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Speaker emphasises the importance of a Parliament closer to the people during a series of meetings and visits in Gozo

"The work of Parliament must go beyond its walls. We must broaden collaboration and participation so that parliamentary work is more closely connected to the realities of society." This was the main message conveyed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives Carmelo Abela, during a series of meetings and visits in Gozo.

The visit began with the Speaker's participation in events marking the opening of the Judicial Year in Gozo. He attended Mass concelebrated by the Bishop of Gozo, Mons. Anton Theuma, at the Church of Santa Savina, followed by a ceremony at the Gozo courthouse.

At the Ministry for Gozo, the Speaker met with the Minister for Gozo Clint Camilleri, and the Shadow Minister for Gozo Frank Anthony Tabone. The discussion focused on parliamentary work and issues relevant to Gozo.

The Speaker stressed the importance of mutual respect and professionalism in parliamentary work, even when political views differ. He emphasised that a strong Parliament requires respect for the institution and for one another, with political work remaining focused on the welfare of Maltese and Gozitan citizens.

Minister Camilleri and Shadow Minister Tabone welcomed the meeting and discussed various aspects of parliamentary work relating to Gozo.

The Speaker also visited the offices of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) in Gozo, where he was welcomed by Chief Executive Alfred Grixti, Director Mons. Joseph Vella Gauci and members of staff. During the meeting, staff outlined the social services provided by FSWS and the realities they encounter daily. The Speaker thanked them for their commitment and said that their work was more than a job.

"Your work is a vocation. Laws can establish structures and rights, but they cannot, on their own, ease the emotional distress and difficulties people experience. It is your direct contact, support and humanity that can make a difference in a person's life," said the Speaker.

Referring also to his meetings with people and organisations working across different social contexts, the Speaker said that institutions gain a better understanding of society's challenges by listening directly to those who experience them and those who work to address them every day.

The Speaker also spoke about his priority of continuing to raise awareness of parliamentary democracy, particularly among adolescents and young people.

"Democracy depends on people. We should value the right to choose our representatives while remaining engaged and participating in the democratic process beyond election day," said the Speaker.

As part of the programme, the Speaker also visited two businesses in Gozo. At Lord Chambray, a company established in 2014 that produces craft beer for the local market, he was welcomed by Chief Executive Samuele D'Imperio and members of staff.

The Speaker also visited Gozo Cottage, where he was welcomed by Director Dr Joseph Grech and members of staff. During the visit, he observed first-hand the production of various local products and alcoholic beverages.

During these visits, the Speaker stressed the importance of Parliament continuing to listen directly to businesses and workers about the realities, opportunities and challenges they encounter. He said that direct contact with different sectors of society helps ensure that parliamentary work remains connected to the daily realities of citizens and communities in Malta and Gozo.