

On the SPOT.

NEWSLETTER
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BREAKING NEWS



Paris: Officer's Cross for Ms. Anne Broquet, Ordre de Malte France

On 24 January 2007, Ms. Anne Broquet, responsible for the health strategies of the French Malteser relief service "Ordre de Malte France", was awarded the Officer's Cross „pro merito melitensi“. H. Exc. Count and Prince Dominique de la Rochefoucauld-Montbel, President of the French Association of the Order of Malta, and Count Thierry Beaumont-Beynac, President of Ordre de Malte France and Vice-President of Malteser International, handed over the decoration.

Ms. Broquet was honoured for her committed and tireless work with "Ordre de Malte France" where she has been actively taking part in and standing up for the international work of the Order for ten years. She participated in various assignments of ECOM, the antecessor of Malteser International. Her last deployments took her to Sri Lanka and India for the emergency relief after the tsunami. Ms. Broquet is a strong supporter of Malteser International and the good cooperation between Malteser International and "Ordre de Malte France" to a large extent also is due to her exemplary commitment.

Malteser International welcomes its 20th member association

On the 30 January, the 20th association of the Order of Malta has submitted its formal application for membership of Malteser International after the Hungarian Association as 19th member association having already joined the worldwide relief agency of the Sovereign Order of Malta in September 2007.

H. Ex. Mr Michael Khoo, President of the Singapore National Association, writes in his email addressed to H. Ex. Mr Nicolas de Cock, President of Malteser International: "... The Singapore National Association hopes that its membership of Malteser International will enable it to collaborate effectively in the Sovereign Order of Malta's international hospitaller, disaster relief, and social works, particularly in this region of the world..."

AFRICA

Kenya I: Returning to normal work after electoral violence

The outbreak of violence following the announcement of the Kenya General Election outcome on 30 December 2007 forced Malteser International to suspend temporarily its work in the slums of Nairobi. For the time being, the staff of the office has returned to continue their work, but the project areas in the slums are still not accessible. Due to the closing of the health centres in the slums, it is to be feared that the treatment of patients suffering from tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS was interrupted which might cause resistance against the drugs and drastic increase of AIDS victims and deaths.

The organisation will execute further investigations and assessments of the impact on the work with TB and HIV patients as soon as the situation in the slums will be calm again.

As soon as the situation returns to normal, Malteser International will provide immediate relief like the provision of food-/non-food items as well as water and sanitation support. In the long term, the organisation also plans to offer psychosocial support and to care for the resettlement of the numerous displaced people.

Kenya II: National award for best tuberculosis facility in 2006 and 2007

On 4 December 2007, the diagnosis and treatment centre Riruta in the slums of Nairobi which is supported by Malteser International has won the national award as the best tuberculosis facility of the years 2006 and 2007. The “Kenya Association for the Prevention of TB and Lung Diseases” and the Kenyan National Leprosy and Tuberculosis Programme appreciated the important work of Malteser International to the control of tuberculosis. Already in the years 2004 and 2005, other health centres supported by Malteser International had won the prize. Through laboratories constructed, equipped and staffed by Malteser International, for the first time TB diagnosis is also integrated into the services of the health centres which so far were only treating the disease. Tuberculosis can thus be diagnosed and treated in the same facility. The slum dwellers now do not have to cover long distances anymore to reach a laboratory for which in most cases they have to pay sums they cannot afford.



Sudan I: World AIDS Day celebrations in Darfur

In December 2007, Malteser International joined in celebrating the World Aids Day in four of its supported health centre locations across Darfur. Large scale HIV/AIDS awareness events were organised. About 1,000 people attended the well-advertised event in Abu Zerega, which included a session on HIV/AIDS by Malteser International's Community Health Officer, El Said Adam and other health facility staff. There was also an audio show where the people listened to talks and watched a video on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. Later that week, approximately 700 people attended the health education sessions in Shangil Tobayi, boasting radio and video shows. Almost 500 people attended the same event in Wada the following week. Although the 'walk-in, walk-out' event attracted many people, most felt that next time it could be more successful if held in the evenings when more people would be able to attend. All in all, the health staff of Malteser International and of the supported health centres felt that the events were well attended and a successful way to inform people on the risks of HIV/AIDS and prevention methods.

Sudan II: Health meeting of female community level workers in Darfur



On 4 December 2007, 82 female community level workers (FCLW) attended a meeting organised by Malteser International. The issues discussed included: the cooperation between the FCLW and the health facilities, the risks of female genital mutilation (FGM), the risks of a late referral to health centres and mothers at risk. The importance of Anti-Natal Care (ANC) was pointed out, and it was reported that many women refused to go to the facility even when advised to do so, because of ignorance.

