**Call for Contributions Ensuring equitable, affordable, timely and universal access for all countries to vaccines in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic – HRC Resolution 49/25**

Input from the Republic of Malta

1. **the human rights implications and the impact on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health of affordable, timely, equitable and universal access and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.**

*Malta firmly believes in the importance of the individual’s right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health including universal access to healthcare. Access to medicines and medical products are crucial for the preservation of health and well-being of citizens and to ensure the long-term sustainability of healthcare systems, as new medicines, vaccines and treatments have helped to increase life expectancy and tackle some of the leading causes of disease and life-threatening illnesses.*

1. **good practices and key challenges in ensuring affordable, timely, equitable and universal access and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.**

*Guaranteeing safe and timely access to medicines relies on a wide range of provisions supported by multilateral agreements on the international stage and reinforced, at national level, by sound structural policies that encourage supply and enhance healthcare capacity. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic European Union Member States managed to guarantee timely and widespread vaccine supply across Europe, through the adoption of a joint procurement mechanism. At a national level, measures were adopted to mobilise healthcare capacity required to administer the vaccines and engage with the community to reduce barriers to vaccination uptake, including misinformation. The Government of Malta ordered an increased quantity of vaccines from a number of COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers, in a bid to spread the risk and boost the vaccination program at the initial stages so as to reach herd immunity as quickly as possible. Surplus doses were donated to other countries worldwide as a sign of support to these countries, which had limited or no access to COVID-19 vaccines. Countries with limited resources, require further backing on a global scale and all efforts should be made to support them, not just through donations but also through assisting them in the storage and administration of vaccines.*