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*Speech delivered by H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta,  
on the occasion of the 16<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Malta Engineering Excellence  
Awards*

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12th December 2017

**It is my pleasure to welcome you to Verdala Palace, for the 16th Edition of the Malta Engineering Excellence Awards. Verdala Palace is a most fitting venue, of great historical and cultural importance. The venue reflects the importance that I give to these awards, and the many achievements you have made as engineers, over the past year.**

**As we have already heard, these awards are an annual tribute, conveyed by the Chamber of Engineers, to celebrate the ingenuity, the engineering excellence, and the professional commitment of all the members of the Chamber.**

**Engineering is a fundamental element in our everyday lives, and engineers play an essential role in every walk of life. They convert scientific and technical knowledge into practical applications, touching the daily lives of all people.**

**Moreover, let me highlight one skill that engineers share in common, which is a versatility of thinking, and a drive towards innovation, that keeps building bridges between the sciences, technology, and society.**

**As engineers, you are contributing to the technological and industrial development and progress of Malta, and helping to improve the living conditions of our communities and our society.**

**Thanks to your achievements in multiple fields, Malta is capable of developing further, in more sustainable and far-reaching ways, into the 21st century.**

**I believe that the creativity of our scientists and engineers will always play a critical role, to enable us to achieve our utmost, in every sphere of science and technology.**

**This goal, of sustainable and effective development, is at the heart of the United Nations' Agenda 2030, and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.**

**The centrality of sustainable development lies with the process of creating development across cities, businesses, and communities, which meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and to thrive.**

**Agenda 2030 should be an inspiration to us all. It is a structured pathway for all of us, whatever our responsibilities might be. Hence, as engineers, I would like to encourage you to consider some questions, such as:**

**How can you, through your work, ensure that we all have access to clean energy, sufficient water, quality education, health and employment, whilst also safeguarding our natural world?**

**How can our planet sustain the current pace of human development, and how can engineering influence this development?**

**Sustainability must be the fundamental concept, to answer these questions.**

**Bearing in mind that your work is linking the aspirations of humanity for the future, with the innovation that can be made possible, then sustainability must continue to be central to your work as engineers.**

**It is clear that traditional engineering, in the sectors of energy, transport, buildings, clean water, and other key infrastructures, are intimately related to global development.**

**However, engineering is also vital to meet the SDG targets in many other, and more innovative, ways.**

**For example, let me encourage you to put your minds to the challenge of considering how your expertise can address the goal of abolishing world hunger, through smarter agricultural practices; how can we improve healthcare through new technologies; and how can we provide more quality education, by improving the way science and technology is taught in our schools.**

**Moreover, the President of the Chamber has indicated how much the work of the Chamber is focused on promoting ethics and the ethical behaviour of engineers. This is a principle that should be emphasised by all professions. Let me commend the Chamber for providing such a powerful example.**

**I believe that all of us, working together across all strata of society, must do more, to develop a strong culture of ethical accountability in Malta.**

**Not only will this guarantee greater transparency, but it shall also create a space for discussion and dialogue, which are fundamental characteristics of good governance, thereby holding ourselves to a higher standard of respectful behaviour.**

**It is my great hope that, as a nation, we shall work together to continue to promote the principle of respect, to send a powerful message about the need for holistic wellbeing in the lives of all individuals, their families, and diverse communities, which make up the whole of the Maltese society.**

**Let me also note the positive steps, which Chamber is making, to bring a greater focus on gender equity and equality in the profession. I augur that you shall always encourage the participation of women within the Chamber, especially at Council level.**

**Let me also take this opportunity to express my gratitude, on behalf of the Maltese people, towards the Council, for your donation to the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation. Your contribution will be of significant benefit in the lives of many people.**

**As I am sure you all know, the MCCFF performs a vital function in our society. It is thanks to the work of the MCCFF that vulnerable individuals and families receive much-needed support and care, at times of great illness or socio-economic adversity.**

**It is this generosity of spirit that is a shining characteristic of the people of our islands, setting an example of solidarity, which shall be of benefit to both present and future generations.**

**Thank you for your attention, and enjoy the rest of the evening.**