



# World Council of Churches

**General Secretariat**

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Mr António Guterres  
Secretary-General-designate  
United Nations  
United Nations Headquarters  
New York, NY 10017  
USA

Geneva, 21 October 2016

Your Excellency,

I congratulate you from my heart - and on behalf of the member churches, leadership, and staff of the World Council of Churches - on your appointment as Secretary-General of the United Nations. This is good news for the UN and for all who need the UN to fulfill its important tasks in our time. I admire your courage, your clarity, and your true compassion with the suffering people of our world. The task you are receiving is a significant calling, and I want to assure you of our support and prayers for you and your ministry, in accordance with the duty we have to pray for "all in high position". I really look forward to the cooperation with you and the UN under your leadership..

Your appointment by acclamation by the UN General Assembly on 13 October reflects the respect and trust you have earned in your years of public service to your country and to the international community. Following such a transparent and open selection process, your appointment carries yet greater legitimacy and credibility, undergirding the innate capacities and long experience of leadership that you bring to this role. In a time of multiple converging global crises, your experience and wisdom will be greatly needed – perhaps more so now than at any previous time in the history of the UN.

We have been inspired by the leadership you have shown here in Geneva, and also by the way you have included us in your strategies. Indeed, the manner in which you fulfilled your mandate as UN High Commissioner for Refugees has been a source of inspiration and motivation for many in the international community and around the world. At a time in which the principles of international humanitarian and refugee law and policy - and the UN's capacity to respond to the dimensions of the forced displacement crisis - have been under unprecedented pressure, you gave principled, energetic and effective leadership to the UN refugee agency.

Your humanitarian commitment to alleviating the suffering of the most vulnerable people, in particular refugees and those affected by conflict, and your commitment to gender equality will surely continue to be priorities for you during your tenure as Secretary-General. And I am certain that your strong commitment to engagement with the faith community, as demonstrated in the UNHCR High Commissioner's Dialogue on Faith and Protection, will continue to be a feature of your leadership of the United Nations.

The World Council of Churches has worked for justice and peace alongside and in frequent collaboration with the UN since the formation of our respective organizations. Through its Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), the WCC was one of the original non-governmental organizations in UN consultative relations, and contributed actively to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to other foundational processes. The relationship between the WCC and the UN has only broadened and deepened in the intervening decades, with especially in recent years a proliferation of new partnerships and forms of collaboration with different elements of the UN system.

As the WCC's member churches and partners pursue this work, in a common ecumenical Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, we look forward to continuing to walk with you on that path. And we pray that you may be guided and strengthened for the critically important responsibilities you will bear.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Olav Fykse Tveit". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit  
General Secretary, WCC