



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 ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

“Towards a global compact on refugees”

Formal consultation 1 – Agenda item 2

Geneva, Palais des Nations 13-14 February 2018

Excellency, Madam Chairperson,

My Delegation joins previous speakers in thanking UNHCR for its leadership in this process and for having prepared the Zero Draft before us that reflects in a comprehensive and balanced way our previous discussions and consultations.

The Sovereign Order of Malta fully supports the **multi-stakeholder approach** adopted in the Comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) and further developed in the Zero Draft.

With regard to **reception and admission**, we propose the following, in addition to the points already covered in the Programme of Action:

- i. that access to civil registration and documentation be facilitated for refugees through innovative procedures
- ii. strengthening of the role of local authorities, particularly in urban areas
- iii. expanding family reunification mechanisms through implementation of clearly defined national and local policies
- iv. stipulate that placing asylum seekers in detention situations with poor conditions of space, nutrition, sanitation and access to legal help are violations of their basic rights.

As for ***meeting needs and supporting communities*** we wish to recall that due to their local roots, faith-based institutions are often first providers of material and spiritual assistance. Their access to community and cultural networks enables them to support inclusion of refugees in national and local systems and services such as housing, health care, education, social safety nets and psycho-social support. Granting refugees and asylum seekers freedom of movement and providing for instance work permits would also enhance refugee self-reliance and thereby contribute to successful local integration.

Although the engagement of FBOs is already fully acknowledged in paragraph 29 of the Zero Draft, the Order of Malta would welcome a wider definition of the areas of support they provide to refugee and local host communities. We of course agree that faith-based action needs to be context-appropriate and adapted to the specifics of each situation.

Meeting needs of refugees should also include spiritual support. FBOs could be invited to provide cultural and spiritual space propitious to resilience, thereby combining material assistance with an ethical and spiritual dimension. In this context the adoption of policies that guarantee the freedom of religion are of particular importance to the wellbeing of refugees in their new environment.

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