**First Asia-Pacific Countries Muslim Religious Leaders’ Summit in Turkey**

The President of the Islamic Council of Western Australia Dr. Rateb Jneid attended the first summit of Muslim religious leaders from the Asian and Pacific countries opened on Tuesday 13 October 2015 in Istanbul with the Turkish head of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) Prof. Dr. Mehmet Görmez calling for a renewal of cooperation between Asia-Pacific Muslims and unity against challenges to Islamic world.

The summit attended by the 125 delegates from 37 countries was the scene of debates on the theme “Unity in Multiplicity: Rethinking Wisdom and Peace Together, from Afghanistan to Australia and tiny Pacific nations, Prof. Dr. Mehmet Görmez said the summit aimed to re-establish religious, historical and cultural ties between Muslim countries and communities in Asian-Pacific countries and Turkey.

After four days of intensive work the summit ended with Prof. Dr. Mehmet Görmez reading the final communiqué.

The meeting was held with the aim to bring together the Muslims living in the Asia-Pacific countries, letting them share their experiences, exchanging views, develop cooperation, rebuild fraternal bonds which were neglected.

**President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan addressed the closing session of the First Summit of the Muslim Leaders of the Asia-Pacific Countries.**

President Erdoğan addressed and thanked the participants of the summit Diyanet for organizing such a meeting and said he hopes this gathering increases the existing ancient friendship, solidarity and cooperation between Turkey and the Asia-Pacific countries and strengthens the bridges of affection among them.

Pointing to the theme of the summit “Unity in Multiplicity: Taking Up Wisdom and Peace Together” President Erdoğan went on to say “At the root of many problems we have been confronted in the Islamic geography lie the lack of exchanging views and absence of consultations”. That is the reason we as an Ummah (Nation of Islam) are facing a scarcity of benediction. At the moment the nation of Islam is in pieces that is why such meetings are of utmost importance for the unity of the nation of Islam.”

“Saying the countries which should be defined as the places of welfare and tranquility are today being identified as places of blood, tears and conflict President Erdoğan highlighted the following points to the 125 delegates from 37 countries;

1. **Followers of a religion, which advises to give life to even your enemies, target each other’s lives because of ethnical and sectarian strife**
2. **Newly emerged terrorist groups are conducting a smear campaign against the world of Islam through their criminals and unknown masters and goals**
3. **Dirty calculations and dynamics lie behind the process that has turned the Islamic world into a sea of blood and fire**
4. **Civilization is not based on the idea of man eating man but believer providing sanctuary to believer**
5. **Quarters are knowingly playing with the fault lines of the Muslim geography**
6. **The Office of the President of Diyanet, the Red Crescent, AFAD and other NGOs are involved in an effort to heal the wounds of Muslims no matter where they are**
7. **Islamic scholars are the leading people who will repair the wounded memories of the nation of Islam, will treat the injured minds**

**During the Summit Dr. Rateb Jneid** offered his condolences to Ankara victims, who were killed in the twin bombings Saturday, which left at least 97 people dead.

“No matter which religion it comes from, we condemn such terror incidents,” Dr. Jneid said, adding: “We hope it is the last terror act in Turkey”.

Dr. Jneid said the summit organised by the Turkish government was a positive initiative whilst the Muslim world was facing serious challenges amidst negative perception.

The Islamic world is being confronted, and there are faulty views and perception that present it as a religion of terror, monopolizes Islam's truth and declares those not following their faith as apostates. This faulty view of religion should never contaminate peaceful Muslims of the Asia-Pacific region. This requires a reinforcement of religious education and services," Dr.Jneid said.