



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 - 44th session - Agenda item 3
**Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the
enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health**

Statement by Mr. Jean-François Kammer
Deputy Permanent Observer
Geneva, 3 July 2020

Madam President,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The Sovereign Order of Malta commends the Special Rapporteur's report and fully shares his view that "there is no health without mental health". Furthermore, the ill effects of COVID-19 on mental health have been disproportionately borne by those who are most on the margins of health care generally, even without a pandemic, e.g., the poor, the elderly, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, migrants, and refugees.

Until now, the focus of attention and action has tended to be, and still is, primarily on physical health. Within its worldwide humanitarian activities, the Order of Malta provides health care in some 120 countries. It firmly supports and commits itself to holistic health care that promotes well-being of the *whole person*, comprising physical, mental, and social care (as the preamble of the *Constitution of the World Health Organization* states), as well as spiritual assistance.

In mental health care it is not only unequal access to services that is a challenge, but also pervasive stigma associated with having compromised mental health. We highlight the importance, given in the Special Rapporteur's report, of the responsibility and role of families and communities in nurturing and supporting mental well-being and resilience. While we should enable people, who experience compromised mental health to live in their communities as much as possible, they must be supported with adequate resources to do so. In these efforts, they can often find partners in various faith communities and faith-based organizations.

We support promoting the decision-making capabilities of persons in mental health care as much as possible, thereby ensuring that persons with compromised mental health have the supports they need to make judicious decisions regarding their overall well-being.