



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

PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA

Human Rights Council – 38th Session
Item 3 - Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur
on Leprosy

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann
Geneva, 18 June 2018

Mr. President,
Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

The Sovereign Order of Malta welcomes the establishment of this new mandate and commends the Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy, and their family members on her first report.

The Order of Malta has a long experience in leprosy treatment and is been engaged in programs for diagnosing and fighting Hansen's disease in some of the countries most at risk in Asia (India, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam); Africa (Niger, Guinea, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Senegal, Mauritania, Gabon, Benin, South Sudan, Kenya, Egypt) and South America (Brazil).

Since 2006, Ordre de Malte France has been running MALTALEP, a scientific project that studies the genetic mechanisms causing leprosy and develops new therapies. Recognized by the World Health Organization, MALTALEP is now the main source of financing for research into eradicating leprosy.

Furthermore, through projects shared with the local authorities, Ordre de Malte France is involved in delicate surgical procedures and rehabilitation courses, as well as in training local doctors and nurses. It is also implementing plastic surgery, bracing and rehabilitation programs in many countries to assist patients to reintegrate professionally and socially. In 2015 a new department for plantar ulcers was officially inaugurated in Battambang province, Cambodia. The pavilion specializes in leprosy patients with pathologies that often involve feet deformities.

The Order's Philippine Association has been very active in assisting in the cure of leprosy and the rehabilitation of its victims. Because of the visible results of leprosy (hands without fingers, leg amputations, blindness) many thousands of sufferers are excluded from society.

The Order's International Committee Against Leprosy, the CIOMAL Foundation has been engaged in medical care for victims of leprosy for nearly 60 years. Since 2000 it runs a rehabilitation center in Phnom Penh which is recognized as the main center of excellence of the treatment of leprosy in the whole country. CIOMAL also ensures scholarships for children affected by leprosy or living in a family with a parent affected by leprosy. In addition, it provides professional training

for adults, financial support for the development of an economic activity (pig or chicken farming, small grocery store, etc.) and economic support for the most vulnerable and disabled persons (food support or building of housing).

The Order of Malta supports the Special Rapporteur's priorities for the implementation of her mandate, in particular her aim to cooperate with all stakeholders working in the field of leprosy.

We stand ready to participate in concertation and dialogue with a view to sharing expertise and experience gained in this field and thereby contribute to awareness rising.

Thank you.