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## **Malteser International Americas and U.S. Agency for International Development Enter Agreement to Establish Dignified Solutions to Humanitarian Issues Affecting Vulnerable People Worldwide**

**WASHINGTON D.C.** – On the heels of **Malteser International** becoming an organization in special consultative status with the **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** at the **United Nations last month**, the 65 year old humanitarian relief and development organization of the **Order of Malta** (a 900 year old religious lay Order), has taken another major step forward for the faith-based and humanitarian community. Yesterday, a historic **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** between **Malteser International Americas** and the **U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)** was formalized. The significant agreement opens the door to establish relief and sustainable programs that promote human dignity, compassion, relief from suffering, aid to the poor, protection for the vulnerable, and refuge for those in need.

The formal MOU was signed by Administrator Mark Green of the U.S. Agency for International Development and Major General (Ret.) Thomas A. Wessels, President of Malteser International Americas at a Signing Ceremony, which took place at USAID’s Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

“The momentous agreement catapults Malteser International Americas, a relief and development organization with Catholic values, to the forefront of the humanitarian aid spectrum, while prioritizing the critical role of faith-based organizations in worldwide relief,” said Major General (Ret.) Thomas A. Wessels, President, Malteser International Americas. “This MOU is a crucial step forward, as it promotes collaboration between a Catholic Non-Governmental Organization and the United States’ leading foreign aid office,” he continued.

With no respite for humanitarian aid in sight, the partnership to provide humanitarian protection and assistance comes at an opportune time for Malteser International Americas and USAID, when the most vulnerable populations and countries around the world are facing some of the greatest humanitarian crises of our lifetime.

“For over 60 years, Malteser International’s humanitarian assistance has been rooted in the Catholic values to care for the poor, sick, and vulnerable, and this agreement will allow us to continue to play a central role in strengthening our existing projects in the Americas, Middle East, and Africa to further provide humanitarian assistance and protection to children and families,” said Ravi Tripptap, Executive Director, Malteser International Americas.

The MOU lays the groundwork for both organizations to establish viable, long-term solutions that exhibit empathy and dignity, while creating opportunities for vulnerable populations in the Americas, Middle East, and Africa to thrive. The agreement will focus the following areas:

1. Fostering of Peace as a Fundamental Basis for Development
2. Responsiveness to Crisis Poverty Reduction
3. Human Trafficking
4. Youth

Prominent figures present for the signing were: U.S. Agency for International Development, Administrator Mark Green; U.S. Agency for International Development, Acting Director Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives, Tim Lavelle; Malteser International Americas, President, Major General (Ret.) Thomas A. Wessels; Malteser International Americas, Executive Director, Ravi Tripptrap; Malteser International, Secretary General, Ingo Radtke; Order of Malta U.S. Federal Association, President, Dr. Margaret Melady. Malteser International Americas Board Members and staff, as well as representatives from the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Order of Malta U.S. Associations were present for the signing.

Malteser International remains committed to helping all peoples in all parts of the world, without distinction of religion, race or political persuasion. The work is guided by Catholic values and based on the humanitarian principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality. The organizations follows strict, internationally recognized guidelines for humanitarian aid, including: Sphere Project, Core Humanitarian Standard, Code of Conduct of the International Red Cross. On a global scale, over 2 million people benefitted from Malteser International's aid around the world in 2017.

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**About Malteser International Americas:**

Malteser International Americas is an affiliate of Malteser International, the humanitarian relief organization of the Order of Malta. Through its U.S. headquarters, Malteser International Americas provides emergency relief and sustainable, community-based programs focused on health, nutrition, clean water, sanitation & hygiene, and disaster preparedness, to vulnerable people in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean. For over 60 years, the humanitarian organization's focus remains to empower people to live healthier, better, more resilient lives with dignity. Visit [www.orderofmaltarelieff.org](http://www.orderofmaltarelieff.org) to learn more.