



SOVRANO MILITARE ORDINE OSPEDALIERO  
DI SAN GIOVANNI DI GERUSALEMME DI RODI E DI MALTA

**WHO 76<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly  
23 May 2023**

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**Fra' Alessandro de Franciscis  
Grand Hospitaller of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller  
Order of St John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta**

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Distinguished Chair:

The Sovereign Military Order of St John of Jerusalem, known as the Order of Malta, is a catholic religious Order chartered by the Pope in 1113. We believe that Jesus Christ calls us to take care of the poor and of the sick. We are neutral by mission, serving without distinction.

We have been “*hospitallers*” for more than 900 years! And in the last year we have served in the most diverse ways in all of Europe, from Lampedusa to Ukraine, where I was twice in the past 6 months; in Palestine, with our Maternity Hospital in Bethlehem; in Lebanon, Turkey and Syria; in Africa; in the Asia-Pacific Region and in all the Americas.

And what do I see out of this honorable General Assembly? I see that the powerful, the Governments and the very rich make wars!

And that the poor are obliged to die, be kidnapped, run away and become refugees, be victims of human trafficking often because of the loss of legal identity, falling sick and remaining sick!

And us, Mr Director General, as the representatives of almost all the world, we were not even able to learn from the Covid-19 pandemic on how to oblige our Governments, by Treaty, to assure universal and gratuitous vaccination in a highly probable next pandemic!

Back in the eighties, as a young doctor at the Harvard School of Public Health earning my Master's degree in Epidemiology, I learned that the poor always remain underserved. Has that changed in 40 years?

Dear Colleagues Health Ministers, please! Make your voices heard in your Countries, please show them how much « *health* » can be bought at the cost of one rifle, of one tank, of one bomb, of only one airfighting airplane or the filling with mines of a large field of wheat that will cost lives and amputations.

War is the N°1 disease.  
And it is as preventable as any disease.

The cure has the name of PEACE!