



PR231532

05.10.2023

5



PRESS RELEASE BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

A Maltese Parliamentary Delegation led by the Deputy Speaker is attending the 66th CPC in Accra, Ghana

Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives David Agius together with Carmelo Abela and Graziella Attard Previ are in Accra to participate in the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

On 1 and 2 October, the delegation attended the 39th Small Branches Conference, where they discussed the unique challenges they face in mobilising resources for greater sustainability. The conference discussed strategies to meet the unique developmental needs of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's smallest legislatures through key thematic workshops aimed at building parliamentary capacity for the CPA Small Branches and create greater opportunities for the sharing of knowledge, parliamentary strengthening and cooperation across the network.

The 66th CPC was officially opened on 4 October where the delegation of the Maltese Parliament participated in various workshops. Carmelo Abela was invited to address the workshop on the meaning of sustainable trade and economic development for small jurisdictions. Mr Abela stated that at its core, sustainable trade emphasises a balanced approach that takes into account economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection. This concept is particularly relevant for small jurisdictions, where the delicate balance between economic growth and environmental preservation is critical due to limited resources and space.

Carmelo Abela opined that economic development, on the other hand, goes beyond mere GDP growth. It encompasses improvements in living standards, access to education and healthcare, infrastructure development, and the creation of job opportunities. For small jurisdictions, sustainable economic development means finding innovative ways to utilise their strengths, whether through niche markets, unique cultural offerings, or technology-driven sectors. Sustainable trade and economic development for small jurisdictions require a multi-faceted approach comprising diversification, investment in human capital, infrastructure development, sustainable practices, trade agreements, supportive policies and global cooperation. In conclusion, Mr Abela stated that sustainable trade and economic development offer a promising route for small jurisdictions to overcome their inherent limitations and flourish on the global stage.

Graziella Attard Previ made a brief intervention during the workshop on 'The Commonwealth Charter: A Charter for all Human Rights, or just some?' Ms Attard Previ stated that, since 2011, the LGBTIQ+ community in Malta has achieved several rights, and nowadays Malta proudly ranks amongst the highest in the world in this regard. She stressed that it is appalling that out of 56 Commonwealth countries, 35 member states continue to criminalise same-sex relations by imposing penalties of imprisonment, and in two cases, male homosexuality can lead to the death penalty. She reiterated that as upholders of human rights, we cannot turn a blind eye to this chilling reality and that if we really believe that LGBTIQ+ rights are human rights, LGBTIQ+ individuals have the right to live



PRESS RELEASE

in a welcoming, safe and protected environment throughout the world. Parliamentarians have the means and power to change and/or introduce laws, which ensure that this is achieved.

Deputy Speaker David Agius had two bilateral meetings in the margins of the 66th CPC. The Deputy Speaker, accompanied by Carmelo Abela, met the Speaker of the United Republic of Tanzania, Dr Tulia Ackson, who sought Malta's considerate support for her candidature as the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Speaker Ackson outlined her vision of her prospective Presidency. Deputy Speaker Agius emphasised the importance of giving more importance and effectiveness to small jurisdictions. With reference to the war in Ukraine, Deputy Speaker Agius also emphasised that despite Malta's neutral status, it believes unreservedly in the need to respect the crucial territorial integrity of sovereign states.

Deputy Speaker Agius also met with Catherine Gotani Hara, Speaker of the Malawi National Assembly. Speaker Hara, who is also a candidate for the Presidency of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, sought Malta's support of her candidature. She outlined her vision for IPU in the coming years, emphasising on better visibility of the institution. The Deputy Speaker reiterated Malta's position on the war in Ukraine and pointed out the urgency to debate pressing issues like migration. The election of the IPU President will be held during the 147th IPU Plenary in Angola later this month.

The 66th CPC, being held in Accra, Ghana between 30 September and 6 October, will conclude with the General Assembly.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) is the annual Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). It is the largest annual gathering of Commonwealth Parliamentarians, who come together to discuss global parliamentary and political issues. The 66th CPC will be held under the theme of 'The Commonwealth Charter 10 years on: Values and Principles for Parliaments to Uphold'. 2023 marks the 10th anniversary of the Commonwealth Charter which outlines the principles and values of the Commonwealth.