

Don't Forget Human Rights in Haiti, Urges Prelate

Recalls Importance of Principle of Subsidiarity

GENEVA, Switzerland, JAN. 29, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- A plan to rebuild Haiti needs to be based on human rights and ensure the principle of subsidiarity, says the Holy See's permanent observer at the Geneva U.N. offices.

Archbishop Silvano Tomasi affirmed this Thursday at a U.N. Human Rights Council special session on supporting Haiti after the Jan. 12 earthquake that leveled the capital.

In Haiti's case, noted Archbishop Tomasi, rights "to life, to nutrition, to water, to health, to development, to the hope of an adequate life, and the right to proper work, were, in great measure, already absent."

But as aid comes in, the prelate said, it is important to respect the principle of subsidiarity, giving "Haitians in the first place the ability to reconstruct for themselves the infrastructure they need and to assume their political and social responsibilities."

"The Church, integral part of Haitian society, will continue to collaborate actively in the country's reconstruction promoting the most fundamental human rights and contributing to the progress of Haitians' health and education, in the framework of their just aspiration to a life of liberty and dignity," affirmed Archbishop Tomasi.

In regard to the situation of the local Church, in a country that is largely Catholic, the Holy See representative reflected that it is symbolized by the photo of the collapsed cathedral.

He mentioned the death of the archbishop of Port-au-Prince and other Church leaders.

This tragedy is also an appeal to the "solidarity of the international community" to "respond immediately" to Haitians' needs and to "put human rights at the base of a healthy plan of reconstruction," he said.

Archbishop Tomasi recalled Benedict XVI's Jan. 13 exhortation to send aid and his assurance that the Church would do what it could to meet the needs of the population.

The Holy See representative expressed appreciation for the worldwide response, including \$33 million from Caritas and another \$25 million from Catholic Relief Services.

He also expressed the Holy See's condolences "to the government and the people of Haiti," represented at the session.

And the prelate recalled the "millions without shelter" and the destruction of Port-au-Prince and other cities of the island, and expressed appreciation for Brazil's work in responding.