

Thank you, Mr President,

Allow me to start by congratulating the leadership of the United Arab Emirates for the COP28 impeccable organisation and the ambitious outcomes the COP Presidency aims to achieve.

Science has always been clear.

But today we are not dealing about possible shocking events only.

Today we are dealing with an alarming reality that some of us have been going through, particularly Mediterranean countries like Malta who have experienced one of the worst summers in recent history.

It was during the COP21 in Paris that the momentum for putting a cap of not more than 1.5 degrees Celsius increase in temperature was set.

This is no mean feat, but by acting seriously together we can achieve the ambitious targets we have set.

Malta is one of the smallest island states in the world.

Potentially it can be one of the worst hit too.

Being small does not mean that we should do less.

We understand the challenge in front of us and the responsibility we have.

That's why we are punching far above our weight.

Being an EU Member State, we are working hard to achieve a 55% emission reduction by 2030 from the 1990 levels.

Malta has achieved a lot during the past years, but we want to be more ambitious and do much more.

Having the lowest gross emission per capita among the EU Member States means that our efforts need to be sturdier.

In the past 10 years we reduced our Greenhouse Gas Emissions from the energy sector by 60%.

We have increased our renewable energy share from 10MW in 2012 to 230MW in 2021.

And this is not enough. We want and we will do more with ambitious projects in the pipeline.

Our onshore area is limited.

Our offshore potential is immense.

This does not come without its own challenges particularly when it comes to the bathymetry around our island.

But challenges make us work harder.

Saying that we want to be climate neutral by 2050 is a conviction we are working hard on.

We are committed, more than ever in having the first Global Stock Take during COP28 that can truly help us achieve the systematic changes we need to help reach our ambition.

Change requires reform, particularly when it comes to unlocking private financial investments to achieve climate neutrality and to make sure that we channel financial flows through global economic systems ensuring accessibility by the most vulnerable states.

We will always walk the talk.

Nationally, our very own water utility company has been one of the first European utility companies to issue green bonds for retail investors.

Internationally, in the past 4 years, Malta has doubled its contribution to the Green Climate Fund twice.

Today 17% of our Overseas Development Aid is earmarked for capacity building in adaptation to climate change.

As a small island state, I have a clear appeal to all.

Sea level rise is a reality and should be considered as a global security threat.

It implies that no States should lose any of its rights because of sea level rise.

We will continue emphasising this message as champions of the Coalition on Addressing Sea Level Rise and Existential Threats.

Through our Island for Islands initiative, we will continue supporting Small Island Developing States and we will

continue our leadership position in promoting the nexus between Climate Change and Health.

We are extremely satisfied to see many parties joining this important initiative.

“It is always impossible, until it is done,” stated Nelson Mandela and there is no better time than today for such a statement.

Let’s join forces and enable humanity to reverse this existential threat.