

**OPENING SPEECH BY H.E. MARIE LOUISE COLEIRO PRECA, PRESIDENT  
OF MALTA AT THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL WELLBEING SEMINAR TITLED  
'THE POLITICS OF WELLBEING'**

**19<sup>th</sup> MAY 2017**

**Dean**

**Dear Faculty Members**

**Dear friends**

**It is with great pleasure, that I accepted the Dean's invitation, to open  
this seminar, entitled "The Politics of Wellbeing".**

**I have met and worked, and I am still working, with many of you on an individual basis, through the various activities of my Presidency, however, it is not often, that I have the opportunity, to meet, and discuss, with all the academics, and practitioners of the faculty, together.**

**Therefore, I hope that my reflections, which I will share with you today, will serve to stimulate your discussions and deliberations further.**

**In the process of my contribution, this morning, I will also present some information, about the principles and the values, which inform the work of my Presidency.**

**I have been mainly inspired, by two of the objectives presented for this seminar.**

**Objectives that stand out to me, as particularly relevant, at this time of such uncertainty and turbulence, in our world.**

**Firstly, the focus that you have chosen to place, on how best to merge your professional activities with a critical and proactive approach, to promote direct action for social justice within society.**

**Secondly, your decision to appraise if your activities, as educators and practitioners, can contribute to a healthier and more resilient democracy in our islands.**

**I believe that, questions of social justice, and democratic participation, are rarely answered easily. However, these questions are some of the most essential concerns of an evolving and forward-looking society.**

**As a Faculty dedicated to the promotion and study of wellbeing, your diverse departments, must be at the vanguard of innovation and practical engagement, to answer such questions.**

**In so doing, you shall make a valuable contribution towards ensuring that wellbeing is a living and meaningful reality for the people of our nation.**

**The President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, of which many of you, are expert members or collaborators, works very closely with the University of Malta and other stakeholders, in order to highlight the importance of wellbeing.**

**My Foundation roots itself in the academic pursuit of knowledge, while also acknowledging, the need for our discourses about wellbeing, to be translated into practical and meaningful action.**

**I believe that without full and effective access to processes of democratic participation, there can be no wellbeing.**

**It is for this reason that my Foundation prioritises active engagement with the communities of our islands, entering into consultations with thousands of people, and promoting, active and inclusive citizenship.**

**I also believe that, when we talk about a politics of wellbeing, then we must also talk about an ethics of wellbeing.**

**We must talk about the actions, that are necessary to nurture, implement, and sustain wellbeing, within our communities, but also the thought processes, which are needed, to ensure that all our efforts, promote equity, equality, respect and dignity for all members of society.**



**I believe that, wellbeing can only be achieved when we are working together, in an ethical and inclusive manner, in mutual partnership and profound synergy.**

**This is just like the way the diverse departments of your faculty come together, to combine their expertise.**

**You are stronger, both academically, and as practitioners, when you work together, to focus on one ethical and inclusive vision, for the future of our communities, our societies, and our world.**

**It is this belief of the need for a unified vision, for the future, that makes me such a passionate promoter, of the United Nations' Agenda 2030, and its Sustainable Development Goals.**

**I truly believe that, it is only when we act holistically, and in synergy, that we can ensure that, nobody is left behind, while also building, effective democratic processes, and meaningful social justice, which subsequently will, promote and encourage, a culture of positive peace and wellbeing, for the benefit of our communities and across society as a whole.**

**There can be no positive peace, without wellbeing.**

**In a similar way to the synergies you have achieved among your diverse departments, we need to find new integrated ways, to harness the combined expertise, and the enthusiasm, of all our citizens, in order to implement Agenda 2030, to our benefit, but also as part of our contribution to the benefit of all humanity.**

**As educators, at the country's foremost university, you are ideally placed, to also inspire your students, to share a wider vision, which embraces Malta, into an intrinsic part, of a whole world.**

**Furthermore, let us remember that when students become inspired, and rise up to meet the challenge, to become activists for change, then their families, their communities, and the whole of society is also transformed.**

**Agenda 2030 gives us an exceptional framework, and opportunity, to make a difference, and to promote true activism, in a proactive and targeted way.**

**In fact, many of the SDGs correspond to the activities of your departments.**

**The first of the Sustainable Development Goals, pinpoints the need to end poverty, and address risks of precarity.**

**It acknowledges that economic injustices are often at the root of many other forms of inequality and discrimination.**

**For example, through Sustainable Development Goal Number 3 Target Number 4, world leaders have recognised, for the first time, the need to promote mental health and wellbeing, as major priorities, within the global development agenda.**

**While Target Number 5 goes deeper still. Target Number 5 requests that all countries, and I quote, “strengthen the prevention and treatment of**

**substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.” End quote.**

**Moreover, the Indicators from each of the targets can be disaggregated to give more specific information.**

**Another example, Goal Number 4, ‘to ensure quality education for all’ contains, as part of its targets, several indicators, that address the needs, of people with disabilities.**

**It goes on to highlight, the importance of gender-equitable, and equal educational measures, which must take root in all nations, if we are to create fairer, and more just societies.**

**While many specific Goals and Targets will have special relevance to your individual departments, the SDGs can only achieve their full potential if they are implemented holistically.**



**Just like each species, within an ecosystem balances the other, to ensure continued harmony, the SDGs must be united in order to create sustainable peace and wellbeing.**

**The United Nations' Agenda 2030, is political in the true sense of the word. I truly believe that, it is the people and their wellbeing, who must be at the heart, of all our work, and policies.**

**Let me therefore, take this opportunity to encourage you, as academics and as practitioners, to bring in your conversation today, and to keep,**

**the Sustainable Development Goals, as a guiding framework, in your work, both as researchers, and in the process of educating your students.**

**The SDGs are a powerful way of focusing your students' attention on important issues of social justice.**

**The more socially aware your students are, then the more they shall be active participants, in the building of democratic processes, and promoters, of the values of social justice, throughout their lives.**

**As a practical strategy, for global social solidarity, the United Nations' Agenda 2030, and its Sustainable Development Goals, is our best hope, to achieve the transformation of our communities, our society, and our world.**

**I would like to take this opportunity, to encourage you to continue in your endeavours, to ensure that more is done, in the sector of formal education and beyond, to make the wellbeing and prosperity of each and every individual, and community, in our country, and in our world, a reality in our lifetime.**

**Finally, I augur you all, within the Faculty of Social Wellbeing, much success with today's seminar, and I look forward to the outcomes of your deliberations.**