

# Development and Peace optimistic that bishops' overseas aid concerns will be resolved

Canada's bishops continue to be concerned that some Development and Peace aid partners conflict with Catholic moral and social teaching, says Bishop Lionel Gendron, president of the Canadian bishops' conference.

That means a study on the Catholic aid and development aid agency's overseas partners, presented to bishops at their annual plenary Sept. 26, is "still ongoing" and there is no word yet whether bishops who have been withholding funds collected last spring will release them.

"What we are trying to do is, when Development and Peace are saying they are the Catholic social arm of the Church, they have to be Catholic," said Bishop Gendron. "There is work; it's a bit slow, maybe too slow. We want to put pressure, and I think the fact some of the bishops retain the funds, a way of putting pressure."



Development and Peace director-general Serge Langlois

Twelve bishops – including Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smith – have been withholding funds from their annual Lenten collection for the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, pending the results of a joint study with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, after concerns were raised about some overseas partners in Haiti that seemed to be supporting abortion and contraception. Their concerns led to a joint study to examine all

of Development and Peace partners.

The bishops are withholding somewhere between \$2 million and \$4 million. Toronto, one of the dioceses withholding funds, raised \$800,000 through its ShareLife campaign for Development and Peace.

According to the online French-language news site *Présence*, Development and Peace director-general Serge Langlois said the study revealed problems with about 40 of the agency's overseas partners which have pushed agendas contrary to Catholic teaching.

Langlois did say the study showed none of the specific projects funded by Development and Peace went contrary to Catholic teaching or social doctrine. He added he's optimistic the bishops' concerns addressed.

"There have been advancements and we hope that the situation will soon be resolved so that funds can go towards supporting the poorest and most vulnerable in the global south. Those funds belong to them," Langlois said in an Oct. 1 e-mail.

Bishop Gendron added: "It is a work in progress. We need to be persevering and patient, and at the same time we have to put some pressure so we will see the end of it."

The Catholic Bishops' Conference also wants to ensure people who are working at the diocesan level dedicated to helping people in developing countries understand what the problem is regarding concerns about Development and Peace, said Bishop Gendron, and that everyone understand "that we are Catholic and want to be Catholic."

The CCCB cannot order dioceses to release funds, but decisions must come from the individual bishops.