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STATEMENT

BY

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to the United Nations**

TO THE

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON HIV/AIDS

New York, June 2, 2006

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Mr. President

Thank you for allowing me to take the floor.

Five years after the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS we have an important responsibility to assess our progress, and to ensure that all is being done to fight this devastating scourge. Slowing the spread of HIV/AIDS is inextricably tied to larger development issues, including the Millennium Development Goals of reducing poverty, hunger, and childhood mortality. It is vital that effective and efficient methods of prevention and treatment are available because for the first time in the history of the disease, the world possesses the means to begin to reverse the global epidemic.

The Sovereign Order of Malta stands as a partner in the worldwide efforts to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and to improve the lives of those already infected.

Mr. President,

Sadly, mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS accounts for 90% of new infections in children under 15 years-old. The Sovereign Order of Malta seeks to end the transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child by providing access to screening, pre-natal therapies, and treatments

For those already suffering, the Sovereign Order of Malta has established programs of medical and palliative care. These programs are operational in Argentina and Mexico in Latin America and Kenya, Angola, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Sudan in Africa.

Mr. President,

Part and parcel of treatment is the training of healthcare workers in the community. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) 1.3 billion people worldwide lack access to basic healthcare. One of the overriding causes of this injustice is the lack of workers to provide care. Often doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers from the developing world migrate to the developed countries to work. It is estimated that to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, Africa alone will require 1 million new health workers. The Sovereign Order of Malta seeks to alleviate the strain placed upon the few overburdened workers available and to actively engage the population in their own health. The training of local community members in vital healthcare tasks is always a priority in even the most remote medical centers of the Sovereign Order of Malta.

Mr. President,

The Sovereign Order of Malta strives to administer its humanitarian aid in a fashion that ensures sustainability and also diminishes the causes of need in the first

place. A major component of the work of the Sovereign Order of Malta is not just addressing acute crises as they occur, but helping to create the structures and mechanisms that sustainably blend into the communities. In accordance with the draft declaration, the Sovereign Order of Malta believes that the HIV/AIDS response must be part of a comprehensive strategy that addresses basic healthcare needs. By offering regular healthcare, we know that many illnesses can be prevented entirely. The healthcare paradigm can shift from treating acute problems to prevention. Through the establishment of healthcare centers and the provision of vaccines, the Sovereign Order of Malta is working to effect that change.

Mr. President,

At this crucial five year mark, the Sovereign Order of Malta recognizes the importance of evaluating the progress made thus far in the HIV/AIDS fight. We are proud to work in harmony with the Members States of the United Nations to achieve the goal of universal access to treatment by 2010 for all those who need it. It will only be through international cooperation and coordination that this blight upon humanity can be eliminated.

Thank you, Mr. President and Members of the General Assembly.