



## **SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA**

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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### **Statement by Mr. Kieran D. Mercer Adviser**

#### **To the Commission for Social Development Economic and Social Council**

**[Item 3(a)] Priority Theme: Promoting empowerment of people in achieving  
poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work  
for all**

**13<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

*(Check Against Delivery)*

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Madam Chair,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the floor on behalf of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. Last year, the Order celebrated 900 years of humanitarian action. The interventions the Order makes through its humanitarian arm, Malteser International, global funds and partner projects, focus on empowering those most in need across the globe. We seek to assist the marginalized and vulnerable taking no account of race, religion, class or creed.

Today, despite huge advances in technological innovation, information proliferation and economic productivity, we cannot say that we live in a world defined by equality of opportunity. Unfortunately, the growth in inequalities both within and between States strike us as the most pervasive concern of our time. By reversing this trend, we can strive to create an environment which embodies collective good and enablement.

It is self-evident that the provision of basic services for all, is a prerequisite for equitable socioeconomic development. We believe that ambitious sustainable development goals, such as those currently being devised, must be built on a foundation which champions human dignity and inclusion.

The provision of basic services for all, is absent in many of the neighborhoods in which the Order operates. From our experience, a society is only as strong as its most vulnerable members and this paradigm extends to our global community. This conviction is shown to be increasingly clear as the world becomes progressively more interdependent.

The Order is active in empowering marginalized communities across Europe. In Paris, we provide 16,000 nightly stays for homeless men each year. Beneficiaries are helped to break their cycle of dependency and reintegrate into society through employment and skills training.

In Northern Albania where social development facilities are sparse, the Order is expanding its work in civil protection and building local capacity. Working with Roma families, we provide schooling and summer camps, boosting the literacy rates for what is often a forgotten community. Our work with the Roma is also prominent in Hungary, where a resettling program in Tarnobod, is rehousing families which have lost their homes, and reintegrating them within the local municipality. In addition, we have established a school, providing training in computer basics and internet use in order to combat digital illiteracy.

The Order's activities have proven that through cooperation with other actors, long term substantive development is more easily achieved. Malteser International, is currently partnering with local churches and health districts in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The partnership is distributing pharmaceuticals worth over 1 million Euros each year to the impoverished communities of North and South Kivu. This program not only relieves the suffering of civilians in a conflict ridden region, but also develops local capacity and economic resilience by providing decent work for Congolese residents.

The Order is very conscious of the synergies between the provision of basic services and social development. We encourage the international community to commit the political will and resources necessary to address the inequalities currently restricting the prosperity of many. For our part, we will continue to support the marginalized and seek to cooperate with other actors in order to make the greatest impact upon social development.

Thank you for your attention.