

# **PROGRESS OF DELIBERATIONS AT GREEK FOREIGN MINISTRY'S PEACE CONFERENCE (PART V)**

The representative of Pakistani youth then took the floor, to underline how unfortunate it is that countries in the Middle East, i.e. Iraq, Egypt, Israel, Palestine, are plagued by political unrest, with Israelis, Muslims and Christians alike being the victims. Islam, he said, is supportive of the peaceful coexistence amongst peoples and an International Organization must be established to solve the problem of violence committed in the name of religion.

Mr Olav Tviet, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches spoke next, pointing out that the role of the WCC is to try and bring fair peace in regions suffering from controversy, conflict and war. The WCC, he went on, was set from the start against a military intervention to Syria and in favour of a peaceful negotiation towards resolving the Palestinian question and creating two states in peace and safety.

At noon, Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens hosted the Heads of Churches and their attendants to lunch at the Intercontinental hotel.

Addresses continued with the Palestinian Ambassador to Greece. Mr M. Toubassi conveyed the greetings of the Palestinian people who, in his words, suffer the consequences of Israeli occupation, adding that Jordan supports the rights of the Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank and that Palestine is the cradle of a rich pluralistic religious heritage. He concluded by saying that there is no need for walls; there's only need for safe borders to secure the coexistence between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

The representative of Qatar spoke next, saying that his country has created the conditions for religious coexistence as advocated by the Islamic religion. Islam allows the freedom of religions, the right of property, learning and using one's mother tongue, he said, concluding that the Medina Constitution provides for special care for the poor, which applies to all true believers in Islam.

On Monday afternoon, on the conclusion of deliberations, a music concert was held on the initiative of Foreign Minister, Mr Kotzias. The concert featured Greek composer Thanos Mikroutsikos. Introducing the event, Mr Kotzias said that political conferences owe to include cultural events too, as religion, poetry and music have the power of voicing the unsaid.

After the concert, Mr Kotzias hosted guests to dinner at the Museum of the Acropolis, where Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, made an address.

Deliberations continued on the following day, Tuesday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2015, with speakers from India, the United Arab Emirates, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Hungary, Metropolitan Soterios of Toronto, etc.

Mr Kotzias closed the conference by saying that foreign affairs and religion in the Middle East owe to work together for peace. Unrest in the region will become a threat for humanity as a whole, he added.

**From the Secretariat-General**