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JOINT STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARIAT FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND THE MALTA UNION OF TEACHERS

SIGNING OF CHURCH – MUT AGREEMENT

Following intense negotiations, the Church Authorities and the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) have agreed on a Collective Agreement for Church Schools which will be effective from 2018 until 2022. The signing of this agreement was presided over by Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna, today, at the Archbishop's Curia in Floriana.

The Collective Agreement will affect all educators working at the Secretariat for Catholic Education and in Church schools in Malta and Gozo. They will benefit from an improved financial package with revised salary scales, allowances and work resources, better working conditions, structures and opportunities at their workplace.

This Collective Agreement also includes specific parameters regulating practices in Church Schools such as recognition of regular service, as well as exams and other assessment practices adopted by the different schools. Although the Church Authorities are still negotiating funding from the State, Learning Support Educators and Kindergarten Educators are further benefitting from the reassurance of being provided with a laptop for the first time at par with other Education Grades.

Many of the provisions of this agreement have been adopted from the Sectoral Agreement signed by the MUT and the Government in December 2017. This also includes provisions such as progression and training initiatives, the new grades of Learning Support Educator 3 (LSE 3) and Kindergarten Educator 3 (KGE 3), structures for time in lieu, and added leave.

On behalf of the Secretariat for Catholic Education, Fr Charles Mallia said: "The Church Authorities are pleased to have concluded this new collective agreement with MUT in time to prepare adequately for the coming scholastic year. Church schools have already started implementing parts of this agreement including the financial package, and have also made the necessary arrangements with Education Authorities

to provide the required staff for the coming scholastic year and those following it. Although this agreement reflects the sectoral agreement between the Government of Malta and MUT, it has been adapted in a way that respects Church Schools ethos, identity and autonomy. Superiors and Heads of Church Schools have contributed in this process. The Secretariat for Catholic Education and the Church Schools Association are confident that this new agreement brings significant benefits to their educators, and will hopefully result in a better holistic educational experience for students in Church Schools.”

Malta Union of Teachers President Mr Marco Bonnici said: “This collective agreement for educators in Church schools endorses and adopts the improved conditions of work and financials achieved through the Sectoral agreement signed between MUT and the Government in December 2017. It includes specific provisions to recognise the uniqueness of the Church school sector and the level of autonomy of respective Church schools. In the past thirty years since the date of signing of the first collective agreement, the Church authorities together with the MUT had a central role in the reorganisation of educational grades to ensure the parity of esteem of educators with their counterparts in State schools and to recognise the specific service of educators in Church schools. The MUT takes pride that negotiations on this Collective Agreement were carried out in a spirit of mutual recognition of the role of Educators in Church schools and an equal recognition of the role of Church schools in the educational provision to thousands of students attending, from kindergarten to sixth forms, in Malta and Gozo.”

The collective agreement has been approved by the absolute majority of respondents through a vote amongst members of the Malta Union of Teachers working at the Secretariat for Catholic Education and in Church schools following continued consultation with members throughout the process.