



# Archbishop of Canterbury and Chief Rabbis of Israel Sign Historic Agreement

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**London, 5 September 2006**

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams and the Chief Rabbis of Israel, Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar and Chief Rabbi Yonah Metzger today signed a joint Declaration which sets out a framework for continuing dialogue between them. Dr Williams described the agreement as historic:

“This is a most significant step in developing better mutual understanding and trust between the Anglican Communion and the Chief Rabbinate and worldwide Judaism.”

The Archbishop was supported in the meeting by the Coadjutor Bishop in Jerusalem, The Rt Revd Suheil Dawani and by Bishops Michael Jackson and John Stroyan. The Chief Rabbis were supported by Rabbi David Rosen and by the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations, Sir Jonathan Sacks. The Archbishop paid tribute to Sir Jonathan and to Bishop Suheil for their constructive roles in the discussions leading to this meeting.

The agreement adds to the growing network of bilateral and multilateral dialogues between religious leaders in the Middle East and in the wider world. This network of dialogue is a major contribution to a world in which religious faith is an increasingly important dimension of people's lives and of national policies.

At a reception to witness the signing of the joint declaration, attended by 70 leaders of the Jewish and Christian communities of England, the guests heard a presentation by the Chief Executive of the Council of Christians and Jews and by the Director of the Centre for the Study of Jewish Christian Relations. The presentations illustrated the range of new initiatives taken by these two complementary organisations to take forward relationships between Christian and Jewish communities in England.

Dr Williams said that the agreement would help to advance inter faith relations:

“This is a potentially fruitful development for relations between Christians and Jews in general and for the peoples of the Holy Land in particular. What we've agreed today will provide a framework within which both practical and sometimes challenging issues can be discussed on the basis of mutual trust and respect”.

The Archbishop and the Chief Rabbis also agreed on the need for a renewed sense of urgency in the search for long term peace, justice and security in the Middle East in general and in Israel and

the Palestinian territories in particular. The Archbishop and Chief Rabbis called for the greatest possible response to the need now for reconstruction and rebuilding both of the physical infrastructure and of the emotional and psychological relations of Christian, Jewish and Muslim believers in the region. Dr Williams said that the dialogue would make trust and cooperation easier to establish:

“We have acknowledged the tensions that shadow the present situation particularly the ongoing tragic conflicts in the Holy Land. But our hope has rested very firmly on this; that without friendship and mutual confidence, without the ability to speak to one another candidly and lovingly, we shall never be in a position where our relationship can change things and challenge things and move the situation forward.”

*Anglican Communion News Service*

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[Text](#) of the agreement