

# World Student Christian Federation



## WSCF Leadership team visits Youth and Churches in Egypt

22 February 2013

The leadership of the World Student Christian Federation held its yearly Staff and Officers Meeting in Cairo, Egypt from 13 to 20 February 2013 in order to offer their presence and support to the Student Christian Movements in Egypt.

WSCF's leadership, which included the Chairperson, Treasurer, and General and Regional Secretaries, met with students, youth and church leaders to hear their perspectives on their faith and witness during this tumultuous time in Egypt's history, and to reinforce the WSCF's commitment to support their communities during the process of ongoing change in the country and region.

Throughout the duration of the meeting, the WSCF leadership participated in a service of the Egyptian Week of Prayer for Christian Unity hosted by The Episcopal Church. They also met with several church representatives from different church and ecumenical bodies, including those from the Middle East Council of Churches. The team was honoured to have conversations throughout the week with Bishop Mounir Hanna of the Episcopal Church; Father Giovanni Esti of the Catholic Church; Bishop Moussa, Bishop of the Youth of the Coptic Orthodox Church; Father Bishoy Helmy of the Coptic Orthodox Church, newly-elected General Secretary of Egyptian Council of Churches; Father Saraphim Elsouriany, Secretary of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church; and to have an audience with His Holiness Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

Each of the church leaders expressed deep appreciation for the WSCF's work to strengthen ecumenical relationships amongst the student groups and the churches worldwide. The WSCF team was pleased to hear the announcement of the new formation of the Egyptian Council of Churches, and affirmed the new ways in which the churches are working to involve the younger generations in the life and leadership of the church. They encouraged the church leaders to continue and increase their involvement of youth, and to work with the World Student Christian Federation moving forward.

A highlight of the WSCF leadership's time in Egypt was meeting with students and youth from the eight Student Christian Movements. The students boldly expressed their fears, hopes, and dreams for their communities during this time of deep economic and political instability. Following the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, the young people have a newfound understanding of what it means to be both Christians and citizens in their country – an understanding which has spurred them to increased activism on social and political levels.

However, the students shared with the WSCF team that their desire to play an increasingly active role in the future of their society is complicated by the economic pressures to leave Egypt to find secure jobs and peaceful livelihoods – a pressure which affects many Egyptian youth. They also shared that as Christians, and therefore minorities, they have fears about the fact that the new constitution does not give them the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship.



*The WSCF leadership team met with His Holiness Pope Tawadros II in Cairo. From left to right: Mohsen Edward, Christine Housel, Elsy Wakil, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, Luciano Kovacs, Marcelo Leites, and Sunita Suna.*

In addition, the young Christians are impatient with the lack of unity between the churches and expressed their desire for churches in their community to move beyond their differences and intentionally work together to demonstrate the leadership and unity needed to transform their churches, communities, and society during this time.

The students and youth called upon the WSCF's leadership to support them by: offering support to their ongoing ecumenical work with young people; entering into high-level conversations with church and ecumenical bodies and leaders; and fostering greater communication between Student Christian Movements in the Federation's six regions. They also expressed profound gratitude to the staff and officers for choosing to be present with them during this turbulent time.

The World Student Christian Federation commits itself to:

- Offering renewed solidarity and support to Egypt and the Middle East Region during this extraordinary moment in history;
- Communicating the concerns of the youth to the global church, ecumenical bodies, and wider world;
- Encouraging and supporting the work of the Student Christian Movements;
- Creating space for young voices to be heard;
- Encouraging and facilitating Muslim Christian peace-building at all levels of the Federation;
- Continuing to equip students and the Federation to play a role in the evolution and change happening in Egypt and the Middle East; and
- Continuously hold our sisters and brothers in Egypt and the Middle East in prayer.

*“The Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”  
Matthew 2:15*



*Above, the WSCF leadership team celebrates the Universal Day of Prayer for Students with representatives of the Federation's movements in Egypt.*

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