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## Media Release

### **Protecting jobs and our planet are not conflicting objectives - MEA**

#### ***SME National Forum 2021 brings together industrial, political and social leader in discussing SMEs and Green Growth: The Journey Ahead***

“The protection of jobs and our planet should not be conflicting objectives. Without the planet, we will have no jobs. So, we must learn to adapt, find the right balance and think long-term. Awareness, knowledge, technology are the tools that will help us get there”. This was the key message shared by the Malta Employers Association’s President, Ms Joanne Bondin, while opening the SME National Forum 2021 held at the Dolmen Hotel in Qawra.

Industry leaders, social partners, politicians and entrepreneurs got together on the initiative of the Malta Employers Association to share their views, exchange best practice and find common ground for a way forward in Malta’s efforts to embrace the green revolution towards a more sustainable future for our country.

During the hybrid event, stakeholders from the private and public sector enjoyed a healthy discussion on the latest developments in tech and the green economy, the need for greener planning, and challenges in moving towards greener mobility. A common underlying issue that was raised during the discussion related to the role of education at the foundation of the efforts needed to address these new realities.

Representatives from the Malta Development Bank and Malta Enterprise shared details about incentives and grants that businesses can utilise to implement their transition towards sustainability.

The event was also addressed by Ms Jeannette Axisa, DG Foundation for Transport. She noted how green growth gives the opportunity to become part of a global community working for a more sustainable future. “Transport has to be associated with climate change and for this to happen it requires not only investment, but also needs alignment with the country’s policy on issues such as education, employment and FDI”, she remarked.

A number of Government Ministers and the Leader of the Opposition, Dr Bernard Grech, also shared their views with the audience.

Concluding the event, Mr Joseph Farrugia, Director-General of the Malta Employers Association said that society needs to look beyond immediate gratification and re-orient ourselves towards a more sustainable economy: “We owe it to our children so that they inherit a better society. We need to ensure that all stakeholders benefit from the green transition, leaving no one behind. All this implies a change in culture, and the earlier we have an acceptance of a newer way of life, it will be easier to bring about the changes that we desire”.

The event was organised by the Malta Employers Association and the Ministry for the Economy and Industry with the support of the Foundation for Transport, Malta Enterprise, the Malta Development Bank.