

## Catholic Relief Services update on Haiti

Tom Roberts | Jan. 13, 2010 NCR Today

Following is a news release from Catholic Relief Services updating its Haiti efforts:

Baltimore, MD, January 13? Catholic Relief Services is readying food and other aid to help families affected by a powerful earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12. CRS has committed an initial \$5 million (US) to help survivors of the devastating quake.

?This is a massive disaster,? says CRS? Country Representative in Haiti, Karel Zelenka. ?We should be prepared for thousands and thousands of dead and injured.? In a brief call on Tuesday night before phones went down, Zelenka described clouds of smoke surrounding Port-au-Prince and said, ?I?ve experienced earthquakes before, but I never felt anything like this. This is a major hit. And it was direct.?

While the CRS office in Port-au-Prince is undamaged, a building directly across from it collapsed. CRS has approximately 340 staffers in Haiti, of which 120 are in Port-au-Prince. Many staffers slept outside on Tuesday night to avoid building collapses from aftershocks.

CRS has pre-positioned food, water storage containers, bedding and other supplies in warehouses in Haiti and neighboring countries. ?We have to find out if the warehouses in Haiti are damaged,? says Ken Polsky, Regional Representative for CRS Latin America. ?We will also move supplies there from the Dominican Republic and Miami.?

?This is going to be devastating to an already large, slum-like city,? says Bill Canny, Director of Emergency Operations for CRS.

?We're moving additional emergency staff in as quickly as possible,? continues Canny, who is leaving for Haiti today [January 13]. ?We know it's chaos in Port-au-Prince and help is needed immediately.?

CRS has worked in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, for over 50 years. The country is still rebuilding from the 2008 hurricanes that left the city of Gonaives buried in 3.2 million cubic yards of mud.

*Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. The agency provides assistance to people in more than 100 countries and territories based on need, regardless of race, nationality or creed. For more information, please visit [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org) or [www.crsespanol.org](http://www.crsespanol.org).*