



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 - 110<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council  
General Debate  
Statement by H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann  
Geneva, 26 - 29 November 2019**

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

My Delegation thanks the Director General for his inspiring report on his first full year in office. We are approaching the first anniversary of the adoption in Marrakech of the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. The Sovereign Order of Malta is proud to be one of the signatories of the Compact and is fully committed to its implementation. In his address to the intergovernmental conference, the Order's Grand Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Albrecht Freiherr von Boeselager, stressed our support for the 23 objectives laid down in the Compact, expressing belief that it "contains a balanced approach in the interest of all countries concerned affirming the basic rights of migrants on one side, but also addressing strongly the threats of human trafficking and other illegal practices". Moreover, he welcomed the specific reference in the document to the role of religious institutions and faith-based organizations which are often trusted first responders and long-term community partners in crisis situations.

With regard to the Order of Malta's assistance to displaced populations, it is present in several countries suffering from protracted displacement situations caused by conflicts, mentioned by the Director General in his report. On the **African** continent, for example, the Order of Malta is engaged in South Sudan, Northern Uganda, the DRC and Nigeria. The projects focus on medical and health care, WASH, food security and basic goods. Resilience-building, for areas affected by climate change through new agricultural methods and the prevention of natural disasters has also an important part in those projects.

In **Colombia**, the Order is providing medical emergency assistance to Venezuelan migrants and refugees under a Memorandum of Understanding with UNHCR. A program creating livelihood perspectives for both Venezuelan migrants and Colombian IDPs in host communities also contains components for socio-

cultural integration, reducing discrimination and xenophobia, as well as support to women, children and youth who are emotionally and psychologically affected by forced migration and its dire experiences.

In **Asia**, the situation of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh remains of great concern. The Order of Malta's international humanitarian relief agency, Malteser International, has been providing medical care and psychosocial support for traumatized refugees since the beginning of the crisis and has established in-camp health posts. A new project is focusing on strengthening the resilience of host communities affected by the influx of refugees from Myanmar.

In the **Mediterranean Sea**, our Italian Relief Corps is at the forefront of efforts to prevent the death of migrants at sea. Only last weekend, during a widely reported dramatic rescue mission off the coast of Lampedusa, the Order of Malta's doctors and nurses provided first aid and medical care to the 149 migrants saved by the Italian Coast Guard.

In the **Middle East**, Malteser International continues to support health facilities across Idlib and WASH activities in IDP camps in **Syria**. In cooperation with all religious communities in **Lebanon**, the Order's national association is responding to the humanitarian needs of displaced persons and the local population by re-enforcing the existing health structure and giving Syrians and Lebanese access to its mobile medical clinics. Projects under implementation in **Iraq** focus on the revitalization of the Primary Health Care structure, reintegration of IDPs into the labor market with on the job training and multi-purpose cash assistance to conflict affected IDPs, host communities and returnees. The Order also helps the displaced population in camps and facilitates their return to their villages with the repair and reconstruction of houses.

Mr. Chairman,

Migration is a multinational phenomenon which has to be dealt with on a multilateral basis. In this centenary year of multilateralism, our goal should be to strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration. In that context, **faith-based organizations** and religious institutions can play an important role in peacebuilding, social cohesion and interfaith dialogue, thus contributing to healing societies and reducing the risk of conflicts. Furthermore, promoting the resilience of populations migrating and preventing their displacement helps their reintegration in countries of arrival and origin in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

In conclusion, allow me to thank IOM for its important and invaluable contribution to alleviating the suffering of migrants worldwide. The Order of Malta shares the universal values of protection of human dignity, promotion of human rights for all without any discrimination, and respect for the principles of international law.

Thank you.