

Christians and Muslims to work together in Nigeria



Participants in a WCC meeting at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey. Photo: WCC/Andreas Waldvogel

WCC, 29 September 2015

Key stakeholders in a new inter-religious centre in Nigeria have met to plan for the centre and its work, set to launch in March 2016.

The meeting was held at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland, 27 to 28 September.

Institutions represented were the Jordanian Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (RABIIT), the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) and *Jama'atu Nasril Islam* (JNI).

The project has developed as a result of a high-level international inter-religious visit to Nigeria by representatives of the WCC and RABIIT in 2012.

Speaking about the significance of the project, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the WCC, said, “Muslims and Christians can, through this initiative, hear each other’s stories, share each other’s pain, and begin to heal. This centre is a significant common project for Muslims and Christian leaders in Nigeria and a pioneering work in inter-religious encounter.”

Attendees shared their vision for the work of the centre, which is intended to act as an impetus for healing and reconciliation in Nigeria, given the recent incidents of conflict in the country. The governance, management and programme of the centre are intended to model Nigerian Christians and Muslims working together on issues of concern to all Nigerians.

The evocative phrase “In the sandals of the other” was proposed as a descriptive title for the centre. In the first year of its operation, the centre will work on supporting victims of violence who are suffering from trauma, with a particular focus on women and young people. It will also share examples of people working together to support each other across religious boundaries, as well as beginning substantial data collection.

Participants of the meeting included Dr Khalid A Abubakar, Ms Lamyia Al-Khraisha, Dr Clare Amos, Dr Usman Muhammad Bugaje, Mr Sulayman Hart, Dr Gina Lende, Rt Rev. Prof Emele Mba Uka, Rev. Dr Yusuf Ibrahim Wushishi, Dr Yakubu Joseph and Ms Marietta Ruhland.

In the Sandals of the Other – Christians and Muslims working together in Nigeria

Communique from a meeting at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland, 27 to 28 September, to plan for the setting up of an inter-religious Centre in Nigeria.

29 September 2015

Drawing together representatives of key stakeholders in the project, a working meeting was held at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey 27-28 September 2015, to plan for the setting up of an interreligious Centre in Nigeria with a proposed launch date of March 2016. The institutions present were the Jordanian Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (RABIIT), the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Christian Council of Nigeria (WCC) and Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI). The project has developed as a result of a high-level international interreligious visit to Nigeria made by representatives of the WCC and RABIIT in 2012.

Members of the group shared their vision for the work of the Centre, which is intended to act as an impetus for healing and reconciliation in Nigeria, given the recent incidents of conflict in the country. Governance, management and programme of the centre are intended to model the importance of Nigerian Christians and Muslims working together on issues of concern to all Nigerians. The evocative phrase 'In the Sandals of the Other' was proposed as a descriptive title for the Centre. In the first year of its operation the Centre will work on the need to support victims of violence who are suffering from trauma, with a particular focus on women and young people. It will also share examples of good news of people working together to support each other across religious boundaries, as well as beginning substantial work on data collection. The meeting, conducted in a friendly and amicable spirit, made key decisions which will enable the Centre to open as intended in early 2016. Gratitude was expressed by the participants at the meeting to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has enabled the initial establishment and operation of the Centre.

Participants:

Dr Khalid A Abubakar
Ms Lamyia Al-Khraisha
Dr Clare Amos
Dr Usman Muhammad Bugaje
Mr Sulayman Hart
Dr Gina Lende
Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
Rt Rev Prof Emele Mba Uka
Rev Dr Yusuf Ibrahim Wushishi
(Consultant) Dr Yakubu Joseph
(Staff) Ms Marietta Ruhland