

**General Debate: Building Momentum Toward the SDG Summit,
Transformation for Accelerating Implementation of the SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11,
20 July 2023**

- Ambassador Dr. Paul Beresford-Hill

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

Our focus over these two weeks demands unwavering attention and collective action, as we build momentum toward the SDG Summit. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) present an ambitious and transformative agenda, designed to tackle the most pressing global challenges we face as a human family while encompassing a comprehensive framework.

One of the critical SDGs that the Sovereign Order of Malta has given special attention to is ensuring accessibility to clean water and sanitation, especially in healthcare facilities. Over the past two decades, globally, two billion people have lacked access to clean safe drinking water, which, according to a recent report by Humacoo, has caused more than 25,000 deaths each week. Ban Ki-Moon, former U.N. Secretary-General, remarked that: "more people die from unsafe water than from war".

In this context, the Sovereign Order of Malta, through our esteemed relief agency, Malteser International, has been dedicated to providing clean water and sanitation for 30 years, collaborating with over 400 agencies, including the German WASH Network and the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance. By way of example, the geographical extent of the Sovereign Order of Malta's projects encompass diverse areas, from drought preparedness in Kenya to promoting access to water and sanitation while continuing to support humanitarian and SDG related initiatives in India, Nepal, Uganda and Haiti and in many other nations.

Mr. President, this moment underscores the crucial importance of partnership and collaboration when it comes to tackling the most pressing challenges. Applying the age old principal that two heads are better than one, we support the increasing opportunities provided through partnerships and affiliations. For this reason, the Order is working with organizations such as Mary's Meals, which focuses on setting up school feeding programs in impoverished communities to address both hunger and lack of education and which, each day, provides hundreds of thousands of

nutritious meals per day across the developing world. By joining forces with various entities, we have created a platform for exchanging ideas, experiences, and best practices.

This collective effort propels all of us towards the summit with renewed vigor, by uniting to undertake new innovative and technology-based ideas. The Order of Malta was recently introduced to a project developed by a Swiss water company. This technology uses condensation to turn air into water, one machine producing over 10,000 liters of clean water per day. It is through harnessing the creative energies of the commercial, non-profit and humanitarian space, and particularly paying attention to the contribution of young people, that we can utilize human ingenuity in our search for viable solutions to those factors which inhibit success in the pursuit of the SDG agenda.

In conclusion, may our discussion and deliberations during this General Debate ignite the necessary momentum and galvanize us into action to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals.

Despite setbacks which are delaying achievement in many areas, we can still, despite our imperfections, build a better world, and leave a lasting legacy for generations to come. As Pope Francis admonishes us: “Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start”.