



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

Inter-Parliamentary Union
148th IPU Assembly

General Debate: “Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding”

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse PICTET-ALTHANN,
Permanent Observer to the Inter-Parliamentary Union – Head of Delegation**

Geneva, 23-27 March 2024

Mr./Madam President,
President Ackson,
Mr. Secretary General,
Honourable Speakers and Members of Parliaments,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate the new IPU President the Hon. Dr. ACKSON, on her election and extend our deep gratitude to her predecessor, President PACHECO.

The Sovereign Order of Malta was admitted as Permanent Observer at the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 2021, recognising our long-standing and excellent cooperation on issues of mutual interest, such as human rights, peace and security, climate change, and interfaith dialogue. Since then, we have increased our cooperation and were actively involved in the preparatory process leading to the first Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue held last June in Marrakesh. I had the honour of moderating a panel entitled “*Different mandates, common goals: Religious actors and parliamentarians as allies for promoting gender equality and youth participation*”. It truly highlighted the importance of the contribution of religious leaders and faith-based organisations to parliamentary work and the need to expand this collaboration.

The fact that the parliamentarians present here today – representing their constituents from all over the world, with different backgrounds, faiths, cultures, and ethnicities – are working together and with numerous stakeholders, clearly reflects the theme of this general debate: “*Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding*”. This is why parliamentary diplomacy must not be overlooked but increased, especially at the international level, bringing the voices of every member of our societies to foster peaceful co-existence and mutual understanding, promote tolerance and fight against discrimination, hatred, violence, and extremism. In that context, the



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collaboration with faith-based organisations is crucial to achieve those goals through interfaith dialogue and faith literacy.

The Order of Malta advocates in its worldwide diplomatic and humanitarian action for the promotion and respect of international human rights and humanitarian law. We strongly believe that the input of parliaments in UN processes, such as the Human Rights Council and its Universal Periodic Review is an essential element to achieve progress and ensure implementation. We encourage parliaments to share with their respective government's best practices for the benefit of their citizens.

In concluding, the Order of Malta looks forward to participating in the next Assembly and continuing to work with IPU, in particular on the second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue to be held in Rome in 2025.

Thank you.