

**THE SITUATION IN HAITI -  
REGIONAL COOPERATION  
FOR ITS RECONSTRUCTION**

**PRESENTATION TO THE  
THIRD CARICOM-CUBA MINISTERIAL MEETING**

**BY**

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## **SALUTATIONS**

It is eight (8) months since the devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010. As pointed out by the Foreign Minister OF Haiti, the challenges have moved from the relief stage, to the phase of recovery and development.

The framework for assistance for the recovery, and more importantly, for the reconstruction and development phases is taking shape primarily through the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC).

Given the passage of time there are some critical areas which are now impatient of action. These include:

1. The removal of the debris in the most seriously affected areas such as Port-au-Prince. This poses serious risks to health and safety.

The presence of the mountain of rubble is a constant reminder which must have deep psychological consequences.

The rebuilding cannot begin in earnest until the existing piles of debris have been cleared.

2. The provision of semi-permanent shelter in relatively safe areas away from Port-au-Prince. Haiti has been spared a major hurricane in the season so far, but there is another two (2) months until the end of the season. The region has systems and capacity which can be mobilized to assist.
3. Augmenting and then systematically rebuilding of the institutional infrastructure. This is vital if the Haitian government is to play its role in leading the planning, policy making and implementation roles in the recovery and rebuilding processes.

The region has the capacity to coordinate and provide a critical level of assistance in the process of strengthening the capacity of the Haitian state.

In looking more broadly at the role for regional cooperation in the reconstruction and development we do well to bear in mind that:

- a) The need in every area is so large that no one country, institution or firm can satisfy it in any acceptable timeframe.
- b) In almost every area cooperation and coordination will be needed to create impact and visibility.
- c) The fundamental strategy for development encourages the creation of new centres or poles of development. This will require simultaneous, multi-sectoral activities of significant

scale in areas such as housing and economic activities such as agriculture, agro industry, energy etc.

d) It will also require social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and clinics as well as cultural and sporting facilities and transportation.

## **APPROACH TO IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES FOR COOPERATION**

One approach to identifying priorities for Caribbean (CARICOM/CUBA) cooperation might be to look at areas already identified for CARICOM/CUBA cooperation and superimpose the priorities in the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti.

The Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti promulgated by the Administration in March 2010, established a range of immediate and medium to longer term priorities in the special, economic, social, institutional and infrastructural areas. It envisages action by the public sector (Haitian and international), the Private and NGO sectors. The Haitian Government has expressed strong interest in the involvement of the Caribbean, including Haiti itself in all aspects of the Recovery and Development processes.

This recognises CARICOM's collaborative response in the emergency phase. There are several areas of priority in which the Caribbean has capacity and experience. These include the following:

### **1. HEALTH CARE**

Rebuilding and strengthening the Health sector is an area of high priority in the Plan. Cuba has a major programme in this sector. This was an expansion of its previous programme. There is also a Cuba/CARICOM programme which can be expanded.

CARICOM member states had a successful programme in the Health Sector in the emergency phase. This programme was terminated when the overall CARICOM emergency mission was wound up. Many of the personnel from that mission were and are still prepared to continue to offer services. They could be incorporated into some future structure.

One of the major projects approved by the IHRC on August 17, 2010 was a project to “Strengthen the healthcare system and epidemiological surveillance in Haiti”

This is a two year project which is expected to cost approximately (US\$70M). The project is fully funded by Brazil and is to be implemented by Brazil, Cuba and Haiti. It is multi-dimensional, including areas like human resource training, healthcare management, immunization and epidemiological surveillance.

Many of these are areas in which CARICOM has capacity through national and regional organisations such as the Caribbean Epidemiology Center (CAREC).

Brazil and CARICOM concluded earlier this year an agreement for cooperation in health in relation to Haiti. This is a good opportunity to create a four way agreement incorporating Brazil, Cuba, Haiti and the rest of CARICOM.

## **2. EDUCATION & TRAINING**

The Government of Haiti has placed very high priority on the recovery and development of education at all levels. In the social rebuilding programme the Government prioritises “a system of education, guaranteeing access to education for all children, offering vocational and university education to meet the demands of economic modernisation...”

