



## **AFRICA/EGYPT - Insituted, National Council of Christian Churches**

Cairo (Agenzia Fides) – Representatives of several different Christian denominations present in Egypt met this morning in St Mark's Coptic Orthodox cathedral in the capital's al-Abbasiy district, to sign the statutes of the country's first National Council of Christian Churches. Attending the founding meeting, leading members of 5 churches, present in Egypt (Coptic-Orthodox, Coptic-Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Anglican and Evangelical), each heading a delegation of five representatives of the respective denomination. Those present included Coptic-Orthodox Patriarch, Tawadros II, Coptic Catholic Patriarch Ibrahim Isaac Sidrak and Theodoros II, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria.

"The new body" Fides learned from Bishop Kyrillos William, Coptic Catholic Bishop of Assiut, "will help us proceed together along the path of ecumenism, and reveal our shared position regarding dialogue and peaceful co-habitation with non Christians. It will also certainly provide opportunities for shared social and cultural initiatives ". Bishop Kyrillos underlined that the new Council "will have no strictly political profile and certainly no ability to exercise binding authority over the activity of the individual Churches". However, its foundation is an important factor for the future of the Christian communities in Egypt, and confirms the ecumenical awareness of the new Coptic-Orthodox Patriarch, installed November last year : "Tawadros" says Anba Kyrillos "gave full support in order to hasten the inauguration of the new body, and plans for its institution existed even before his election".

In the meantime, on Sunday, several hundred Coptic Orthodox Christians staged a march to Egypt's High Court to protest against the torching, on the part of Islamist extremists, of Mar Girgis church on Friday 15 February, in the prefecture of Fayoum. (GV). (Agenzia Fides 18/02/2013).