

Communique from the 10th Dialogue between WCC (World Council of Churches) and CID (Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue)

In this divided and troubled world, WCC (World Council of Churches) and CID (Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue) were able to meet for the 10th Dialogue at The Ecumenical Institute Bossey, Switzerland. The meeting, which was held on 5-7 December 2022, aimed to celebrate the friendship, respectful dialogue and cooperation between WCC and CID, which began 28 years ago; look back to past meetings, reflect on the current interreligious situations in Switzerland and Iran from theological and ethical perspectives, and discuss future themes for dialogue and cooperation.

The meeting was attended by delegates of both parties. While the WCC delegation to the meeting was composed of WCC acting general secretary Rev. Prof Dr Ioan Sauca, the WCC general secretary-elect Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay, Dr Heidi Hadsell, Rev. Dr Jean-Claude Basset, Rev. Dr Jacky Manuputty, Rev. Dr Hans Ucko, and Rev. Dr Abraham Silo Wilar, the CID delegation was represented by the president of ICRO (Islamic Culture and Relations Organization), Hodjat al-Islam (H. I.) Dr Mohammad Mahdi Imanipour, Prof. Dr Seyyed Hassan Eslami Ardakani, Prof. Dr Mahmood Karimi Banadkooki, Prof. Dr Mahdi Esfahani, and Dr Zahra Rashidbeygi.

The leader of each group addressed the meeting in opening remarks, and other delegates discussed the presented papers, and exchanged knowledge and perspectives during the sessions. There was also a very productive meeting with the religious leaders in Switzerland. In his address, the Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca shared the deep concern of the WCC regarding the current unrest in Iran, and expressed the fervent hopes of the WCC that justice and peace will prevail. The H. I. Dr Mohammad Mahdi Imanipour underlined the necessity to discuss difficult matters fairly. He also mentioned the gap between reality and its depiction online, religious leaders seeking solutions to what happened in Iran, and foreign interventions that become obstacles to solve the problem.

In his remarks, the Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay highlighted the importance of the WCC's theme: Pilgrimage of Justice, Unity and Reconciliation as a foundation for the WCC involvement in this dialogue.

Participants discussed the future direction of the dialogue. Several themes were discussed including focus on the emerging concerns we share about the disaffection of many youth from their religious traditions, faith in a multireligious and secular world, and religious approaches to environmental issues. The H. I. Dr Imanipour mentioned the significance of paying attention to the role of media, and the images of religion found in social networks.

The participants planned that the two delegations will set up a small working group focused on research, and also produce an annual joint publication. The next meeting will take place in 2024 in Tehran, Iran. The meeting will be focused on 'youth and faith'.

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