Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church attend the first forum of young religious leaders in Astana.



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The first forum of young religious leaders entitled ‘Shaping a common future: the role of young leaders in strengthening interreligious dialogue’ took place in the capital of Kazakhstan Astana on 9th October. The event was organized by the Nursultan Nazarbayev Centre for the Development of Inter-confessional and Inter-civilizational Dialogue, along with the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and the government of Kazakhstan.

The forum was attended by: the chairman of the Senate of the Kazakh parliament Maulen Ashimbaev, the minister for culture and information of Kazakhstan Aida Balaeva, the first deputy the minister for

foreign affairs of Kazakhstan Akan Rakhmetullin, the archbishop of Anthidona Nectarios (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem), the head of the bureau for Islamic affairs fr om the dicastery for interreligious dialogue of the Roman Catholic Church monsignor Haled Akashe, the secretary general of the Council of Muslim Elders Muhammed Abdelsalam, the director of the chancery of the supreme imam Al-Azhara Abdrakhman Musa, the honorary archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kazakhstan Yuri Novgorodov, and representatives of the Christian denominations, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish and Hindu religious communities from Kazakhstan and other countries, state officials, diplomats, scholars and volunteers.

Attending on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church were: the sacristan of the Dormition Cathedral in Astana archpriest Dimitry Baidek, cleric of the same cathedral Father Grigory Kulikov and representative of the secretariat for interreligious relations of the Department for External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate deacon Sergei Nesterov, who, with the blessing of the chairman of the DECR the metropolitan of Volokolamsk Anthony, gave a presentation at one of the forum's workshops. In his presentation deacon Sergei Nesterov noted the danger of ignoring spiritual values at a time of rapid developments in innovations and technology which could lead to the degradation of the environment, peoples' physical and spiritual well-being and the dehumanization of society.

During the forum there was a panel discussion and workshops wh ere topics related to the importance of the role of young leaders in the steady development of the world were discussed, as well as in establishing interreligious dialogue among young people in the context of cultures and religions. The issue of spiritual values was raised in connection with the era of digitalization and artificial intelligence; modern-day spiritual and moral challenges were named and opportunities were proposed. A number of interactive events and exhibitions were also a part of the programme.

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