



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

103rd Session of the Council

General Debate

Statement by:

H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann

Permanent Observer

Geneva, 26th – 29th November 2013

Check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,

Director-General,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

My Delegation joins previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the Bureau on your election and in welcoming the new member states and observers to IOM. We also wish to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report, outlining the “*guideposts to dignified, orderly, safe and humane mobility*”. Furthermore, allow me to commend IOM for its new publications which provide most valuable information, in particular the *World Migration Report 2013* and the edition of Migration Initiatives 2014 entitled “*Health of Migrants*”.

Health is at the centre of the Sovereign Order of Malta’s worldwide activities which are carried out in some 120 countries on all continents. In many areas IOM and the Order of Malta work side by side to alleviate suffering by assisting those most vulnerable, in particular the victims of conflicts and natural disasters. Allow me to illustrate this by some examples.

Following the destruction caused by Typhoon Haiyan in the **Philippines**, the Order of Malta’s relief agency for humanitarian aid, Malteser International, is providing emergency assistance on the islands of Bantayan, Samar and Bohol which are some of the disaster’s most affected areas and where some villages were nearly completely destroyed. At present the focus is on the distribution of food, household items, hygiene articles, tents, and on support for the repair and reconstruction of homes. Several large tents which will house a temporary clinic for a team of doctors and nurses are also being sent to the region and the distribution of three tons of medicines is being organized. Future relief measures plan to address the poor sanitary conditions in the disaster zone. Malteser International will also provide psychosocial care in order to help the survivors, in particular children, overcome the trauma of Typhoon Haiyan.

The ongoing conflict in **Syria** is a further example of our combined efforts to assist both the population inside the country and the Syrian refugees outside. In Northern **Syria**, in the area of Aleppo, and in Damascus and its surroundings, emergency kits (food, hygiene, baby, and winterization) are being distributed since last autumn. Furthermore, about 20 health centers and/or hospitals will receive drugs and medical consumables in the Aleppo region. A Temporary Field Hospital (TFH) in Kilis, a border town in **Turkey**, 3 km from Syria, supports the Turkish health care system by receiving Syrian patients and thereby taking some of the burden off the recently opened Kilis State Hospital. Patients are not only receiving primary health care but also psychosocial support. In **Lebanon**, the Order of Malta’s Lebanese Association is carrying out relief activities for Syrian refugees in its socio-medical centers, which offer free health care and medical drugs to Syrian refugees. In addition, emergency kits are distributed to families in need. In **North Iraq**, already since 2003, the Order financially supports a health centre in Karamless, a small town north-east of Mosul. The Order of Malta’s humanitarian intervention on behalf of the conflict-affected Syrian people is planned for some time to come. Further projects with a long-term perspective will be needed in Syria to rebuild infrastructure, such as hospitals and schools. Since most of the health infrastructure, especially in Northern Syria, is damaged or completely destroyed, medical supply and services will be strongly needed, once the conflict stabilizes.

On the **Mediterranean coast** we continue to witness tragedies whose victims are fleeing from war and persecution, poverty and misery. Together with IOIM, the Order of Malta is continuing its assistance on the spot. Since 2008, the Italian Relief Corps of the Order of Malta (CISOM) has provided medical aid to over 4,000 children, women and men who attempt to reach Europe through the Strait of Sicily. On board the vessels of the Italian Coastguards and Financial Police and on the island of Lampedusa the Order's doctors, nurses and ambulance technicians provide first-aid to migrants who are often in desperate conditions.

In **Germany** the Association of the Order of Malta runs a number of programs that take care of migrants who do not have access to social services. The "*Malteser Migranten Medizin*" – MMM – ensures that migrants have access to medical care. Other programs contribute to the migrants' integration by assisting them in finding work and housing.

In **East Africa**, Malteser International is providing food and medication to victims of the drought in northern Kenya and emergency medical relief to the Congolese citizens who have crossed over to Uganda during the recent humanitarian crisis. In **Haiti** the Order's support to persons displaced by natural disasters is continuing. Furthermore, recovery and health programs in **Myanmar, Thailand, Pakistan** and **Sri Lanka** are benefitting populations suffering from the consequences of crisis situations.

Mr. Chairman,

Cooperation between IOM and the Order of Malta illustrates our shared commitment to assist people who are forced to flee their homes against their will. Health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, livelihood and social programs, as well as disaster risk reduction are core areas that enable migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees to restore their livelihoods. This can only be achieved through strengthening our ties to our partner organizations on the ground. Cooperation with international partners such as IOM is therefore a vital element of our approach to humanitarian action.