**Human Rights Council –58th session**

**General Segment**

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

26th February 2025

Mr President,

Mr. High Commissioner,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The Sovereign Order of Malta expresses its deep concern regarding the ongoing erosion and lack of respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. These fundamental principles serve as the cornerstone of peaceful and just societies, ensuring the protection of human dignity, particularly in times of conflict and crisis.

We firmly believe that all human relations must be governed by the rule of law. The adherence to legal frameworks at both national and international levels is essential to maintaining stability, fostering justice, and upholding the rights of the most vulnerable.

As a long-standing international humanitarian actor, the Order of Malta remains steadfast in its commitment to multilateralism. We recognize multilateral engagement as a vital guarantee for security, cooperation, and the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. Strengthening international institutions and reinforcing collective action are indispensable in addressing global challenges.

In this spirit, we reaffirm that all our objectives—humanitarian aid, social cohesion, and the promotion of peace—are best achieved through dialogue and diplomacy rather than through the use of force. Constructive engagement, mutual respect, and diplomatic solutions must remain the primary tools for resolving disputes and fostering long-term peace.

The Order of Malta upholds human rights worldwide through its humanitarian action in the fields of assistance to displaced persons, medical and healthcare services, disaster relief and emergency response, defending religious freedom and human dignity, anti-human trafficking initiatives, social inclusion and help for the poor. It is engaged in many of the areas of special concern to this Council such as Ukraine, Palestine, Myanmar, Venezuela, Haiti, to name just a few.

At the same time, we recognize the transformative role of new technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, in advancing humanitarian work and protecting human rights. AI-driven solutions enhance communication, improve healthcare outcomes, and strengthen humanitarian responses by enabling more efficient aid distribution and crisis management. Digital technologies also offer significant opportunities in crisis prevention, from early warning systems to real-time data analysis that can help mitigate risks before they escalate. We must harness these advancements responsibly, ensuring that they serve humanity while upholding ethical standards and fundamental rights. In this regard, we support the initiatives taken by the Human Rights Council in this field and encourage further international cooperation to ensure that technological progress aligns with humanitarian principles.

The Order of Malta will continue to advocate for the respect of international humanitarian and human rights law and the protection of those in need, working in partnership with States, international organizations, and civil society to uphold these fundamental principles.

Thank you.