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PRESS RELEASE OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

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The Vatican, March 5th 2008

In the light of the Open Letter "A Common Word" signed by 138 Muslim scholars, and the response of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, through the Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, a Delegation of the Signatories of the Open Letter met with a Delegation representing the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Vatican City) in the offices of the same Pontifical Council on Tuesday, March 4th and on Wednesday, March 5th 2008. Five participants from each side participated in the meeting.

The participants were:

Catholic Participants:

1. His Eminence Cardinal Jean-Louis TAURAN, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.
2. His Excellency Archbishop Pier Luigi CELATA, Titular Archbishop of Doclea, Secretary, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.
3. Msgr. Khaled AKASHEH, Head Officer for Islam, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.
4. Fr. Miguel Ángel AYUSO GUIXOT, M.C.C.J., President, Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies.
5. Prof. Dr. Christian W. TROLL, S.J., Visiting Professor, Pontifical Gregorian University.

Muslim Participants:

1. Sheikh Professor Abdal Hakim MURAD, President, Muslim Academic Trust, UK.
2. Prof. Dr. Aref Ali NAYED, Director, Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Center, Amman, Jordan.
3. Dr. Ibrahim KALIN, SETA Foundation, Ankara, Turkey.
4. Imam Yahya PALLAVICINI, Vice-President, CO.RE.IS. (Comunità Religiosa Islamica), Italy.
5. Mr. Sohail NAKHOODA, Editor-in-Chief, Islamica Magazine, Amman, Jordan.

In order to further develop Catholic-Muslim dialogue, the participants agreed to establish "The Catholic-Muslim Forum" and to organize the first Seminar of the Forum in Rome from 4 to 6 November 2008. Twenty-four religious leaders and scholars from each side will participate. The theme of the Seminar will be "Love of God,

Love of Neighbor". The sub-themes will be "Theological and Spiritual Foundations" (1st day) and "Human Dignity and Mutual Respect" (2nd day). The Seminar will conclude with a public session on the 3rd day. The seminar participants will be received by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.

Cardinal Jean-Louis TAURAN

Sheikh Prof. Abdal Hakim MURAD

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