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# Press Release

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*The Speaker of the House of Representatives receives the Torch-Bearer Award from the International organisation of Sri Chinmoy*

This morning, the Speaker of the House of Representatives Anglu Farrugia welcomed participants from all over the world taking part in the Sri Chinmoy Oneness-Home Peace Run 2016. The main purpose of the peace run is to highlight the importance of 'oneness', and of creating a harmonious environment for the peaceful coexistence of people with different beliefs and traditions.

Anglu Farrugia greatly welcomed the organisation's incessant work to elevate and promote peace as a way of life, as well as its strategic outreach to world leaders as the true catalysts for change. As a matter of fact, the Peace Blossom Nation initiative, bestowed for the first time in 1998 on the Maltese Islands, is the noble and admirable concept of engaging and encouraging nation states to inject greater energy in the creation of a more just, full and equal world.

Recalling Malta's role in the region and its historical actions to bridge closer European and Mediterranean states, the Speaker spoke about Malta's diplomatic efforts to include in the 1975 CSCE Helsinki Final Act a Mediterranean component. This initiative spurred dialogue between the two regions, as well as strengthening the possibility of enhancing prosperity and peace. On an international level, Malta came out with the idea that the seabed constitutes part of the common heritage of mankind, which led to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Malta was also instrumental in initiating the discussion and consideration of the UN Convention on Climate Change, which is presently a global phenomenon. This, Speaker Farrugia continued, is a concrete example that exhibits the shift from speeches and symbolic actions to affirmative and durable acts.

Reflecting on more recent times, Farrugia expressed concern for the increased intensity of violent conflicts, more specifically to atrocities being perpetrated on civilians in Libya, Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East. This is proving to be an obstacle to the social and economic development of the area, and most importantly its people. The Speaker reiterated that the guarantee of living in a harmonious and peaceful environment is an inherent and fundamental human right for every individual.

In expressing gratitude once more for the Torch-Bearer Award and welcoming the activities which will be carried out with local schools in the coming days, Speaker Farrugia augured that the Sri Chinmoy Peace Run organisation continues to create a movement of peace, built upon respect for others, and mutual understanding of different traditions and religions.

The 'oneness' concept became a reality when Anġlu Farrugia, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chris Agius, Parliamentary Secretary for Research Innovation, Youth and Sport, and Frederick Azzopardi, Deputy Whip for the Opposition, held together the Peace Run torch as a symbol of political and national unity.