



## **AMERICA/DOMINICAN REPUBLIC - No to the closure of "bi-national markets," a source of livelihood for thousands of families**

Santiago (Agenzia Fides) - The Catholic Church in the Dominican Republic has expressed a negative opinion on the closure of "bi-national markets" that are held every week at different points along the border with Haiti, warning anyone who promotes such a measure, because it does not take into account the damage that it causes to thousands of Haitians and Dominicans who flock to the markets and manage to survive thanks to this kind of trade.

The Church's voice was heard in the editorial titled "Abandoned" (Desamparados), published in the latest issue of the weekly "Camino", in which inter alia states: "Those who support the closure of the bi-national markets show that their heart is far from the border."

Last week, Prime Minister of Haiti, Laurent Lamothe, had proposed to close down the bi-national markets as part of a series of measures aimed at eliminating smuggling and to secure an increase in tax revenue of the country. The Church knows that if these measures are applied, the Haitian authorities prove to ignoring the real needs of their compatriots, "because this informal trade between the two peoples dates back to the colonial period and was reinforced at the time of the embargo that hit Haiti "decades ago. The Church, therefore, calls on the Haitian government to open its doors to trade" and not to hinder it, otherwise it will mean only increasing misery. If the problem is the lack of revenue into the coffers of the Haitian state, these must be found elsewhere, and not putting the poor on the cross." (CE) (Agenzia Fides 04/07/2012)