

## **PORVOO CONSULTATION ON CHURCHES RESPONDING TO CONFLICT COMMUNIQUÉ**

On the recommendation of the Church Leaders Consultation in March 2010, the Porvoo Contact Group held a consultation on the theme *Churches Responding to Conflict* from 20<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> February 2011 in Tallinn, Estonia. The organisers are grateful to the host church, the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, for the invitation to hold such a consultation in Tallinn. The churches met in the context of a widening conflict across the Arab world and upheld its peoples in prayer.

Keeping the goal of the common good of Christ's church in mind, the **consultation** was a way to deepen knowledge, strengthen sharing, learn from one another and generate greater understanding. Furthermore, it was to make suggestions to the Porvoo Contact Group for further work on an appropriate framework for responding to situations of conflict within the Porvoo Communion of Churches. Serious tensions have arisen over issues of sexuality which have threatened communion.

The conference opened with Eucharist in the Cathedral at which The Rt Revd Karl Sigurbjörnsson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iceland presided and The Rt Revd Trevor Williams preached. The consultation closed with Eucharist in the Holy Spirit Chapel, presided over by Archbishop Andreas Pöder of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and at which Bishop Michael Jackson was the preacher. Daily prayer accompanied the sessions.

The Bible Studies held by The Rt Revd Duleep de Chickera of the Church of Ceylon formed a cornerstone to the deliberations. As a representative from the Global South he shared valuable theological insights gained from the context of conflict in his country of Sri Lanka and within the Anglican Communion.

Thematic inputs were given by Rt Revd Trevor Williams, Church of Ireland, Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe (Churches Responding to Political and Religious Conflict), Rt Revd Michael Jackson, Church of Ireland, Diocese of Clogher (Churches Responding to Conflict – a Diaconal Perspective), Revd Prof Paul Avis (Authority, Conflict and Leadership) and Revd Prof Dr Tõnu Lehtsaar, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (Churches Responding to Conflict in Times of Societal Change – An Estonian Perspective).

In group meetings and workshops, participants explored their perceptions and ideas. The so called Keynote Listeners provided the plenary sessions with information from group meetings and workshops. The daily Public Conversations provided the reflecting process in which the keynote listeners were asked questions in an interview format to invite their reflections. The resource persons also acted as consultants for the consultation.

The consultation provided the Porvoo Contact Group with a range of important building blocks for further progress on a framework for responding to Conflict.