



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

Human Rights Council –55th session
**Item 2 - High Commissioner global update followed by a presentation of reports on
OHCHR activities in Colombia, Guatemala and Honduras.**

Statement by Ralph Loren Eisendecker, Attaché
4 March 2024

Mr President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

The Sovereign Order of Malta would like to thank the Office of the High Commissioner for its latest report on the situation of human rights in Colombia, which provides a summary of its activities and findings during 2023 and concludes with a list of recommendations.

Our delegation welcomes the cooperation between the Colombian government and the Office, and highlights the important steps that have been taken to address the challenges that the country is experiencing in this field. In this regard, the Office refers to the adoption of the National Development Plan “Colombia, World Power of Life”, which contains measures aimed at mainstreaming the role of water in development and envisages ways to involve vulnerable populations and ethnic groups in policy-making, two essential objectives supported by my delegation.

As recalled in paragraph 30 of the report, the Office has also encouraged the Government to establish various dialogue processes with grass-roots organizations, ethno-territorial authorities and vulnerable populations. These dialogue mechanisms are indispensable tools to understand the problems experienced by local communities and to guarantee the full enjoyment of their rights. Accordingly, two projects undertaken in Colombia by Malteser International focus on these interactions.

In La Guajira, we have set up the program *Social Dialogue for Healthcare Access in Rural and Ethnic Communities*, covering twenty of them so far. We have established working groups between communities, local healthcare service providers and governmental groups, aimed at identifying problems and mutually agreed solutions. We have also conducted surveys to facilitate healthcare operations, conducted trainings and set up mobile health



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clinics, always promoting respect for the cultural traditions of the communities we serve, including afro-descendent and indigenous populations.

In the same region, we are conducting the project *Resilience - Strengthening Food Security and Climate Change Adaptation*, intended to cover more than 9,000 beneficiaries. Originally conceived in order to expand the access of vulnerable communities to water resources and to support sustainable agriculture, the programme now encompasses disaster risk reduction and climate mitigation initiatives by communities that have been historically neglected. One core objective is to strengthen their relationship with the regional institutions in charge of the agricultural and disaster risk management sectors, in order to create a robust framework of preparedness and response to emergencies.

We encourage the Government to continue its efforts in this direction and we look forward to future updates.

Thank you.