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Climate Change 2022

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The Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nation's body that assesses the science behind climate change. Due to its reports in the past years, the world was sensitized on humankind's impact on global warming and that, in turn, this has impacts on both humans and ecosystems, at times irreversible.

The latest report of the IPCC makes it clear that urgent measures need to be taken to mitigate the open impacts of climate change in the years to come, thus limiting future heating to 1.5C above

clearly that as things stand, we are currently failing to make the required changes. Unless we take the required action, temperatures will rise beyond the required limits.

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Proposals included in the report include the effective phasing out of coal, the reduction of methane emissions by a third, the growing of forests and preservation of soils; massive investment in all economic sectors, including energy, transport, construction, and food; as well as the usage of new green technologies including hydrogen fuel and carbon capture and storage. Undoubtedly, the proposals did not fall from the sky or emerge through a magic wand, but are the result of interpretation, negotiation and articulation of positions based on the scientific evidence available. The alternative to this is unresolvable policy conflict which will make us none the safer.

The IPCC report was published amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Apart from being a violent tragedy, this war has raised awareness of the dangers on being dependent on dirty energy, particularly from warmongering states. Not only because we are funding war machines by purchasing such fossil fuels, but also because our dependency is directly impacting climate change.

Both the IPCC report and Russia's invasion of Ukraine present bleak scenarios. But the obstacles they represent can also help guide the ways forward for a cleaner and safer global society.

What should Malta's role be in this situation? Given that we happen to be both a small island state and a member of the EU, I believe that we have a dual role.

Small islands and coastal areas are amongst those which have most to lose with rising sea levels, extreme events. Hence, it is in our national self-interest to speak up for the particular needs of open islands. Given that we are an EU member state, we have both the right and responsibility

Foreign Affairs Ian Borg, and the Minister responsible for Climate Change Miriam Dalli, to make use of Malta's best talent in various sectors, including academia, business, civil society and communities. Climate change should also be mainstreamed in all Government set-ups, being looked not only as an existential threat, but also as an opportunity, to make the most of the situation to combine both ecological modernization and sustainable development. This should be an area which strives as much as possible on policy consensus through continuous deliberation.

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