



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

Towards a global compact on refugees
Thematic discussion four
Contribution by H.E. Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann

Panel Four: How can we make local solutions work for refugees and the communities in which they live?

In reply to this question the Sovereign Order of Malta wishes to submit for consideration the following points based on the concrete experience gained in its worldwide humanitarian action.

- Most important for local solutions are: coherence and coordination between (local) government, state and community services and private civil society action. Install coordination platforms with a dialogue on eye level.
- Civil society action is vital for local solutions. There is a definite need to advocate for freedom and sufficient space for civil society, since more and more nations are establishing restrictive NGO legislation.
- Civil Society NGOs can, for instance, function as points of information regarding the cooperation with international organizations and government services; especially in a context where they have a long-standing presence on the ground due to development cooperation projects and strong relationships with the (local) government authorities. Civil society actors, mainly local NGOs, as well as faith-based organizations (FBOs) and religious institutions, have an excellent understanding of local and cultural context and are very efficient at using local networks. This all will help to find and strengthen local solutions and promote resilience within local communities.
- Additionally, a broader approach to possible actors in response to refugee needs should be taken into consideration, especially in a context where civil-society organisations are weak. Care for refugees is not an aid issue only, it is an economic issue as well. There is a need to encourage identification for investment in economic opportunities that the arrival of refugees offer host communities, instead of pushing good will of communities to its absolute limits. This should not be confused with making profit from peoples' despair. The point here is to promote social harmony through sustainability and social inclusion by building on a solid economic perspective.

Geneva, 14th November 2017