



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 ORGANISATIONS IN GENÈVA

Statement by Professor Michel Veuthey
2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
Cancún (Mexico), 21 – 26 May 2017

The Sovereign Order of Malta would like to thank the Government of Mexico for hosting this Conference and UNISDR for their preparatory work.

The **Order of Malta**, founded 900 years ago, is one of the oldest Christian Faith-based humanitarian organization. It maintains diplomatic relations with 106 countries. It has 120,000 Members, professionals and volunteers active in 120 countries. It concluded more than 55 cooperation agreements. Through humanitarian operations and diplomacy, both bilateral and multilateral, it promotes respect for human life and dignity, religious freedom, solidarity towards all human beings in need without any discrimination. Its Worldwide Relief Agency, **Malteser International**, has its General Secretariat and European headquarters in Cologne, Germany. Its American headquarters are based in Miami, Florida, USA.

The Order of Malta and *Malteser International* help communities make emergency plans and implement protective measures to reduce the risk of disaster. *Malteser International* has implemented **disaster risk reduction projects** in many countries in Africa, America, and Asia. As a founding member of the *Disability inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Network (DiDRRN)*,¹ we contributed to shape **disability inclusion** in the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA2). The Order of Malta places a special focus on people with disabilities and their active participation in disaster preparedness.

The Order of Malta would also like to stress the **importance of families** in disaster risk reduction and recovery, as well as the role of **Faith-inspired organizations** and institutions (FBOs). FBOs, having the trust of local communities are often the first in, and the last out in disasters and crises. The strengths and resources of FBOs could complement those of other DRR stakeholders.

The Order of Malta would like to emphasize the **role of spiritual values**, which are synonymous with and supportive of **fundamental human rights**,

www.orderofmalta.int
www.malteser-international.org

humanitarian rules² and principles³. These fundamental rules and principles should be respected in all circumstances – in natural disasters, internal strife, armed conflicts – by all stakeholders, for the protection of the life and dignity of all human beings, beginning with affected individuals, families and communities.

Protection means prevention and should always be a part of it. National, regional, and international legal instruments and customs should provide protection for all, including relief and medical workers, as well as religious personnel.

Universal religious values of solidarity and respect for life and human dignity could contribute to the effective implementation of fundamental rules and principles of human rights, refugee law, and international humanitarian law. The respect for these rules and values could effectively reduce risks in paving the way for conflict prevention and settlement, reconstruction and reconciliation. In the wake of the World Humanitarian Summit, the Order of Malta continues to work with other religious actors on ways to reinforce public conscience for peace, and in respect of human life and dignity.

Thank you.

¹ www.didrn.net

² Beginning with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as Common Articles 1 and 3 to the 1949 Geneva Conventions

³ Especially the Principles of Humanity, Impartiality and Neutrality