The FCLW were advised to always encourage and refer all pregnant women to deliver in the health facilities.

On the issue of female circumcision, the FCLW reported that they no longer do it, but acknowledged that it is still practiced in their communities. They were informed on the complications of such practices especially during delivery.

As a result of the meeting, the FCLW agreed not to conduct female circumcision, to encourage women to deliver in the facility and to talk to women in their villages about the importance of anti-natal visits. But of course we are aware that these issues will need regular and close follow-up. Reports from the villages submitted to the health facilities on a regular basis and quarterly meetings with the FCLW will enable us to do so.

Sudan III: Training on syndromic management of sexually transmitted infections

In November and December, staff of one of the health centres supported by Malteser International, attended training workshops on the syndromic management of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The training, which was done in two batches was facilitated by Dr Abdel Mohsin, a consultant dermatologist and venerologist from El Fasher University. During the workshops, there were lectures on the common STIs, clinical diagnosis and management, as well as group discussions with the participants about issues arising in their daily work. For some participants, it was the first time they had been given accurate information on STIs and on how to deal with them. In the discussions, the participants felt that more health education was necessary to sensitise people on the prevention of STIs. The need was also expressed for continuous medical training through refresher courses on the subject, and this should be followed up in the facilities. - A total of 25 participants attended the training including medical assistants, midwives, nurses and two community health workers.

ASIA

Cambodia I: Water festival and boat race with Malteser International and CHHRA team



For the first time, a team with staff of Malteser International and its Cambodian partner CHHRA (Cambodian Health and Human Rights Alliance) – among them Malteser International Program Coordinator Sandra Harlass and Project Manager Maia McFadden - participated in the Provincial boat race on the occasion of the annual Water Festival which took place from 18 to 19 November 2007 on the Snoeu Lake in Samrong District/ Oddar Meanchey Province. Many people from all parts of the province came to watch and enjoy.

In his opening speech, the Governor of the province, His Excellency Pich Sokhen, explained that the objectives of the festival are, among other, to remind the people about the importance of water and to remember heroic naval persons who struggled to bring freedom to Cambodia. He especially pointed out the participation of relief organisations: “I am feeling very pleased. This year is more exciting than the past years, because in 2007 there are participants from an international and many national NGOs. There’s the boat, Sokhapheap Meanchey, owned by Malteser International and CHHRA. It is a delight to have foreign athletes participating with us during the Water Festival.” – By the way: The name of the Malteser International/CHHRA boat “*Sokhapheap Meanchey*” means “health and victory”.

Cambodia II: Community based health insurances now also in Banteay Meanchey



Since November 2007, Malteser International has extended its project to reduce poverty and improve health through self-help also to Banteay Meanchey, the neighbouring province of Oddar Meanchey in north-western Cambodia. Both provinces had been particularly affected by the civil war. The population consists mostly of returnees as well as migrants from other parts of the country. 75% of the population suffer from malnourishment, and the income from agriculture is so low that there is no possibility to accumulate savings for emergency situations.

Malteser International had started its projects in the province of Oddar Meanchey already in 1999, after the relocation of the returnees, with a comprehensive primary health care and health sector development programme. Step by step, the organisation has drawn away from direct service implementation to structural support and more community-based measures including the establishment of a community based health insurance (CBHI).

Aim of the upgraded project now is to extend the concept of CBHIs and to combine all single village CBHIs to one insurance association. Moreover, Malteser International plans to improve the hygiene conditions in 75 villages with the participation of the village communities by constructing latrines and providing the communities with educational material. Educational campaigns about domestic violence and the right to access to health care are being carried out.

Malteser International expects to complete the project within three years in cooperation with its local partner CHHRA and the Cambodian Organisation for Assistance to Families and Widows. A total of 47,500 people in 95 villages will directly benefit from the project.

Cambodia III: Malteser International honoured for support to the population

On the occasion of the celebration of Victory Day over the Pol Pot regime held on 7 January 2008, Malteser International was honoured with the “Medal for the Development of Cambodia” in recognition of its important achievements and continuous support to the people of Cambodia. The medal was awarded by Mr. Pich Sokhim, the Provincial Governor of Oddar Meanchey.

During the ceremony, many civil servants as well as several other organisations were honoured for their work in Cambodia. The ceremony is held every year but this was the first time that an international NGO was given the medal. Dr. Ouk Kim Soeun, Director of the Provincial Health Department in Samrong – who in 2007 had been awarded the Malteser Jubilee Medal in recognition of his important support of the work of Malteser International in Oddar Meanchey province – expressed his thanks for the excellent cooperation of Malteser International with the primary health department.



