



ORDRE SOUVERAIN MILITAIRE ET HOSPITALIER  
DE SAINT-JEAN DE JERUSALEM DE RHODES ET DE MALTE

MISSION PERMANENTE D'OBSERVATION AUPRES DE L'OFFICE DES NATIONS UNIES  
ET DES AUTRES ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES A GENEVE

# Sovereign Military Order of Malta

## International Organization for Migration

### Ninety- Sixth Session of the Council

#### General Debate

Statement by:

H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann

Permanent Observer

Geneva, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008

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Mr. Chairman,  
Director-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

As this is the first time that the delegation of the Sovereign Order of Malta is taking the floor since the election of the new Director General, I would like to congratulate Mr. William Lacy Swing most warmly and wish him much success in his new position as the head of the International Organization for Migration. We look forward to continuing the fruitful cooperation established with his predecessors. Allow me also to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman and the Members of the Bureau on your election.

Director General, in your first report to the Council, you underlined IOM's expanding range of activities. Amongst the highlights we noted several areas in which IOM and the Order of Malta have common commitments, namely migration health, emergencies and migration and development. On the operational level, the Order is a transnational, global and decentralised structure, at the service of the poor, the sick, refugees and all those in difficulty. Since the signing of the cooperation agreement between IOM and the Order of Malta in July 2007, our two institutions have begun an effective field-based collaboration aimed at meeting "*Challenges of Irregular Migration*" as described in the Discussion Note before us.

Over the last six months, the Order of Malta's ambulance Corps' volunteer doctors, nurses and helpers have been providing medical assistance on board the Italian coastguards' patrol vessels to over 2,500 immigrants off the shores of the island of Lampedusa. Dozens of children, including the newborn, have been assisted as well as numerous pregnant women, in many dramatic cases at serious risk of giving birth on board. The most frequent pathologies were dehydration, malnutrition, chemical burns and sunstroke.

Mr. Chairman,

In the context of *mixed migration flows in emergency situations*, the Order of Malta is giving particular attention to health care, socio-economic development and capacity building. For example, in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the Order of Malta's worldwide relief agency, Malteser International, has been providing an integrative programme including medical, nutritional, infrastructural and psychosocial projects since 1996. In the region on the border between North and South Kivu, Malteser International, together with the World Food Programme, is presently distributing some 1'000 tons of urgently needed food supplies to more than 30,000 internally displaced persons who have had to flee the conflict. In the Darfur area of **Sudan**, the Order has stepped up its nutrition programme in the Wada and Tabit health centres. Besides tackling the problem of the lack of food, health workers are engaged in vaccination campaigns, prenatal care for pregnant women, training on hygiene and health measures for mothers, as well as and training and supervising doctors and local staff in 27 health centres. In El Fasher last June, Malteser International took part in a meeting of the United Nations Security Council with local Darfur authorities. This provided an opportunity to ask the Security Council and UNAMID, the African Union's operation in Darfur, to facilitate access to the region to help the work of humanitarian organizations.

IOM and the Order of Malta also share their commitment to *health assistance for crisis-affected populations*. In **Myanmar** the Order was among the first to assist the victims of cyclone Nargis in early May of this year when more than 1.5 million were made homeless and over 100,000 died. To day its work on the spot continues as it seeks to help the needy, still suffering from the after-effects of this national catastrophe. The Order is providing medical services as well as water, sanitation and hygiene for 16,000 of the 45,000 internally displaced persons and has set up clinics and water treatment plants.

The Order of Malta's post-Tsunami *Reconstruction, rehabilitation and development activities* continue in the province of Aceh in **Indonesia**, in the south, east and north of **Sri Lanka**, as well as in **Pakistan** following the earthquakes of 2005 and 2008.

Mr. Chairman,

The Order of Malta is very supportive of IOM's impressive work and its strategy in addressing migration's multiple facets. We wish to express our congratulations for the 2008 World Migration Report and welcome the successful initiatives of the *Global Migration Group* enhancing cooperation and coordination based on close partnership with Member States, the United Nations and other international organisations, but also with NGO's and the private sector. We namely follow with great interest IOM's efforts to ensure that public perceptions of migrants are fair and balanced and emphasize respect for the human rights of migrants as a key commitment. While commending the quality of the *International Dialogue on Migration*, we welcome the choice for next year of the theme of "*human rights and migration*" which implies the respect not only for the fundamental civil and political rights but also the economic, social and cultural rights of migrant workers.

We shall be happy to continue our *collaborative partnership*.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.