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Original

Minute on 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

During the year 1915-1916, about 1.5 million Armenians were massacred and thousands more were displaced or deported from the Ottoman Empire in present-day Turkey. The “Armenian Diaspora” today, scattered in different parts of the world, represents the greatest effect of the genocide as more than eight million Armenians now live outside Armenia. Even after almost a century, the Armenian Genocide still has serious implications for the Armenian people, as well as the international community. Although most of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide have passed away, the Armenian people continue to demand recognition and reparation for the suffering and injustice inflicted upon their ancestors.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has addressed the issue of the Armenian Genocide in international fora on several occasions. During the 1979 Session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) raised the question of the need for recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the UN. The 6th Assembly of the WCC held in Vancouver, recognized the importance of the need to continue to address the effects of the Armenian Genocide in appropriate contexts. A minute adopted at the Vancouver assembly stated, “The silence of the world community and deliberate efforts to deny even historical facts have been consistent sources of anguish and growing despair to the Armenian people, the Armenian churches and many others.” We honour the other 600,000 Christians of Aramean, Chaldean, Assyrian and Greek descent, including Catholics and Protestants, who were also massacred along with their Armenian brothers and sisters. The role of the WCC in “enabling the Armenian churches to speak out and work towards the recognition of the first genocide of the 20th century” was recognized by the Armenian churches over the years.

Prior to the 10th Assembly of the WCC the Armenian churches reminded the WCC General Secretary of the historical reality that the 10th Assembly will be held on the threshold of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in 2015. Requests have been made by the leaders of the Armenian churches for the WCC to initiate programmes to observe the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in appropriate ways.

Therefore, the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches meeting in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 30 October to 8 November 2013, requests the general secretary to:

- A. **Organize** in 2015, around the commemorative 100th anniversary date 24 April 2015, an international conference in Geneva on the recognition of and reparation for the Armenian Genocide with the participation, among others, of WCC member churches, international organizations, jurists, historians and human rights defenders.;
- B. **Organize** an ecumenical prayer service commemorating the victims of the Armenian Genocide at the Cathedral of Geneva in conjunction with the international conference; and
- C. **Invite** member churches of the WCC to pray in memory of the Armenian martyrs around the dates of the international conference and also for recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

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