

Press Release

At the kind invitation of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), on the occasion of the fifth Anniversary of the Document *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct*, Officials from the Roman Curia and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Italy, representatives of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), as well as scholars and believers from African Traditional Religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism and Tenrikyo met in Rome on Tuesday, 21 June, 2016.

This document, published on 28 June, 2011, was a joint venture by the PCID, the WCC and WEA, with the participation, in its first phase, of believers belonging to other religions as well.

The commemorative event, with the participation of Christians and other believers, was intended to reaffirm important issues of common concern in respect to the document.

The Keynote Address by H.Em. Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the PCID, was followed by a Video Message from Rev. Dr. Shanta Premavardhana, currently President of the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education, Chicago (USA), and previously a staff member of the WCC, on the history and evolution of the Document. Short reports on the implementation of the Document were presented by the co-author institutions: Bishop Miguel Àngel Ayuso Guixot, for the PCID; Dr Clare Amos and Ms. Kyriaki Avtzi, for the WCC; and Prof. Dr. Thomas K. Johnson, for the WEA.

“Document through the Eyes of Religious Neighbours” was the title of the first session during which representatives of African Traditional Religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism and Tenrikyo presented briefly their vision of the Document.

In the next session the Officials representing the Roman Curia and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Italy offered their contribution on “Promoting a Culture of Dialogue and of Encounter: Relevance of *Christian Witness Document*”.

The final session “Looking Forward: Responding Together to Contemporary Global Realities” was aimed at agreeing on some major points emerging from the Workshop. The duty and right of all believers to witness to his/her faith was reaffirmed, as well as the necessity for mutual respect and interreligious dialogue. This implies the freedom of religion, to be respected by all and guaranteed by the States through appropriate laws.

The participants encouraged the organizations responsible for the original document to consider how the “spirit” of the document could be extended to enable interreligious discussions on issues such as the ethics of witness and freedom of religion. They expressed their gratitude to the PCID for organizing the event and offered their good wishes to the Muslim participants for Ramadan and ‘Id al-Fitr.