

*Statement by Helen Clark, Administrator, UNDP  
on the occasion of the Montreal Ministerial Conference on Haiti  
25 January 2010, Montreal, Canada*

Let me also join others in thanking the Government of Canada for hosting this important Preparatory Conference. We appreciate the leadership demonstrated by the Government, as well as the active involvement and concern of so many here today in addressing the disaster Haiti has endured. I would like to acknowledge the special role played by many countries and institutions in the region, a region marked by solidarity for those in need.

Let me begin by underscoring the statement of needs presented by the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator, John Holmes. Haiti is a comprehensive Humanitarian Emergency and funding is needed now for all aspects of the Flash Appeal.

As is often the case in humanitarian emergencies, Early Recovery in Haiti is under-resourced. I hope as an outcome of this Conference there will be a commitment to mobilize resources for early recovery as a critical part of the humanitarian appeal. Early recovery serves as a bridge to the recovery and development phase. We must not allow a gap to exist in the transition from humanitarian action to development.

As the Chair of the UN's Development Group, I want to highlight a number of areas that the United Nations system believes are vital for both immediate and medium-term recovery in Haiti.

We need immediate financial support to scale up cash-for-work programmes and inject money into the affected communities. The dignity of work will provide hope for many who have none. Job creation aimed at rebuilding infrastructure is critical in the short term. We have already launched some initial "cash-for-work" but much more is needed. We need more joint cash and food for work programs that integrate large number of Haitians using local skills that will build on our vast experience in this area in previous disaster recovery efforts and on our partnership with the 'Better Work Haiti' initiative launched by President Clinton in November.

The following areas will be among those requiring immediate attention

**Rubble removal:** Removing the rubble of collapsed buildings in an environmentally-sensitive way is an immediate and critical priority. Much will be done manually, and linked to the-cash-for-work programme, generating employment for the people of Haiti. However, a large part of rubble removal needs to be done mechanically through engaging contractors and specialized agencies. We must remove the rubble in a way that reduces the potential for environmental consequences, and salvage what is possible for reconstruction.

**Transitional shelter:** A pressing priority is the provision of emergency and intermediate shelter for the people rendered homeless by the earthquake. This challenge presents an opportunity for innovative collaboration among many stakeholders including the private sector. China, for example, set up 400,000 semi-permanent houses after the Sichuan earthquake. Similar initiatives will need to be considered and supported for Haiti.

**Food security:** Long before this disaster, Haiti was already enduring serious food security problems, with soaring food prices and food riots. Now thousands are fleeing Port-au-Prince to join relatives in impoverished rural areas where 60 per cent of the population already lived. The UN system will use its capacities for early recovery to couple its food aid programmes with immediate support to boost food production, starting with inputs for the next planting season in March, while simultaneously expanding food security programmes.

**Restoration of basic state capacities:** Governance is critical and we in the United Nations are both equipped and committed to help the national and local governments take leadership of the recovery and reconstruction. Efforts are needed to build the enabling governance and institutions for earthquake/disaster response and to strengthen the government's capacity to lead and coordinate the effort. Support for the Haitian National Police and the entire security sector is vital.

**Reforms to economic laws** should be prioritized to help in the recovery. But the poor have been hit so hard by this disaster that we must never forget that much needed economic and legal reform always take into account securing the rights of the poor and all victims of the present disaster. Legal empowerment of the poor can play a catalytic role in restoring the rule of law and averting conflict. In all of the above areas, work is ongoing and will require the full support of the international community to enable the UN system to rapidly scale it up.

But beyond today's emergency and the early recovery needs, Haiti confronts an enormous challenge of recovery and reconstruction.

The international community must respond with all available resources in a forceful and yet highly coordinated manner. We have an opportunity to draw on lessons learned from disasters around the world, including following the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. We know of the importance of keeping a long-term perspective from the start to build back better. While we can draw on good practice, we must always keep in mind Haiti's national context and existing local conditions.

We must remember that even before the earthquake, Haiti had the highest rate of infant, under-five, and maternal mortality in the Western hemisphere as a result of persistent under-nutrition and high prevalence of preventable diseases. Furthermore, recent armed violence and limited government services, combined with high levels of poverty, and the impact of urbanization and macro-economic crisis, have made Haiti one of the world's most challenging environments for development for all its citizens - men, women, and children.

We need to plan carefully, but expeditiously, a sequence of essential steps involved in developing the earthquake recovery programme in Haiti. For any such large-scale recovery programme to succeed, it will take the sustained and enduring commitment of the international community as a whole to support the government and people of Haiti, over a realistic time-frame that will stretch well beyond the next three or four years. Recovery and reconstruction requires more attention than a fleeting moment of news coverage. It will take the sustained engagement of all of us.

Recovery requires that much be done, often simultaneously. Efforts are needed to:

- Restore basic services and provide social protection, with special emphasis on the needs of women (especially pregnant women), children, the recently disabled and the elderly;
- Build institutional capacities including public administration and local governance institutions;
- Reconstruct infrastructure, including more child-friendly schools and safe health facilities;
- Foster economic recovery and return to the path of development;
- Strengthen information sharing and coordination; and
- Integrate disaster prevention concerns and capacity into recovery and reconstruction, and enable the Haitian Government to set up a standard setting body to monitor all reconstruction efforts for compliance with earthquake resilience standards.

