

ORAL QUESTION H-0938/08
for Question Time at the part-session in December 2008
pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure
by Johan Van Hecke
to the Commission

Subject: Easing Haiti's debt burden

The current situation in the desperately poor country of Haiti is being called the most serious environmental crisis on the planet. While the country has been pounded by violent storms, 98% of all its forest have been cut down for fuel, which means that even ordinary storms lead to flooding. Experts say that it will be years before the country can cultivate even half of the food needed to feed the population. And even this can only happen with a massive injection of money and energy into watershed restoration, essential services and food security.

That being so, it is absurd that it will be five months before Haiti can expect major debt relief from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. At the same time Haiti's entry into the group of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) has been postponed. In the interests of the country's reconstruction it is necessary for the shareholders in the World Bank to look together at how they can cancel Haiti's debt as soon as possible. What is the Commission's view of this postponement, and will it be taking any action in consequence?

Tabled: 24.11.2008
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