

Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order

of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta

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Permanent observer Mission to the United Nations office

and other International Organizations in Geneva

**Human Rights Council – 53rd session - Item 2**

**Interactive dialogue on the Secretary-General’s Report on Adverse impact of climate change on the full realization of the right to food**

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

Geneva, Tuesday 04 July 2023

Mr President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

The world currently faces one of its worst periods in terms of food security. While war and poverty continue to be drivers, climate change has rapidly exacerbated the situation, intensifying seasonal climate hazards, and leading to natural disasters. It is no longer enough to provide traditional aid for hunger relief; the current situation calls for climate-responsive solutions.

The Sovereign Order of Malta has progressively adapted its worldwide relief operations to align with current climate challenges, which aim to provide aid for local-level resilience building and development. Our efforts include providing tools, climate-adapted seeds and crucial practical knowledge to assist local populations in Africa, South America and Asia in adjusting their agricultural production to climate change.

The right to food is integrally tied to the right to water. Therefore, our projects include building irrigation and water storage systems, and ensuring long-term food storage, leading to durable food-systems. We also provide emergency assistance to disaster-afflicted countries, especially helping to fight malnourishment affecting children, as well as supporting local farmers’ legal rights to access and use land, thus decreasing dependency on industrial agribusinesses.

Our experience indicates that soil health is key to unlocking food security by stimulating local and regional food systems with shorter supply chains that are less impacted by climate change. Focus needs to be placed on local types of plants, which are likely better adapted to climate changes and less reliant on commercial companies.

We encourage States to consider creating a legal framework to fight climate change’s effects on food security. We firmly believe that by working with local populations and forming strategic partnerships with Member States and NGOs, we can overcome the current climate-based threats.

Thank you.

3, PLACE CLAPARÈDE – CH-1205 GENEVA – TELEPHONE: 0041 (0)22 346 86 87

E.MAIL: UNMISSIONGENEVA@ORDEROFMAlTA.INT- HTTPS[://UNMISSIONGE.ORDEROFMALTA.INT/EN/](https://unmissionge.orderofmalta.int/en/)