

H.B. PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS' III SPEECH AT THE MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES SESSION HELD IN CYPRUS.

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Dear Friends,

We give thanks to Almighty God for the opportunity to meet in this Executive Committee of the Middle East Council of Churches.

The purpose of our meeting here in Cyprus is to discuss further the process of re-organization of the MECC especially given the current political developments that our region is witnessing. It is obvious that our joint Christian voice is now more necessary than ever before. Therefore, it is time seriously and responsibly to consider our mission as church leaders, as we uphold the interests of our Churches and faithful. In addition to this we must be ready to respond to the calls that are made to us by our respective political leaderships.

We take this opportunity to re-iterate once again our commitments to this Council, a commitment, a commitment that we have already displayed in practice.

The Orthodox family has demonstrated our steadfastness in maintaining in maintaining the fellowship to which this Council aspires. In support of this the Church of Cyprus, under the wise leadership of His Beatitude Archbishop

Chrysostomos, has taken the initiative to place the meetings of the MECC on a firm administrative and financial basis in Cyprus.

And so, We appeal to all our member Churches to overcome any misunderstanding that may exist and to reach a consensus by which we can accomplish the fundamental principles of the institution of the Council.

We would like to express our gratitude especially to Our beloved brother Archbishop Chrysostomos for his gracious and generous hospitality. And we would like to thank all of you who have responded positively to the invitation to gather here for this decisive action in leading the MECC in fulfilling our common expectations.

Thank you, and May God bless you.