

17th November 2017

It is my pleasure to attend this year's edition of Malta's Best in Business Awards.

I am confident that, over past three years, these awards have contributed to encourage excellence in the business sector of the Maltese Islands.

These awards have recognised and celebrated the outstanding achievements of businesses, and their contributions to the economic and also the social wellbeing of our Maltese Islands.

I believe that these awards are contributing for businesses to be more involved in the development of the concept, of holistic wellbeing.

Holistic wellbeing touches the social, the environmental, the economic, and the cultural development of individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

I believe that the awardees are role models for others.

I would like to encourage the Maltese business sector to continue placing the good of society at the top of the corporate agenda.

For this reason, I would like to share a brief comment about the essential importance of long-term and sustainable initiatives, as part of your efforts to engage in effective corporate social responsibility.

I am convinced that there is so much that businesses and society can achieve, by working together, to develop further meaningful corporate social responsibility.

Corporate social responsibility is a multi-dimensional concept.

I must emphasise that it is encouraging that a large number of Maltese businesses, including those present at this award ceremony, are already very engaged in some form of CSR.

Therefore, let me take this opportunity to commend all businesses, in Malta and Gozo, who are creating a real difference in society thanks to their CSR initiatives.

I believe that all enterprises, including middle and small sized businesses, have a vital role to play to promote social wellbeing through effective action.

Furthermore, let me mention that your corporate social responsibility efforts will be even more effective, when they link up with the mandate of the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

I believe that the United Nations' Agenda 2030, which has been agreed upon by all the leaders of the international community, offers the most structured and powerful framework, for effective CSR in today's world.

Indeed, corporate social responsibility is at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals, and our commitment to a global social solidarity approach.

Agenda 2030 ,and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, offers a strong roadmap for the ongoing development of society, in Malta and beyond. It links us up with developments taking place in other nations, and regions, across the world.

Moreover, I believe that Agenda 2030 proposes the best way forward, for government authorities, civil society, and businesses to collaborate, on important issues of contemporary concern.

In the light of this much-needed synergy between the private sector and other stakeholders, I would also like to refer to some important indicators, from a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers, entitled, "*Make it your business: Engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals*".

This report highlights some good news.

It states that 70% of businesses, in different countries, have already responded to the SDGs, and that their CSR commitments are being led by Agenda 2030.

Moreover, this same report goes on to say that an overwhelming 90% of citizens believe that it is important for all businesses to implement the SDGs.

I am convinced that this fact will help businesses to maximise their potential, by listening and responding to the aspirations of our communities.

I would, therefore, like to encourage all those businesses who have not, as yet, taken up CSR initiatives inspired by Agenda 2030, to adopt the SDGs as part of their proactive approaches to development and sustainability.

The SDGs offer a clear focus, to address inequalities and to end discrimination; to halt the degradation of our environment; and to safeguard the full inclusion and active participation of each and every member of our society.

On concluding, I would like to encourage you to keep the holistic wellbeing of our society in your minds.

In so doing, you shall be nurturing new relationships, and promoting innovative strategies, to create holistic wellbeing in the lives of all the people of Maltese Islands.

Let me also thank the many businesses, present here today, who have made a contribution to the essential work of the Malta Community Chest Fund Foundation.

Through your generosity and solidarity, we are able to provide life-changing support and care, for some of Malta's most vulnerable individuals and families.

I truly thank you, and I wish you all every success in your endeavours.