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***Roundtable 1: Decent, affordable, adequate and healthy housing for  
all***

- ***What are the achievements in the provision of decent, affordable, adequate and healthy housing? What are the challenges?***
- ***How could some of these challenges be addressed through regional cooperation and exchanges of best practices?***

**Intervention**

Madame Chair,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

It gives me great pleasure to make this brief intervention in an event of such importance, during which intervention I will focus mainly on the aspect of facing challenges.

The Maltese Government's vision is that of creating a society that is built on the principles of solidarity, inclusion and cohesion. A society where economic wealth is distributed in a just and fair manner.

Housing constitutes a key objective in the fulfilment of such a vision. Decent and affordable housing is indeed a basic necessity in life.

Fully aware that decent housing strengthens communities and provides for a better and healthier living environment, the Housing Authority in Malta is pursuing, through the support of the Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity, a holistic approach towards housing, and this through the provision of various schemes and initiatives, targeting in particular those who are in greater need of accommodation. Through the intervention of the Housing Authority, Malta is also promoting environmentally sustainable and healthy housing projects, when constructing new units, as well as when embellishing existing government housing blocks.

This is not an easy task, especially considering the contextual realities in Malta, such as land scarcity, population density, demographic ageing and the ever growing influx of migration. These contextual considerations are in turn bound to shape public demand for land and property, as well as having a profound effect on the housing market in Malta. Undoubtedly, land management and housing provision represent a complex and growing challenge for Malta.

That being said, the Maltese Government is confident that the housing sector in our country will not only renovate and continue to grow in a sustainable way, but will also respond to the ever-changing exigencies

of the country and the needs of its people. For example, it is no coincidence that one of the objectives being pursued, is that of encouraging and supporting the take up of the country's vacant housing stock. This is a valuable resource which a country of our size, can ill-afford not to utilize to good effect.

The sustained economic development attained by Malta in recent years, has also in turn fuelled increased demand for housing, with the result being that property prices, as well as rents, have gone up. Such a situation is however not unique to Malta. In fact according to the 2017 edition of the "*State of Housing in the EU*", housing has become the highest expenditure for Europeans, with house prices growing faster than income in most Member States.

In addition, the Maltese Government is also intent on strengthening measures aimed at ensuring that only those truly in need, benefit from social housing. This however requires a change in culture, one that does away with dependency on Government.

Although all the countries represented here have their own socio-economic realities, I do believe that there is much to learn from one another's experiences and thus Malta supports cooperation in this area, be it through knowledge sharing and / or the dissemination of best practices. International agencies such as UNECE are also instrumental in prompting and supporting initiatives that favour enhanced cooperation between countries. Neighbouring countries can

in turn come together to promote and sustain regional cooperation.  
We can all achieve so much more, by working closely together.

I conclude my intervention by once again confirming Malta's support for the adoption by this Committee, of the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development.

Thank you.

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