Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church meets in St. Petersburg

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The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church met for its regular session on 5 March 2010 at the historical building of the Sacred Governing Synod in St. Petersburg. It was chaired by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

The permanent membership of the Synod includes Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine, Metropolitan Vladimir of St. Petersburg and Ladoga; Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchate Exarch for All Belarus; Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and All Moldavia; Metropolitan Varsonofy of Saransk and Mordovia, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations. Summoned for the Synod's meeting were Metropolitan Agafangel of Odessa and Izmail, Archbishop Lev of Novgorod and Stray Rusa, Archbishop Ionafan of Abakan and Kyzyl, Archbishop Yelisey of Surozh and Bishop Markell of Beltsy and Felesht.

The meeting was preceded by a prayer at the Chapel of the Fathers of the Seven Ecumenical Councils.

In his introductory remarks, Patriarch Kirill said that the agenda of the meeting included items on the current activities of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Holy Synod was to consider the results of patriarchal visits and various activities held recently and to assess the work of the recently established Inter-Council Presence.

The Synod is to make a number important decisions concerning the restructuring of the central church governance, His Holiness said, as 'life has shown that the work to improve the church central governing system should be continued, and we will have to discuss it today, as well as some other important hierarchical appointments'.

The Synod will also consider the election of a new vicar bishop for the diocese of Minsk, who will be nominated by Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Slutsk, the Patriarch Press Service reports.