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The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Vatican City) and the World Islamic Call Society (Tripoli, Libya) jointly organized a Colloquium in Rome from 15-17 December 2008. This initiative follows other meetings which began in 1976 through the Christian-Muslim Conference held in Tripoli, then regularly continued again from 1989 until today. The following persons participated in the meeting:

Catholic participants:

1. His Eminence Cardinal Jean-Louis TAURAN
2. His Excellency Archbishop Pier Luigi CELATA
3. His Excellency Bishop Giovanni MARTINELLI
4. His Excellency Bishop Jean-Luc BRUNIN
5. Reverend Monsignor Khaled AKASHEH

6. Reverend Father Markus SOLO
7. Reverend Monsignor Bernard MUNONO
8. Reverend Monsignor Mato ZOVKI,
9. Reverend Father Joseph ELLUL, O.P.
10. Dr. Ilaria MORALI
11. Dr. Eugenia DI GREGORIO
12. Mr. Roberto MUSSI

Muslim participants:

1. Mr. Ibrahim RABU
2. Dr. Mohamed Fathalla ZIADI
3. Dr. Abdelati Abdelgalil AL-WARFALLY
4. Dr. Amal Ibrahim SAID
5. Dr. Mohammad ASSAMMAK
6. Dr. Mohammed BAKARI
7. Dr. Anas SCHAKFEH
8. Mr. Faisal JOSEPH
9. Imam Ahmad TAYEL
10. Dr. Mohammad BESHARI
11. Dr. Mansur TANTUSH

The Catholic delegation was presided over by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, while the Muslim delegation was directed by Mr. Ibrahim Rabou, Head Department of Conferences, International Organizations and Relief, in the World Islamic Call Society.

The theme of the Colloquium was "Responsibilities of Religious Leaders especially in Times of Crisis". The theme was developed in three subthemes: 1) Religious Responsibilities; 2) Cultural and Social Responsibilities, and 3) Times of Crisis on the Path of Interreligious Dialogue.

The Catholic and the Muslim participants agreed on the following:

- 1) The first and most important responsibility of religious leaders is one of a religious nature, according to their respective religious traditions, to faithfully fulfill them through teaching, good deeds and example, thus serve their communities for the glory of God.

2) Considering the role religions can and should have in society, religious leaders also have a cultural and social role to play in promoting fundamental ethical values, such as justice, solidarity, peace, social harmony and the common good of society as a whole, especially the needy, the weak, migrants and the oppressed.

3) Religious leaders have a special responsibility towards youth, who require particular attention so that they do not fall victim to religious fanaticism and radicalism, receiving rather, a sound education thereby helping them to become bridge builders and peace makers.

4) Taking into consideration that crises of diverse nature, including in interreligious relations, are possible, on a national or international level, religious leaders should learn to prevent, cope with and remedy these particular situations, avoiding their degeneration into confessional violence. This requires a mutual respect and reciprocal knowledge, both cherishing personal relations and building confidence and mutual trust, so as to be able to confront together crises when they occur.

The participants were honoured and pleased to be received by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, who expressed his satisfaction and strong encouragement.

The two sides agreed to hold the next colloquium in Tripoli within the next two years.

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