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# Press Release

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**PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

*Speech by the President of Malta Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca at an event held at the Malta High Commission in the United Kingdom for Maltese doctors and professionals*

Your Excellency,  
Distinguished guests,

It gives me great pleasure to attend and to meet you here tonight. It is reassuring to see so many committed professionals, present here, who are active in this vitally important sector to save people's lives.

It is your tireless and dedicated work that the health and wellbeing of countless individuals, is ensured, and whose very lives are profoundly improved by your support and care.

I can assure you that your invaluable work does not go unnoticed. Patients and their families are full of praise for your care and dignity that you give to them.

We are extremely proud of you.

As President of Malta, my work brings me in contact with many individuals, and their families, who experience precarity or vulnerability. I come in contact with people who are living in poverty; with people at risk of social exclusion; and with people whose lives have been disrupted by illness. This is our experience through the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation.

Through the work of various entities, the Presidency reaches out to the people of Malta and Gozo, in order to create meaningful and positive changes in their lives.

Among these entities is The President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, which creates spaces for dialogue, consultation, and the sharing of knowledge among the different communities of our nation.

One recurring outcome, from the consultations held by the President's Foundation, is the need that our people feel for access to environmental health and wellbeing. This is especially clear in what we hear from children and young people, who are active contributors to our consultations.

Last week, such environmental concerns were echoed at the very first conference on Care in Oncology, which I was pleased to inaugurate.

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This conference brought together, for the first time, all stakeholders in the medical and caring professions, to discuss a united effort for a more holistic oncology care plan for our patients.

Furthermore, the work of the National Cancer Platform, established through the Presidency last year, has voiced a similar need for increased awareness into the underlying causes of certain environmental conditions.

The Platform brings together fifteen civil society organisations working with cancer patients, and their families, to create a more holistic approach to the services provided by them.

It is essential that all of our efforts keep the dignity and wellbeing of each member of society in mind. We must strive to ensure that all individuals, particularly those at risk of vulnerability or exclusion, are empowered to achieve the best quality of life.

The provision of these services is further proof of the strong ties that link Malta and the United Kingdom, through a bilateral health agreement established in 1975.

While our nation continues to strive for excellence in many areas of medical specialisation, there are still instances where people need more targeted and specialised care, which is most readily available in the UK.

The Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation is invaluable in providing much-needed financial assistance to people in need of these services.

Besides supporting patients going abroad for treatment, the MCCFF also offers financial, material, and professional support to people experiencing difficulties because of severe chronic illnesses; to persons with disability; and to people living in poverty.

For this reason, the Fund spends over a quarter of a million euros each month, in expenses to provide for this assistance and support. In order to be in a position to do so, the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation relies on the generosity of the people of the Maltese Islands, as well as the social conscience of private sector contributors.

My heartfelt gratitude goes out to each person who contributes, in the knowledge that they are contributing to the wellbeing of individuals, families, and the whole of society in our nation.

Let me also extend once again, my deepest thanks to the many doctors, specialists, and health care professionals, like yourselves, who work tirelessly on behalf of our patients.

You embody the spirit of solidarity that we must foster, in our communities and across our country. We must reach out and provide all the support we can, to people in their moment of greatest need. I can assure you that you are an inspiration to us all.

You are an example of the core values which our nation treasures above all others.

These include a sense of fundamental respect for the dignity of all life, and the resilience to keep working on behalf of others, ensuring the wellbeing of each and every person.

Thank you, and please enjoy the evening.