



ORDRE SOUVERAIN MILITAIRE ET HOSPITALIER
DE SAINT-JEAN DE JERUSALEM DE RHODES ET DE MALTE

MISSION PERMANENTE D'OBSERVATION AUPRES DE L'OFFICE DES NATIONS UNIES
ET DES AUTRES ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES A GENEVE

Sovereign Military Order of Malta

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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Statement by :

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Permanent Observer

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Madam President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

The focus of the Annual Ministerial Review during this year's High-level Segment on **"Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health"** is of the utmost importance to all humanitarian actors engaged in alleviating human suffering.

The Sovereign Order of Malta is particularly aware of the **link between health and poverty**, as its historic mission is to help the sick, the needy and the most disadvantaged in society. The core of the Order's humanitarian programmes in over 120 countries is in the fields of health care and the provision of medical assistance. First aid corps, help for the elderly, the handicapped and children in need, palliative care, as well as the provision of first aid training are only some of our activities. Moreover, the Order of Malta runs or supports hospitals, medical centres, dispensaries and health education programmes, thus empowering communities to develop their own health care systems.

In his report on "Current global and national trends and their impact on social development, including public health" and in his opening address to this meeting, the **Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon**, highlighted the present concerns with regard to the progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He also underlined the necessity of enforcing the role of the **multi-stakeholder approach** with a view to strengthening health systems. The Order of Malta fully supports the Secretary-General in his efforts to enhance cooperation within the international community. We work actively in partnership with UN agencies, states and local and international NGOs, thereby relying on the involvement of our 12,500 members, approximately 80,000 trained volunteers and some 20,000 employees, the majority of whom are medical personnel. In some countries medical institutions founded by the Order of Malta have become an important part of their national health systems.

In its assistance programmes to populations affected by conflict, natural disasters and other emergencies, the Order aims to meet the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable by providing, inter alia, **primary health care services**. In Myanmar for example, clinics and water treatment plants of Malteser International, the Order of Malta worldwide relief agency, ensure access to water, sanitation and hygiene for persons displaced due to the devastation brought about by cyclone Nargis. In a similar vein, in Sri Lanka, Malteser International provides safe and

adequate water supply as well as environmental sanitation in order to improve hygienic practices within communities.

A major component of the Order of Malta's projects is dedicated to **reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating violence against women**. In this context, our work in several Asian and African countries concentrates on training midwives, the involvement of traditional birth attendants and participatory health education in the communities, thus increasing the number of births under professional surveillance and improving the overall mother-child health situation. In several countries, we also distribute mosquito nets to pregnant women and young mothers. Furthermore, amongst the Order's ongoing programmes, special attention is given to psychosocial assistance and psychological treatment for women and girls victims of sexual violence.

Madam President,

In the course of this week, many speakers have referred to the need for increased efforts towards meeting MDG 6. The Order of Malta witnesses daily in its work the suffering caused by **communicable diseases**. The fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and leprosy is amongst its priorities in numerous countries, particularly in remote and rural areas and urban slums. We shall of course continue our endeavours in this field.

In concluding, my Delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for encouraging governments to seek partnerships with "**community leaders, faith-based organizations, charitable foundations and the private sector**". While the Order of Malta provides humanitarian aid in all parts of the world without distinction of religion, race or political persuasion, Christian values and the humanitarian principles of impartiality and independence are the foundation of its work. Allow me to assure you that the Order will do its utmost to respond, within the framework of its possibilities, to the challenges global public health is presently facing due to the consequences of the energy, food and economic crises.

Thank you.