

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



MEDIA CONTACT:

Cathy Herholdt, World Concern
206-546-7374 (office)
206-794-9775 (cell)
cathyh@worldconcern.org

“It was a nightmare...”

World Concern Remembers Haiti Earthquake Devastation as 10th Anniversary Approaches

January 10, 2020 (SEATTLE) – “I heard a noise like a storm,” recalls Efanor Nore, World Concern Haiti Country Representative, of the moment when the magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck his home nation, on January 12, 2010. He was driving through Haiti’s capital city Port-au-Prince when the road buckled in front of him and another car smashed into the broken concrete. Buildings collapsed before his eyes, and people ran into the streets, screaming for help.

“It was a nightmare,” said Nore, as he recounts the day no Haitian will ever forget.

This Sunday, January 12, 2020, marks the 10-year anniversary of the devastating quake that hit Port-au-Prince at 4:53 p.m. local time. The disaster caused an estimated 300,000 deaths, displaced more than a million people, and damaged nearly half of all structures in the epicentral area.

World Concern launched a massive response that assisted tens of thousands of people who were affected by the disaster. Initial aid focused on meeting immediate needs for shelter, water, medical care, and income. In the months that followed, World Concern provided transitional shelters to families who lost their homes, and cash grants to families and business owners to restart businesses that were lost, among other activities.

Since 2010, World Concern has implemented multiple disaster risk reduction projects aimed at equipping families and communities to be better prepared and more resilient in the face of recurring disasters, particularly weather-related disasters, with a goal of bringing national disaster plans that are in place down to the household level, where training and equipping are needed most.

“Community members have to own the process,” explains World Concern Deputy Director of Disaster Response, Maggie Konstanski. “At World Concern, we don’t see disaster as a one-time event, but always aim to leave a community more resilient and protected than before.”



“When communities are truly equipped with early warning systems, trained on how to use them, and they’re owned at the community level, and an effective, safe plan is in place, it does save lives,” says Konstanski. **“The community wants to protect and save themselves. We’re giving them the knowledge and tools to protect themselves.”**

Despite efforts by the Haitian community, aid organizations, and the government, the unique and extensive challenges in Haiti have prolonged and even crippled rebuilding efforts. Nore believes only about 3% of buildings in Port-au-Prince have been rebuilt in 10 years. And an estimated 38,000 people still live in tents and makeshift camps that were set up after the quake.

Corruption, gang violence, political crisis, and drugs have left the city in a state of ruin Nore feels is even worse than 2010.

Is there hope for Haiti? Nore believes so.

“Haiti is really resilient. Even at this time of political crisis ... Haitians still have hope,” he said. “They think a new day will come where people around the world will use the example of what Haiti has faced over the past 100 years of suffering to learn ... The time of Haiti will come,” he said. “We continue to be an example—positively. We face more than any civilization has faced in the past. We hope to use our past experience to move forward.”

For more information on World Concern, or to donate, please visit www.worldconcern.org.

For interviews with staff in Seattle or Haiti, or for more information, please contact Cathy Herholdt, Senior Communications Director, at (206) 794-9775 or cathyh@worldconcern.org.

###

World Concern is a Christian global relief and development organization. With our supporters, our faith compels us to extend life-saving help and opportunity to people facing the most profound human challenges of extreme poverty. At World Concern, the solutions we offer, the work we do, creates lasting, sustainable change. Lasting change that provides lasting hope. Our areas of expertise include disaster response, clean water, education, food security, child protection, microfinance and health.