

VISIT BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES TO HIS BEATITUDE

On 20th June His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa was visited by the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr Samuel Kobia, who was accompanied by the members of the Council for "FAITH AND ORDER" of the WCC, among whom were His Eminence Genadios of Sasimon (Ecumenical Patriarchate) and His Eminence Vasilios of Konstantia (Church of Cyprus), as well as His Eminence Bishoi of Damietta, representing the Coptic Church.

During the private meeting held between His Beatitude and Dr Kobia in the Patriarchal Office, His Beatitude said: "We are especially gladdened by the visit of the Secretary General of the WCC to Alexandria, because as a Kenyan in origin, he is a son of Africa ... Dr Kobia is an international figure, who together with the other members of the WCC works for the prevalence of peace in the world. For this reason, I wish that we could have closer collaboration, so that together we can contribute to the efforts of solving the problems of suffering Africa. We would like to have the presence of a person who would be the connection between the WCC and our ancient Patriarchate".

His Beatitude then received the 40-member delegation in the Throne Room, where he greeted them and welcomed them to the Great City of Alexandria, spoke about his long association with the two Metropolitans present and to whom he expressed his love and honour for His Holiness Bartholomaios the Ecumenical Patriarch and His Beatitude Chrysostomos Archbishop of the Church of Cyprus. Addressing Metropolitan Bishoi, he expressed his wish for a speedy recovery to Patriarch Shenouda of the Coptic Church. He then honoured Dr Samuel Kobia with the Cross of the Saint and Apostle Mark.

The General Secretary of the WCC thanked His Beatitude for the heartfelt welcome, and the honour bestowed on him, as it comes from "an ancient and historic Church which significantly contributed to the formation of Christian teaching and life. It is therefore a great honour and blessing to receive this award, which I did not expect, so I will bear this Cross of the Apostle Mark always as a precious personal amulet". He also assured His Beatitude, regarding future closer collaboration, for the good of the suffering people of Africa and gave him a cross, made from the wood of an olive tree, as a symbol of eternal peace.

All were then taken on a conducted tour of the Patriarchal Buildings, as well as the recently inaugurated Patriarchal Library of Alexandria, following which His Beatitude hosted a lunch in honour of his guests.