



World Council of Churches

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Greetings for Eid Al Fitr from the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

It gives me great joy in sending you, the worldwide Muslim community, my greetings of peace and good will as you celebrate the Feast of *Eid Al Fitr*. Even as you end the holy month of Ramadan I very much hope that the past month has been both meaningful and blessed.

Festivals with their dimension of gratitude to God have the potential to draw us closer to God and to those around us with a fresh and firmer awareness of God's grace and generosity. It is this awareness of divine grace and generosity that holds the promise of healing and hope in a world rent apart by strife, greed and division. I trust that this holy month of fasting and sharing has helped deepen this awareness within you and enabled you to reflect this grace and generosity in and through your own lives.

Even as I send you my best wishes on this festive occasion, this is also an appropriate moment to acknowledge with gratitude the longstanding relationship that the World Council of Churches enjoys with our Muslim partners. Despite the huge challenges that we encounter, our bilateral dialogues and joint projects of common collaboration have not only helped to deepen trust and strengthen mutual respect but also have provided a strong foundation to advocate jointly for just, inclusive and peaceable communities. Conversation has translated into collaboration in creative ways and we very much hope that this close co-operation on issues of utmost importance will be sustained and strengthened in the days to come.

Later this month on the 25th of June the World Council of Churches will be partnering in the first world conference on "Religions, Creeds and/or Other Value Systems, Joining Forces to Enhance Equal Citizenship Rights" that is being organised under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan. This event will be a follow up of a panel debate on "Islam and Christianity, the Great Convergence: Working Jointly Towards Equal Citizenship Rights" which was organized at the United Nations Office in Geneva last year. The conference seeks to harness the collective energy and

convergence of religions, creeds and value-systems to affirm and advocate for equal citizenship rights as a means to celebrate principles of diversity, equality and inclusivity. Christian-Muslim collaboration in issues like this is vital to ensure a future of peace in this world. As the document *A Common Word Between Us and You* makes it clear Christian-Muslim relationships are of paramount importance in “contributing to meaningful peace around the world”. This places on us a huge responsibility for the wellbeing of all.

It is increasingly being recognised that equal citizenship is an effective tool to redress the scourge of xenophobia, racism and intolerance which are increasingly causing people to resort to the distortion and abuse of religions and faith for violent ends. The Christian and Muslim religious traditions have a lot to offer in countering the politics of fear and hate which has become the bedrock of exclusion and discrimination. Our spiritual and scriptural resources on hospitality – especially through the Quranic concept of *Ta'aruf* and the biblical concept of *Philoxenia* have the capacity to expand the horizons of our imagination beyond merely tolerating the 'other'. They inspire us to envision a new world where we will neither be complicit in the dehumanization of the other, nor our own dehumanization through apathy, in the face of outright violence or violation of the rights and dignity of the other.

Eid Al Fitr is an occasion to be reminded that at the heart of the holy month of Ramadan are the values of self-discipline, solidarity and compassion. As you mark the end of this holy month, my prayer for you is not only that through the discipline of fasting your faith and spirit have been richly fed, but also that you have been blessed with a hunger for justice and peace. May the blessing and inspiration that you received from this holy month flow freely into your lives and the lives of all your loved ones; and may they overflow as solidarity and compassion into the lives of all those around you. *Eid Mubarak* (Blessed Eid)!

Sincerely yours,



Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
General Secretary