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AMERICA/HAITI - "After 6 months, many of the people who were living in tents still have nothing...many see no way out," Apostolic Nuncio in Haiti tells Fides

Six months after the earthquake that devastated Haiti on January 12, 2010, affecting much of the capital, Port-au-Prince, Fides has asked Apostolic Nuncio in Haiti, Archbishop Bishop Bernard Auza, a few questions on the current situation.

Your Excellency, what is the current situation in Haiti?
I can testify that the situation is still terrible as far as the practicability of the roads; it seems that the earthquake just happened yesterday! There is no one to carry away the debris and we can still not use certain streets in the capital. There are still no offices for some local government institutions. Many people who are living in tents still have nothing and then there are still many poor people who do not even have tents and do not see a way out.

And as for the reconstruction?
The problem of reconstruction, especially in the capital, is fundamentally linked to the composition of the Commission designed for this purpose. Initially, the international community had proposed a Commission with 17 members (10 foreigners and 7 from Haiti), but the government denied its approval. Then, another composition of the Commission was proposed, with members in equal shares (10 foreign and 10 in Haiti) and it seems that now they can finally get to work.

The President has also promised to begin the election process ...
I have spoken with President Rene Preval, and he told me that at this time, he sees 3 main political priorities for the country: first, establish an agency for reconstruction as there is still rubble in the streets; second, establish possible dates for elections in the country, most likely for late November; third, coordinate accommodations for the many displaced people still living in tents.

How is the Church working on the reconstruction?
As the Church, we are waiting for a sign from the Government in order to be able to act with all our strength. For example, some religious institutions cannot begin to rebuild the buildings or houses, because they lack a safety certificate issued by the government for that area. And that part does not depend on us. Our projects are many and the international community has helped us considerably, but there is still so much needed for our priority project.

What does this priority project consist of?
The construction of 2 national seminaries for the country. We already have things organized, but we still need a technical committee that can put this project on paper. We had also heard about the possible purchase of land in a beautiful place, but we abandoned the idea because the price was beyond our possibilities. Now we have another piece of land in sight, but we are still negotiating. In this project, we have been encouraged by the Bishops' Conferences of our brother nations who have contributed substantially, especially America and France, and this has helped to raise the spirits of all of us working to rebuild the Church in Haiti; it is like seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. Our hope is to lay the first stone or offer some concrete possibility on the first anniversary of the earthquake on January 12, 2011.

What would be Your Excellency's appeal to the international community?
Simply, that everyone sees that there is still much left to do. We still need help. We thank the Bishops of Haiti, the

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Holy See, and the international community for supporting us in the reconstruction. The Catholic Church has this priority: the reconstruction of the churches and seminaries. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 07/10/2010)

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