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FIAC – IFCA
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AC Bari e
Delegazione
regionale Puglia

DECLARATION OF THE SECOND CONFERENCE WITH THE WOMEN FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

Women, Workers of Peace Towards a Culture of Meeting and Dialogue set the theme of this important meeting between women from the Middle East and their sisters from throughout the world held in Bari, Italy from October 19-23, 2016.

As women of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) who first met with our Christian sisters from the Middle East in Amman Jordan in 2013, we meet again as the situation in that part of the world has not met our hope for peace but in many areas the situation has grown worse, particularly for Christians. Therefore, we now resolve at this historic second meeting to renew and maintain our commitment to:

- Our solidarity with our sisters from the Middle East;
- Work to achieve a right to a life of dignity for all persons through all stages of life and in all nations;
- Dialogue in international fora in support of the precept that all persons have the right to practice their religion free from persecution;
- Our heartfelt promise to pray for a rapid resolution to the terror of war in all areas of the world;
- Pray and advocate for those in refugee status and those who remain behind in war torn areas;
- Contact our national governing bodies to pressure them to act to resolve the war in the Middle East and to address the humanitarian issues resulting from that war;
- Continue with strength to achieve our goal of peace through the support of women's movements in the Middle East in collaboration with WUCWO.

We strongly appeal to the consciences of all people to overcome their indifference to the war in the Middle East and to achieve a resolution to the root causes of these conflicts. It is imperative that we advocate against the globalization of indifference as Pope Francis has so often stated.

We pledge that we shall do all we can to make all aware of the courage and steadfast commitment to our faith demonstrated by our sisters from the Middle East. Our empathy and prayers are with our sisters who now experience the brutality and uncertainty of living in areas directly or indirectly threatened by war propagated in the name of religion.

The women of the Middle East who joined with women from around the world in this important second meeting co-organised by the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations, the International Forum Catholic Action (FIAC) and the Catholic Action of Italy remain in our prayers, our thoughts, our actions for advocacy, and always in our hearts.

There is a duty to others that we carry with us as citizens of the Earth and a bond between Christian women that cannot be transcended by war, politics, or geography. We hold each other in our hearts and in our prayers forever and we shall not cease to work against war until it is over and peace is restored to this land. And that is perhaps the greatest grace received from this historic and important meeting.