
Speech by H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta delivered on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Ghana

6th March 2018

**Honorable Minister Carmelo Abela
Excellencies
Distinguished guests
Dear friends**

High Commissioner, I thank you for your kind words.

It is my pleasure to be here today, to commemorate the National Day of the Republic of Ghana.

Let me also take this opportunity to send joyous greetings, on my behalf and on behalf of the Government and People of Malta, to President Nana Akufo-Addo, and the Government and the People of the Republic of Ghana, on the occasion of the 61st Anniversary of Ghana's Independence.

In this context, we have come together to celebrate the close friendship that has developed between our nations, since diplomatic relations were first established in 1974.

Our friendships is made even stronger by the ties of our heritage, which is attested to by our common membership within the Commonwealth of Nations.

Another step, to further consolidate our friendship, is definitely the announcement that Malta will open a High Commission in Ghana, which will be the first diplomatic representation opened by the Government of Malta, in sub-Saharan Africa.

Bilateral ties between our nations have also been further consolidated, following my historical State Visit to Ghana last year, which welcomed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Bilateral Consultations, and the signing of a cooperation agreement between the Malta and Ghana Chambers of Commerce, and between Trade Malta and the Ghanaian Association of Industries.

These agreements are constructive examples of how our friendship is developing, through economic collaboration, which will lead to mutual prosperity for both our peoples.

I am confident that the visit, last week, of the King of Ashanti, to participate in the Mediterranean Tourism Forum, is a statement in itself about the goodwill that exists between our social and private sectors.

Such socio-economic cooperation is especially timely, considering Malta's unprecedented levels of economic growth, and the fact that the economy of Ghana will be among the fastest growing in the world in 2018, according to this year's Global Economy Watch.

The convening of the Malta–Ghana Joint Commission, in order to further advance the cooperation between both our countries, is another reflection of the commitment that exists between our governments, to take our relations to a higher level.

I would like to take the opportunity to encourage the Ghanaian authorities to convene the next meeting of the Malta–Ghana Joint Commission, as soon as this is possible, for us not to lose the essential momentum.

Let me also note that there is a good number of Ghanaian nationals living in Malta, and the presence of this diaspora is evidence of Malta’s increasingly multicultural society.

It is essential that we continue to celebrate the strength that such diversity brings, and to find ways of making our communities more resilient, through strategies for dialogue and friendship-building.

Malta and Ghana are united on many levels, for example, both of our peoples take pride in our commitment to the importance of peace, of democratic participation, and of social solidarity, all of which are essential, to ensure a dignified life for all of our citizens.

Such a commitment highlights the focus that our nations are making, by putting into practice the United Nations’ Agenda 2030, and its Sustainable Development Goals, to build a culture of positive peace and of holistic wellbeing, for the benefit of all our citizens.

I believe that we must continue to strengthen our efforts to implement Agenda 2030, with a focus on education and culture, so that our children and young people, who shall one day take our place as the leaders of tomorrow, will enjoy a world that is conducive to peace and prosperity.

In this context, I am pleased to note the great strides being made by Ghana, in the areas of gender empowerment and youth participation.

I also believe that we must explore further opportunities for our young people to come together in dialogue, to enhance their understanding of the principles of democratic participation; respect for Human Rights; and the upholding of the Rule of Law.

I would like to take the opportunity to encourage both our nations to work more closely together, to ensure that we shall leave a legacy of sustainable peace and inclusive prosperity, for the benefit of both present and future generations.

High Commissioner, I am convinced that you, and your staff, will continue to enhance the special ties between our countries and our peoples.

Let us keep building on what we have achieved so far, for the common good and shared prosperity of our nations and our peoples.

I wish you all an enjoyable evening.