

**PREPARATORY MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON  
HAITI, MONTREAL, CANADA, 25 JANUARY 2010:  
PRESENTATION OF THE MOST HONOURABLE  
PERCIVAL JAMES PATTERSON, REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE MEMBER STATES OF CARICOM: A NEW  
RENAISSANCE FOR HAITI**

Mr. Chairman,

I speak today as the representative of the fourteen governments of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) of which Haiti is a member. I wish first of all to express the deepest condolences and solidarity of the Governments and People of CARICOM to our Haitian brothers and sisters following this disastrous earthquake. We also extend our sympathies to the United Nations for the losses suffered by its mission in Haiti. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those affected in one way or another.

I also wish to thank and congratulate the Government of Canada for convening this preparatory Ministerial Meeting on the rebuilding of Haiti and for the arrangements put in place. Given the magnitude of the disaster which has befallen Haiti, it was of critical importance that all, Haitian authorities and representatives of the international community, come together quickly to start to consider how best to ensure that the future of Haiti will be different to its past. CARICOM wishes to commend the international community for its rapid and generous response to the calamity.

Mr. Chairman,

This disaster is an opportunity for the world to show that it can help Haiti rise from the dust. It is also an opportunity for both Haiti and the world to ensure that out of the rubble will rise a new Haiti,

a Haiti envisaged over two hundred years ago by the founding fathers of the country when they fought for their freedom. As the consideration of the drafting of long-term plans for the reconstruction of Haiti commences, we should not neglect the present urgent needs in humanitarian assistance for the Haitians. The obstacles that have to be overcome are enormous but the highest priority must continue to be given to the delivery and distribution of this assistance and to addressing the shelter and other needs of the homeless, the displaced and the vulnerable, among the latter children, women, the elderly and the disabled.

Mr. Chairman,

We support the principles contained in the draft statement prepared for the conference as important guideposts in how we should approach the task of reconstructing Haiti and ensuring that its development becomes sustainable and resilient, especially as these embrace OECD principles of aid effectiveness. In particular, we unhesitatingly support the acceptance that Haiti must be central to this recovery/reconstruction programme. Unless there is ownership by those directly affected, the best laid plans will come to nought. In addition to the involvement from the outset of the Haitian authorities, that of civil society and of the people of Haiti is also of overarching importance.

As the international community commences its consideration, in tandem with the Haitian authorities, of how best to respond to Haiti's reconstruction needs, it needs to bear uppermost in its mind several critical realities:

- Port-au-Prince is not only the capital of the country, but is the location where public administration, political, business, cultural and other activities are over-concentrated to the detriment of outside locations. The common usage by Haitians of the term "the Republic of Port-au-Prince" speaks for itself. Consequently, the magnitude of the devastation wrought by the earthquake to the

State's human capital, its institutional and administrative capacity as well as its physical presence (destruction of Ministries, Courts, Police Stations including the Headquarters) is such that its implications for the entire country's future social and economic development as well as for its continued political stability and human security need to be fully measured. Every effort must therefore be made to strengthen this pulverized institutional capacity. One way of doing so would be to facilitate the mobilization and technical assistance of the Haitian Diaspora, which as we heard this morning is ready to play its part. The public functions of the state and of its public service must be reinforced as a matter of urgency and priority to ensure that the progress made in the provision of public goods and basic services is sustainable.

- Reconstructing Haiti needs to encompass more than replacing destroyed buildings and infrastructure and eviscerated institutions and must include a developmental dimension. Rebuilding should therefore also include the empowerment of the Haitians by the teaching of new skills.

- Despite the measurable institutional, governance and security advances made over the past three years, the plight of the ordinary Haitian has not improved. Given the magnitude of the disaster and the scope of the resulting recovery and reconstruction, both Haiti and the international community must draw the lessons from their past cooperation interface.

- The eyes of the whole world - the international donor community, NGOs and the media - are now focused on Haiti. However, once the media frenzy that accompanies the disaster recedes, so will attention as well as the fulfillment of pledges made. That reality cannot be ignored. In this regard, the establishment of a single, multi-donor reconstruction fund for Haiti, as has been advocated by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago at the Fifth Summit of the Americas and reiterated at the Santo Domingo meeting last Monday (18 January 2010) with built-in transparency and accountability mechanisms should be seriously considered. The establishment of such a fund would have a second

and critical consequence. It would do away with the impediment presented by the dizzying number of accounting modalities required by individual donors.

- A considerable reverse exodus from urban to rural centres has taken and is taking place. Humanitarian relief will need to cover not only the areas affected directly by the disaster, but also those now receiving large numbers of returnees for which they do not have a carrying capacity. Reconstruction and development activities should also target these outside locations so that a return of these persons to informal and unregulated accommodation in Port-au-Prince could be reduced.

- Thought should be given to the pressures that will be placed on neighbouring countries by the outward flows of displaced persons (the Dominican Republic, The Bahamas, Jamaica, and the Turks and Caicos Islands) and to their need for assistance in order to cope with these increased flows.

Mr. Chairman,

The Caribbean Community stands ready to do all in its power to assist Haiti and to play a prominent role in the reconstruction of Haiti. As small economies, our resources may be limited but not our willingness to assist. Already we have provided more than (400) response personnel. These include military personnel, medical personnel, as well as search and rescue teams. Tons of emergency supplies to Haiti have been routed through our operational focal point, Jamaica. The Government of Jamaica continues to offer its port facilities, both land and sea, as a staging area for international assistance into Haiti.

We will continue to offer our emergency and recovery assistance with a primary focus, though not exclusively, on the health sector.

### **CARICOM's Relief Assistance**

- i) More than 3.5 million dollars pledged by governments**

- ii) Holistic Health focused programme being developed to serve a population of 20,000 in general medical and health care for discussion with Haitian officials. Will seek to embrace community and civil society engagement in design and implementation**
- iii) Will work with government of Haiti to deepen Security and logistics interface with national framework and international partners**
- iv) Will continue work with Government of Haiti to strengthen to strengthen and test national preparedness plan, taking into consideration of imminent onset of the next hurricane season.**
- v) Will strongly advocate for the establishment of a National Integrated Disaster Risk Programme as a platform for avoiding future losses. Stakeholders and other partners working DRR in Haiti will need to deepen their efforts towards harmonization within this framework.**

Excellencies,

Every delegation in attendance, and indeed every individual here, is fully committed to the rehabilitation which the catastrophic earthquake has made an imperative because of our common humanity. I believe we also accept that we are no less seized of the imperative to build a new Haiti – a renaissance. To make this possible, we cannot leave here without creating an effective executive machinery between the countries, international and regional organizations, donor agencies and non-governmental relief organizations to prepare for the international conference which will ensure the reconstruction of Haiti. CARICOM expects to be in that engine room.

The Caribbean Community will respond positively to the appeal made by the Prime Minister of Haiti for the Caribbean Community to play a role as advocate on behalf of our fellow member state. The Community also looks forward to working closely with Haiti's external partners on this challenging undertaking which will require a long haul. In particular we look forward to be a vibrant part of this process of reconstruction which must be built on a platform of resilience. We are confident that the issue of governance will go beyond the issues of democratic institutions and also address the process of designing, delivering and reporting on and monitoring this rebuilding effort. Let us all work together over the long term as one, Haitians and international community, for the renaissance of Haiti.

Thank you.