

World Council of Churches to hold first meeting in China

News

May 30, 2012

(ENInews)--The Geneva-based World Council of Churches (WCC) said it will hold its first meeting in the People's Republic of China, focusing on "the unique situation of Chinese churches and ecumenical relations" in the region.

The meeting will take place from June 9 to 16 in Shanghai and Nanjing, according to a WCC news release. It is being organized by the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) and hosted by the China Christian Council (CCC) and the National Committee of the Three Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China. The CCC, with 23 million members, is the largest member constituency of the WCC in Asia.

The WCC general secretary, the Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, will attend the meeting. It will be his first visit to China since he took office in 2010.

The main deliberations of the CCIA will take place in Nanjing. This will include a seminar on "Understanding China," invoking diverse perspectives on market reforms and development in socialist systems, poverty eradication and environmental sustainability, China's religions and religious policies, and churches in China.

"This is the 51st meeting of the CCIA. The meeting will be a historic event as it is the first time since the inception of the WCC [in 1948] that an international ecumenical gathering will take place in China, and will be hosted by a WCC member church in China," said Mathews George Chunakara, director of the CCIA.

The event will begin with meetings in Shanghai, with Sunday worship services in local Chinese congregations, followed by visits to urban and rural models of life in the context of modern China.

The final meeting of the CCIA in follow up to the WCC 10th Assembly, which will take place in 2013 in Busan, South Korea, will discuss future program directions and

significance of international affairs in the ecumenical movement. This will also include discussions on priorities for public policy and global advocacy initiatives in the emerging geo-political situation.

The WCC brings together 349 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other churches representing more than 560 million Christians in over 110 countries, and works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Church.