

# International Donors' Conference Towards a New Future for Haiti

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SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you very much, Secretary General, and thank you for your leadership and your personal commitment to this international endeavor.

President Preval, to you and the members of your government, we thank you for the extraordinary work that you have done leading up to this point.

To former President Clinton, with whom I first went to Haiti many years ago about two months after we were married, thank you for taking on another assignment from the Secretary General.

And to all of the countries and international institutions represented here, thank you. Thank you for the immediate response to the overwhelming catastrophe that afflicted the Haitian people and thank you for your continuing commitment.

We have had over 140 nations working to support the Government of Haiti in delivering food, temporary shelter, and medical care to thousands of survivors. But the emergency relief is only the beginning of what will be a long road to recovery, as the Secretary General just pointed out; one that will require global support.

Some people wonder, "Why Haiti? Why this great outpouring of international humanitarian concern and commitment to Haiti's future? Why is Haiti's fate of such consequence to the region and the world that it deserves sustained help? Why should we hope that this time, with our collective assistance, Haiti can achieve a better future?" These are questions that deserve answers and I believe that this conference will begin to do so.

The humanitarian need, we know, is great. Therefore, as fellow human beings, we respond from a position of conscience and morality to help those who, but for the grace of God, we could be in a world where natural disasters are often unpredictable, inflicting great costs. Haiti was a country of 9 million people before the earthquake. Today, more than a quarter of a million of those people have died. More than a million are homeless. Hundreds of thousands live in temporary camps without enough food or sufficient access to sanitation. Nearly every government agency has been destroyed along with universities, hospitals, and primary schools, which we know are the foundations to a nation's long-term progress. Close to a million young people were preparing to enter the job market within five years. Now their opportunities have crumbled while the need for jobs has multiplied.

Before the earthquake, Haiti was on a path to progress. The government, led by President Preval, had started enacting critical reforms. Haiti's economy grew by nearly 3 percent last year. Two international chains launched new hotels, a sign of a rising tourism industry. New factories were opening and others had been contracted to begin production. But with the earthquake, the results of much of this hard work were wiped away. But the people of Haiti never gave up. As they mourn their losses, they gathered the resources they had left and began working around the clock to put their lives and their country back together. They relied on the strength and the spirit that have carried them through tough times before. But they need our help. They cannot succeed without the support of the global community, and we need Haiti to succeed. What

happens there has repercussions far beyond its borders.

There are two paths that lie before us. If Haiti can build safe homes, its citizens can escape many of the dangers they now face and return to more normal lives. If Haiti can realize broad-based, sustainable economic growth, it can create opportunity across the country beyond Port-au-Prince so Haitians don't have to move to their capital or leave their country to find work. If Haiti can build strong health and education systems, it can give its people the tools they need to contribute to their nation's progress and fulfill their own God-given potentials. If Haiti can create strong, transparent, accountable institutions, it can establish the credibility, trust, and stability its people have long-deserved. And if Haiti can do all of those things with our help, it will become an engine for progress and prosperity generating opportunity and fostering greater stability for itself and for countries throughout the hemisphere and beyond.

But there is another path that Haiti could take, a path that demands far less of Haiti and far less of us. If the effort to rebuild is slow or insufficient, if it is marked by conflict, lack of coordination, or lack of transparency, then the challenges that have plagued Haiti for years could erupt with regional and global consequences. Before the earthquake, migration drained Haiti of many talented citizens, many of whom live in our country. If new jobs and opportunity do not emerge, even more people will leave.

Before the earthquake, quality healthcare was a challenge for Haiti. Now, it is needed even more urgently. Haiti has the highest rate of tuberculosis in the hemisphere, the highest rate of HIV, the highest rates of infant, child, and maternal mortality, one of the highest rates of child malnutrition. And with the public health system now shattered, those numbers will climb. The lack of sanitation services could cause outbreaks of lethal illnesses. And the lack of reliable medical services could give rise to new drug-resistant strains of disease that will soon cross borders.

Before the earthquake, hunger was a problem for Haiti. Years of deforestation had stripped the land of its rich topsoil and people struggled to grow or purchase enough food to feed their families. The riots over food that broke out in 2008 toppled Haiti's government. Now, food is even more scarce, and people more desperate.

Before the earthquake, security was a challenge for Haiti, and a United Nations peacekeeping mission, MINUSTAH, helped promote the rule of law. Now the dedicated UN workers in Haiti have suffered terrible losses. So have the Haitian National Police, which were building their ranks and their capacity. With so much destruction and dislocation, security is even more tenuous. Drug trafficking is a half a billion dollar a year industry in Haiti. It thrives on political and social instability. Trafficking in human beings is also rampant. Tens of thousands of children are trafficked in Haiti every year, and now even more are vulnerable.

Now, each of these problems directly affects the people of Haiti, but they indirectly affect us all. And if they worsen, it is not only the people of Haiti who will suffer. Yet I have great confidence in the resilience of the people of Haiti. Their history has tested them and now they are being tested again. So are Haiti's leaders, in whom I also have great confidence. So we are called to do better than we have in the past. Many countries here have helped Haiti in the past. Many NGOs have helped Haiti in the past. We cannot do what we've done before.

The leaders of Haiti must take responsibility for their country's reconstruction. They must make the tough decisions that guide a strong, accountable, and transparent recovery. And that is what they are starting to do with the creation of a new mechanism that provides coordination and consultation so aid can be directed where it is most needed. And we in the global community, we must also do things differently. It will be tempting to fall back on old habits – to work around the government rather than to work with them as partners, or to fund a scattered array of well-meaning projects rather than making the deeper, long-term investments that Haiti needs now. We cannot retreat to failed strategies.

I know we've heard these imperatives before – the need to coordinate our aid, hold ourselves accountable, share our knowledge, track results. But now, we cannot just declare our intentions. We have to follow through and put them into practice. Therefore, this is not only a conference about what financially we pledge to Haiti. We also have to pledge our best efforts to do better ourselves – to offer our support in a smarter way, a more effective way that produces real results for the people of Haiti.

So let us say here, with one voice, we will pass this test for us. To that end, the United States pledges \$1.15 billion for Haiti's long-term recovery and reconstruction. This money will go toward supporting the Government of Haiti's plan to strengthen agriculture, energy, health, security, and governance. We are committed to working with the people and organizations throughout Haiti, including civil society groups, private businesses, NGOs, and citizens. And I'm very glad to see so many of them represented here today.

We will also be looking for ways to engage our Haitian diaspora. Haitian Americans have much to contribute to this effort. And we will seek specifically to empower the women of Haiti. I've said this so many times that I know I sound like a broken record, but investing in women is the best investment we can make in any country. And investing in the Haitian women will fuel the long-term economic recovery and progress, not only for them, but for their families.

Over the years, all of our countries have learned many lessons, particularly from the tsunami that the United Nations was instrumental in leading the response to. Now, we must put those lessons to work in Haiti. I'm very excited and very committed on behalf of President Obama, the Government of the United States, and the people of the United States to help Haiti and to help the leaders of Haiti lead a recovery effort worthy of their highest hopes.

Thank you so much, Secretary General. (Applause.)