

Message delivered by the Ministre d'Etat, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, one year after the earthquake which struck Haiti on January 12, 2010

Paris, January 12, 2011

One year after the tragedy of January 12, 2010, which plunged Haiti into mourning, I would like, on behalf of the French government, to send to Haiti a message of friendship, sympathy and solidarity.

The Haitian people have experienced one of the worst ordeals in their history. They faced it with courage and self-sacrifice. On this day of national mourning, we would like to say to them: your determination commands admiration and respect. France stands resolutely and permanently alongside you in this ordeal.

This was, for France, one of the most significant humanitarian interventions of the last few years: airlifts which continued for 2 months; a field hospital, a hospital ship also sent to care for the injured; about a thousand emergency service, medical, and engineering personnel to help the populations.

The commitments made by President Sarkozy during his visit on February 17, 2010, have been honored.

The Haitian debt has been cancelled. Budgetary support has been provided. Emergency response equipment has been delivered.

Young French people have also played a role; with the help of young people doing their adapted military service and their civic national service from Martinique, Guadeloupe and Metropolitan France it has been possible to restore dozens of schools, orphanages, and health centers.

Thanks to France's support, Port-au-Prince's main hospital has been able to continue receiving the sick. It will be rebuilt through a Franco-American partnership with the Haitian Ministry of Health.

Two working-class neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince are currently being rehabilitated.

In order to prepare for the future, almost 500 Haitian students – future judges and civil servants – have been admitted into our institutions.

Our businesses are mobilizing their efforts and are contributing to the revival of economic activities, without which there can be no prospects of development or progress.

All of these reconstruction efforts are part of a long-term strategy focusing on the coordination of efforts. France will continue to play its part in Haiti alongside the other donor countries and international organizations, within the framework of the guidelines established by the Haitians themselves and the Haitian authorities.

France will have provided a total of €326 million over two years - in 2010 and 2011 - in support of the reconstruction of Haiti, which represents an unprecedented effort.

I hope that 2011 will be the year of renewal, hope and reconstruction.