



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

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

MRS. FIAMMA ARDITI DI CASTELVETERE,
COUNSELLOR

TO THE

THIRD COMMITTEE

[ITEM 26] SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

5 OCTOBER, 2015

(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

Madam Chair,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the floor on behalf of the Sovereign Order of Malta on the issue of Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and the youth, aging, disabled persons and the family.

In every country of the world the same people are isolated by society – the homeless, ethnic minorities, drug addicts – and there are those who can be pushed to its fringes, such as the elderly and disabled. The Order of Malta is one of the world's oldest institutions and has served as a sovereign in the humanitarian sphere for over nine hundred years. Today, the Order of Malta is active in over 120 countries caring for people in need through its medical, social and humanitarian works. Day-to-day, its broad spectrum of social projects provides a constant support for forgotten or excluded members of society. We believe that every person has the right to live a healthy life with dignity, and we work hard so that the vulnerable and marginalized people of this world also have a chance to do so.

Characteristics such as, but not limited to, age, ethnicity or disability status continue to affect the risk of being left behind in all countries. The Order of Malta's work around the world is dedicated to combat this risk of exclusion.

Two of the biggest events of the Order's year are the Lourdes pilgrimage, where over 7,000 participants travel to the Marian shrine, and the International Summer Camp for the Young Disabled. Volunteers from across the world join forces to care for their disabled guests and to meet friends old and new. Many national camps are also run across Europe and also in Lebanon, a country where the living conditions for people with disabilities are especially hard. Local activities take place year-round with projects expanding and new ideas and collaborations emerging.

The Order also organizes activities of relief and care for the elderly. It directs numerous specialized centers for the elderly in England, Germany, Spain, Austria, the United States, Chile and Mexico. In various countries there are a variety of services to make life at home easier for the elderly, such as providing meals on wheels, transport services, visiting services to elderly people often living alone in meagre conditions and great poverty, soup kitchens, care homes, hospices, hospitals, and medical care. The Order has volunteer corps in 23 countries in Europe alone.

Fra' Matthew Festing, Grand Master of the Order of Malta, underlines the importance of the orders 80,000 volunteers of the Order of Malta pointing out, that "The action of helping one's neighbour is an integral part of active citizenship today and of conscious participation in social development. Many of the Order of Malta's charitable projects are run by volunteers: men and women who when faced with the suffering of this world want to make a difference through their own efforts. They are a splendid resource and a reason for hope in the future."

Madam Chair,

The Report (A/71/214) highlights the impact on exclusion of major trends such as climate change, demographic change or technological change. The increased number of natural disasters that are attributed to climate change mostly affect impoverished populations living a precarious existence in vulnerable areas. Climate change also has an effect on their crops, their living conditions, and the transmission of diseases. People living in high-risk areas need to be prepared to face future disasters. Malteser International, the Order of Malta's international relief organization for medical and humanitarian aid, is helping them to do just that by implementing disaster risk reduction measures, assisting in long term reconstruction projects and through development programs.

Madam Chair,

The imperative of Inclusive Development as well as the implementation of the internationally agreed upon development goals for persons with disabilities are of the highest importance for the Order of Malta as they deal with issues that constitute a core element of the Order's international work around the world, serving those who are at high risk of social exclusion. The Order is very conscious of the synergies between the provision of basic services and social development. We promise to continue to work towards these goals in partnership with the UN Community.

Thank you for your attention.