



*Mouvement Mondial des Travailleurs Chrétiens  
World Movement of Christian Workers  
Movimiento Mundial de Trabajadores Cristianos  
Weltbewegung der Christlichen Arbeiter*

## **The World Movement of Christian Workers (WMCW) and the tragedy of Port au Prince Haiti.**

### **A disaster a challenge to us all.**

In many countries of the world, men and women have been affected by war, acts of terrorism, grave accidents or other natural catastrophes, the whole of humanity has been horrified by the dramatic event which has hit the Haitian people: thousands of human lives have been lost or displaced, and huge damage to the infrastructure.

National and International solidarity has to be rapidly put in place to assist the numerous victims. All over the world, people feel very affected by the extent of this catastrophe.

All these situations are a challenge to us all. The WMCW is not indifferent. Because behind each of these disasters is the question of human responsibility, the type of aide that is needed, and also the human values and priorities that will direct the reconstruction.

In solidarity with the victims of this earthquake and all the other disasters that hit the world, the WMCW would like to make its contribution to the necessary reflection, which has to accompany the commitment on the ground, and to those people most affected.

A reconstruction on solid and durable values.

In relation to the practical steps and the objectives of the reconstruction, it seems to us fundamental to start from the needs and the aspirations of the populations affected. In our eyes, it would be a grave error to impose on them reconstruction schemes based exclusively on the interests of the donor countries. We strongly recommend that procedures are put in place that support democratic participation and also to give to all the citizens the opportunity to have their voices listened to in the decisions that are taken by leaders.

We think that whatever the different steps of reconstruction are, they should be written from a social and economic justice and sustainable development perspective. More than ever before it is about putting physical, financial and human resources at the service of the well being of each inhabitant of our earth. Everyone should have access to health, education, food, drinking water and decent work that would guarantee a social protection adapted to their life situation. Also it is important and indispensable to look after and respect the environment as much in the short term as in the long term.

It is in these areas that each government should invest, and not in arms. In this way we could better achieve the Millennium Goals.

The members of the WMCW are organising themselves.

In relation to the tragedy in Port au Prince, at this point in the emergency, members of the movement in the countries of the North are engaging individually through various solidarity, of which ONG's for example the CCFD,

Solidarité mondiale, Entraide et Fraternité, CAFOD or Weltnotweck, But not only these, also members of the WMCW from the countries hit by this earthquake are actively engaged in the stricken areas. They are offering assistance that is precious on the ground.

The WMCW is happy to see so much solidarity being expressed in numerous places around the world, but we think that it is of prime importance to keep a watch on all the aide being sent in order to avoid penalising the populations already hurt by this natural catastrophe

It is vital that each country creates quickly a precaution system to alert them to all forms of natural disasters in a way that will ensure a better security for its population.

To finance the setting up of such a system, as well as the reconstruction and development work, the WMCW urges the adoption of an international system of taxation on financial transactions.

For a future perspective of sustainable development.

The inhabitants of the countries affected have already made known their wish to see tourism start again as quickly as possible because this generates important revenue for the local economy. The moment has arrived to insist on the development of tourism, which respects the people who live in these regions. A human tourism, which favours intercultural exchanges, which are sources of human enrichment, which respects the respective cultural traditions

We believe that too often the multinationals enrich themselves by exploiting the poorest of the inhabitants of these regions. Yet they could assume a more positive role by offering dignified salaries and working conditions that would be acceptable to all workingmen and women.

In order for Haiti and all the countries hit by other catastrophes not to become eternally dependant, but that they can respond to their own needs in the long term, we demand the cancellation of their debt. We call equally for the development of a system of fair trade between all the countries of the planet.

Finally, the WMCW calls for an international vigilance to ensure that this dash towards the people of Haiti, does not distract attention away from aide to those other countries and their people also touched by different catastrophes, and for Africa which knows "every week the equivalent of an earthquake provoked by man, and therefore avoidable" (cf Tony Blair), is not abandoned once again to herself.

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Crespin LAWSON and ALDA FORTES

COPRESIDENTS of the WMCW