



## **Metropolitan Hilarion opens a conference on the participation of state, public and religious organizations in prevention of AIDS and drug addiction**

[gallery]

On 18 October 2011, a conference on the participation of state, public, and religious organizations in prevention of HIV/AIDS and drug addiction opened at the conference hall of “Danilovskiy” hotel complex.

The conference will sum up the project called “Supporting initiatives of religious organizations to fight the epidemic of HIV/AIDS and palliative care in the Russian Federation” being implemented by the Russian Orthodox Church and the RF Federal Service for Surveillance in Customer Rights Protection and Human Welfare with the support of the U.S. Agency on International Development and the UN Programme. Taking part in the Conference are representatives of state, public, international, and religious organizations from twenty regions of Russia.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations, opened the conference.

In his address, he mentioned the “Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church’s participation in overcoming the spread of HIV/AIDS and work with the HIV/AIDS-infected people.” The document elaborated by the Synodal Biblical Commission (now the Biblical and Theological Commission) is based on the experience of pastoral care and diakonia and theological, ethnic and social and political analysis. According to Metropolitan Hilarion, “a significant result of the adoption of this document, along with the invigoration of the church ministry to the people living with HIV, is the development of productive cooperation among the Church, the state, and society in fighting against its spread.’

Metropolitan Hilarion underscored that the project has vividly demonstrated the efficiency of this cooperation for the country and has manifested common sense and serious approach to the problem. Another important aspect is interreligious cooperation in the socially important spheres that serves to the consolidation of civil society, strengthens solidarity, develops horizontal ties in society, and enhances the level of civil self-understanding and responsibility.”

On conclusion of his address, Metropolitan Hilarion wished participants in the conference successful work for the good of society.

The Conference will end with summing up the results and issuing the final document on October 19.

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