



## ***Committee on International Justice and Peace***

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March 3, 2010

**[The following letter was sent to the members of the Financial Services Committee of the House]**

Dear Representative:

As Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I write to express the Conference's support for the Debt Relief for Earthquake Recovery in Haiti Act (HR 4573). We urge quick action on the bill so that the people of Haiti can redirect their limited resources to recovery efforts. Debt relief is a concrete expression of our nation's moral commitment to care for the least among us; it reflects the deep-rooted humanitarian concerns of the American people who are responding so generously in the earthquake's aftermath.

While it will take a comprehensive strategic plan to help Haiti recover fully from the earthquake of January 12, 2010, the people of Haiti cannot wait until one is developed. Haiti was beginning to show progress in some areas before this disaster. As the earthquake destroyed this progress and thrust millions of Haitians into deeper poverty, it is essential to minimize the time lost in returning to a path of sustainable growth and development.

We recognize and appreciate the important role of the U.S. in achieving substantial debt cancellation for Haiti last year, but the Haitian people are experiencing the worst disaster in their history. Extraordinary measures are required by the international community to enable the people in the poorest country of the Western Hemisphere to recover and move forward. While the United States already provides grants instead of loans to Haiti, U.S. leadership will be needed to encourage other governments and multilateral institutions to do the same. The cancellation of Haiti's outstanding multilateral and bilateral debt, which amounts to some \$1 billion, would give Haiti financial relief and enable it to redirect its limited resources to reconstruction and investments in development.

Be assured that the United States Conference of Bishops is also doing everything possible to act in solidarity with the people and Church in Haiti at this time of terrible loss and suffering. Through our Church in Latin America Office and Catholic Relief Services, we are directing tens of millions dollars in private donations to relief and rebuilding in Haiti. We ask that you exercise your leadership in insuring that debt relief for Haiti complements the recovery efforts of the U.S. Government, other donors, and private voluntary agencies.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard  
Bishop of Albany

Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace