



News Story

To News Editor

For Immediate Release

Jamaica and CARICOM States Must Unite for Haiti - Patterson

Jamaica has an immediate opportunity to help in the massive redevelopment process being rolled out in Haiti, says former **Prime Minister and Special Representative of CARICOM on Haiti, the Most Hon. P. J. Patterson.**

A multi-donor reconstruction fund was established and a total of US\$9.9 billion was pledged in New York last Wednesday, Mr. Patterson said. The aim is to put Haiti on a developmental path, following the devastation caused by the 7.0 earthquake on January 12, which killed more than 230,000 persons and left approximately 1.2 million homeless.

"I see the possibility of Jamaica once again becoming a focal point for the developmental activity that is going to take place in Haiti," Mr. Patterson said.

He was updating members of the **Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ)**, on the **Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti**, at a breakfast meeting sponsored by the Jamaica National Building Society, at the Terra Nova Hotel on Thursday, April 8.

The PSOJ has already started playing a co-ordinating role for its sector, Honorary Secretary of the organisation, Earl Jarrett told the meeting. He said, "It is for us _ the private sector in Jamaica _ to recognize that Haiti represents as significant an opportunity as we can have for several years to come."

Prime Minister Patterson pointed out that, "Haiti has a three-phase plan prepared by its Government and accepted at a New York donors meeting." Following on a six-month emergency phase, a period of reconstruction lasting 18 months will follow, leading into a development phase lasting more than a decade.

Jamaica is poised to be a key provider of goods and services for Haiti's redevelopment thrust, he said. "We have human skills, we have talents in all the various disciplines that can be made available to assist."

"There is no field of national endeavor in which we in the Caribbean cannot make a contribution at this time for the development and rebirth of Haiti," he said. "It is an opportunity to build a new Haiti."

The Jamaica Institute of Engineers has already indicated its willingness to make available the building code for Haiti which was developed in Jamaica, Mr. Patterson asserted. "They are not just allowing people to start rebuilding without standards."

The question of land tenure will need to be addressed, he said. This is because the construction activity projected for Haiti can neither be carried out nor financed, in the absence of a regulated land tenure

system. "In the judicial field there is going to be scope for activity," he stated. "It is a critical thing for what has to be done."

University of the West Indies administrators met with their Haitian counterparts in Port-of-Spain during March. Academic and student exchanges are being considered, along with the development of a joint curriculum.

Haiti's chamber of commerce has offered to host consultations with their Caribbean counterparts, he said. "This should be urgently pursued for forming an alliance with Haitian counterparts."

"Anyone interested in playing a role in the country's advancement should first get a copy of the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti," Mr. Patterson suggested, adding "I would suggest you develop an inventory of capabilities and capacities, not only within Jamaica, but within CARICOM."

He advised the PSOJ members to build partnerships with companies outside of CARICOM where this was necessary. "You may have to look at what alliances you may need," he said, pointing out that banking and insurance companies from Canada, Europe and the United States are already demonstrating interest in Haiti.

Every country making a contribution to the multilateral development fund has a list of companies poised to start, and "some are already in Haiti staking claims where they possibly can," he said. Brazil and Mexico have already indicated that there are "areas where they would like to engage with Caribbean entities," he added.

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