



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

**U.N. Human Rights Council – 54<sup>th</sup> regular session**

**Item 3**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking  
water and sanitation**

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

*14 September 2023, Geneva*

Mr President,  
Mr High Commissioner,  
Mr Special Rapporteur,  
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

My Delegation thanks the Special Rapporteur for this comprehensive report to which the Sovereign Order of Malta's international relief agency, Malteser International, compiled an input. Fulfilling the human rights of those living in poverty and restoring the health of aquatic ecosystems are two converging challenges. By highlighting access to clean water and sanitation as a human right, the Special Rapporteur emphasizes the need for universal accessibility, non-discrimination, and accountability.

Malteser International prioritizes interventions that both provide immediate water access and promote long-term ecological sustainability. Its Global Program on WASH emphasizes community-led development, which recognizes the important role of decentralized authorities in promoting human rights and empowering marginalized communities. Another key aspect is Water Resources Management enabling a safer water environment through measures that prevent pollution and contamination.

The linkage between the human right to a clean environment and climate change adaptation strategies, can be strengthened by integrating climate-resilient WASH solutions into programs.

As for the interconnectedness of various sectors and rights, Malteser International advocates for and implements the One Health approach, which recognizes the interdependence of human, animal, and environmental health.

By scaling up access to clean water and sanitation facilities and adopting approaches that emphasize behavioural change and community engagement, we can make progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

As to the suggestion to discuss the inclusion of water pollution, overexploitation, and mismanagement of water resources in the list of crimes against humanity as defined in the Rome Statute, is the Special Rapporteur already envisaging concrete steps?



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Thank you.