



Patriarch Kirill's congratulatory message to Russian Foreign Minister S. Lavrov

Dear Sergey Vladimirovich,

Kindly accept my congratulations upon the significant event in your life – your 60th birthday.

You have dedicated yourself to the foreign policy work and successfully passed through all the stages in the diplomatic hierarchy to lead now one of the key structures of the Russian state. Your high professionalism, firm positions and fruitful works for the benefit of the Motherland have gained you profound respect by Russian leaders, diplomats, statesmen and many people both in our country and far beyond it.

In today's world with its urgent need to build interstate relations on the basis of dialogue and mutual understanding, the art of persuasion and the skill of finding compromises become ever more important. In your efforts to 'seek peace and pursue it' (1 Pet. 3:11), you have worked much for strengthening good-neighbourly relations and solidarity in various parts of the planet. Your life journey is a good example for the youth who wish to apply their knowledge and skills in international sphere.

During your service as foreign minister, the cooperation between the Russian foreign policy department and the Moscow Patriarchate has considerably broadened. Through joint efforts we have managed to make a contribution to the gathering and consolidation of the Russian World and to promote many initiatives aimed at building intercultural harmony. I hope that our good cooperation, also in the Working Group for Cooperation between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation, will be continued.

On this memorable day, I wholeheartedly wish you peace, spiritual joy and God's help in your important ministry.

May the Lord preserve you in good health for many good years!

Respectfully,

+ Kirill

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia
