



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER  
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

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PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT  
BY  
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TO THE

SECOND COMMITTEE

[ITEM 19] SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(C) INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION

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1 NOVEMBER, 2011

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(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

MR. CHAIRMAN,  
MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU,  
ESTEEMED DELEGATES,

The Sovereign Order of Malta appreciates the opportunity to address the Second Committee today on the issue of sustainable development. My delegation's address will focus on the **Report of the Secretary General on the Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction**. Disaster Prevention is a subject of the utmost importance to the Order since it is an integral part of humanitarian assistance, both in relief and recovery, as well as in long term development initiatives.

Our projects aimed at disaster prevention include the reinforcement of structures against earthquakes and cyclones, constructing flood-safe emergency shelters, and training village emergency teams and volunteers in the establishment of early warning systems. The programs are carried out by the Order's worldwide relief agency for humanitarian aid, Malteser International. **The Order has projects pertaining to disaster risk reduction in Haiti, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Vietnam, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and most recently, Japan.**

Of course, the Order also intervenes in the aftermath of natural disasters through relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. Most recently, in the immediate aftermath of the severe earthquake that hit **Turkey**, the Order worked in close cooperation with its long-standing local partner organization International Blue Crescent (IBC) to distribute blankets, food, baby formula, and wood ovens. The Order has provided 50,000 Euros out of its emergency fund for the affected population.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

This year's observance of the International Day for Disaster Reduction emphasized **the vital role that children and young people play in reducing disaster risk**. The Order of Malta recognizes this important role in its projects, where children and youth are educated in techniques to help keep their communities safe. For instance, in **Vietnam**, one of the most disaster prone countries in the world, our Disaster Risk Reduction project begins in schools. Working with our local partners, more than 1,000 children from 13 coastal villages in Central Vietnam have participated in our workshops on identifying risks and what to do in case of

evacuation. They participate in drills to put what they have learned into practice. In just two years, the Order has instructed over 2,000 families in these Vietnamese villages in community-based disaster risk reduction and trained hundreds of volunteers in first aid and search and rescue skills. The Order has been active in Vietnam for 45 years.

This September, along with ActionAid and UNDP, the Order co-organized, **a regional workshop** on best practices and policies for community-based disaster risk reduction in South-East Asia. A total of 80 participants from 11 countries exchanged their experiences and developed strategies, so that aid organizations and local communities can work together to minimize the devastating impacts of natural disasters.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

The report of the Secretary-General highlights that public awareness and access to risk management related information is critical; the Order of Malta works towards this aim in its various projects. For instance, in the Swat area of **Pakistan**, the main objective of the Order's efforts is make the population aware that simple measures can be taken to avoid high numbers of victims during and especially after a disaster. With support from the World Health Organization and the German Government, the Order aims to see community based disaster management plans put into place in this region, which is prone to earthquakes, floods, landslides, and avalanches. A similar project can be found in West Papua, **Indonesia**. And in **Myanmar**, where the Order already implements health and hygiene campaigns, the program goes a step further to educate on appropriate measures for disease prevention following natural disasters.

**The Order agrees with the Report's recommendation that it is essential for this kind of disaster risk reduction work be decentralized and implemented at the local, community level.**

The Order of Malta remains committed to the issue of disaster prevention and relief, and will continue to illustrate this commitment through its numerous ongoing related projects.

THANK YOU.