

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION OF THE  
**SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA**  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
**216 EAST 47th STREET / 8 FL**  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10017  
**PHONE: (212) 355-6213 - FAX: (212) 355-4014**  
e-mail: [orderofmalta@un.int](mailto:orderofmalta@un.int)

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**Mr. Bertrand De Looz Karageorgiades, KM**

**Counsellor**

**of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Malta  
to the United Nations**

**TO THE**

**45<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**New York, February 12, 2007**

## **Translation from French**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me at the outset, on behalf of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Malta congratulate you and the other Bureau members on your election to preside over our Commission.

I am pleased to note that we are giving follow up to the important decision taken at our last session to promoting full employment and decent work, given the close linkages that exist between eradicating poverty and social integration.

The thorough report of the Secretary General on this issue has been given full attention by the Order of Malta. It highlights the fact that unemployment, poverty and social exclusion are unfortunately fellow travelers linked together by chains that are very difficult to break. The effects of globalization, which is not the panacea that we had dreamed of, demonstrate that economic growth does not necessarily contribute to either reducing poverty or effectively fighting unemployment. What is more, lacking decent work, people are locked into a circle of undignified poverty: they become pariahs or excluded persons. Our work, the key to social, cultural and moral development, is clearly the connecting thread in the fabric of our lives...

Mr. Chairman,

Poverty, exclusion and dignity have been at the very heart of the activities of the Order of Malta for more than 900 years...Its mission has always been the same and is magnified by the world's development and by the long standing or new sufferings sparing no continent. It is to assist any one in distress without distinction for race, origin or religion. The only thing which matters is human dignity. For the knights of Malta of the modern world, exclusion is a term that should not have any meaning.

Faithful to its mission, the Order is always at the service of the poor and the needy: to day it is working in the medial, social and humanitarian areas in more than 120 countries; its actions are linked by diplomatic relations it has currently with 96 States. The Order relies also on its 12 000 members, its 80 000 permanent volunteers and its medical paid staff. It also relies on its 42 national Associations that are very often at the roots of the Foundations and emergency assistance Corps, bringing their expertise and help worldwide.

Mr. Chairman,

The Order of Malta is not an expert on the labour market, but because of the very spirit of its mission, it is deeply conscious that work is an integral part of our human mission: it makes us creators and provides us with the underpinnings for our human dignity.

Like many others, facing the development of humanitarian crises and emergency needs, the Order of Malta has continued to increase its contribution to the efforts of rehabilitation of the international community in this area, taking into account the elements that we are considering to day. The recent reorganization of its international arm, Malteser International, has enable it to develop and coordinate more effectively many pilot projects worldwide and to participate independently and with neutrality in resolving emergency humanitarian situations and in creating rehabilitation projects.

The efforts of Malteser International are rooted in a wonderful idea: we are here to build a bridge; between them and us; there are two pillars to build this bridge and it is necessary that its weight be equally distributed. Our counterparts are not beggars. They are not the excluded...we are all together, in this. In a project the rule is: daily contacts with those who live in poverty; pass words are: acceptance, education and reintegration into life of the community.

By way of example, in Kosovo, carpenters have been given loans to relaunch their businesses and to reintegrate with their families into community life; in West Afghanistan, schools have been constructed under the auspices of the Order providing better education access to 20 000 children, of them 40 per cent are girls; in India, there is a micro credit pilot project, after the 2004 December tsunami, which has allowed many women to launch modest businesses.

Mr. Chairman,

As was recently recalled by the Grand Master of the Order at his address to the diplomatic body accredited to the Order, the age old mission of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Malta is a humanitarian mission of public international law that is neutral, impartial and has no political mission. It is recognized by many Member States. This enables it to operate immediately to provide emergency assistance where other agencies cannot always do so. It is continuing to work with pilot projects in the near and long term that operates as bridges between emergency and sustainable development activities. But ultimately, what counts with the members' Order, more than the amount or the variety of initiatives is the attention given to each individual, to each poor person, to each sick person, in order to help them restore or find their dignity.

Thank you Mr. Chairman