



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Bernardito Auza
Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN,
at International Ebola Recover Conference and Technical Consultation
New York, 9-10 July 2015

Mr. / Madame President,

My delegation is pleased to participate in this International Ebola Recovery Conference, which has established the ambitious and vital aim of “getting to zero and staying at zero”. Sadly, we recently witnessed the urgent need for such efforts when a new death due to the Ebola Virus Disease was identified in Liberia, some forty-five days after the country had been declared “Ebola Free”. Thus, this review and planning exercise, as well as the generous pledging efforts in which we engage today, must result in action-oriented commitments to overcome all risk of complacency and to make tangible progress in the strengthening and preparedness of health systems to avoid future outbreaks.

On numerous occasions, the Holy See has expressed its close solidarity with those affected by this epidemic. During his 2015 Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, Pope Francis mentioned the sick who are so often cast aside and marginalized, including, in particular, “the victims of the new and terrible outbreak of Ebola ... in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea.” He appealed “to the entire international community to provide adequate humanitarian assistance to patients and to make concerted efforts to combat the disease.”¹

Moreover, local Catholic communities in the affected countries have been on the frontlines in the fight against the epidemic and in providing support to the families of the victims. These communities strongly opposed discrimination against those who recovered from the illness and children who have been orphaned by the Ebola-related deaths of their parents, while actively working for their reintegration into their families and communities. They have also promoted safe and dignified burial practices.

In close cooperation with the Holy See, international Catholic organizations have raised funds and supplies worth millions of dollars to assist the Catholic Church in the affected countries. Pope Francis himself granted 500,000.00 Euros to advance a special initiative. We continue to provide significant resources to Catholic Church-related institutions in the three affected countries to enhance and expand their programs.

¹ Pope Francis, Address to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, 12 January 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/january/documents/papa-francesco_20150112_corpo-diplomatico.html

As an expression of its appreciation for the remarkable efforts of all to defeat Ebola, and as a gesture of its continued solidarity with those affected by the epidemic, the Holy See pledges the symbolic amount of US\$ 20.000 to support national and regional recovery strategies. More importantly, the Holy See wishes to reiterate its determination to continue to work, through Catholic institutions in the countries and areas affected by Ebola and its international humanitarian network, towards the achievement of “getting to zero and staying at zero”.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the appeal Pope Francis makes to the international community to exert all necessary effort to defeat Ebola, effectively alleviating the hardships and sufferings of all those affected.

Thank you, Mr./Madame President.