

## CLOSING ADDRESS DIHAD 2023

### **H.E. Dr Sergio Piazzi, Secretary-General of PAM**

We had three full days with very interesting presentations, good debates, and very relevant comments and questions from participants. We had the opportunity to listen to over 50 very insightful speeches, and the very lively debate brought a lot of experience to the table.

We enjoyed some lively and musical interludes by the DIHAD children, to whom we wish a bright future.

I appreciate the very interactive sessions with great contributions from the audience, illustrating how topical the theme is. *“Energy and Aid – Capitalising on available resources.”* None of us would have been able to predict (when we met last year), after the year of COVID, how horribly the unprovoked and unilateral attack on Ukraine would affect its people and impact the world far beyond, and continue to do so. This war has ended the era of Globalisation to start a new one of Regionalisation.

The link between DIHAD and PAM with UAE, since last year a full PAM member, has become even more evident this year. We have worked together on several important issues, such as in response to the recent earthquake in Syria and Turkey, and the medical needs in Lebanon with the UAE Civil Defence.

The sessions were incredibly informative, as energy is at the centre of our living and livelihoods, but lack of it most importantly affects the poorest and already most vulnerable populations.

We heard how some of the combined challenges of conflict, climate change as well as natural disasters make the delivery of the badly needed assistance more complicated.

On a positive note, the crisis has also made people to resort to more easily accessible locally produced food, e.g. replacing staple food of grains by rice. We hope that the “Grain deal” will be renewed for a longer period than the 60 days set by Moscow.

One of the questions was whether sustainable energy can break the fragility cycle. Whereas this is not so clear cut, the search for better and more affordable green energy is definitively necessary.

We focused on ways for energy efficiency, and we heard calls for inclusivity of energy supply and without discrimination on the target population. Energy must be sustainable and affordable.

Last year we focused on the SDGs and in particular SDG 17, but it is now even more clear how the SDGs are all involved in the topic of the theme of this year’s conference.

We enjoyed a most impressive presentation on access to education and the three steps for successful philanthropy: setting a clear and compelling vision; deciding why it matters; good governance and transparency of funding.

Energy supply is also necessary for access to education, not only simple light for children to do their homework, but also to use PCs and access data and information, not to mention distance learning.

In fact, on education we learned of the value of digital education, and again how energy is needed for connectivity and not increasing the gap between those well connected and those isolated.

One dollar invested in education will lead to economic gain of at least 20 dollars, so it is of crucial importance.

We were encouraged by the numerous innovative approaches and how they have already brought gains. We were also encouraged by very ambitious goals set by many organisations, e.g. to reduce the carbon impact by half by 2030, as the target set by the Terre des Hommes. The cleaning of oceans and waterways from plastics is super important, but it is up to all us to reduce the pollution by plastics.

At the PAM Plenary in Morocco two weeks ago, all delegates listed the critical connection of the FFFM Food, Fuel, Finance. This is at the basis of all, and I would add a fourth F – Future. No Future without energy, at least for the level of technology reached by our society.

Much has been done, but the road to recovery is still very long. Therefore, the call for better integration and collaboration between different levels of governments, private sector and involvement of the local society are of critical importance. This requires our personal commitment and vision. This requires our commitment, vision and resolve to each together.