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The Speaker of the House of Representatives highlights Malta's climate vulnerabilities and the role of parliaments at IPU Parliamentary Meeting on COP31 in Türkiye

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Carmelo Abela, participated in the IPU Parliamentary meeting at the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31), organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in collaboration with the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, and held in Antalya, Türkiye.

During the meeting, Speaker Abela highlighted the particular importance of climate change for Malta, emphasising the vulnerabilities faced by small island states, especially those in the Mediterranean. He noted that rising temperatures, water scarcity, extreme weather events, and increasing pressures on coastal areas and infrastructure pose significant challenges to Malta, affecting not only the environment but also economic resilience, energy and water security, and community well-being.

The Speaker stressed that the circumstances of small island states must remain at the forefront of international climate discussions. He underlined the importance of adequate, accessible and predictable climate financing to enable countries with limited resources to implement effective adaptation measures and strengthen their resilience against the effects of climate change.

Referring to the role of national parliaments, the Speaker emphasised that while governments negotiate international agreements and undertake climate commitments, parliaments have a fundamental responsibility to oversee their implementation. This includes scrutinising government action, adopting the necessary legislation, approving expenditure and ensuring accountability.

He further highlighted the importance of ensuring that climate objectives are adequately reflected in national legislation and budgets, that public investment contributes to resilience and adaptation, and that progress is monitored transparently. He noted that parliamentary scrutiny is essential to ensuring that international climate commitments translate into tangible results.

The Speaker also underlined the importance of parliamentary diplomacy, describing the IPU as a valuable platform for parliamentarians to exchange experiences, strengthen relationships and foster practical international cooperation in addressing climate change.

Carmelo Abela also held a bilateral meeting with the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, Prof. Dr Numan Kurtulmuş, to discuss the longstanding relations between Malta and Türkiye and explore opportunities to further strengthen cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting reaffirmed the importance of continued parliamentary dialogue, building on the strong foundations of bilateral relations established since diplomatic ties were formally established in 1967.

Both sides acknowledged the growing momentum in relations between the two countries, particularly through high-level exchanges and parliamentary engagement. The establishment of the Malta–Türkiye Parliamentary Friendship Group in August 2025, followed by its reconstitution in October 2026 following Malta's general election, was highlighted as an important mechanism for strengthening institutional ties and fostering closer cooperation between the two parliaments.

The two Speakers recognised the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in complementing government-to-government relations and promoting mutual understanding. They welcomed the continued work of the Malta–Türkiye Parliamentary Friendship Group and the opportunities it provides for regular exchanges between parliamentarians.

During his participation in COP31-related activities in Antalya, the Speaker also visited the COP Expo, where he gained further insight into the initiatives, innovations, and solutions being showcased in climate action and sustainability. During the visit, the Speaker also visited the Malta Office at EXPO31, where he met with Maltese representatives in Antalya on behalf of the Government of Malta, who are preparing relevant documents and participating in meetings related to the COP31 process. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange views and discuss the work Malta is undertaking in this regard.

The Speaker reiterated that climate ambition must go hand in hand with adequate financing, democratic accountability, and international solidarity, stressing the need for countries to work together to ensure that the challenges faced by smaller and more vulnerable states receive the attention and support they deserve.