

Third International Conference on Financing for Development - Intervention

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is truly an honour to speak here today at this important event which will directly affect the lives of millions and have a lasting impact over generations to come.

As we are all well aware, this is a watershed year for international development action. In September, UN Heads of State and Government will meet in New York to agree to an ambitious new post-2015 international Development Agenda and adopt an unprecedented set of far-reaching Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which were agreed to in 2000 have been significant in reducing poverty and improving the lives of millions. However, as we all know, the results have been mixed and many millions continue to live in degrading and inhuman conditions. As we reflect on the fight to eradicate poverty over the past 15 years, we are reminded about just how dire the need for renewed collective universal action really is whenever we switch on the news. Nobody can claim ignorance.

With the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda in a few months, the international community is being called on to respond in a transformative manner to fundamental challenges facing the world today: eradicating poverty, achieving inclusive and sustainable development for present and future

generations and ensuring the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental values as the basis for peaceful and prosperous societies.

The Summit in New York will seek not only to address the shortcomings of the Millennium Development Goals, but to go far beyond them. This unprecedented level of ambition, however, must be matched by a strong arsenal of implementing tools; both financially and otherwise. This week in Addis Ababa, we are being called on to ensure that the financial tools needed to realistically implement the Post-2015 Development Agenda are up to the mammoth task.

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Malta views this week's Conference, and that which will take place in New York in September, as intrinsically interlinked. Indeed, they are both part of a single process to transform the international development climate. We cannot consider Financing for Development and the Post-2015 Development Agenda as two separate tracks; the former is nothing short of the enabler to the latter.

There are two dimensions to this single transformative process which I consider priorities, and which are very important within the particular context of this week's Conference; these being the need for an Outcome which is both **Sustainable** as well as **Universal**.

The cornerstone of the Post-2015 Development Agenda is a universal approach to **sustainable** development. Calling the new proposed set of 17 Goals the '*Sustainable*' Development Goals has nothing to do with mere semantics. Official Development Assistance (ODA) which is ambitious and sustainable is

an important part of this approach, and Malta has actively supported the EU's ambitious collective 0.7% of GNI commitment to ODA within this new framework. Furthermore, Malta has fully supported the international drive to ensure that a strong focus of ODA is committed towards fragile, conflict-affected and least developed countries (LDCs).

But the successful implementation of Sustainable Development Goals necessitates equally sustainable and realistic national budgetary commitments, paired with sustainable ODA target levels. Unrealistic targets which cannot be matched by foreseeable national economic and fiscal realities risk undermining the credibility of the international community. More seriously, they risk derailing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is in this context that Malta is also fully supportive of measures which can greatly improve the effectiveness of development assistance while not incurring unrealistic financial burdens in the current international economic climate.

In particular, we welcome the focus on improving national policy environments which enable easier implementation of Sustainable Development Goals; greater involvement of the private sector, improving the effectiveness of public financing – including public procurement and fiscal responsibility, as well as more efficient legislative and regulatory frameworks. Such measures need to be a focus of the Outcome of this Conference in order to implement and improve development assistance without establishing unrealistic financial burdens.

In terms of **universality**, the transformative nature of the work being carried out this year matches the transformation of the international community over the past 15 years. All countries must bear equal responsibility – commensurate to capacity – for the financing and enabling of international, regional and domestic development. A global challenge of this proportion necessitates a concerted

global remedy. If we all do our part to implement the outcome of this Conference, I am confident that the Sustainable Development Goals which will be agreed to in September can be achieved.

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Despite its size, Malta is a very active international ODA contributor, **and is a leading performer amongst European countries that joined the EU since 2004** in terms of the amount of assistance provided annually as a percentage of its GNI. Since 2004, Malta has increased its total ODA dramatically, **almost doubling its contributions in the past 10 years!** This is a clear testament to our commitment to increasing our ODA contributions and meeting out international responsibility to finance international development efforts.

Malta's ODA policy is framed against the Millennium Development Goals and focuses on the financing of projects with the following priorities:

1. Supporting sustainable water related projects and initiatives and adopting this area as an area of focus in which it can give a specialised contribution in practical implementation of its development policy;
2. Contributing to educational formation with its programmes of assistance in various fields;
3. Supporting action that is geared to improving access to basic health care in developing countries as well as action dealing with the control of HIV/AIDS;

4. Promoting gender equality and empowering women;
5. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; and
6. In terms of geographical priority – placing a focus on Africa, but not excluding other developing countries, especially those which rank low in terms of human development indicators.

In keeping with the global transition to a focus on sustainable development, Malta has already adapted its own ODA financing for projects which are sustainable in nature. Indeed, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' 2015 ODA project so-financing programme adopted the theme of 'sustainability', whereby projects aimed at implementing Malta's development goals in a sustainable manner were prioritised.

Following the agreement of the Post-2015 Development Agenda in September, Malta will build upon the sustainability approach adopted towards this year's projects and review both its ODA financing of NGDO projects as well as our other means of funding. Our goal is to ensure that Malta leads the way in the means by which it implements the Post-2015 Development Agenda through its ODA-financed projects.

With respect to international migration we support the reference made in the Outcome Document regarding the need for international cooperation to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration with full respect for human rights. Needless to say development aid plays an important role in the countries of origin in addressing the root causes of migration. To this end, Malta very much supports the principle of differentiation and graduation of aid and in focusing aid where it is most needed; only by addressing the root causes can illegal migration be

curbed and criminal networks disrupted. In addition, financial assistance can also effectively contribute to support a number of countries to address the difficult situations they face as a result of very large migration inflows.

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I want to conclude by re-emphasising just how pivotal this year is to the lives of millions. We cannot compromise when it comes to establishing a new transformative international development agenda. This is also the spirit by which Malta is guided in its commitment to the organisation and success of the Valletta EU-Africa Summit as well as the Commonwealth Heads of State and Government Meeting, both scheduled to be held in Malta in November 2015. We will all collectively be held to account by generations to come for the decisions that we take over these days.

It is truly encouraging to see the commitment and mobilisation of the international community at this Conference, as well as the incredible efforts which have been made over the past months of heated negotiations. We all have the collective prosperity of humanity at heart in a globalised world which is no longer defined by the vestiges of national – or even regional – boundaries. It is only through collective and ambitious action such as that being committed to over these days that poverty will be stamped out once and for all.

There should be no doubt. There is no international ambition more important than the one which we are debating here; the future collective prosperity of humanity.

Thank you.