**Human Rights Council – 58th session**

**Item 3 – Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean,**

**healthy and sustainable environment, Astrid Puentes Riaño**

Mr. President,

Our Delegation would like to thank the Special Rapporteur for her latest contribution to our work, through a report that draws the Council’s attention to the close relationship between ocean governance and the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

A key element of her report is its promotion of an ecosystem- and human rights-based approach to ocean governance. This requires sustained and coordinated efforts by States and all other public and private stakeholders, with the aim of achieving a coherent and effective normative framework that addresses environmental threats to oceans while upholding the rights of all persons without discrimination. Recognising the special vulnerability of coastal communities to climate change and ocean pollution is a crucial step in this direction.

As part of our humanitarian work, the Sovereign Order of Malta actively supports people affected by the consequences of climate change, both through emergency relief and through long-term projects aiming at mitigation and adaptation. These include restorative environmental measures in coastal areas and projects aimed at improving the resilience of coastal communities.

In Colombia and Haiti, our agency Malteser International is actively engaged in the restoration of coastal mangroves, which counter the risk of floods and mitigate erosion, drought, and wind damage. They also provide a suitable habitat for fish, thus generating improved income opportunities for local people. In 2023 alone, we supported the planting of 44,300 mangrove seedlings in these two countries. In India, Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines, our project “Womenpreneurs4plastic” trains and involves women in the entire value chain of plastic recycling. Its main goals are to reduce plastic pollution, including in coastal areas, and to improve income opportunities for vulnerable women.

More generally we are committed to a human-rights based approach in environmental governance, and we are looking forward to further contributions from the Special Rapporteur.

Thank you.