

Opening Speech, delivered by H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta, at the 3rd ITU Conference, organised by the Malta Critical Care Nurses Association (MCCNA), 9 November 2018

[Salutations]

Distinguished speakers,

Dear friends,

It is my pleasure to join you this morning, at this important conference.

Let me begin by commending the Malta Critical Care Nurses Association for facilitating this initiative.

I am truly pleased to note that you are providing an essential platform, to disseminate knowledge amongst nurses who are working in the critical care setting, and other healthcare professionals, as well as students, with the aim of promoting excellence in the delivery of nursing care.

I am confident that this conference will help to bring further visibility, and the much-needed focus, to the work of our critical care nurses in the Maltese Islands.

As we all know, issues of health are complex, and they often require a team of medical professionals who must work together in synergy, to address the diverse needs of a patient.

This is especially important when it comes to providing immediate and intensive care.

I believe that we must note, at the beginning of this conference, that the invaluable contribution of intensive therapy nurses, alongside various allied health practitioners, provides a range of diagnostic, technical, therapeutic and direct services for the care of patients.

Undoubtedly, such services are crucial, to effectively support the work that is being done throughout our national healthcare sector.

In order to ensure that the dignity of the patient remains central to the care that is given, there is an urgent need for our healthcare professionals to work closely with one another. For this reason, I am truly pleased to note that a multi-disciplinary approach is being promoted by this conference.

I believe that it is a must, for our country to continue to prioritise the health of our citizens. This means, that we need to continue to assist, and to support our professionals who have dedicated their lives to serve others.

You, as professionals and practitioners, are the first crucial line of support, that people need, during the most vulnerable and challenging times in their lives.

Therefore, I believe that it is of utmost importance, that you are also supported, and that your work is acknowledged, with the importance it deserves.

For this reason, it is crucial that, as we strive towards a more holistic and specialised approach to health care, your needs, as healthcare providers are also acknowledged and respected.

We cannot expect you, as our healthcare professionals, especially those who are providing intensive therapy, to meet the psychological and emotional needs of their patients, if your own needs are not being adequately addressed.

This is why I want to emphasise how important it is for health care professionals to have access to the necessary psycho-social support, which will ensure that they are caring for their own emotional wellbeing.

In fact, according to an important research study, published in the Qualified Health Research Journal, entitled “The Need to Nurse the Nurse”, it is stated that, the emotional strength of nursing professionals, around the world, is rarely given the necessary focus.

Therefore, I would like to take the opportunity to encourage you to take care of your emotional health, and at the same time, encourage our authorities to continue to focus further in addressing the concerns and needs of healthcare professionals.

I am pleased to note that this conference is including the participation of diverse speakers, from a variety of medical backgrounds. This diversity of experiences and skills is a strength for the medical community and Maltese healthcare sector.

Such diversity is also a strength within our society, and for this reason an inclusive approach, which provides culturally-sensitive services, is essential.

To ensure a culturally-inclusive health system in Malta, we must respect our national diversity.

Professionals must be trained to be able to connect with individuals from every community. Your efforts to nurture comprehensive healthcare will make it clear that we, as a country, are committed to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of each and every individual within our Maltese society.

It is the responsibility of both the public and private sector to respond to the specific needs of every patient, by encouraging mutually empowering partnerships.

I believe that opportunities to efficiently and effectively provide continuous training for practitioners must be a top priority. It is in this way that, the health sector will be able to improve the quality and the accessibility of healthcare services.

T=

That is why, I also believe that we must work together, in our different fields and sectors.

On concluding, I consider today's conference as also a time to celebrate your successes, as well as an invitation, to continue to contribute to a better health service, for each and every patient in our Maltese society.

In your roles, as nurses and healthcare providers, you are best placed to sustain and to nurture the holistic wellbeing of our Maltese society.

I am certain that, due to your dedication, you shall continue to develop in your respective professions. On the other hand, I would like encourage the students, who are present here today, to continue to endeavour in your studies, so as to strive for excellence.

Dear students, you are the future providers of the necessary healthcare services in the Maltese Island, who will ensure that our communities are capable of facing the challenges of life, with resilience and confidence.

Finally, I would like, on behalf of the people of the Maltese Islands, to thank all healthcare professionals and practitioners for your invaluable service you provide for all of us.

There is no way we can thank you enough.

I am truly proud of you all.

Thank you for your attention.