



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- Eighth Session of the Council

#### General Debate

Statement by:

H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann

Permanent Observer

Geneva, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009

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. We wish you much success in your important task. We also wish to express to the Director General our deep appreciation for his leadership of IOM and welcome the Deputy Director General, Ambassador Laura Thompson, in her new post.

Assistance to migrants is part of the Order of Malta's ongoing global activities as it strives to deliver medical and humanitarian aid to those who need care and comfort in the face of poverty, conflict or disaster.

The Director General's wide-ranging and comprehensive report to this Council underlines the size and complexities of the mass human mobility the world is currently witnessing. In this rapidly changing environment the Order of Malta supports IOM's determination to continuously adapt its strategy to evolving situations, streamline its capacities, improve further the impact of its field operations by decentralization and continue to seek new partnerships. Close **cooperation** between humanitarian agencies fosters solidarity within the international community and contributes directly to improving the assistance we provide to those in need. In this context the cooperation agreement signed in 2007 between IOM and the Order of Malta laid the ground work for our two institutions to cooperate in matters of common concern, especially in the areas covering emergency and post-crisis situations, medical and social assistance to persons involved in migration, protection of victims of trafficking, as well as dissemination of international human rights. The Order therefore remains committed to addressing these challenges within the framework of its humanitarian activities.

Mr. Chairman,

The issues of development, security, humanitarian assistance, health and human rights are closely linked and of direct concern to migrants. The Order of Malta welcomes the important role IOM plays in these fields, particularly with regard to persons involved in **mixed flows** such as vulnerable migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons. We share with IOM our focus on **healthcare** with particular emphasis on enhancing access to health services and the strengthening of national public health systems through reconstruction of health centres and local capacity building. Another priority area is the prevention and control of infections and diseases such as the global fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Equally important for the dignity and well being of migrants is the respect for **human rights** in accordance with international law. The fact that migrants continue to be disproportionately affected by human rights violations is of great concern. The measures IOM is taking and the projects it is implementing to actively promote respect for the human rights of migrants should therefore receive the full support of both states and civil society.

In the field of **emergency and post-conflict response**, the Order of Malta is engaged in many of the same crisis areas as IOM, through its health assistance for crisis-affected populations in recovery and post-emergency phases. We wish to commend IOM for taking on the responsibilities of the Cluster lead for Camp coordination and Camp Management. In this capacity IOM played an essential role during the displacement crisis in Pakistan. On this occasion and also in the overcrowded camps following the armed conflict in Sri Lanka, the Order's worldwide relief organisation, Malteser International, joined efforts with IOM by providing urgently needed aid to internally displaced persons.

Mr. Chairman,

Climate change, the increasing number of natural disasters, as well as socio-economic pressure is having a strong impact on migration patterns. Although **disaster preparedness and risk reduction** have become an integral part of humanitarian assistance, there is a definite need to better prepare populations at risk. We welcome the initiatives IOM is taking to address these issues both through research and policy analyses and by facilitating dialogue. The reinforcement of houses against earthquakes and cyclones, the construction of flood safe emergency shelters and the training of village emergency teams are only some of the concepts the Order of Malta is working on with a view to strengthening local capacities. Community based disaster risk reduction will continue to represent an important part of our reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes.

The International Dialogue on Migration, the Global Approach to Migration and the recently held Global Forum on Migration and Development in Athens underline the fact that migration remains high on the agenda of the international community and that there is a definite need to find new solutions to present migration challenges. While these gatherings enable in-depth discussions, they also raise high expectations. Through its expertise and its leadership IOM is in a position to contribute significantly to these processes.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.