

HOSPITALLER



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SPECIAL EDITION:
WOMEN OF THE ORDER



‘No panels without women’

H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann has a full schedule

Her Excellency Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann was appointed head of the Order of Malta’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva in 2005. With a background in international civil service and diplomacy, her special concerns have centred on creating awareness of the mission and work of the Order in the context of the United Nations, where she speaks on major activities and issues.

She is currently on a very particular mission, as an international gender champion, a leadership network that brings together male and female decision-makers to break down gender barriers. Since 2015, she has committed herself to the empowerment of women and joined the ‘parity party pledge’, which campaigns for ‘no panels without women’. This involves signing up to two commitments per annum which are achievable in this context – to move gender equality forward in her organisation and its work.

Women in humanitarian action

‘A gender-based society is particularly important in humanitarian action, which calls for increased empowerment

of women all over the world. As a humanitarian institution, the Order of Malta is engaged in promoting women in its projects globally. In my daily work in Geneva, I aim to ensure gender equality amongst the Mission’s diplomatic team.’

Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann notes that there are some 40 women ambassadors representing their countries at the United Nations in Geneva and adds that the Order of Malta now has three women ambassadors.

An energetic and deeply committed member of the Order, she is involved in many aspects of its diplomatic life. The Mission promotes relations with international and intergovernmental humanitarian organisations, informs them about the activities of the Order of Malta in 120 countries and defines possible fields of cooperation. Among her many activities are her Statements at the United Nations on behalf of the Sovereign Order – in December at the Global Refugee Forum, in November at the International Organization for Migration, and earlier, Statements to the Human Rights Council, the World Health Organisation and the World Council of Churches, among others.

From 2005 to 2017, she was a member of the Board of the EORTC Cancer Research Fund (European Organization for the Research and Treatment of Cancer), whose goal is to improve the standards of cancer treatment in Europe through the evaluation of innovative drugs and new regimens.

The Ambassador organised the Order’s 2015 symposium for faith-based organisations and institutions in the humanitarian field on the topic: “Religions together for humanitarian action” at the UN in Geneva. It emphasised the importance of interfaith dialogue and the special role of faith-based actors reaching out to victims of armed conflicts, as they are often first responders, operating in local

“The Mission promotes relations with international and intergovernmental humanitarian organisations...”

communities with much trust, they speak the local language, respect traditions and human dignity, and are there, long term, simply to help. She has also recently been elected an honorary President of Religions for Peace, the world’s largest and most representative multi-religious coalition, which advances common action among the world’s religious communities and promotes the building of trust, the reduction of hostility in areas of conflict and the provision of a platform for common action.

There’s not much down time, but when she can, the Ambassador finds herself on the ski slopes, or at the local parish choir practice.