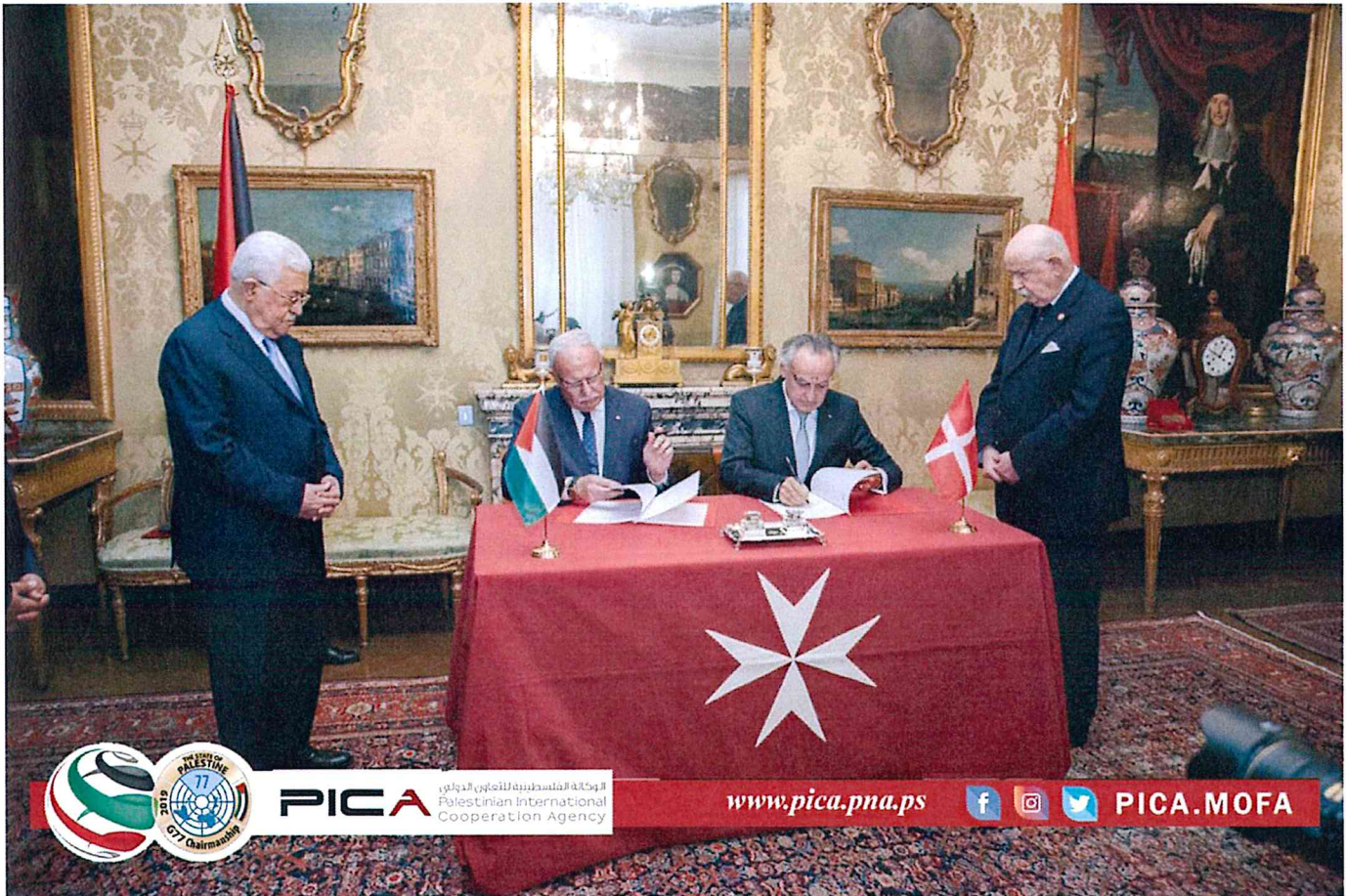


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## TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY THE PALESTINIAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY (PICA). THE STATE OF PALESTINE AND THE SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA (SOM) AGREE ON JOINT COOPERATION PROGRAM

Rome



The State of Palestine, represented by PICA, and the Sovereign Order of Malta (SOM), represented by the Ministry of International Cooperation, agreed on a joint cooperation program as a follow up in implementing the bilateral agreement signed between H.E Dr. Riad Malki Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates and the Minister of International Cooperation, H.E. Prince Dominique de la Rochevo Montpell at the Presidential Palace in Rome on the 3rd of December 2018, in presence of H.E President Mahmoud Abbas and the President of SOM, H.E. Giacomo Dalla Torre.

PICA Director General, Imad Al-Zuhairi, met with the Minister of International Cooperation, Prince Dominique de la Rochevo Montbel in the Presence of H.E. Mr. Issa Kassissieh, Ambassador of the State of Palestine to SOM, the Chief of Cabinet of the Office of the Minister of Health, Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and International Cooperation, Mr. Ivo Graziani and the Director General of Middle East Dep, Eleanor Hapsberg.

The meeting aimed at translating the articles of the agreement into a joint cooperation and a practical program with specific activities that reflect the interests and priorities of both parties.

Al-Zuhairi considered the meeting as important and constructive, during which both parties agreed on certain points to form specific programs in terms of content, nature of intervention and targeted countries. Al-Zuhairi added that SOM enjoys a long history of humanitarian and development experience and has embassies in most countries of the world.

Thus, it was important for PICA to benefit from working with SOM in specific development areas, including in health.

Ambassador Issa Kassissieh expressed the importance of implementing the agreement the fact that will lead to enhance the presence of the State of Palestine internationally as well as the role of Palestine in development worldwide.

PICA Director General and the Ambassador of the State of Palestine gave a presentation on the objectives of PICA, its mandate, activities and development programs. Also, both palestinian officials briefed the SOM senior officials on the difficult situation in occupied Palestine due to the continuous Israeli occupation, in addition to discussing the latest political developments.

Within the framework of the bilateral agreement, both parties agreed to cooperate in several fields, the most important of which is the exchange of expertise, coordination and joint actions to serve the objectives related to development and humanity in general.

It is worth mentioning that SOM is sponsoring the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, where it received more than 4,400 births in 2018, and other humanitarian and development projects in the State of Palestine.