Sri Lanka I: Flood relief for 530 displaced families

Malteser International financially supported the emergency relief for 530 families - about 2.120 people - affected by the heavy rainfalls in late December 2007 and early January 2008 in Pottuvil, Ampara District. The goal of the emergency relief - carried out in cooperation with ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) - was to mitigate the impact of the flooding on the displaced families in selected areas by providing dry rations according to international standards. The packets contained various food items such as rice, flour, sugar and tinned fish as well as matches and washing powder.



The Pottuvil Division in the Eastern province of Sri Lanka faces chronic flooding on a seasonal basis due to torrential rains resulting from the north-east monsoon. According to the authorities of Pottuvil, more than 7,000 families - 33.000 people - were experiencing flooding in their homes. Schools had been closed and all economic and social activities were interrupted. There has been a significant damage to infrastructure facilities in the area.

Sri Lanka II: Child friendly water and sanitation facilities for ten schools in Ampara District



In November 2007, Malteser International handed over child friendly water and sanitation facilities to two schools in the divisions of Maha Oya and Dehiattakandiya in the district of Ampara in Sri Lanka. Maha Oya is a very dry area where most people have to walk for hours to fetch water; most households still are without any toilets.

Dehiattakandiya on the other hand, has plenty of irrigation canals for agricultural purposes, but the drinking water is highly contaminated, and therefore not safe to drink. The sanitation facilities here are rather primitive.

The project was co-funded by UNICEF and aims to improve the sanitation and water supply in ten schools, as well as implement hygiene promotion activities. Children, teachers and parents have been involved into the planning and implementation. Malteser International also puts emphasis on awareness raising among the children who will bring the information home to their families and thus create a multiplier effect. Moreover, the organisation introduces water test kits and water treatment methods to the school children and improves the knowledge of the whole school community on basic hygiene practices.

Sri Lanka III: Five new cooler trucks for tsunami affected fishermen

On 25 December 2007, Malteser International in cooperation with the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) handed over five cooler trucks to the Pottuvil and Panama Divisional Fishermen Cooperative Societies, a cooperative of fishermen whose livelihood was lost due to the tsunami. Two of these trucks were financed by Malteser International. The representatives of the societies received the trucks from the Malteser International Country Coordinator Lawrence Oduma and the Programme Coordinator Tyche Hofman. The Divisional Secretary and other representatives of the local authorities took part in the ceremony. Since 2005, Malteser International has been working in Sri Lanka together with the GTZ, providing boats, fuel and engines, and rehabilitating houses.

Sri Lanka IV: Bio-sand filters as effective method for household water treatment



In the coastal community in Koggala, Sri Lanka, Malteser International completed a pilot project run in cooperation with the Deputy Provincial Director of Health Services (DPDHS). The project included the construction of 30 bio-sand filters. Due to their organic layer, such filters have proven to be highly efficient in reducing turbidity and removing harmful disease-causing organisms found in surface or groundwater supplies. They therefore offer a simple and effective method for household water treatment, a key feature central to any water supply, sanitation and hygiene project.

The completed project saw all members of the community taking part in daily construction activities to complete the filters under the supervision of the local Public Health Inspector. Training programmes were held at a local temple to introduce the technology and explain how to operate and maintain them. The handover ceremony was attended by the Provincial Director of Health Services, the DPDHS Director and other dignified

guests, where Malteser International was highly recognised for its support.

Groundwater is the main source for drinking water in Sri Lanka and has received much attention since the tsunami due to its impact in the contamination of open dug wells along the coast. The programme of Malteser International in Galle is active in promoting safe hygiene practices and household water treatment methods. With its water quality testing equipment, the water and sanitation team will monitor these bio-sand filters and their impact on the community. There are also plans to integrate this technology with other ongoing projects such as the rainwater harvesting and water safety plans.

Syria: Evaluation of pilot project on cash assistance for Iraqi refugees

An internal evaluation of the Malteser International cash assistance provided for 100 Iraqi families that live as refugees in Syria has shown that this approach was much better than to provide only food aid. All the beneficiaries interviewed had been very happy with the cash that left the decision up to them to spend it for exactly what they needed. The biggest needs were the rents that they have to pay monthly. Many used it also to buy school uniforms or special drugs for ill family members.

Also for the implementing partner, the International Blue Crescent (IBC) - a Turkish non-governmental organisation that collaborates with Malteser International in several Muslim countries

- this tool proofed as much easier to handle as huge amounts of food aid. Transfer costs for logistics are respectively lower. For the same reasons, the UNHCR in Damascus and further humanitarian agencies recently started with cash assistance as well.



