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# Press Release

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

*Launch of the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace*

Speaker of the House of Representatives Anglu Farrugia presided over the launch of the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace. The meeting, which was attended by over 40 Members of Parliaments from all over the world, included key note speeches from the President of the Parlantino Parliament, Elias Castillo, the President of the Pan-African Parliament Roger Nkodo Dang, the President of the National Assembly of Mauritius Santi Bai Hanoomanjee and the President of the National Assembly of Senegal, Moustapha Niasse. The launch of the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace marks a historical development in the creation of an inter-parliamentary forum aimed to promote and strengthen tolerance and peace.

Speaker Farrugia spoke on the historical developments of the capital city Valletta. He highlighted that the building of walls and multiple outlook posts had as their main purpose the protection of the island, but also promoted the 'us and them' approach. This ideology dominated the politics and the perceptions of the local population for hundreds of years. Today, Valletta is a cosmopolitan city, home to different religions and beliefs. In fact, in 2018 Valletta holds the title of European Capital of Culture.

Speaker Farrugia explained that the Global Council and the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace encapsulates and promotes an important belief that peace is a never-ending process and involves the capacity of transforming conflicts with empathy, creativity and without violence. Only through shared understanding of common challenges and equal dialogue between partners can members promote tolerance and peace not only within their national borders, but also across states. He further recognized that Malta has always been at the forefront to promote dialogue between different regions and states. Already in the 1970's Malta argued on the importance of including the Mediterranean countries into the Helsinki Final Act of the CSCE, now OSCE.

Concluding, Speaker Farrugia reiterated that the Global Council and its International Parliament will be instrumental in enabling a balanced approach with the executive and legislative arms of a country and focus on the importance to recognise that tolerance and peace are a continuous process involving multiple players and stakeholders.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health Chris Fearne, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion, Carmelo Abela, the Opposition spokesperson for Foreign Affairs, Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici and former Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr George W Vella addressed the opening session. MP David Stellini was also present during the opening session. MP Glenn Bedingfield participated as the member nominated by the Maltese Parliament to the International Parliament and member of

**Attachments: photos**

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the newly formed Committee on International Matters. He addressed members present during the afternoon session and proposed that the Committee on International Matters includes in its working sessions a focus on migration and addresses the ongoing humanitarian crisis, taking place not only in the Mediterranean region, but also across other borders and regions.

*The International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace is one of the two main pillars of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace. The International Parliament will include a total of five committees on: youth and women; legal and legislative matters; international matters, cultivating peace and sustainable development.*

*The Global Council for Tolerance and Peace, was officially launched in Malta in November of 2017 and has the goals of promoting tolerance, peace and humanitarian action across the world. Through the adoption of democratic principles and international law, the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace aims to counter discrimination, religious sectarianism and ethnocentricity whilst promoting the role of women, youth and marginalized groups as key players in the development of just and peaceful societies.*