



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER  
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE  
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA

## International Organization for Migration - 108<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council General Debate

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann  
Geneva, 28 November – 1 December 2017

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

My Delegation joins previous speakers in welcoming the new member states and observers that have been admitted. I also wish to thank the Director General for his inspiring report.

The Sovereign Order of Malta is fully engaged in the preparatory process leading to the adoption of the ***global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration***. We are contributing to the informal thematic sessions and are preparing a summary of the topics we would like to see reflected in the compact. Allow me to mention four key elements:

- *Migrants* need to be considered in the framework of an economic, social and political approach and to be protected by relevant instruments of human rights and labor law
- The *family structure* is of vital relevance to resilience and should be considered as such when establishing welcoming and integration policies
- Develop stronger cross border, regional and inter-regional *anti-trafficking policies*
- Increase *cooperation* between all actors and stakeholders through exchange of data, publicly available information on migration flows and best practices.

As one of the initiators and as a signatory of the « ***Charter for faith-based humanitarian action*** » endorsed at the UN World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, the Order of Malta continues to emphasize the special role FBOs and religious institutions have in the protection and integration of migrants in host communities. Through their impartiality they are able to provide a link

between different religious communities by exercising leadership in prevention and peace building processes. Due to their local roots, FBOs are often first providers of material and spiritual assistance. Their access to community and cultural networks enables them to support inclusion of migrants in national and local systems and services and support host communities through capacity building and investment in local structures. The Order of Malta therefore encourages States to recognize FBOs as a crucial actor in the humanitarian migration response and proposes that their role be clearly acknowledged in both the Global Compacts.

With regard to the Order of Malta's ongoing relief operations in the Mediterranean, our Italian Relief Corps is actively saving lives by giving first aid to migrants crossing from the Libyan and Tunisian coast on makeshift boats. Although political agreements have contributed to reducing the numbers, the loss of lives at sea continues, in parallel to a steady increase in the number of victims of human trafficking. To this end, the Order of Malta has recently appointed two Ambassadors to tackle and monitor the plague of human trafficking.

In this context I should like to report on the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Libyan working group co-organized by the Order of Malta last week in Tunis which brought together Libyan politicians and officials, European government officials and international organizations including IOM. The aim of these discussions is to facilitate a high-level policy dialogue to support Libya address the challenges the country faces from migration, and to take forward the work of the Libyan working group on migration to identify realistic, practical, and implementable solutions and policy recommendations. Based on the contributions emerging from the meeting in Tunis, some proposals to stir the dialogue into shared action points to tackle the crisis will be elaborated.

In conclusion allow me to mention the special event organized yesterday by the Permanent Missions of the Holy See and the Order of Malta on the topic: *"Mutual Contributions and Benefits: Integrating Migrants in Host Societies"* which was well attended and attracted wide interest.

Thank you.