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## **PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER**

### *Speaker Anġlu Farrugia participates in the 6th World Speakers Conference held in Geneva*

One hundred and two Speakers from around the world are meeting in Geneva for the 6th World Speakers Conference held in Geneva on 28–31 July. Established in 2000 by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the World Conference of Speakers of Parliament brings together the highest level representatives of parliaments and the United Nations every five years. This occasion marks the culmination of two years of work by a Preparatory Committee of approximately 20 Speakers of Parliament from all regions of the world. Speaker Farrugia was a member of the Preparatory Committee and participated in the final meeting held just a few hours before the inauguration session of the conference. During the Preparatory meeting held yesterday the Speakers finalised the resolution which will be adopted as the end of the Conference.

During the first day of the Conference, Speaker Farrugia was interviewed for a podcast by the Inter-Parliamentary Secretariat in which he shared his long experience as a Parliamentarian and Speaker of the House of Representatives. Speaker Farrugia gave a brief outlook about the political procedures and his role in presiding over the sittings in the Maltese Parliament. He shared also his experience in introducing several reforms including the Parliamentary Services Act which gave the Maltese Parliaments and its staff full autonomy from the executive branch. Mr Speaker was asked also about his role in the international fora such as the Commonwealth and in the Inter-Parliamentary Union. He gave a brief explanation about his roles as President of the Committee to Promote International Humnitarian Law and member in the Task Force on the War in Ukraine.

In the afternoon Mr Speaker also attended the inaugural session of the Conference with keynote speeches from the President of the IPU Tulia Ackson and the Secretary General of the IPU Mr Martin Chungong, the Speaker of the National Council of Switzerland Maja Riniker and the special guest for the occasion, actor and producer Michael Douglas as a United messenger of peace.

On the margins of the Conference Mr Speaker held three bilateral meetings. The first bilateral meeting was held with the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nepal Devraj Ghimire. During the exchange between the two sides. Mr Speaker remarked that relations between the two countries go back since 1973. He remarked that Malta as a member of the EU supports Nepal's beneficiary of the Everything but Arms policy under the EU's Generalised Scheme Preferences (GSP). He also congratulated the Speaker of Nepal as Nepal is expected to graduate from Least Developed Country by the end of 2025. Speaker Farrugia remarked that Malta is supporting the EU in this important transition for the country. Mr Speaker remarked also that there is a large community of Nepalese nationals living in Malta.



# PRESS RELEASE

Speaker Farrugia held another bilateral meeting with the President of the National Council of the Principality of Monaco, Thomas Brezzo. During the exchange of views between the two sides, they discussed initiatives on how to strengthen the voice of small nations when they coordinate between each other. Mr Speaker while supporting such initiatives, remarked that such initiatives should be brought forward during the next meeting of Speakers of small nations that will take place in Cyprus in September.

The third bilateral meeting was held with the Speaker of the Knesset of the State of Israel, Amir Ohana. During their exchange of views, Speaker Farrugia made it clear that in line with the recent joint statement by 28 states including Malta, there should be an immediate ceasefire in Gaza along with the full release of hostages captured by Hamas. He also emphasised that respect for international Humanitarian Law should be held by all sides also in respect to Article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement. He remarked that an immediate cease fire in Gaza will also be positive for Israel as it will send a positive message to the European Union in its relations between the two sides.

Speaker Farrugia is later on today expected to address the general debate of the Conference which focuses on the current challenges of multilateralism. Mr Speaker will also be a panel member in a session on protecting and promoting the rights of persons in vulnerable situations.