**U.N. Human Rights Council – 51st regular session**

**Item 2 – General debate on the Acting High Commissioner’s oral update**

***Statement by H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann, Permanent Observer***

Tuesday, 13th September 2022

Mr. President,

Madam Acting High Commissioner,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me first to extend, on behalf of the Sovereign Order of Malta, our most sincere condolences to our colleagues and the peoples of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth Realms, on the death of Her late Majesty Queen Elisabeth II.

We thank the Acting High Commissioner for her comprehensive oral update and look forward to welcoming Mr. Volker Türk as new High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The situation in Ukraine remains a priority for the Order of Malta, assisting the civilian population, refugees and IDPs and protecting their human rights, in Ukraine, all neighbouring countries and beyond. We deplore the lack of humanitarian access to certain parts of the country and the constant violations of international humanitarian law which we witness daily on the ground.

Climate change has an increasingly devastating impact on the enjoyment of human rights around the world, as we are sadly witnessing in Pakistan. It also poses an unprecedented threat to food security, with many countries on the brink of famine. Better integration of international human rights mechanisms will help reduce the negative impacts of climate change. Malteser International, our worldwide relief agency, is engaged in building more resilient communities through projects that aim at both preventing and responding to disasters.

The Order of Malta welcomes the former High Commissioner’s visit to Cox’s Bazar, in Bangladesh, where Malteser International has been assisting Rohingya refugees in the overcrowded camps since 2017.

Thank you.