

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti, Jan. 13, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- HCNN -- During his annual speech to parliament on Monday, Haiti's Prime minister said the government has made tangible progress in reconstruction, agriculture, security, macroeconomic management, investment, tourism infrastructure and the fight against corruption and extreme poverty, among many other areas of improvement, four years after the earthquake that killed several hundred thousand people.

He applauded the efforts of the government, noting how over the last six months, the momentum has accelerated and progress across the board is now clearly visible despite little direct external budget support to the Haitian government.

In the aftermath of the January 2012 earthquake, the international community pledged more than \$10 billion to finance the reconstruction of the country devastated by the disaster.

For the most part the promised funds never reached Haiti or were disbursed through non-governmental organizations or international organizations. Only about 2% of such funds were actually transferred to the government to address the major challenges stemming from the disaster.

In a speech commemorating the disaster, Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon expressed his support. "Your commitment, combined with the resilience of the Haitian people, has made much progress possible, health systems are being strengthened, more children are in school, close to 90 per cent of the displaced population have left the camps and economic activities have resumed allowing Haiti to start moving from crisis to long-term development."

Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe added that out of the 1.5 million people who were living in tents, 90 % of the displaced have been relocated to safer homes, and that efforts were underway to facilitate the relocation of the remaining 147,000.

Lamothe told members of Parliament that significant improvements in safety and security were also palpable. According to the latest report from a UN agency, the rate of violent crimes dropped by 34%, the rate of kidnapping has decreased by 55%. At the same time, the Haitian National Police force has been growing in numbers, personnel is increasingly better trained, and its members are being widely deployed.

Another area of success is macroeconomic stability. The Prime minister said the growth rate of GDP was 4.3 % for 2013, compared to 2.02% in 2012, and an increase is expected for the year 2014.

Foreign direct investment has also grown by 25%. According to the IDB, the inflation rate fell to 4.5 % in 2013 against 6.5 % in 2012 and the exchange rate is stable.

Lamothe explained that over 800 projects are ongoing nationwide. He proudly noted that through the government's principal social program called "Ede Pep" (Help the People) significant poverty reduction programs are being carried out in poor neighborhoods where homes have been renovated, kilometers of roads built, and where many other job-generating infrastructure, sanitation projects and conditional cash transfers provided.

"The EDE PEP program has already reached 2 million vulnerable people and we will continue to bring this solidarity to the most vulnerable, while we are working to create more sustainable jobs for the population," said Lamothe.

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