11th Meeting of the Group of Friends on Water and Peace

Remarks by Mr. Marco Pangallo, Attaché on Multilateral Affairs

WMO Building, 27th February 2020

Excellencies,
Distinguished panellists,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Sovereign Order of Malta thanks the organizers for their invitation and welcomes the opportunity to participate in the WATER AND PEACE dialogue.
Indeed, there is a deep concern with reference to the increasing tendency of using water resources and infrastructure as targets in armed conflicts. The international community should be prepared to prevent and mitigate such abuses.

The Order of Malta is firmly convinced that water can become a theme for collaboration and an instrument for peace. It is with this positive vision that, in order to provide without distinction the best health care, we depend on access to clean water and sanitation for our medical activities in more than 120 countries. Through various humanitarian projects, our worldwide relief agency, Malteser International, provided in 2018 access to drinking water to approximately 355 000 people, mainly in conflict and crisis situations.

Particular attention is given to the urgent needs in Uganda, as a consequence of the massive numbers of refugees fleeing from the neighbouring countries of Congo and South Sudan. As these territories are suffering from shortages of water and other structural weaknesses, we develop new water supply systems for people in need and rehabilitate existing ones. These include boreholes, taps, and rainwater harvesting systems.
Malteser International constructed more than 30 solar-powered water pumps and distribution systems in settlements across northern Uganda, reaching over 120,000 South Sudanese refugees and their host communities with clean water.

Further concrete examples are “soft measures” such as training on basic hygiene, distribution of sanitary tools, water deliveries, construction and improvements of water-related installations (specifically transportation and storage), and maintenance of water supply systems. These measures are implemented in remote villages in DRC, Nigeria, South Sudan, Haiti and North East of Cambodia.

In its global humanitarian action, the Order of Malta cooperates with numerous international governmental and non-governmental organizations, and is therefore considered a long-term community partner, able to rapidly respond to the needs of local populations by helping those affected leading a healthy life with dignity. It is essential to bring access to water in public infrastructures, such as health and education facilities, camps for displaced persons and shelters for the homeless, in order to leave no one behind.

As a faith-based institution, we are particularly aware that in all major religions water represents a symbol of life and peace.

The Order of Malta will continue its engagement in this field and strongly encourage States and other relevant stakeholders to cooperate with reference to this matter of survival.

I thank you