

SECOND PHASE OF WSIS, 16-18 NOVEMBER, TUNIS

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SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA

Without communication there is no understanding, without understanding there is no peace.

The importance of this United Nations World Summit on the Information Society is to identify in practical terms how to use communication technologies in the most effective and realistic ways available, in order to help the poor, the deprived and the illiterate in the developing world. The Order of Malta recognises, and strongly applauds, the need for dissemination of information through technological means as a way of reducing poverty, extending knowledge and information, and therefore promoting good practice in whatever undertaking.

The Order of Malta has for nine hundred years attended to the needs of the poor and sick, regardless of their race, nationality, age or religion. In this century, we identify closely with the goals set by the United Nations Development Millennium – goals which aim not only to reduce poverty, but also to advance the causes of freedom and democracy, to improve the standards of living of all humankind, and to close the digital divide in order to help achieve them.

The work of the Order around the world is centred on improving the conditions in which society lives - in particular, by offering practical advice for health, by teaching the afflicted how to rebuild their lives, whether because they have suffered illness or through man made conflicts or the dramatic events of earthquakes, floods or hurricanes, by setting up educational programmes for children and drug addiction programmes for young people, by providing regimes for the treatment of leprosy or HIV positive mothers and infants.

Malteser International, the Order's worldwide relief service, attends to the first needs of the afflicted. The next phase is taken up by the Order's health workers and helpers who are dedicated to assisting those marginalised by society, for whatever reason — illness, mental or physical handicaps, or natural disasters. They fan out from the Order's 56 national and international organisations.

Additionally, in this information society, the Order of Malta is concerned with good governance — a set of standards which is based in respect for humanity and respect for the environment. These standards are the principles which the members of the Order of Malta commit to follow: love and serve your fellow man in a Christian spirit. It is this spirit that drives the Order to this day. It is this spirit which the Order finds so compatible with the estimable goals set out by the United Nations, and for which we are ready to offer our collaboration — consultative, professional and practical.

The Order of Malta supports and welcomes all efforts and projects presented at this conference, which, together with general policies of educating communities, at first through medical aid and then through the training and education which it undertakes, will help raise living and working conditions and practices through increased knowledge and participation.