

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here with you to celebrate our Charity's tenth annual Golf Day. I have to say that, last year, I had no certainty about being able to continue this annual gathering of people who like the event and the worthy cause behind it. And then, thanks to the willingness of many volunteers and friends in Pioneer and elsewhere, we are here again, and I have to thank them all for making this event a reality.

This year I am extremely pleased to thank all of the participants for their help. Together with people who supported us throughout the years without fail, there are new people who share our cause, and I thank them all heartily.

Activities

Zimbabwe and the fight against AIDS remain our most urgent and complex project. The problems we have to overcome, as well as the results of our actions make it a daring but rewarding task.

We are now treating in excess of 1,900 patients affected by AIDS. This figure is in sharp increase in comparison with last year, when we reached 1,600 and shows the need of our action.

And now let's give you a feel for the situation on the ground.

Situation of the country

Zimbabwe has again been classified as one of 22 countries in "protracted crisis" where a combination of weak institutions, political instability and vulnerability to natural disasters expose a significant proportion of the population to a high risk of chronic hunger and food insecurity. It is listed among countries requiring special attention because of their precarious humanitarian and political situations.

An estimated 1.7 million Zimbabweans are forecast to face hunger during the current 2010/11 marketing season.

The situation in the school system is gloomy. In the past three years thousands of children dropped out of school at both secondary and primary level..

From a political standpoint, the Government of National Unity is in tatters, unable to assert its authority against Mr. Mugabe's will.

The country is run as a personal fiefdom for Mugabe and his military junta, all of whom live in palatial homes and expect a personal cut from every aspect of the country's wealth.

The winds of freedom that are sweeping many countries in Northern Africa and Middle East do not blow in Zimbabwe, for the moment. The political and economic oppression continues unabated, and just we do not for how long.

Against this background, which shows very little sign of improvement, we are able to help these people in many ways, not only with medical care but also with food, diesel, transport, clean water, support for schooling, basic items, so that their lives are as "normal" as possible. We remain confident on a future change of the political situation for the better, and meantime we are helping some two thousand people to resist and hope in a better future for them and their kids.

All this is made possible by you and your support.

I confirm that we have no overheads, so that all of your kind donations go straight to the people who really need help.

Thank you very much indeed!

Sebastiano