



Caribbean Community

Office of the Special Representative on Haiti

The Most Hon. P. J. Patterson, O.N., O.C.C., P.C., Q.C.

Message

from

THE MOST HON. P. J. PATTERSON, ON, OCC, PC, QCH
Special Representative of CARICOM Heads on Haiti

On the Occasion of

The Second Annual Interfaith Memorial Service for Victims of the Haitian Earthquake

I have always felt a close kinship with the Haitian people due to our shared heritage and condition as neighbours in the Caribbean community. The Haitian disaster of January 12, 2010 was an eye-opener to the world regarding the true conditions in Haiti. No longer could we turn a blind eye and excuse our inaction on the vague and incorrect premise that Haitians are not worth saving. That has never been the case and will never be the case. Haiti has as many wonderful, hard-working and patriotic people as any other nation. What they have not had, for centuries, up to this point in time, is opportunity.

It was particularly gratifying to me to see how well Haiti dealt with a Presidential election in the middle of the dislocation and destruction left in the aftermath of the earthquake. It was pleasing to note how well they faced the frightening spectacle of a runaway cholera epidemic without flinching and to also see the response of the international community to this further catastrophe.

As the CARICOM Representative on Haiti I can assure you all that the Caribbean region has assisted, continues to assist and will assist Haiti in the future to the very best of its ability. Already much planning has taken place and with the advice and consent of President Martelly, much more will no doubt be accomplished. We cried with the people of Haiti and we offered them the hand of brotherhood, but we did not fail to see the opportunity that the disaster had created, the chance to build from the ashes a new Haiti, a renaissance Haiti, which would become a beacon of hope for all impoverished and disposed people.

Much of the aid promised Haiti has not yet reached its shores, but by far the majority of assistance the nation has received, has been the practical aid provided by humanitarian groups like the The Haitian Memorial Task Force, and its parent group, the International Humanitarian



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Outreach Ministries, Inc. That assistance, those prayers and the moral support provided has been outstanding and has been greatly appreciated by Haitians at home and abroad.

I commend you on your sterling work and for keeping the issue of Haiti alive here in the United States. I regret not being able to attend this welcome and important memorial service but know that your thoughts and prayers will fall on fertile ground.

May God guide your prayers and grant you his support in your efforts to help Haiti become the first world nation it deserves to be.