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AFRICA/SOMALIA - The Bishop of Djibouti" satisfied with the response of the Catholic world to the tragedy in the Horn of Africa"

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - "I am very pleased with the response of the Catholic world to the Holy Father's appeal for Somalia and other countries in the Horn of Africa", says in an interview with Fides His Exc. Mgr. Giorgio Bertin, Bishop of Djibouti and Apostolic Administrator of Mogadishu, just back from the meeting on the food crisis in the Horn of Africa, sponsored by the Holy See (see Fides 08/10/2011). In total the funds raised by the Catholic Church amount to over 60 million euros.
Cardinal Robert Sarah, President of the Pontifical Council "Cor Unum", has launched an appeal to go beyond the emergency phase, hoping for the creation of a school in every village in order to offer young people a chance to develop. "I was impressed by the appeal on behalf of His Eminence, also because before coming to Rome, we had just opened a primary school in the village of Itki, north of Djibouti. The school was built thanks to the donation of a lady's heritage, which was given to us through my Franciscan brothers", said Mgr.Bertin.
"Our concern is to go beyond the emergency phase, so that in the future, humanitarian crises like this will not occur," continued the Bishop of Djibouti. "This is why a long-term strategy is required, which provides aid to farming and local sheep-farming in order to overcome its structural weaknesses that lead to these tragedies. The international financial mechanisms should also be reviewed that make weak countries even more fragile".
The tragedy of Somalia, however, is mainly caused by the lack of a state structure in the past 20 years until now, with the Country panic-stricken by civil war due to the presence of different militias. "I do not want to interfere, but I would suggest trying to involve the Somali Diaspora, present in Italy and other parts of the world, so that they try to find a political solution to the instability of their homeland, because the Somali intelligentsia is found 'abroad", concluded Mgr. Bertin. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 12/10/2011)

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