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Speaker Carmelo Abela highlights the importance of parliamentary dialogue at 12+ Group Steering Committee meeting in Malta

Speaker of the House of Representatives Carmelo Abela underlined the importance of parliamentary diplomacy, dialogue and international cooperation while addressing the Steering Committee of the 12+ Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), meeting in Valletta.

Welcoming members of the Steering Committee, including those participating remotely, Speaker Abela said that the meeting reflected the importance that parliaments continue to attach to cooperation, dialogue and the exchange of experience.

Referring to his parliamentary career, Speaker Abela recalled his involvement in parliamentary diplomacy through various international and regional fora. He stressed that these experiences had reinforced his conviction that parliamentary diplomacy has an indispensable role in bringing people together, fostering understanding and keeping channels of dialogue open, particularly at a time of division, uncertainty and increasingly complex international challenges.

Speaker Abela also recalled Malta's longstanding membership of the IPU since 1988 and the Maltese Parliament's continued commitment to the principles and objectives of the Organisation. He described the IPU as an important forum through which parliaments from across the world can exchange perspectives and work together in pursuit of peace, democracy and cooperation.

Turning to the role of the 12+ Group, the Speaker highlighted its contribution to consultation and coordination among its members, including in preparation for IPU Assemblies, debates, resolutions and emergency items, as well as candidatures and vacancies within the various bodies of the Union.

Speaker Abela noted that Malta has long recognised the importance of dialogue and of building bridges between different countries, regions and traditions. He stressed that even where perspectives differ, engagement and mutual respect provide strong foundations for meaningful cooperation.

Concluding his remarks, Speaker Abela observed that, against the backdrop of profound international challenges, meetings of this nature demonstrate the enduring value of parliamentary dialogue. They provide an opportunity not only to coordinate positions, but also to listen to one another, strengthen relationships and reinforce the cooperation upon which effective parliamentary diplomacy depends.

The 12+ Group is one of the six geopolitical groups within the IPU and brings together primarily European parliaments, together with other Western states, including Israel, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Such geopolitical groups play an important role within the IPU by facilitating consultation among their members, coordinating positions on matters before the Organisation and contributing towards fair representation within its various structures and bodies.