

MESSAGE TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Mr. Guirguis Saleh

Secretary General of MECC,

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We send you our greetings in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ from the Holy City of Jerusalem. We have been kept up to date with the work of the Middle East Council of Churches, and we are pleased that our delegate, Archbishop of Abela Mr. Dorotheos, is able to represent us at this meeting of the Executive Committee.

We remain committed to the stated purposes and goals of the mission of the Middle East Council of Churches. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem is always ready to work in collaboration with all the people of good will for the well-being of our region, and we wish especially to acknowledge the efforts of our fellow Christians from other Churches and Christian communities in this regard. Such collaboration represents for us that respectful co-existence of people of different religious, cultural and ethnic identities that we believe is essential for the integrity of the life of the Middle East.

However, our concern about the present state of affairs in the Middle East Council of Churches continues. We wish respectfully to remind the Executive Committee of the resolutions of the 9thh General Assembly of the MECC in Paphos, Cyprus, which was held from 27 to 30 November 2007. It was at this meeting that the need for re-structuring the organization was acknowledged.

Subsequently, the MECC has admitted a serious financial crisis, a crisis that is being felt by many organizations around the world. At later meetings of the Executive Committee in Beirut and Kykkos, although the deepening crisis was known, no action was taken.

We note with sadness a distinct lack of progress in setting the MECC on the firm footing that was articulated in Paphos. Instead, the financial crisis has deepened.

We acknowledge with gratitude the hard work of many in the MECC to ensure that the Council is faithful to its goals and mission, and we understand the many challenges that faces the Council in its work. It is all the more important in our view that the Council remains absolutely committed to its vision and mission.

Therefore with great reluctance we are forced to admit that we lack confidence in the current Secretariat Staff and the SCAF of the MECC, and it seems to us that the following two courses of action are the only courses of action now open to the MECC in order to move forward:

1. Given the deepening crisis and the clear lack of progress in re-structuring the organization, and given the inability of the present Secretariat Staff and SCAF both to acknowledge this publicly and to propose effective solutions, it would seem that the honorable next course of action would be for the current Secretariat and SCAF Staff to submit their resignations, and for the Council to elect and appoint a new body of Secretariat Staff and SCAF with the clear mandate to execute a strategic plan that will accomplish the goals set at the 9th general assembly in 2007 as well as ensure the financial solvency of MECC and
2. that the newly elected and appointed secretariat Staff

and SCAF will provide to member Churches an open strategic plan to set the MECC on its proper course. With an expectation of regular reports and accountability to member Churches.

We realize that these may be difficult recommendations for some to hear, but we articulate them out of deep concern for the MECC itself. If we are not ready and prepared to proceed along these lines with firm clear and focused action then there is no likelihood that the MECC can accomplish the good work that lies at the heart of its urgent mission to the peoples of our region who so desperately need the leadership of the Churches in establishing peace, reconciliation and a proper co-existence of all.

We pray for God's blessing upon your work during this meeting, and we urge you to take this necessary action for the future of the MECC.

Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

President for the Eastern Orthodox Churches of MECC.