



Press Release

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“Each and every one of us has the responsibility, at every level of society, to act in ways that encourage respectful dialogue, while promoting peace and wellbeing”

At The Grandmaster’s Palace in Valletta, the President of Malta Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca welcomed members of the Diplomatic Corps for the annual exchange of greetings for the New Year.

During her address, President Coleiro Preca expressed her gratitude to the resident and non-resident Ambassadors for the incessant work which they are doing to build mutually-enriching and peaceful relations between our different nations.

“The Pursuit of Peace is fundamental to your work as Ambassadors”

The President said that whilst the members of the Diplomatic Corps represent the best interests of their respective countries, the reality of peace must go beyond the physical boundaries of nations, adding that it needs to transcend across all borders.

“Peace is necessary in the life of each and every human being. Peace must be made the standard, the benchmark, and the objective by which our governments measure their success”, the President said.

The President said that without peace, there can never be social inclusion and sustainable prosperity, whilst without wellbeing, there can be no effective economic or social development “among our family of nations and people”.

“How can we speak of effective and meaningful peace...?”

The President said that we cannot speak of effective and meaningful peace when we live in a world that is experiencing unprecedented upheavals and violence; when there are whole families who do not have the necessary sustenance for their children; when individuals live in fear, and are sometimes forced to flee from situations of extreme conflict, and when people experience precarity and exclusion from the benefits of social and cultural life.

Coleiro Preca also said that we cannot aim for effective and meaningful peace, when we are confronted by the suffering of the marginalised, the excluded and the oppressed.

In light of all this, President Coleiro Preca said that she is “hopeful that Malta’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union will provide a platform from which to address these crucial

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challenges”, adding that her belief is that the active involvement of all stakeholders, and in particular civil society, throughout Malta’s Presidency is crucial and necessary.

“I believe that the vibrant community of non-governmental organisations, faith groups and social collaborators, at work in Malta and across the European Union, will positively enrich the proposed programme”, the President said.

Here, the President said that if the nations want to be true to themselves, then they must be “resolute in our commitment to safeguard the fundamental rights and freedoms of every individual across the globe, by ensuring that they are truly universal.”

“Peace is the greatest need of our time.”

In his first speech as Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres said:

“Let us resolve to put peace first. Let us make 2017 a year in which we call – citizens, governments, leaders – strive to overcome our differences. From solidarity and compassion in our daily lives, to dialogue and respect across political divides, peace must be our goal and our guide.”

President Coleiro Preca said that peace is the greatest need of our time, a need which must be reasserted at every opportunity. She said that nations must never allow themselves to become complacent about the gains and successes which they have made, in terms of human rights, in terms of environmental justice, and in terms of social inclusion. The President described these as ‘treasures which we cannot afford to lose’.

The President called for strengthening of the forces of moderation in every society: “nurturing spaces in which reason, truth and harmony can flourish”, whilst saying that we cannot continue to allow the voices of extremists, who advocate falsehoods, fear, and violence, to go unchallenged.

“Our thoughts and deeds must be directed by the simple but profound principle, that we should treat others as we ourselves would like to be treated.”

Her Excellency said that the above-quoted golden rule applies to the relationships between nations as much as it does between our communities, within our families and in our own individual lives.

She said that “we need to encourage a global ethic of wellbeing that must work in synergy with a global social solidarity approach, to touch the lives of each one of us, no matter where we come from or our circumstances”, adding that these are values which we must hold sacred, in the face of hostile populism and against the angry and aggressive rhetoric of demagogues – demagogues who cannot have the last word “when we know that peace is the ultimate solution for our peoples to prosper in wellbeing.”

“No single individual or nation can stand alone”

President Coleiro Preca appealed to all diplomats present to be active and effective agents of peace, for their countries and among our nations, since “we are strongest when we celebrate and share the diversity of our experiences and stand united.”

The President said that the global implications of the social, ecological, and moral problems which we face must be recognised and acknowledged, and that therefore, our actions towards the building of ethical standards and the values of respect, peace and wellbeing must be globalised as well.

“In this way, as people of influence and the implementers of policy, we can respond to today’s realities by working towards sustainable peace, which will ensure far-reaching prosperity, and meaningful wellbeing for the benefit of all,” President Coleiro Preca concluded.