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COMMON DECLARATION Archbishop George Carey and Catholicos Aram

Canterbury, England, 8 June 1998

In response to the invitation of His Grace, the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Dr George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia and the moderator of the central and executive committees of the World Council of Churches, visited both London and Canterbury between 5 and 8 June 1998. At the end of this visit, and as a result of their deliberations, His Grace and His Holiness issued the following joint declaration:

Our encounter during these days has provided us with a wonderful opportunity to pray together as brothers joined in the love of our common Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We have remembered together the meetings of our predecessors and the long-standing relationship between the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia and the Anglican Communion. This time together has given us an opportunity to discuss, in the spirit of Christian love and fellowship, a number of issues and questions of common concern.

The Christian presence and witness in the Middle East has claimed our attention with its urgency to re-establish a comprehensive and lasting peace with justice in that region. The active participation of all the churches and faith communities of the Middle East is vital for the nation-building process in this region. We affirm the need to strengthen Christian-Muslim dialogue and to find ways of collaborating on ethical and social issues, and on matters relating to justice, peace and the establishment of human rights.

The unity of the church is needed if we are to give credible witness and effective service both in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world. To this end we pledge ourselves to give a new vitality and a more organized expression to the theological dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the family of the Oriental Orthodox churches within the context of the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox international forum.

Both our churches recognize the distinctive role that the World Council of Churches has as a privileged instrument of the ecumenical movement. It provides the place where the churches of the Anglican Communion and the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia join with others in seeking that visible unity of the church which is God's gift and our calling. The World Council of Churches also provides an appropriate space where we can address the many challenges before Christians in the world today.

We stand on the eve of many celebrations: the Lambeth Conference, the eighth assembly of the WCC, the 1700th anniversary of the founding of the Armenian Church in Armenia. These will provide important opportunities for reaffirming our commitment to visible unity and our work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation as we move into the next millennium.

As a result of our time together we reaffirm our commitment to a closer collaboration between the Anglican Communion and the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, particularly in the areas of Christian education, theological formation and service. We commit ourselves to strengthening and expanding our ecumenical partnership in the years ahead. May the peace of you, Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit sustain us and bring these commitments to fruition.