

THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY ON ORTHODOXY AT THE PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA

On Monday 18th October 2010, the meeting of the Members of the International Secretariat and the Chairmen of the Councils of the Inter-parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy took place in the grounds of the Patriarchal See, which His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa had granted to them.

On the day before, 17th October 2010, the official welcome of the participants had preceded this, by His Beatitude in the Throne Room. During his address, His Beatitude emphasized on the one hand the role of dialogue as a constituent element of democracy aimed at mutual understanding and tolerance, and on the other hand the contribution of parliamentarianism as an area of free and sober thought in international mutual perception and peace. For this reason he praised the efforts of the Inter-parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy as a channel through which the voice of the people of the world is heard, especially the Orthodox, as well as their anxiety for the transformation of a world which will be based on respect for human rights and humanistic principles.

During their replies, both the President of the General Assembly of the I.A.O. Mr Sergei Popov, as well as the Deputy Secretary Parliamentarian Mr. Anastasios Nerantzis, thanked His Beatitude for his kind hospitality and underscored the multi-strength presence of the Second Throne Patriarchate on Africa, the continent of problems and challenges. In conclusion, commemorative gifts were exchanged.

During the meeting on 18th October 2010, which was opened by the Venerable Primate of the Alexandrian Throne, who prayed for its successful conclusion, a review was made of the 17th General Assembly of the I.A.O. which took place in Armenia in summer, and the programming of the future activities of the I.A.O. were extensively discussed. Among these is the imminent signing of a cooperation agreement on the one hand with the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of Independent Commonwealth Countries and on the other hand with the Pan-African Parliament. An extensive preparatory discussion was held on both the upcoming meeting of the I.A.O. in Beirut on the topic of the presence of the Christian Communities in the Middle East, as well as on the next General Assembly which will take place in Paris next June on the topic of Orthodoxy in the middle of the Universal financial crisis.

With the opportunity of the meeting in the grounds of the Patriarchate, His Beatitude had a private meeting with the Swaziland member of Parliament, Mr. Marwick Khumalo, who happens to be also the Chairman of the Cooperation Committee, International Affairs and Solution of Conflicts of the Pan-African Parliament. His Beatitude expressed his satisfaction for the fact that a signing is imminent on a cooperation agreement by the I.A.O. with the Pan-African Parliament and assured Mr. Marwick that the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa will make every possible effort for the strengthening of ties between the two organizations with the criterion being the finding of a hopeful future for the African continent, a future which will have as its starting point the respect of traditions and convictions of African people.

At the same time, and as an assurance once again of the excellent cooperation of the Second Throne Church with the Republic of Cyprus His Beatitude had a private discussion also with the Cypriot Parliamentary representatives, who were Messrs. Eleftherios Christoforou, Angelos Botsis and George

Varnavas.

Declaring the conclusion of the deliberations of the meeting and praying for the success of the work of the Members of the I.A.O., His Beatitude called on all the participants not to forget the work being done by the pioneers of the Gospel on the African Continent and made himself available for the success of mutual aims for the benefit of the people of Africa.

He also appointed His Grace Ioannis, Bishop of Mozambique, who for many years was the Coordinator of the I.A.O. for South Africa, as the permanent representative of the Patriarchate in the I.A.O. and by request of the I.A.O. its liaison with the African Parliaments.