



Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much for being here tonight. It is the fourth time that we have held this event which is now becoming, for most of you, a very familiar one.

I am extremely pleased to welcome some good friends who have offered to be our sponsors for this year's events, and I thank them whole heartedly.

Together with Pioneer Investments, we have ABN Amro, Citi, Deutsche Bank, HSBC, Lehman Brothers, Societe Generale and UBS. An impressive list of big names and, most importantly, of good friends!

Activities

This past year's activities have been mostly focussed on Zimbabwe, which continues to be our main project. A year ago, when I spoke to you about this project, we were treating some 1400 patients affected by AIDS. Now this number stands at 1453, in spite of the increasing problems in carrying out our humanitarian mission.

Situation in Zimbabwe

Atrocities being committed against the Zimbabwean people by their own Government and Police force are now countless. A vast human cull is under way in Zimbabwe and the great majority of deaths are as a direct result of deliberate government policy. Their aim is to Bash the opposition! Retain power!

Women suffer the most. At a certain point the men just walk away **but** the women are left with their children, watching them starve. They used to have universal schooling but today 50% of the children are out of school because the parents cannot afford even the smallest fees.

Meat disappeared after the government shut down private abattoirs. Fuel supplies dried up after the State was made the sole authorized distributor. In town, straggling queues form at any rumor that sugar, maize or bread or anything else might be available. Most supermarket shelves are empty of the most basic of staples: There is no meat, no sugar, no maize, no bread, no pasta, no rice, no milk. This is because at the end of June, the Government imposed a price cut of 50% in a country where inflation is running over 8,000% p.a.!

I was there at the beginning of July and the despair, the hopelessness of the people and the fear of the police force was palpable everywhere. A drive across Zimbabwe today reveals a desolate portrait of widespread decline.

The South African countries neighbouring Zimbabwe continue to support its President and, by so doing, these countries neglect the Zimbabwean people.

Our projects

The vast majority of our patients have been affected by these ongoing attacks on their human rights. But, thanks to you and your support we were able to respond, in face of increasing difficulties, to this ongoing emergency. Thanks to you we have been doing our best to help our patients by providing them not only with medicines but also food and various staples. We are also importing fuel to keep our projects running and we are now planning a system of solar panels in the Luisa Guidotti Hospital in order to let it function even when power supply is cut off for days at a time. We are also helping to drill two boreholes at the Hospital, equipped with solar pumps, in order to alleviate the water scarcity.

The so called “good old days” when we provided just medicines because everything else was available are now gone. We all know that the local Authorities are extremely successful in disintegrating their country, and making their economy the worst in the world.

A very special thought must be sent to all of our people on the ground. They, in spite of increasing physical insecurity and ongoing pressure from the Authorities, continue to struggle in order to ensure that our projects bring hope and relief to our patients and local staff.

Demonstrating by their daily actions, that **we all must be givers, not just getters.**

Conclusion

We saw many harsh realities in Zimbabwe. However, we also saw the many positive results of our projects there and how important our support is to ensure the survival and the relative well being of our patients.

We now have to persist with what we are doing, and help these people to wait, in good shape, for the day when normality can return to their country. This requires determination, a clear vision of our aims and full support from our donors. It is, again, teamwork from all the stakeholders in this project.



ROBERTO BAZZONI

ONLUS

Honouring a memory... and a mission

As you know, all this was made possible by you. **You** who have been side by side with us for so many years.

I hope that our Charity continues to enjoy your support, by raising your awareness and willingness to stay involved. And finally, ladies and gentlemen, I express to you all my sincere thanks for being here tonight.

Sebastiano