean family life through home stay programs. The youth participants also shared the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Asia and Pacific through presentations of cultural expressions of their respective countries.

The Cheorwon International Peace Conference was held prior to APAY's General Assembly from September 4 to 6, 2015, at the Border Peace School (BPS) in the demilitarized zone, or DMZ, separating North and South Korea. This pre-assembly program offered the 70 participants from 10 countries and regions, including Peter Posner, president of the World Alliance of YMCAs (WAY), an opportunity to learn about the experiences of war and separation of the Korean people for the past 70 years and the links between achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula and attaining peace elsewhere in the region and the world. Among the participants' recommendations was for APAY to make peace between North and South Korea and the reunification of the nation a priority agenda during the next quadrennial and to initiate a series of

peace programs in the next four years.

Another pre-Assembly event that took place in Daejeon from 5-7 September 2015 was the GATN Program Managers Training. About 20 participants from 11 countries participated in this event. This Workshop is part of a series of programs planned to provide further training for Program Managers from YMCAs that were offering alternative tourism programs and those who were planning to host such alternative tourism programs. This training focused on Community Based Tourism and Service Learning, which are two very important aspects of Alternative Tourism.

The General Assembly also presented a great opportunity to promote GATN as well as the many varieties of Alternative Tourism sites within our APAY region. At the GATN Marketplace, YMCAs from 9 countries exhibited their Alternative Tourism programs. The hosting YMCAs exhibited photos and banners, and distributed brochures and souvenirs to promote the different activities and programs being offered by their Alternative Tourism packages. Some enterprising YMCAs were also able to raise funds for their community programs by selling products and crafts made by their local communities.

The 19th General Assembly was a melting pot of various ideas and concerns which are being faced by the YMCA in our region, represented by the YMCA leaders both lay and professionals. We spent our time in search of answers and solutions, how the YMCAs should respond to these issues in the next four years. All these proposals shall be concretized during the Round Table Meeting of APAY scheduled to be held during the first week of December 2015 participated by the YMCA leaders of our region.

We also thank the host YMCAs, the National Council of YMCAs of Korea, the YMCA of Daejeon, all the lay and professional leaders for taking all the pain to host this successful YMCA event.

We keep ourselves busy in actualizing our hopes and aspirations during the next four years in our YMCAs until we meet again at the 20th General Assembly of APAY.

~ Duncan Chowdhury, Executive Secretary

Not interested any more?