

TECHNICAL PREPARATORY MEETING ON THE RECONSTRUCTION OF HAITI, SANTO DOMINGO, 17 MARCH 2010 – SPEAKING NOTES

Raison d'être of the presence of the Special Representative of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community at this Technical Preparatory Meeting on the Reconstruction of Haiti. Haiti is a member of the family comprising the Caribbean Community. CARICOM has a moral responsibility towards this family member at this moment of grave need. It will assist Haiti, as it has done in the past for other members of the family devastated by natural disasters, within the limits of its resources.

The **issue of governance must be given utmost priority** as we discuss the Post Disaster Needs Assessment Report and its implementation. There are several reasons for doing so:

- If the Government of Haiti is to **play the lead role in the shaping and the implementation of its vision for refounding Haiti, it must have the requisite institutional capacity.** Its present capacity which was already quite weak has been further depleted by the disaster with the loss of scarce and qualified personnel
- **Effective governance** which we all agree is a sine qua non for the success of the implementation of the reconstruction plan **will require strengthening the institutional capacity of the Haitian State.** How else will it pass and monitor the laws, norms and regulations required to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of resources; how else will it put in place the legal, regulatory and other frameworks without which the private sector will be unable to play

the role that it must if reconstruction is to be successful;

- As the past assistance to Haiti over the years has demonstrated, civil society can indeed play a key role in development. However, **civil society does not have the tools, resources and policy focus coherence to ensure the continued viability and sustainability of the projects and programmes they undertake, which in any case is a state responsibility.** For their work to be of optimum usefulness, they must also work within the policy framework and priorities set out by the duly elected government;
- Last but not least, **all states have a responsibility towards their citizens to satisfy their basic needs through the provision of social and other basic services.** The role of the State in the delivery of these services must be increased through the reinforcing of its human and institutional capacity;
- An essential aspect of governance as underlined by the Government of Haiti will be **decentralization** in order to do away with the “Republic of Port-au-Prince” syndrome which has led to the over-concentration of institutions, activities, and people, in the capital. This will require the building of the administrative capacities of the territorial assemblies if decentralization is to be meaningful.

As has been illustrated by a number of speakers, **budget support** is another urgent and immediate requirement in view of the present shortfall in government revenues so that it can meet its responsibilities as a state. **Budget support is also linked to the issue of governance.** A government that is not perceived by its citizens as making an effort to respond to its needs, especially after a disaster of this magnitude, will sooner than later find itself in a fractured relation with its people