

Right to citizenship means one humanity, reflects WCC general secretary



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At the Geneva Centre on 15 March, World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit joined a panel speaking on the theme “Islam and Christianity, the Great Convergence: Working jointly towards equal citizenship rights.”

Tveit noted that, together, Christians and Muslims represent about half the world’s population. “We, here, are not talking about only ourselves. We are talking about humanity in many ways,” he said.

The panel discussion was held as a side event of the 34th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The WCC addresses the issue of citizenship - and humanity - from a theological perspective, Tveit added. “What does it mean to believe today in the one God who created the one humanity? And what are the implications of that in our time? Well, it definitely should not be that believing in one God, we see only part of humanity as our sisters and brothers.”

After citing examples of how the WCC fellowship is strengthening Christian-Muslim relationships around the world, Tveit concluded that citizenship - which is a basic source of identity in many countries - is not only a matter of legal principle but also a matter of how we understand one another as human beings.

Citizenship, he said, is not only a political or a legal principle, it is also a principle that expresses our deepest faith in the one God creating the one humanity.

Even the word “minorities” calls into question our collective ability to accept the citizenship of others, Tveit noted, because there can be a sense that “minorities” really don’t belong. “We must be careful that we don’t use that word all the time but that we also say ‘communities’ - those who belong here.”

Equal Citizenship Rights was co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions of Algeria, Pakistan and Lebanon, as well as the Permanent Observer Mission of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG) that were represented by their respective Ambassadors.

[Read full presentation by the WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit](#)

[Side-event during the 34th UN Human Rights Council session: The great convergence between Islam and Christianity needs to be re-discovered](#)

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