Up to now, the Iraqi crisis produced the biggest number of uprooted people: more than 4.2 million in total and out of that more than two million in the neighbouring countries. The majority (1.5 million) lives in Syria and is becoming a big burden for the Syrian institutions as e.g. schools. Malteser International and IBC therefore also distributed educational material to 750 pupils, both to the Iraqi refugees as to their poorer Syrian classmates.

Thailand: Inauguration of new village on Koh Mook

On 16 December 2007, almost three years after the tsunami hit the coasts of Thailand, Malteser International celebrated the completion and hand-over of the newly constructed village on the island of Koh Mook. Numerous guests had come to the celebration, among them Dr. Raphael L'Hoest, delegate from the German Embassy, Dr. Poldej Pinprateep, Deputy Minister of Social Development and Human Security in Thailand, Otilie Mooshofer, Malteser International Program Coordinator for the tsunami projects in southern Thailand as well as citizens and representatives of other organisations and authorities. The village community had been highly involved in the reconstruction process. The funding and the coordination were carried out by Malteser International in cooperation with the local organisation „Save Andaman Network“.



Together with German and local engineers and companies, 138 houses had been reconstructed and trendsetting technologies from the environmental sector had also been taken into account: In addition to infrastructural facilities such as electricity and water systems, three so-called “Subterra” biological sewage plants wetlands (German export technology) had been built. These constructed wetlands allow a high-quality purification of the waste water on an environment friendly basis.

The ceremony ended with a mangrove planting session by the guests and the project supporters.

Vietnam: Protection of flood victims against diseases and cold

In November and December 2007, heavy rainfalls had caused severe floods in Central Vietnam. Numerous rivers had burst their banks and destroyed entire zones. With financial support from the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, Malteser International handed out food items and blankets to 1,250 families in the provinces Quang-Nam and Danang most hit by the floods. The organisation also provided iron sheets for the construction of temporary shelters. To prevent the outbreak of malaria, the teams distributed mosquito nets. The families also got additional washing agents and hygiene articles to ameliorate the hygiene situation and to prevent the outbreak of infectious diseases.

According to the Vietnamese authorities, more than 100 people had lost their lives in the floods and more than 90,000 were directly affected. Furthermore, the water had destroyed about 21,000 tons of foodstuff and 30,000 tons of seeds.

STAFF

On 1 December 2007, **Ms Rosemarie Gallinger**, former Project Assistant in the Africa Desk in Cologne, left for Kenya to work as a Project Assistant there.

Also on 1 December 2007, **Mr Heinrich Rinke** started to work as a Project Manager in Indonesia.

OTHERS



New video: “Malteser International in Africa: With the people, for the people” – now online!

In the first three months of the year 2007, a camera team (www.ich.tv) visited several Malteser International projects in Africa. The result is a movie (45 minutes) showing the work in the nutrition unit in Maracha/Uganda, the daily challenges of the staff working in the DR Congo as well as the commitment of the health workers in the slums of Nairobi/ Kenya. The video (in English, French and German) is available for download at www.malteser-international.org and can be ordered at the Malteser International Headquarters, <mailto:info@malteser-international.org>.

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Malteser International Lent Campaign 2008: “40 Euros for Sri Lanka”

On Ash Wednesday, 6 February 2008, Malteser International starts its Lent Campaign 2008: „40 Euros for Sri Lanka“. Until Easter, the Malteser International water/sanitation engineer Suzanna Lipscombe will report on a weekly basis from Sri Lanka on her projects, the people she is working with and the situation in the South-Asian country. Since 2005, the organisation has been supporting the rehabilitation after the tsunami in Sri Lanka. Next to the reconstruction of villages, the work of the organisation mainly focuses on water supply, wastewater treatment and awareness raising about hygiene.

„Most people here don’t have access to clean drinking water and know little about hygiene. Therefore we are not only providing water but we are also training the people on how to make best use of it by showing them how they can prevent diseases,” Suzanna Lipscombe says. “For example, we build rain water harvesting tanks together with the families which can catch between 5,000 and 8,000 litres of drinking water,” the British project engineer explains. “Until now, we were able to supply such tanks for almost 2,000 families – about 10,000 people. And our goal is to reach 3,300 families.”

Therefore, Malteser International calls for putting aside one Euro a day during Lent season. This way you can save up 40 Euros until Easter. With these 40 Euros, the organisation can procure cement or sand for a 5,000 litres water tank made of concrete or it can pay the wage for a mason for two 5,000 litres tanks. In order to participate in the Lent Campaign 2008 and donate “40 Euros for Sri Lanka”, just click here: www.malteser-international.org.

For further information, please contact: <mailto:info@malteser-international.org>.

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