



## SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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### STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION OF THE SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

#### TO THE THIRD COMMITTEE [ITEM 68] PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

11 OCTOBER, 2017

*(Check Against Delivery)*

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Mister Chair,

The Sovereign Order of Malta is grateful for the opportunity to address the Third Committee on agenda item 68, the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children. The Order is active in 120 countries providing medical, humanitarian, and social assistance through its embassies, national associations and volunteer corps, and its relief arm, Malteser International. The welfare of children continues to be one of our foremost concerns.

The Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1924) states that:

*“The child that is hungry must be fed, the child that is sick must be nursed... and the orphan and the waif must be sheltered and succored.”*

It is for such as these, that the Order has existed for over 900 years, continuing its commitment to offer healing to the sick and protection to the poor and vulnerable, most especially children.

The hungry child is fed by the Order in projects throughout the world, as exemplified by the project in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where Malteser works in cooperation with the World Food Programme to provide food and aid for displaced and malnourished children. In Namibia, our embassy provides 350 meals a day for orphaned newborns and children. We operate child malnutrition units in many of our hospitals, such as in Maracha, Uganda. And in remote areas where there is no hospital, as in parts of Togo and Benin, our nutrition nurses travel to villages treating undernourished children where they live.

The sick child is cared for by the Order in its hospitals and clinics. The Order maintains a special focus on newborns and their mothers. In Bethlehem in the West Bank, the Order's Holy Family Hospital delivers 70% of babies in the district, offering the women in the region, many living in poverty, the opportunity to give birth under safe and modern conditions. The hospital's neonatal intensive care unit is the only one in the district capable of saving newborns at extreme prematurity and its mobile medical van provides pre-natal care to remote Bedouin communities. We provide maternity and pediatric services in our health centers in Chad, and in Antananarivo, Madagascar, our Sainte Fleur Pavillion delivers 2,500 babies annually and treats children with infectious diseases. We are building new maternity centers in Elevagnon, Togo, in Kampala, Uganda, and in Mtendele, Tanzania where our unit will serve mothers and newborns among 25,000 Burundian refugees. In addition, the Order will open its newest women's and children's health center in Dili, Timor Leste this November.

Lastly, children that need shelter and protection, particularly those who are migrants and refugees, are a continuing concern and growing focus of the Order's work. According to the UNHCR, by mid 2016, almost 65.6 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide, with 22.5 million refugees, 40.3 million internally displaced. Children comprise 51% of this population, with an estimated 75,000 unaccompanied or separated, and are the most affected. They suffer the loss of parents, disability due to curable illnesses, and long-term psychological trauma.

The Order continues to strengthen its response to this increasing need for assistance to migrants and refugees, especially children. This September marked 10 years of joint rescue operations at sea with the Italian Navy and Coast Guard, with whom our medical teams have cared for 54,000 migrants in the Southern Mediterranean to date. In Germany, where 1 in 3 refugees are supported by the Order, we maintain 140 facilities for 44,000 persons. In Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and in Northern Syria, we continue to support medical centers and mobile medical units serving refugees including children. In Wau, South Sudan, the Order is providing food for thousands of internally displaced children and rehabilitating the water supplies to their schools.

Across the world, the Order is more and more focused on unaccompanied migrants, providing them with food, clothes, beds and language lessons, facilitating integration and providing stability and protection.

Displaced children are at very high risk of violence, exploitation, and abuse. With growing concern for the 20.9 million victims of human trafficking, of whom 26% are minors, the Order has recently appointed two special ambassadors-at-large to coordinate our efforts worldwide in combating this plague.

In conclusion, the Order of Malta reaffirms the commitment of our 13,000 members, 80,000 volunteers, and 20,000 medical and relief professionals to the promotion and protection of the rights of children. The Order has served the vulnerable for over nine centuries, and children are among the most vulnerable to disease and disaster, conflict and violence. They are also the future and key to our progress. And so, the Order continues to commit itself to promoting the right of the hungry child to food, the sick child to health, and the displaced or abandoned child to shelter and protection.

Thank you.