
*Press Statement by H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta during
the Incoming State Visit by the President of Botswana*

It is truly a pleasure to welcome my colleague, the President of Botswana, on his State Visit to Malta.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank President Ian Khama, for his constructive and insightful contributions during our deliberations.

During our meetings, I reassured President Khama, that Malta is looking forward to strengthening its relations with the Republic of Botswana, across a variety of sectors, with the possibility of exploring new ventures of mutual cooperation, to benefit the peoples of Malta and Botswana.

This State Visit represents, an excellent opportunity to further enhance, the excellent bilateral relations that already exist, between our countries.

I spoke of Malta's eagerness, to explore opportunities, by which bilateral trade with Botswana may be further diversified and promoted, particularly in light of the innovative stimulus plan which has announced by the authorities of Botswana a plan thought out, to boost the economy through projects in agricultural production, in the construction industry, in manufacturing, and in tourism development.

I proudly explained to my dear colleague the President of the Republic of Botswana, that Malta has plenty of expertise to offer, in these sectors and especially in the sectors of tourism, hospitality, and travel.

Moreover, Malta welcomes the signing of the Double Taxation Agreement, which is the first agreement to be signed between Malta and Botswana, following the establishment of diplomatic relations between our nations, in 2005.

The double taxation agreement is an important development in our bilateral relations, and will lead to a healthy boost in economic co-operation, and further connections between the business communities of both our nations.

We also spoke about the phenomenon of migration, which is an issue of shared concern to both European and African nations.

We spoke of the need for the European Union to continue to do more, to promote strategies for sustainable investment in countries of origin, as well as dignified routes for legal migration in countries of transit, and respectful programmes of inclusion in countries of destination.

Cooperation is the key, and on behalf of the Maltese authorities and the Maltese People, I commend Botswana for its efforts to address irregular migration, particularly human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants, even more, following the adoption, of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act in 2014, by the Botswana Parliament, and the establishment of the Anti-Human Trafficking Committee in January 2016.

I must reiterate once again dear colleague, President Khama, that Malta counts on Botswana's support to ensure that the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants, which shall be agreed in 2018, reflect our common concerns and aspirations for the future of migration, within and across our regions.

Furthermore, I spoke of Malta's full commitment towards the achievement of long-term sustainable development, in line with the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

Malta firmly believes that it is important to participate in the efforts being made by the international community in the field of development assistance.

Our primary objective must be to achieve Sustainable Development Goal Number 1, namely, the eradication poverty, while also promoting good governance, respect for the rule of law, and the upholding of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We believe that to achieve these mutual aspirations for social justice and global peace, Malta looks forward to continuing its cooperation with Botswana, not only bilaterally, but also within the Commonwealth of Nations.

Through our mutual membership within the Commonwealth, we share a powerful heritage of common values, which include a focus on processes of democratic participation, the active involvement of civil society, and the pursuit of holistic wellbeing in the lives of all our citizens.

On concluding, let me state once again, that Malta welcomes the positive and constructive relationship that is flourishing between Botswana and the European Union.

We also look forward to more cooperation between our nations, to enhance peace, security, and prosperity in all our regions.

For this reason, we welcome the emphasis being placed on Youth and Employment, at the upcoming EU-African Union Summit, which is a theme of particular relevance to Botswana.

In this regard, I would like to stress that Malta is appreciative of the efforts being undertaken by the authorities of Botswana, over the past years, to improve the wellbeing of young people in Botswana.

Finally, I would like to add that when our countries focus on the wellbeing of our children and young people, we will be including an essential component, in all our strategies, for the sustainable development of our world.