



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 Order of Malta

International Organization for Migration

105th Session of the Council

General Debate

Statement by:

H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann

Permanent Observer

Geneva, 25th – 28th November 2014

Check against delivery

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

My Delegation congratulates you Mr. Chairman and the Bureau on your election and welcomes the State of Samoa and the new Observers to IOM. In particular we wish to thank the Director General, H.E. Ambassador William Lacy Swing, for his inspiring leadership and express our appreciation for his comprehensive overview of the complex challenges brought on by ever increasing human mobility.

The Order of Malta shares IOM's concern with regard to the numerous crises causing major population displacement. During the past year, new multiple complex emergencies caused by political upheavals, armed conflicts and natural disasters have placed unprecedented pressure on the international humanitarian community, while old crises remain unresolved. We commend IOM for its increased engagement in emergency relief, in particular in the Camp Coordination and Camp Management cluster.

The Order of Malta and IOM are engaged in many of the same areas, working side by side to alleviate human suffering. Our global activities focus on relief and recovery in areas such as reconstruction and rehabilitation, health care, nutrition, water sanitation and hygiene (WASH), livelihood measures and social programs, as well as the promotion of disaster risk reduction. We also share IOM's view that a comprehensive approach that includes peace- and resilience-building is essential. Recent tragic events have reminded us once again how important it is to ensure durable and sustainable solutions.

In the *Middle East* the Order of Malta is providing emergency relief for displaced populations in several countries. Projects for Syrian refugees in **Turkey** in the border region of Kilis provide medical assistance, food relief and emergency schooling, as well as structural support and capacity building. Inside Syria, in Aleppo State, *Malteser International*, the Order of Malta's worldwide relief agency, is meeting the most pressing needs by distributing food and essential items that guarantee the survival of the most vulnerable. As the number of refugees and displaced continues to rise in **Iraq**, Malteser International has been securing medical care for 10'000 displaced Christians and other minorities in the north and is now expanding its outreach with mobile teams to bring aid to neglected areas. The Order of Malta's action in **Lebanon** stretches from north to south, reaching remote areas often lacking basic welfare services. Since the onset of the Syrian conflict in 2011, the Order's *Lebanese Association* has offered assistance to 32'000 refugees. A mobile clinic in Wadi Khaled – the poorest and most sensitive area near the northern border – reaches out to the population in dire need, both Syrians and Lebanese.

The Order of Malta's long-term strong presence on the *African* continent has again proved beneficial in facing the recent instability in several countries. Having worked in the **Central African Republic** for over 30 years, *Ordre de Malta France*, following the new wave of violence, was able to rapidly deploy further medical equipment and supplies for local hospitals and clinics around the capital and is replenishing health centers, thus helping some 100'000 people. The civil conflict that has ravaged **South Sudan** since December 2013 has put seven million people at risk of starvation and made 1.3 million homeless. Thousands of displaced families have poured into the country's northeastern region, and are struggling to survive. Malteser International which has supported the health care system in the region since 2008, is providing immediate food aid to thousands of homeless people. In neighboring **Uganda**, where South Sudanese have sought refuge since the start of the crisis, Malteser International is helping improve the water supply for 11,000 residents at the Rhino refugee camp.

Immediately after Typhoon Haiyan hit the **Philippines** a year ago, the Order of Malta began emergency relief, choosing two heavily damaged villages in east Samar and on Bantayan as its

target region. The priorities to-day remain the reconstruction of houses and schools, recovering the water supply and sanitation system, regaining livelihood and income, as well as measures in the health care sector and psychosocial support.

The humanitarian emergency on the island of **Lampedusa** is among the most important permanent rescue activities carried out in recent years by the *Order of Malta's Italian Relief Corps*. Since 2008 it has deployed a total of 348 doctors, 311 nurses and 195 rescuers on board the Italian Finance Police and Coastguard's vessels, thus guaranteeing immediate healthcare at sea to those crossing the Strait of Sicily. Now specialized in first-aid at sea. This corps has assisted some 9'000 migrants desperately seeking a life that respects the humanitarian values and that has more dignity. Although the *Mare Nostrum* operation ended on 31 October, Italy's Navy is still operating with some ships in the area. The Order of Malta is presently studying with the authorities guidelines for its future activities from next year onwards.

Mr. Chairman,

In concluding, I wish to emphasize that the Order of Malta supports the Director General's commitment to ensure that migration occupy a central role in the post-2015 development agenda. Mainstreaming migration into the development agenda will strengthen IOM's position as the lead agency on migration which in turn can only be in the interest of all its partners. The Order of Malta looks forward to continuing its fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation with IOM.