

FABC-OSC  
11<sup>th</sup> Annual Bishops' Meet  
**Theme: "Managing Communication for Bishops' Conferences"**  
*Bukal ng Tipan Youth & Pastoral Formation Center*  
*Taytay, Rizal, Philippines*  
*November 20-25, 2006*

## **FINAL STATEMENT**

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual FABC-OSC Bishops' Meet on "managing Communication for Bishops' Conferences" was held in Tayaty, Rizal (Manila/Philippines) from November 20 to 25, 2006. The representatives from Bishops' Conferences of 12 different Asian countries based their considerations on important Church documents. Already the Vatican II Document on Social Communication *Inter Mirifica* (1963, nos. 19-20; 21) and the following Pastoral Instructions *Communio et Progressio* (1971, nos. 170, 171-176) and *Aetatis Novae* (1992, nos. 19-23) demanded that national Communication offices for Bishops' Conferences be organized and maintained. These National Communication offices should provide beside others both personal care for communicators as well as communication training and planning to secure a well organized program for their countries. They should have a spokesperson and provide an ongoing two way information flow within and outside their respective Conferences.

The bishops and participants further reflected and studied in more detail the roles, functions and needs of these Communication Offices. A wake up call was made to be aware of the onslaught, influence and demands of new emerging communication cultures in Asia. The participants felt a pressing need to enable the Churches in Asia to meet these challenges.

The participants committed themselves to fully implement the demands of the Church documents and to effectively avail themselves of the opportunities created by new media and the rapid communication revolution, utilizing relevant Strategic Management Principles for Communications and Corporate Communication Systems.

The bishops also reflected on and studied the inputs from media and management experts who emphasized the need for "strategic conversation and for 'benchmarking' outcome" rather than just output. The old paradigm of one-way, top-down communications has no relevance any more today in a world which is increasingly interactive, horizontal and flat rather than hierarchical. Communications today is also research driven and scientific, rather than intuitive. Hence, social communication instead of being message-driven, should seek to understand the needs, expectations and priorities of different "stakeholders" such as the bishops, priests, religious, laypersons and those of other faiths and civil authorities. This calls for effective networking at various Church levels, using the Internet and tools like

e-mail, web-chat, webinars, SMS/texting, Podcasting and other means of social communication.

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of Asian Communication Bishops (“Bishops’ Meet 06) made the following recommendations:

1. All bishops’ conferences and dioceses should prepare a pastoral plan for communication with a proper time frame and a clear vision and mission statement relevant to their region.
2. All bishops’ conferences and dioceses must set up a communication office and appoint a full time media professional as director/ spokesperson.
3. Bishops should ensure that the personnel appointed for communication offices and activities should be professional, academically trained and with commitment to assure the continuity of the work.
4. Media workshops should be organized to sensitize and equip bishops, Church leaders, seminarians and religious on media relations, crisis communication (including ambush interviews), and other media related issues and approaches.
5. Proper Networking with media practitioners through seminars, workshops, get-togethers should be provided on a regular basis and not just in the time of need or crisis.
6. Programs for pastoral support of professionals in mainstream media should be provided.
7. Traditional media such as folk arts, performing arts, dance, music and drama should not be neglected and seen and developed as alternative means of social communication.
8. Communication education for parents, pastoral workers, religious and laity, especially children and youth should be promoted.
9. World Communication Day should be seen as an opportunity to build up awareness of media developments to sensitize people on the importance of social communications and to use media in general.
10. An effective network of Christian communicators of Asia should be promoted to share valuable information and facilitate the recounting of Jesus stories.
11. Bishops, Church leaders and communicators at national and international conferences need to communicate their inspiring experiences, insights and stories with their people and dioceses at home and beyond.

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