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## LWF CONVOY REACHES PORT AU PRINCE

Winnipeg, January 22, 2010 – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is taking a lead role in organizing the response of Action by Churches Together (ACT) to the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Haiti. Below is the latest communication received from the Lutheran World Information, the communication arm of the LWF.

Your donations to the Canadian Lutheran World Relief Appeal for Haiti are being used to support the work being undertaken by the LWF and ACT.

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### LUTHERAN WORLD INFORMATION

LWI News online:

<http://www.lutheranworld.org/News/Welcome.EN.html>

First LWF Relief Convoy Arrives in Port-au-Prince, Haiti DWS Focuses on Assistance for Internally Displaced Persons and Long-term Development Work

PORT-AU-PRINCE (HAITI)/GENEVA 21 January 2010 (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS) plans to scale up operations and strengthen logistics capacity in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic following the arrival of the first DWS convoy with urgently needed relief supplies on 20 January in the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince. DWS Program Coordinator Rudelmar Bueno de Faria underlined the need to expand LWF/DWS response in order to address quickly and effectively the needs of the stricken population.

Reports from DWS country program staff in Haiti indicate that Wednesday's large aftershock of magnitude 6.1 had caused further destruction. Buildings that had already been damaged collapsed completely and more people have been injured. It is still unknown, however, whether the death toll has increased as a result of the aftershock.

An ACT Alliance rapid support team has already arrived in the region and is providing assistance to partner organizations locally in assessing the extent of the damage and the support required. ACT Alliance is the world's largest alliance of churches and related humanitarian and development agencies. The support team is led by Elsa Moreno, LWF/DWS staff member in Geneva from 2006 to mid-2009.

In an interview just before leaving Denmark for Haiti, Moreno told Lutheran World Information (LWI) that in the days to come the ACT Alliance would focus on delivering as much assistance as possible to the population in Port-au-Prince, as well as around the city and in other areas devastated by the earthquake. Some of the towns include those closest to the epicenter, Leogane and Petit Goave. According to the United Nations, 80 to 90 percent of buildings in Leogane, 19km west of Port-au-Prince, were destroyed. Petit Goave, to the west of Leogane, was also badly hit.

Moreno and DWS collaborators in Haiti said that many people had fled Port-au-Prince and returned to their places of origin, putting a great deal of pressure on local communities to host them. "The ACT Alliance will continuously try to assess the number of people going to those areas which are away from response of other agencies. The main work will focus on water, shelter and care for children," Moreno stated.

Moreno told LWI that two important components now needed to be put together-emergency response and long-term development. "Our response is not only focused on the immediate needs, but also to help people recover in the long-term and start the process for development," said Moreno, a native of Colombia.

A key task of the DWS country program in Haiti now will be bringing relief to people who have lost everything. DWS would aim to engage and focus attention on internally displaced persons (IDPs) given the department's expertise in camp management, indicated Bueno de Faria. International relief organizations currently estimate the number of IDPs to be as many as 600,000.

The program's main operational areas before the earthquake were in the Macaya zone in Grande Anse and Forêt des Pins, Bueno de Faria noted. "Our target population has always been small-scale farmers, disaster-affected communities and migrants. The LWF will continue focusing on sustainable livelihoods and environment, and food security and advocacy. We are working to continue supporting these communities."

Meanwhile, the LWF/DWS office in Geneva has sent two collaborators to Haiti to reinforce its team there. Mr Bobby Waddell, consultant for resource mobilization, has been sent as LWF/DWS emergency senior advisor for three weeks; Ms Sophia Gebreyes, program officer for Latin America and the Caribbean, will go to Haiti for a week to assess the situation and identify models for optimal coordination between Geneva and Haiti.

For Waddell, a major challenge lies especially in dealing with the reality of logistics and coordination on the ground. Gebreyes wants to "contribute to the emergency response in the crisis phase as well as help plan the early and long-term recovery phases with our frontline staff." Next week another, larger LWF/DWS convoy will be sent to Haiti with more relief supplies.

In collaboration with other members of the ACT Alliance, DWS plans to set up comprehensive, long-term psychosocial counselling structures for frontline staff as quickly as possible. These collaborators are under tremendous emotional stress and are stretched to their psychological limit, Bueno de Faria noted. It is therefore crucial, he said, to offer them respite and professional accompaniment in dealing with their experiences and trauma.

DWS Director Eberhard Hitzler said he was "overwhelmed" by the solidarity of Lutheran churches all around the world. "Their prayers and financial contribution are a great support for our work in Haiti," he noted.

The fact that World Service staff members in Sudan donated to the relief effort is "another fantastic symbol of this solidarity," Hitzler commented. "This is the LWF at its best."

Follow Communio in Action on the LWF Web site at:

[http://www.lutheranworld.org/Haiti\\_Quake.html](http://www.lutheranworld.org/Haiti_Quake.html)