World Council of Churches leaders meet with delegation of Moscow Patriarchate



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On September 1, in Karlsruhe, Germany, leaders of the World Council of Churches met with the Moscow Patriarchate delegation led by the chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk.

Present at the meeting from the WCC were WCC acting Secretary General Archpriest John Sauka, moderator of the WCC Central Committee Dr Agnes Abuom, vice-moderators of the WCC Central Committee Metropolitan Nifon of Targoviste and Mary Ann Swenson, and co-moderator of the WCC Standing Committee on Consensus and Cooperation Bishop Simo Peura.

Greeting the delegation, Archpriest John Sauka said, ‘In the World Council of Churches we speak the language of faith not politics; we are an open platform for all. The Russian Orthodox Church is a full-

fledged part of our fellowship'. Speaking about today's political confrontation caused by the situation in Ukraine, the WCC general Secretary stressed that any isolation of the Russian Orthodox Church delegation at the General Assembly is quite out of question.

Dr Agnes Abuom noted that the position of the World Council of Churches concerning the membership of the Russian Orthodox Church in this organization is in keeping with the decisions of the Central Committee by which the WCC should remain an open platform for dialogue of all Christians.

Addressing the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Nifon noted how important it is 'to be in solidarity with one another despite all the existing complications'.

In his response, Metropolitan Anthony said, 'We have come for the 11th General Assembly of the WCC as representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church. Since the Moscow Patriarchate joined the WCC in 1961, mankind has endured multiple upheavals but we have always known that we can freely participate in the work of this major religious forum the task of which is to speak not of politics but of the Christian message to the world'.

Touching upon the crisis in Ukraine, the DECR chairman noted that the Russian Orthodox Church is doing all that is possible to help those affected by the conflict. The hierarch stressed that with a blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, prayers are lifted at every Divine Liturgy for the establishment of peace, and the Church has participated in giving humanitarian aid to regions affected by the hostilities and implemented large-scale programs of help to refugees.

In this connection, Metropolitan Anthony expressed strong disagreement with the speech made a day before by President of Germany F.-W. Steinmaier with its ungrounded criticism of the Moscow Patriarchate and pointed to the inadmissibility of using a religious factor for political purposes.

In conclusion of the meeting, the representatives of the WCC leadership wished the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church a successful and fruitful work.

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