

**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**

**UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

**Humanitarian Affairs Segment**

Geneva, 24 June 2023

**General discussion - Statement by H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann**

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

The Sovereign Order of Malta welcomes this year's theme on strengthening humanitarian assistance in a period of unprecedented global needs. Several of the issues discussed during the High-Level panels are particularly relevant to our worldwide humanitarian action.

In light of increasing food insecurity, the Order of Malta’s international relief agency, Malteser International focuses in **Africa, Asia and South America** on strengthening local healthcare systems, and increasing food and water supplies to help protect public health. Recently, it has been scaling up its projects towards food security and livelihood development.

**In Africa** these include, inter alia, supporting smallholder and local farmers through practical and financial aid in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, as well as resilience strengthening with regard to water storage capabilities in northern Kenya. Furthermore, assistance includes measures to improve agricultural practices by distributing farming tools, climate-resilient crop variety seeds, as well as providing business management and technical advice in several Eastern African countries. This support is not limited to food security development; Malteser International further provides nourishment during and after crises, including climate crises.

**In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA,)** our relief agency has helped build food security and livelihood activity in emergencies by providing marketing and production services to farmers, forming farmer groups with business plans and helping upscale local irrigation systems for agricultural production. Furthermore, we cooperate with local government structures and partners so as to identify and refer acutely malnourished children to local health care services through counselling aid and practical assistance.

In **Asia,** our focus is on supplying nutrition services and bolstering local food production. In parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan our projects assist malnourished infants and young children with adequate nutrition, as well as bolstering food supplies to the health sector in the Sindh province. In partnership with UNNATI in India, we are working to improve food security in the Thar desert by helping local farmers adapt to climate change through their cultivation methods. In Indonesia, Nepal and Bangladesh, we help restore livelihoods through peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing schemes accompanied by the necessary agricultural supplements, such as climate-adapted seeds, needed for year-wide growth, independent of seasons.

Throughout **South and Central America**, our projects aim to reinforce food security and livelihoods through environmental approaches, helping to protect not only the disfavoured, but the environment as well. Through the provision of emergency food aid and cash assistance in Colombia, Haiti and Venezuela, especially with nutritional assistance for young children, the Order of Malta fights poverty, while building up local food production and governance.

We remain committed to a steadfast humanitarian response to disasters of all kinds around the world. Recently, Malteser International was providing recourse to hundreds of refugees who lost their homes in Cox’s Bazar, ***Bangladesh***, following rampant fires and cyclone Mocha which ravaged the city’s Rohingya refugee camps.

The Order of Malta has been engaged from the outset in providing humanitarian assistance in ***Ukraine*** following Russia’s Invasion, aiding displaced persons and refugees abroad. This assistance includes basic humanitarian, shelter and medical aid in around 65 Ukrainian cities.

Malteser International is also present in ***Türkiye*** and ***Syria*** following the devastating February earthquakes, assisting our local partner organisations in the procurement of relief supplies, as well as in the provision of medical care through mobile clinics. In north-west Syria, we are supporting hospitals, a maternity clinic and primary healthcare units.

While this list is by no means exhaustive, these examples allow us to share good practices that illustrate how the Order of Malta is adapting and innovating in its response to crises situations by incorporating anticipatory thinking and planning into its current projects, which include a key role for food security. We recognise that all solutions need to respect the specific socio-economic and environmental context of each region. Partnerships and collaboration among governments, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector are crucial in achieving meaningful and lasting progress in addressing urgent global challenges.

Thank you.

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