



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALER 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 59th session
**Item 2 & 3 –Interactive Dialogue on Comprehensive report on access to medicines,
vaccines and other health products in the context of the right to the highest attainable
standard of physical and mental health - Report of the Office of the United Nations High
Commissioner for Human Rights**

Statement by Silvia Vandi, First Secretary
19 June 2025

Mr. President, High Commissioner, Distinguished Delegates,

The Sovereign Order of Malta welcomes the High Commissioner's report and strongly affirms a fundamental principle: **access to essential medicines is not a privilege—it is a basic human right**. We also commend the adoption of the WHO Pandemic Treaty as a vital step toward global health equity.

Yet today, more than **2 billion people**—particularly in vulnerable and crisis-affected communities—remain deprived of this right. We urge all States to adopt a **human rights-based approach to health**, grounded in **universality, transparency, and accountability**.

The mission of our relief agency, **Malteser International**, is to improve the health and well-being of suffering and displaced people around the world. In **Lebanon**, mobile health units bring essential medicines to remote and underserved areas. In **Haiti**, we work with local pharmacies to ensure access to affordable, high-quality treatments. Different vaccination campaigns have been carried out in Colombia, the DRC and the USA.

We reaffirm our commitment to multilateral cooperation that enshrines **universal access to essential medicines as a legal and moral imperative**.

Finally, we express **deep concern** over the alarming increase in attacks on healthcare workers and infrastructure—especially in **Ukraine** and **Palestine**, where our teams continue to serve despite grave risks. We call on all parties to uphold **international humanitarian law** and ensure the **protection of medical personnel and facilities**.

Thank you.