

## **Final Communiqué**

2<sup>nd</sup> Middle East Consultation, Global Christian Forum

Lebanon, 25 – 28 May 2016

With the cooperation and coordination of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), the Global Christian Forum invited a group of bishops, priests, pastors, and lay people from various Christian traditions (Orthodox, Catholic, Evangelical) to a second consultation, held at the convent of “Our Lady of the Well” (Lebanon, Maten), 25–28 May 2016. The first consultation took place in Amman, Jordan, 8–9 April 2013.

The participants discussed the challenges that the churches face in the critical and turbulent situations of the region. They considered the cooperation among churches to proclaim faith that is based on the one Christian message. They deliberated on methods to strengthen ecumenical ties and to nurture a spirit of fellowship and solidarity in order to convey peace and justice among all citizens of the Middle East countries.

The delegates renewed their deep sympathy and solidarity with the victims of war, violence, terrorism, and with displaced people, particularly of Syria and Iraq. They appealed to all church leaders and workers in relief organizations to intensify their efforts to alleviate the suffering and lessen the people’s pain, particularly of children and women.

The representatives drew attention to the problem of the severe emigration taking place for many years, which has led to a massive loss in the region of the most resourceful and constructive elements necessary for rebuilding nations and communities. Hence, Christian presence has decreased enormously and this, in turn, has damaged the church’s ministry and role in the region.

The present consultation reaffirmed the Amman Appeal issued in 2013 and urged the participant churches “to implore their societies, governments, institutions, and international assemblies to support Christian presence in the Middle East in partnership with other religions, and work to achieve full citizenship with equal rights and duties among all people, in accordance with international treaties and agreements, and within the framework of fair laws and truly modern democratic systems”.

During the meeting both pastors and lay persons gave much attention to improving relations between the various churches in the Middle East. They stressed the necessity to be open and to deepen mutual knowledge amongst the churches, as well as to increase coordination between them as much as possible. The participants were informed of the latest activities of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), and they praised it for its key role in strengthening Christian presence and communication between the churches in the region. Furthermore, they discussed ideas and suggestions for how the MECC could facilitate dialogue and convergence among the churches of the Middle East.

The sober and frank dialogue among the participants amplified the feelings of belonging to the one body of Christ, to the church of God, and the commitment to the one message of Christ through a common endeavor to attain one and the same witness.

All participants commended the significant efforts of the Global Christian Forum and the Middle East Council of Churches, which made this meeting possible and ensured its success.

Finally, the participants recommended bringing this ecumenical experience to all churches in order for all to benefit from its outcome and to spread the spirit of unity that is in accordance with the will of God. They also agreed to continue these consultative meetings following the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the grace of the Lord Jesus for the glory of God the Father.