

Eminence, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Friends,

Thank you for having invited us to assist and contribute at this side event on the role of religious organisations:

“Tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum”, “be faithful and service the poor”

The vocation on the Order’ of Malta, a Sovereign and religious entity of public international law, has always been to care for society’s vulnerable. Today, in particular, the vulnerable we support are migrants and refugees – with aid along the Balkan route, housing and assimilation help in a number of European countries; saving lives in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas; implementing development programs in the migration countries of origin.

As you know the Order of Malta organized last year in Geneva’s UN premises a symposium: “Religions together for humanitarian action”- reaching out to victims of conflict, climate change, political and religious crises. This symposium wanted to enhance the special role of FBOs in supporting programs in response to migrants and refugees.

In Istanbul this year, the Order achieved its main objective that is, to contribute to the recognition and the affirmation by governments and humanitarian stakeholders of the impact FBOs and religious institutions have in reducing human suffering through their material and spiritual assistance to communities in need. Even non-religious organisations like the UN and its agencies have now recognized that FBOs have a unique comparative advantage in humanitarian contexts, as they enjoy a relationship of trust with local populations in which they are embedded. The WHS was a unique opportunity to highlight and emphasize the importance of this component of humanitarian action on which the Order can build in the search for new approaches and cooperation initiatives.

But now, may I put out an open question?

What could be proposed so that FBOs recognized in their skills and values can get a better support from international organisations and UN agencies and better access to international and UN funds,

This major explosion of movements of people and the explosion of humanitarian problems need a real cooperation of all actors, as this is only a beginning. To be successful to welcome with dignity, we must together challenge global indifference, face fear and repudiate welfare selfishness.

Thank you

UN New York September, 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016