



**STATEMENT OF THE  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
OF  
THE CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES (CCC)  
ON  
THE OCCURRENCE OF THE JANUARY 12, 2010 EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI**

On the afternoon of Tuesday, January 12, 2010, what can only be described as the most terrifying and perilous catastrophe in the living memory of the Caribbean Region was visited on the people of Haiti. Over the last two (2) days, the Secretariat of the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) has been following closely all pertinent developments. The General Secretary has also been in dialogue with key officials of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat and other international bodies, including the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Geneva-based Action of Churches Together (ACT) Alliance. This is with a view to both assessing the situation on the ground in Haiti and gauging what the CCC's best options might be in terms of a relevant and meaningful response in the situation.

Like the rest of the world, we have been deeply saddened and perturbed as we continue to witness the pervasive devastation and distress which, sadly, constitutes the reality in which our beloved Haitian sisters and brothers are challenged to exist currently.

At this time, we wish to offer our prayerful support and heart-felt condolences to the Haitian people – both at home and in the diaspora – and to all those who have lost loved ones in the wake of this terrible disaster.

While the current reality is indisputably daunting, we are both humbled and edified to witness the tremendous display of courage, resilience and even celebrative hope by the Haitian people as they lend support to one another in the absence of basic requirements for life and the lack of appropriate technology and expertise in the given circumstances. In so many instances, powered by determination and love, bare human hands have been the 'tools' used to free several persons who would have otherwise been left to die, trapped under mountains of rubble. For this, we salute our Haitian sisters and brothers.

We also wish to commend all those nations and agencies that have rushed to the assistance of the people of Haiti with the necessary expertise and equipment. We recognise that in the case of some of the very agencies involved, they themselves have suffered the loss of personnel who have so sadly perished in the disaster. We hail these courageous women and men whose lives were given in service of the betterment of humanity. We commiserate with their bereaved families and stand in admiration of their related agencies which – despite their own loss – are persevering in their efforts on behalf of the Haitian people.

In applauding the heroic efforts of all concerned, we wish at the same time to urge that all operations be carried out with due regard to the dignity of the Haitian people. This is at the level of individual citizens (both living and deceased), communities, the government and the Haitian people as a whole, recognizing their sovereignty notwithstanding their present plight. In this regard, we make a special plea for the protection and care of children and women who – in many situations of this kind – are rendered most vulnerable and disadvantaged and who, regrettably, are sometimes subjected to unspeakable indignities.

With respect to the execution of operations, we also wish to urge the several actors involved to arrive swiftly – in consultation with the President of Haiti and other state and regional authorities – at a feasible co-ordination of efforts which will result in the most effective and efficient delivery of services, redounding to the greatest common good. Without such co-ordination, all the goodwill and effort are at risk of degenerating into massive confusion and wastage of resources.

Along with our condolences and prayerful support, we also offer at this time to the Haitian people our commitment to work towards alleviating their present unspeakable misery, and collaborating with them in forging a future more worthy of their dignity as children of God.

In this regard, and without wanting to detract from the gravity of the situation at hand, we feel the necessity to look beyond the situation with a sense of hope and responsibility. We would therefore like to view the current situation as a stark indicator to the international community of the urgent need to strengthen its resolve to support Haiti in its quest for ***authentic development***.

As an organisation that has accompanied the people of Haiti in various ways and circumstances over the last three decades, the CCC has been concerned, for some time now, with the welfare/aid approach to Haiti that has been the dominant one over a protracted period of its history.

Without wanting to even appear to be minimizing the (very needed) interventions and efforts of so many well-intentioned persons and groups operating over the years in Haiti, we are of the considered opinion that the time has now come for all available resources to be placed at the disposal of ***genuine development co-operation***. Without such a thrust, we shall continue – for decades to come – addressing symptoms and not root causes of a deep-seated social malady. In the given circumstances one is constrained to ask, e.g.: “Was all the destruction, death and distress experienced the result of the 7.0 earthquake *per se*, or was not the factor of an over-crowded city with weak and compromised structures – all due to decades of continued impoverishment and underdevelopment – a major factor in the equation of devastation?” The answer is clearly self-evident.

In conclusion, the CCC would like to advise its member churches and ecumenical partners that subsequent communiqués will be forthcoming from its Secretariat informing of more specific lines of action/intervention. We wish to further urge that in this circumstance our entire membership, as a group of churches bonded in covenant, stand firmly together in consolidating our efforts and resources for the greater good and benefit of the Haitian people and the glory of God who is Father and “the God of all consolation.”

May God’s blessing be upon our Haitian sisters and brothers and all those who seek to assist them as we continue to lift them up in prayer in the months ahead.

***Gerard A.J. Granado (Sgd.)***  
**General Secretary**  
**Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC)**

January 15, 2010  
St. Augustine,  
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.