If building back better means anything, it means that governments include disaster risk reduction and recovery activities and a concern for the environment up front. In this regard, urgent attention needs to be paid to the critical issue of waste management, including demolition waste, medical waste from collapsed hospitals, domestic waste currently piled up in the streets and only now starting to be removed, as well as secondary spills and hazardous chemicals from badly damaged industry and storage sites.

We must also bear in mind the negative environmental impacts of the massive population movements to less affected rural and urban areas of Haiti. While it presents an opportunity to launch rural development programmes, it exerts in the short term additional pressure to the already exhausted natural resources.

A necessary first step towards addressing these multiple concerns in an integrated and co-ordinated manner is to conduct the post-disaster needs assessment. There is an agreed methodology and process to conduct this assessment. In the case of Haiti, the United Nations has established excellent collaboration with the World Bank, the European Commission, and the Inter-American Development Bank in the planning phase to get the post-disaster needs assessment underway under the leadership of the Government.

We are keen to ensure that the post-disaster needs assessment is a comprehensive and broad-based exercise covering all affected sectors and segments of society. We need to deliberate how best we could collect precise information upon damages and losses, and identify the recovery needs. We must all commit our best technical resources to the post-disaster needs assessment, whether it comes from Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, or many others who brings skills and knowledge to the exercise.

I am pleased that colleagues from the World Bank, the European Commission, and the Inter-American Development Bank are here today because reconstruction requires resources. International financial support for Haiti needs to be aligned with the relief and early recovery priorities outlined in the Flash Appeal and the post-disaster needs assessment recovery

framework. Without this support, the government, and people of Haiti cannot free themselves from dependence on relief and transition to recovery and long-term development.

Any international funding mechanism being set up to support recovery efforts, including a Multi-Donor Trust Fund, should pay special attention to the need to provide rapid and flexible funding for early recovery and reconstruction activities and to the need for the government to have a critical leadership role in the governance of the mechanism. I also believe we need to establish a mechanism that draws on the complementary advantages and strengths of the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and the entire United Nations.

Recovery also requires co-ordination. The Government must be in charge. But we need to quickly agree how best we work together, both on the ground and around the world. The United Nations is also ready to apply tools such as an Aid Management Platforms which have been used in recent crises for aid coordination.

Issues of equity and inclusion are extremely important in planning and implementing recovery and reconstruction programmes. A successful recovery programme needs to meet the aspirations of the people on an equitable basis. We need to empower individuals and communities while protecting the most vulnerable, especially women, children, the elderly, the sick and disabled, including people living with HIV/AIDS.

Women's participation is key. In other disasters, we have helped develop local mechanisms that include men and women for addressing issues related to land, allocation of houses, and common property resources. We also recruited women engineers and trained women masons. Gender equality is central to building back better and a gender perspective must be included in our assessment and recovery plans. Gender-based violence which was a pre-existing problem in Haiti will also need immediate attention to avoid escalation. Working through the Haitian Ministry of Women's Rights, and with Haitian women's organizations and civil society institutions will strengthen sustainability

Under the guidance of the Secretary-General and with the energy, drive, and commitment of President Clinton, the Special Envoy to Haiti of the Secretary-General, the United Nations is committed to work as a partner with all. We want to support the establishment of a unique movement led by the Government and people of Haiti, this broad coalition should include the Haitian Diaspora, citizens of other nations, NGOs, the Red Cross Movement, bilaterals, multilaterals, foundations, and the private sector to rebuild Haiti.

People around the world have been seized by the tragedy. By working together we can create a profound response that puts the needs of the Haitian people at the center of what we do.

Drawing on the excellent work of the Special Envoy President Clinton after the Tsunami, we will seize the opportunity to build back better. But this is much more than providing earthquake-proof buildings; it is realizing the promise of a long-term transition to development in Haiti and the building of sustainable institutional capacities in all areas, including education - where so many teachers have been lost, health, agriculture, environment, science, and culture.

So now is the time for the 3 C's: Commitment, Coherence, and Co-ordination. By deciding today that we are in it for the long run, that we will work for one goal – the realization of Haitian priorities – and that our individual efforts will be stronger if coordinated, we will effectively respond to the needs of the Haitian people.

A recovery and reconstruction programme in Haiti is going to be a very complex and demanding challenge. We therefore need to commit to bring together our global experiences and resources to assist Haiti in meeting its critical recovery and reconstruction needs, and building a country that rises anew from its tragedy.

Let me conclude by once again stressing the irreplaceable role of the Government of Haiti in this effort and the need for all of us to assist the Government in putting in place the necessary co-ordination arrangements for all partners in the recovery effort. We must also pledge to support and work within the framework of a single, comprehensive needs assessment for immediate and long term recovery efforts led by the Haitian government, starting with the Flash Appeal which requires immediate funding.

Haitian solidarity is a reality. Haiti has shown extraordinary resilience in the face of this disaster. We must also ensure that the population can participate fully in the rebuilding of their nation, rather than being treated as simple spectators or beneficiaries.

Finally, I call on the United Nations system, all of its agencies, funds and programmes, international finance institutions, multilateral, bilateral and civil society partners to work in a co-ordinated and coherent manner in order to reduce the burden on the Haitian government, and to utilize the best available practices for building back better, including the use of joint financial mechanisms that recognize the special needs of early recovery and support the long term effort of reconstruction.