

BWAid director resigns

March 17, 2016

Rothangliani Chhangte, who has led Baptist World Aid—the relief and development arm of the Baptist World Alliance—since 2012, resigned effective March 16.



Rothangliani Chhangte Her resignation came at a time when some BWA member organizations and their agencies—including Texas Baptists’ Christian Life Commission—have formed [BReaD](#), the Baptist Relief and Development Network.

“It has been a pleasure working with you over the last three and a half years,” Chhangte said in her letter to Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Neville Callam. “As I reflect on the nature of my work, I have found it to be rewarding and impactful ministry.”

Chhangte expressed “great joy” for the opportunity to serve “as an ambassador of the BWA and a pastoral presence to people and communities whose lives were uprooted by disasters.”

Callam praised Chhangte for her contributions to the agency.

“Rothang leaves BWAid in a stronger position than she found it,” he said.

Callam particularly noted her role in updating and finalizing BWAid’s policy framework and revising its operations handbook. He cited improvements

the agency's application, monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes.

"Operationally, BWAid is enjoying its strongest position ever," Callam said.

Chhangte, from India, came to Baptist World Aid after working as liaison for Burmese refugees with American Baptist Home Mission Societies.

Tension between BWAid and the new BReaD Network surfaced at recent BWA committee meetings at the organization's Falls Church, Va., office.

In his written report as general secretary, Callam cited "fundamental theological issues (with BReaD) that need to be considered." They include BReaD's "secular business model" and its "readiness to segregate the church's social ministry from its ecclesial center," he asserted.

Discussion also focused on charges and denials of racism. BReaD is composed primarily of Anglo-dominant Western organizations, while top BWA and BWAid leaders primarily are non-white and, for the most part, non-Western.

Representatives of BReaD and BWAid are expected to meet to discuss their relationship. Chhangte did not raise the issue in her report to the BWA Executive Committee.

Ferrell Foster, director of ethics and justice for Texas Baptists' Christian Life Commission, attended to general meetings of BReaD.

"The BReaD Network has arisen in order to facilitate better global communication between institutions that provide relief and development services. It has been our desire from the start for BWAid to be involved in a leadership role and for all of us to facilitate Baptists' kingdom work in response to disasters and development needs in the poorest parts of the world," he explained.

"Baptists from Australia, Canada, England, Germany, Hungary, Estonia, the

Middle East, south Asia, and the United States have been a part of our early discussions.”

A representative from South America participated in the second BReaD meeting, and a representative from Africa had to cancel at the last minute, he added.