



UNIVERSITY OF MALTA  
L-Università ta' Malta

Sustainable Mobility in Malta: Transport Research in Practice  
Institute for Sustainable Development National Conference – 30 November 2012

### **Opening Speech – Dr Maria Attard**

*Distinguished guests, colleagues and friends*

I welcome you to the first national conference organized by the Institute for Sustainable Development of the University of Malta. The overwhelming response to this first initiative was unexpected but also so encouraging. I'm actually really sorry for those that tried to apply in the last week – we simply could not offer them a place. I guess we were victims of our own success.

The Institute is only in its fourth year of operation and has the objective to be interdisciplinary and support the sustainable growth of the country through relevant and timely research that can inform policy decisions. It has partnered with various faculties of the University, various departments within Government but also and more recently industry.

We have worked hard, started and completed many initiatives, supported research through the academic members within and collaborating with the Institute, to which I am grateful to have chosen us for their research collaborations, and our students who are not all here today, given the theme of the conference but who have and still are working hard to contribute to the research capital (and may I say relevant research capital) of the Institute.

We have engaged in funded projects locally and internationally, participated in numerous conferences and their scientific committees. One strong area that developed over time has been transport research. And it is all this work that has put us on the map in terms of the global community of transport researchers. Today we present to you such efforts in this important area.

We have also expanded in terms of our staff and our responsibilities with the University community, taking on board the Green Travel initiative on campus. We definitely cannot say we're bored. The future of the Institute looks very bright, and with such overwhelming response to our activities we feel encouraged to organize more and share with you our work.

This is also one of the objectives of this conference – we want to share with you our research so that we **engage**, we **become part** of the larger community and we therefore **contribute** to the sustainable development of the islands.

The conference, however, is not only our showcase – it is also our aim to get people together to talk, meet each other, network. We are strong believers in networking and some of our recent initiatives, the TISTA group for example, short for Transport Information Systems and Telematics Research Group, has just shown us the importance of networking, working together, even across disciplines. And, how successful we can be at breaking barriers if only we talked and had the space for it. I mentioned this in my speech at the launch of the Institute in 2010 – and I see now, here with presenters and participants coming from such diverse backgrounds – I made it, we made it possible!

I sincerely hope that all of you present today not only learn something new but also meet someone new (or even someone not so new but with whom you hadn't spoken in many years!). We would like to invite you to read our annual reports, think about new opportunities and ideas of how we can collaborate, support each other (if need be) and ultimately contribute to our islands' sustainable development.

Before I stop just a few words about our sponsors – their interest in the work that we are doing and their support make it much easier to go ahead and organize such events. Their support (and they might not know this!) means a lot to us as researchers as sometimes the relevance and contribution of our work is questioned. Their presence here today proves otherwise and I wish to thank them all one by one:

- SmartCity Malta– Main sponsor and provider of this venue, and major driving force behind the organisation of this event
- Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications and Transport Malta as Gold Sponsors
- GeoSys
- Traffiko
- Arriva
- Key IT Group B&T Signaal

- Mitsubishi Motors with their electric car (which they are letting you drive today!)
- The Malta Council for Science & Technology
- Pedal Power (who have also brought over some bikes – you know what they say... once you learn how to ride a bike! And at some point we all did, right?)
- The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport - Malta
- Kamra tal-Periti
- And last but not least Touring Club Malta and ITS Malta

### **Some Logistics:**

- Programme in the booklet
- Coffee will be served just outside
- Lunch will be served in the Bistro
- For those of you that smoke please note the smoking areas outside at a distance from the building.
- Toilets are available outside the room.

**LAST THING** Since the students have worked hard to prepare their poster, we would like your help in giving them a bit of further encouragement. Upon registration you were given dot stickers. I invite you to have a good look at the posters and place those dots on the ones you like most. The poster with most stickers will win a book voucher. Just a little thought but hopefully enough to get you to engage with our students during the breaks and for the students to show off their research.

Thanks also to the supporting staff that has worked tirelessly on this event and the session chairs who have kindly accepted to keep the time for our presenters.

Help yourselves to our brochures and leaflets and speak to our sponsors that are here today. Most important of all ..... ENJOY YOUR DAY WITH US!!

Thank you