



World Summit of Religious Leaders takes place in Canada

The World Summit of Religious Leaders takes place in Winnipeg on 21-23 June 2010 on the initiative of religious communities in Canada. The Summit is timed to the G8 Summit due to be held in Muscooca, Canada, on 25-27 June 2010. Taking part in the summit are over seventy religious leaders from twenty-four countries, including the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia Aram I, Archbishop Kari Mäkinen of Turku and Finland, and head of the Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations Rabbi Richard Marker. The Russian Church is represented with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia by Hegumen Philipp (Ryabykh), deputy chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations and DECR staff member Vakhtang Kipshidze. The Muslim community of Russia is represented by Mufti Djafar Bikmayev of the Rostov region and his deputy V. Agishev. The Summit's agenda includes discussions of the contribution of believers into environmental protection, struggle against poverty, and defence of peace.

The Summit was opened on June 21. The participants were greeted by the organizers and representatives of the religious communities of Italy, which hosted the G8 Summit last year, and of Russia, where the first Summit of Religious Leaders took place in 2006. Hegumen Philipp (Ryabykh) read out greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill.

A seminar on "Human Rights and Religious Freedom" took place on the first day of the Summit. Representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate distributed "The Russian Orthodox Church's Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom, and Rights" in the English language.