His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Taskhiri, Secretary General of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought

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On 28 June 2012, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Taskhiri, Secretary General of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought, at the Patriarchal Chambers in the Moscow Kremlin. Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Taskhiri arrived in Moscow, leading the delegation of the Iranian theologians, to take part in the 8th meeting on Religion and Human Rights of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission for Orthodoxy-Islam Dialogue.

Participating in the meeting were also H.E. Mahmoud Reza Sajjadi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Russian Federation, and Dr Abuzar Ebrahimi Torkaman, Iran's cultural attaché in Moscow. Representing the Russian Orthodox Church were also Bishop Feofilakt of Pyatigorsk and Cherkessk, head of the Russian Orthodox Church's delegation at the 8th meeting of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission for Orthodoxy-Islam Dialogue; archpriest Georgy Roschin, deputy chairman of the Synodal Department for Church-Society Relations, and Vakhtang Kipshidze, a DECR staff member.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church greeted the guest, noting: "Fifteen years ago we launched a wonderful initiative – the dialogue between the Russian Church and the Islamic community in Iran."

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill regards the work of the Commission for Orthodoxy-Islam Dialogue as a fine example of good relations between two religions: "We are devoted to our faiths. At the same time, relying on our religious beliefs, we exchange views on the problems of modern world and find out that we have much in common. The topic, which is now on the agenda of our dialogue, once again showed that we have common approaches to the issues of human rights in the modern world, the relationship between human rights and moral responsibility, and the place of traditional values in the life of people and society."

According to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, participants in the dialogue consider that traditional values, including religious ones, should not be separated from life of modern society and should comply with

human rights and freedoms thus helping our contemporaries to fulfill their spiritual, cultural and intellectual potential, and guiding them to do good to all.

Believers do not ask themselves what is good as they have revelation from above and God's commandments which are the criteria of truth. And we tell people that there is no person, however clever he is, and there is no institution, whatever authority it enjoys, that can claim to be the criterion of truth. I believe that we have common views on this issue and on these we should base our message to the world."

Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Taskhiri said that it was a great honour for him to meet with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, that the dialogue and cooperation between the two religions were highly important, and that he was very proud of the dialogue. He emphasized Patriarch Kirill's spiritual authority, his role in initiating and developing the dialogue aimed at reaching mutual understanding and at fostering peaceful coexistence.

The head of the Iranian delegation also emphasized high importance of the principle which the Orthodoxy-Islam dialogue is based on, that is, the parties acting in accordance with their religious beliefs seek to deepen mutual understanding.

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