

NEWS RELEASE



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Catholic Relief Services helps set up camp on Port-au-Prince golf course CRS officials get Haitian hospital running

January 21, 2010 (OMAHA, NE) – Among the many relief efforts by Catholic Relief Service (CRS) in this devastated city, CRS began turning a Port-au-Prince golf course into one of the first formal camps for the displaced as other staff delivered medical supplies to St. Francois de Sales hospital, getting that heavily damaged facility up and running.

As CRS works to get more aid into the country—via air, sea and overland from the Dominican Republic—staff are setting up primary medical care facilities and delivering hygiene kits and plastic sheeting, along with limited amounts of food and water, to a number of informal camps that have sprung up around the city.

At the Petionville Club, CRS is working with United Nations officials and the United States military to turn an informal camp that has attracted 20,000 people during the day and up to 50,000 at night into a formal facility for the displaced, registering residents and delivering buckets of food, sanitation items and water to displaced Haitians waiting in long, orderly lines.

Other CRS personnel worked to unload a rare site in Port-au-Prince—a ship that docked at the one working berth in the heavily-damaged harbor. It carried 2,100 metric tons of food from the USAID Food for Peace program. Getting these containers, mainly filled with grain and vegetable oil, off the dock and to warehouses along the city’s devastated roadways is the next challenge.

“It may look to many in the rest of the world that those in need are not receiving any aid, but actually thousands here in Port-au-Prince have gotten help,” said Karel Zelenka, CRS Haiti country representative. “It must be understood that an apocalypse occurred in a place where there was hardly any infrastructure before—hence the huge logistical challenges.

“Whatever those challenges, we know that the destruction of this earthquake was so vast that even if thousands have gotten help, many, many more need assistance,” he added. “We are all working hard to see that they get it.”

CRS, which has worked in Haiti for over 50 years and has a permanent staff of more than

(more)

300 there, has committed at least \$25 million for relief and recovery. It has received \$16.5 million in cash donations and commitments, including \$1 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and \$225,000 from the New York Yankees baseball team.

On the ground, CRS is working with partners from Caritas, the international Catholic aid network, to coordinate its aid response. The agency is also joining aid groups in working with the United Nations as it becomes functional following the destruction of its headquarters and the death of many of its personnel in the 7.0 magnitude quake.

St. Francois de Sales Hospital was familiar to CRS as it had been used to treat people with HIV by the AIDSRelief consortium, which includes CRS. The hospital was heavily damaged in the earthquake, perhaps 70 percent destroyed. It will need reconstruction, but using buildings that remain intact along with tents, doctors have resumed work using supplies from the Catholic Medical Mission Board and others, which CRS delivered. The first operation was one all too common in Port-au-Prince: an amputation. More operations followed conducted by three medical teams that are now working at St. Francois de Sales: one Haitian, one Italian and one Belgian.

CRS is also setting up primary care centers at sites identified by the Catholic Church. Each will be staffed by a doctor and a nurse. At least three are in Port-au-Prince and one in Leogane, a city to the west that suffered extensive damage. More sites are being identified as CRS reaches out to the AIDSRelief network.

How to Help:

Donate via phone: 1-877-HELP-CRS or text RELIEF to 30644

Donate online: www.crs.org

Write a check: Catholic Relief Services

P.O. Box 17090

Baltimore, Maryland 21203-7090

Money orders: Make payable to CRS/Haiti

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