
Address by H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of Soroptimist International Malta, 29 September 2018

Dear friends,

I am so pleased to join you at today's event, as part of your celebrations for the 25th Anniversary of Soroptimist International Malta.

Let me begin by commending the tireless dedication of Dot Hunter, who has shown inspirational leadership, and a true commitment to expand the good work of the Soroptimist family in Malta.

The theme which you have chosen for this Anniversary, "Friendship in Diversity", is being continued in today's inauguration of an Olive Grove at Dar Merhba Bik.

By transforming an unused field into a place of peace and serenity, you are making a practical contribution towards the wellbeing of the service users at Dar Merhba Bik.

I am sure the women and their children, who find refuge and protection within these walls, will enjoy this special space of relaxation and tranquility.

In fact, during my many visits to schools around the Maltese Islands, children always tell me about their desire for green, open, and safe spaces. So I am especially pleased, that Soroptimist International Malta is responding to these aspirations, in particular, for people experiencing a time of vulnerability in their lives.

I am also informed that this project will be sustainable in several important ways by restoring a well, to provide clean water, and rebuilding a wall to protect the area from erosion.

Moreover, the olives produced in the grove will be collected and used to produce meals for the residents of Dar Merhba Bik, while also providing opportunities for additional funds, through the sale of any surplus harvest.

Let me conclude my remarks by addressing the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, who have have, for many years, worked with vulnerable women.

Sisters, I am truly proud of you, for not only offering the much-needed care to these women and their children at a time of greatest need, but moreover, for empowering these individuals to develop their full potential.

This special place of healing and hope will, I am certain, benefit from the innauguration of today's Oliver Grove, and the celebration of friendship that is symbolises, between the women of Soroptimist International Malta, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, and the women who reside in Dar Merhba Bik.

When women stand together, in solidarity and support, there is nothing that we cannot achieve, to improve our own lives, and the lives of our families and our communities.

I augur that these friendships, which are being expressed at this event, will lead to new opportunities for further collaboration in the future.

Thank you for your attention.