

**SPEECH BY H.E. MARIE LOUISE COLEIRO PRECA, PRESIDENT OF MALTA AT THE  
PFWS PRESIDENT'S FORUM**

**16 June 2017**

**President(s) Emeritus(i)**

**Excellencies**

**Distinguished guests**

**Dear friends**

**It is my pleasure to open this third meeting of the President's Forum, as part of the third anniversary celebrations being held by the President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society.**

**Since my Foundation was brought into being, three years ago, we have met with thousands of people from across the Maltese Islands, and beyond.**

**We have engaged with individuals and communities on the issues that matter most, in their lives, including the role of healthy relationships; the need for environmental protection and access to green open spaces; the importance of their economic stability; and the need to focus on issues of mental and physical health.**

**Through consultations and research, we are now in a position to say, with certainty, that these four pillars contribute to a sense of holistic wellbeing, connecting us all, at an individual, communal, and social level.**

**The Foundation core team, led by Dr Ruth Farrugia, together with the Foundation's various experts, specialists, academics and practitioners have worked together, to make wellbeing a concept of central importance, not only on the national policy agenda, but, moreover, in the daily lives of our communities and our families.**

**For this reason, I am pleased to note that, this year, the President's Forum has been organised with the collaboration of the CORE Platform, which was facilitated by my Presidency in 2015.**

**I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the vice-president of CSR Europe, Celia Moore, who is participating in this President's Forum, during this unique event.**

**Together with the representation of the private sector in Malta, we are putting a spotlight, to emphasise the need for businesses to be more involved in the development of the concept of holistic wellbeing in our islands.**

**I believe that businesses stand to benefit and thrive, from an increased focus on the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities within our society.**

**For this reason, through corporate social responsibility initiatives, we can achieve a win-win situation for the private sector, and society at large in Maltese Islands.**

**Last year's President's Forum focused on the participation of communities, to identify their sources of wellbeing. This year, let's build on that popular wisdom, to build strong synergies between the private sector, the public sector, and civil society.**

**This evening's event is aimed at the facilitation of relationships between different civil society, the business sector, and the public sector.**

**During today's event, I hope that NGOs will be empowered, to link up with members of Malta's business community.**

**I am convinced that there is so much that you can achieve, by working together, to put meaningful corporate social responsibility into practice.**

**Corporate Social Responsibility is a multi-dimensional concept, and I must note that it is encouraging, that a large number of Maltese businesses are already very engaged in some form of corporate social responsibility initiatives.**

**Let me give you some examples.**

**I recently hosted representatives from the Coca-Cola Foundation at an event held in San Anton Palace, where the Foundation sponsored the renovation of the palace's 400 year old historical reservoir.**



**The importance of water conservation, in our island, is equally visible in the work being done by HSBC through their 'Catch the Drop' water programme.**

**Another example is the work being done by the Alfred Mizzi Foundation, in partnership with Caritas, to provide shelter for the homeless, with the aim of tackling forms of poverty and precarity.**

**I could go on, with many other examples.**

**Therefore, let me take this opportunity to commend all businesses, in Malta and Gozo, who are creating a real difference in society thanks to their CSR initiatives.**

**This evening, we will be hearing more a very specific initiative which is being launched, in partnership among SOS Malta, St James Hospital, and the Sliema Local Council.**

**It is a perfect example of the kind of team-building which we need to encourage, to nurture wellbeing across our communities.**

**This initiative brings together multiple objectives, addressing our environmental responsibilities, while also promoting strategies for social inclusion.**

**The project shall provide access to mobility vehicles for people with disabilities. It is an example of the synergy between authorities, civil society, and the private sector which we are encouraging, at this evening's event.**

**Even small enterprises have a vital role to play, by taking action, to make their contribution to social wellbeing.**

**Each of these examples of Corporate Social Responsibility are linking up, directly and indirectly, with the mandate of the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals.**

**I believe that Agenda 2030 offers the most structured and powerful framework, for effective CSR in today's world.**

**Indeed, Corporate Social Responsibility is at the heart of the SDGs, and our commitment to a global social solidarity approach.**

**Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals, offers a strong roadmap for the ongoing development of Maltese society, linking us up with developments taking place in other nations, and regions, across the world.**

**I believe that Agenda 2030 proposes the best way forward, for government authorities, civil society, and businesses to collaborate, on important issues of contemporary concern.**

**In the light of this much-needed synergy between the private sector and other stakeholders, I would also like to refer to some important indicators, from a 2015 report by PricewaterhouseCoopers, entitled, *“Make it your business: Engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals”*.**

**This report highlights some good news.**

**It states that 70% of businesses, in different countries, have already responded to the SDGs. They have done so by formulating a five-year strategy, to embed the goals within their operations.**

**Each of these businesses have said that their CSR commitments are being guided by the Agenda 2030 action plan.**

**Moreover, this same report goes on to say that an overwhelming 90% of citizens believe that it is important for all businesses to implement the SDGs in their spheres of influence.**

**This fact will help business to maximise their potential, by listening and responding to the aspirations of our communities.**

**It is clear that there is a strong voice, from the people of the world, for businesses to put a powerful focus on sustainable practices and social initiatives.**



**I would like to encourage all those business who have not, as yet, taken up CSR initiatives, to adopt the SDGs as part of their proactive approaches to development and sustainability.**

**The SDGs aim to address inequalities, the degradation of our environment, or to safeguard the full inclusion and active participation of each and every member of our society.**

**Surely, we cannot continue as business as usual, without taking up Agenda 2030, and its Sustainable Development Goals, as part-and-parcel of all corporate social responsibility initiatives.**

**On concluding, I encourage you to keep working together, with one objective, for the wellbeing of society in mind. In so doing, we shall be nurturing new relationships, and promoting innovative strategies, to create holistic wellbeing in the lives of all the people of Maltese Islands, and all humanity.**

**Thank you, and I wish you all every success in your endeavours.**