The President of Haiti, in demonstrating the importance of action in this sector, proposed that the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) dedicate a portion of its pledged resources to the education sector. The IDB has decided to commit US\$50M per year for the first five years.

The Education Plan as envisaged by the Haitian authorities for the five-year, preschool – through university, is estimated to cost US\$4.2 B.

Education, at the level of policy, institutional strengthening, curriculum development and teaching – is one of the areas in which CARICOM and the wider Caribbean should collaborate to make a major contribution to the recovery and development effort.

Without the building of human capacity, the development will not prove sustainable.

Initiatives which have already begun and recognised by CARICOM Heads of Government include:

1. A Conference hosted by the University of the West Indies for Caribbean and Latin American Universities to strengthen relations with Haitian universities. Partnerships with Spanish and French-speaking universities are seen as particularly important.
2. Provision of access for Haitian students in their final year in disciplines of high priority to the recovery of the country. UWI offered scholarships to 200 students in the current

academic year. Not all these scholarships have yet been claimed but this programme could be expanded significantly if some of the IDB funds could be used to facilitate the cash costs.

3. Development of programmes in distance learning.

4. Educational Policy.

There are other educational institutions which have signalled interest in collaborative activities with Haiti. So far, these include tertiary institutions in Jamaica, as well as Trinidad and Tobago.

Cuba has offered scholarships to hundreds of CARICOM nationals (including Haiti) in critical areas such as medicine, dentistry, engineering and the arts. As of 2009 nurses from nine CARICOM countries (including Haiti) are being trained in Cuba. These efforts should be applauded and be continued, within the prevailing economic constraints in Cuba

### **3.AGRICULTURE**

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors in Haiti – embracing food security, employment, exports, income, rural development. The sector was not badly affected and continues to perform.

Still, there is the need to improve quality, reduce losses, strengthen infrastructure, extend research, enhance value added in the agriculture chain and strengthen the institutional capacity of small farmers and their support institutions.

CARICOM has the capacity and experience in a number of these areas through national, regional and international organisations/institutions. The issues for research are similar and results can be shared.

National institutions such as Ministry of Agriculture in Jamaica, regional institutions such as CARDI and international organisations such as FAO have already developed projects which could support the process in Haiti.

The IHRC has approved a US\$200 million project to “Establish necessary conditions to induce sustainable growth of the

agricultural sector” funded by the IDB and World Bank and a smaller project for the “Rehabilitation of Production Capacity among rural households and preparation for the hurricane season”. This second project has been developed by FAO and IFAD but is not yet funded.

Both projects have elements which are similar to projects developed by the Ministry of Agriculture in Jamaica and CARDI. Cuba has significant capacity in agriculture, including production systems and research.

There is therefore much scope for cooperation here.

#### **4.TOURISM**

Much of the Haitian tourism located in the North and the North West of the country remain intact. However the broader infrastructural needs required to service the industry including sea and air ports, are in need of substantial rebuilding, and require significant investments.

Several CARICOM tourism entities, including the CTO, signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Montego Bay in February, agreeing to collaborate in efforts to remarket and rebrand Haitian tourism. The development of regional tourism packages is an area in

which CARICOM could assist the sector in its recovery and growth. Cuba, given its geographic proximity to Haiti could be a major partner in such an undertaking

## **5.DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

Cuba has always been at the forefront in responding to natural disasters in the region. They were among the first responders to Haiti following the earthquake.

Cuba is a long standing partner with Haiti and had some 334 doctors on the ground before the disaster.

Given their expertise in disaster management it is clear that they have a lot to contribute to Haiti's redevelopment

CDEMA is the CARICOM organization in this area. It is timely to consider how more systematic arrangements can be put in place between the Cuban Disaster management arrangements and CDEMA.

## **6 INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING**

The need to strengthen the administrative and technical capacity of the Haitian State is of paramount importance for the sustainability of social and economic progress

The country is challenged to simultaneously rebuild and strengthen its main institutions for governance such as the Office of the President the Office of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Office, as well as the sector Ministries, Public Agencies and Departments.

Without this, Haiti cannot effectively discharge the functions assigned, in the implementation of the Action Plan.

At the request of the Prime Minister Bellerive, The Office of the Special Representative undertook a quick review of his Office to identify the required resources which would enable him to discharge his responsibility as Prime Minister, Minister of Planning and as co-chair of the IHRC. A cursory review of other key Ministries indicates that the gap is huge.

CARICOM can assist through aligning retired public servants with Haiti's needs. In addition, there is scope for the recruitment of a cadre of young volunteers.

Given its strength in Health, Education and Agriculture, Cuba might be able to assist in the augmentation and capacity building in these Ministries and Public Agencies.

## **7. TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation - both sea and air - has been one of the most significant impediments to CARICOM/CUBA cooperation. This is magnified in the case of links with HAITI. At the same time the potential for trade and travel as the rebuilding process picks up in Haiti could provide the fillip for development.

In this regard CARICOM and CUBA could collaborate to undertake a detailed feasibility study for both air and sea transport. This could be financed from resources under the EDF since it is intended to strengthen integration among CARIFORUM and potential CARIFORUM members.

It could build on two studies – one on air and the other on maritime transport – currently being finalised as part of the regional strategy for the development of the CARICOM Single Market and the Economy.

## **8. COMMUNICATION**

The international media's communication is often inadequate in the way it reports news from the region. It therefore falls short in the way it reflects the Haitian perspective and in communicating with the Haitian populace at home

On the other hand CARICOM and Cuba have significant experience in communicating from a national perspective and can assist Haiti in developing its own communication strategy and structures.

A team of CARICOM media specialists developed a detailed communications plan aimed at supporting the national reconstruction effort. Preliminary consultations have been held with the authorities and CARICOM is hopeful that the key strategies will be implemented.

CARICOM and Cuba can also assist Haiti by circulating relevant information, including placement on their websites.

## **9. PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT**

The Action Plan envisages a significant role for the private sector in the reconstruction and more so in the long-term development. The private sector in CARICOM has been showing strong interest. Different groups and individuals have been seeking information about opportunities how to do business in Haiti etc. We have been providing as much information as we can.

Fundamentally the private sector is now realising that it has to cooperate within countries and across the Region and also collaborate with the public sector.

The Public Sector can encourage private sector investment and support to Haiti by, inter alia:

- Provision of information and facilitating the movement of business persons
- Mobilising and making available financial resources on a competitive basis. Work is currently underway to create a CARICOM-Haiti Development Fund.

## **10. SUMMARY**

I. The situation in Haiti remains urgent. Cuba and CARICOM must continue, therefore, to work jointly at regional and international levels to promote cooperation that takes into account the difficult conditions and special features of Haiti.

II. The magnitude of the disaster in Haiti would have challenged almost any country. The response of:

- a) The Haitian people and Government;
- b) The Caribbean and Latin America; and
- c) The International Community

to the emergency phase was admirable. This must be sustained into the recovery and development phases as there is a unique opportunity which is not to be missed.

III. The Haitian Authorities have promulgated an Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti. It incorporates a long-term vision and key principles such as sovereignty, national responsibility and cooperation and coordination which are vital for sustainable development. The international community adopted the Action Plan with

- these principles and must give effect to them in all efforts forward.
- IV. There is a need for a coordinated approach going forward, involving the Caribbean and Latin America and the wider international community. Given the extent of the need, there is room for all to participate.
  - V. It is vital to support the highest priorities identified by Haiti, such as Institutional capacity building; strengthening the Health, Education, Housing, Agriculture and Forestry sectors; and Disaster Management.
  - VI. There is a need to move urgently to strengthen the capacity of the Caribbean, including, Haitian Private Sector, to contribute meaningfully to the reconstruction and development effort. In this regard, it would be opportune to endorse the CARICOM-Haiti Fund for the Development of Haiti and promote its implementation.

I thank you.