



When the dust settled again on the ground that had just been shaken by earthquakes, no one imagined the extent of the human and material destruction suffered by Haiti.

Thousands of people lost their lives in the buildings that collapsed and the urgency for action to help the survivors was immediately on everyone's mind in Québec, which has a population of approximately 130,000 people of Haitian origin.

Everyone's compassion and solidarity were demonstrated in various ways in the hours after the earthquake, and the international community quickly mobilized, with the assistance of engineers, to secure public buildings, protect the population from buildings that were on the verge of collapse and begin to clear the tons of rubble.

Even if basic standards had been met, which was apparently not the case, a number of infrastructures would not have withstood the force of the two earthquakes that occurred on January 12 and 20 at magnitudes of 7 and 6.1 on the Richter scale, or the hundred some aftershocks that accompanied them, reminding us of the fragility of things in our world.

Three-fourths of the buildings in Port-au-Prince were destroyed and 50% of the major cities near to the epicentre of the seismic activity, such as Jacmel, Gressier and Carrefour, and 90% of Léogane, were damaged.

Once the basic first needs of the population have been met, we

will have to move into the reconstruction phase, for which Québec engineers have already rolled up their sleeves in an effort to help Haitians rebuild their country.

In the days after the catastrophe, the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec encouraged its members to contact [Québec's chapter of engineers without borders](#) and volunteer for long-term engineering projects.

We are able to offer guidance that will be of great help to the small number of Haitian engineers and technicians. Half of the Canadian engineering that is done abroad involves Québec engineers, who are highly sought after for their expertise both in technical solutions and project management, but also for their humanity and social commitment.

In Haiti, where French is an official language, it has always been easy for our members to communicate with local colleagues and thus share the same vision, which makes it possible to provide Haitian engineering the means to create its own sustainable structures and jobs on site.

When the media has abandoned the emergency response efforts, for which engineers have been deployed, it will take personal, longterm investment to mobilize us.

Both engineers on sabbatical leave and engineering students who have to complete internships for their academic programs will find great inspiration in working to rebuild the homes, public buildings, commercial buildings and infrastructures of Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas.

Accordingly, they will prove yet again that social commitment, one of the core values advocated by the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec, is not an empty expression. Solidarity with the less fortunate is also part of the ethics that guide our actions according to our professional conscience and it plays its role here.

Between Québec engineers and engineering students and the citizens of Haiti, a commitment of several months, even years, beyond the generosity of the moment, is what it will take to guarantee their survival. For comments, [bulletin@oiq.qc.ca](mailto:bulletin@oiq.qc.ca).