

CARICOM commits support for President Martelly's Priorities at IHRC meeting

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has underlined its support for a large-scale housing project in Haiti as proposed by President Michel Martelly to allow some 30,000 persons to return to their neighbourhoods in 16 locations. This, together with a request for support for 100,000 students to be placed in schools by the September term was among the major priorities outlined by the President in his first address to a meeting of Haiti's Interim Recovery Commission (IHRC), held in Pt au Prince, July 21-22.

CARICOM's statement of support was part of an intervention made at the 7th meeting of the commission by the Special Representative of CARICOM on Haiti, the Most Honourable PJ Patterson. The meeting was the first held since the inauguration of President Martelly who had outlined his priorities for the commission prior to Mr Patterson's intervention.

The Special Representative also supported the President's call for a 12-month extension of the mandate of the Commission, but stressed the importance of key changes in its modus operandi. In this context he identified the need for changes in the arrangements for the submission and approval of projects, more timely circulation of documents to allow for meaningful discussion of issues and recommended that a timetable for the meetings be developed and agreed to by the commission.

Expanding on the changes needed to make the IHRC more efficient and useful, Mr Patterson said that there was need to implement sub-committees, such as a sub-committee on private sector investments, to allow for greater involvement of the commission in project implementation and monitoring. The Special Representative also welcomed the proposed changes in the IHRC method for submission of projects and encouraged the commission to be more involved in project implementation and monitoring consistent with President Martelly's stated priorities.

Mr Patterson assured the meeting that CARICOM remained committed to support initiatives aimed at building Haiti's institutional capacity. He noted that this commitment was renewed at the recent meeting of the CARICOM Heads of Government in St Kitts. The strengthening of Haiti's institutional capacity remained crucial to its ability to take over the IHRC's responsibilities as proposed in the action plan for the country's recovery. Hence, at the meeting in St Kitts, CARICOM Heads agreed to remain actively involved in this area in collaboration with other participants such as the UN and its agencies, the European Union (EU), the Organisation of American States (OAS) and other entities represented on the IHRC

Mr Patterson reiterated CARICOM's previously made offer to host a meeting of the commission and suggested that another be convened within the margins of the UN General Assembly in September.

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