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Maltese Parliamentary Delegation participates in the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Marrakesh, Morocco

MPs Davina Sammut Hili and Ryan Callus participated in the ‘Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue: Working together for our common future’, which took place from 13 to 15 June 2023 in Marrakesh, Morocco.

The conference brought together Speakers and members of parliament, religious leaders, representatives of civil society and other experts to engage in dialogue and share good practices around key issues standing in the way of sustainable co-existence, and to jointly explore action points for building more peaceful and inclusive societies, with the aim of developing a roadmap for joint action ahead.

Ms Sammut Hili made a short intervention during the general debate of the conference in which she remarked that while there are different religions across the globe, we share a single world in which to co-exist. She emphasised that a harmonious society is one that embraces a multicultural environment and respects the rights of all individuals. Religion should never be viewed as a cause of conflict and warfare even though there are those who may believe that denouncing any form of religion is the key of achieving peace. Terrorism for example has no affiliation with any religion. Ms Sammut Hili referred to the role and responsibility of parliamentarians in enacting legislation that contributes to the promotion of peaceful co-existence and concluded that parliamentarians have the ability to facilitate and encourage dialogue and serve as bridges between communities.

During his intervention Mr Callus welcomed the Moroccan proposal to have a committee on interfaith dialogue within the Inter-Parliamentary Union as he remarked that dialogue on inter-religious faith is not a one-off event. He then referred to the experience shared by two young people, Heela Youn, an Afghan peacebuilder, and Ildephonse Niyokindi from Burundi, who both lost their mothers due to conflicts in their homelands. Both experiences are excellent examples on how to turn tragic experiences into positive outcomes. Both Heela and Ildephonse made the right choice as they chose a future of hope, peace, stability and tolerance, over revenge and hatred. Mr Callus concluded his remarks by stating that this meeting in Morocco provided the opportunity for politicians and religious leaders to learn from each other. It reconfirmed that whilst we may practice different religions, what unites all religions and all nations, are our shared common values.

The conference was organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco in cooperation with Religions for Peace, and with the support of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the Mohammadia League of Religious Scholars. The Marrakesh Communiqué was adopted during the conclusion of the conference.