



Committee on International Justice and Peace

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3160

WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG/JPHD • FAX 202-541-3339

January 26, 2010

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State

Ambassador Ron Kirk
U.S. Trade Representative

Mr. Timothy F. Geithner
Secretary of the Treasury

Ms. Janet Napolitano
Secretary of Homeland Security

Dear Secretary Clinton, Secretary Napolitano, Secretary Geithner and Ambassador Kirk:

As Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I write to express our gratitude for the strong, determined response of the U.S. Government to the recent earthquake in Haiti and to highlight Haiti's long-term needs for recovery, poverty-reduction and development. How our nation responds in the near and long term is a test of who we are as a neighbor.

We welcomed how President Obama exercised leadership and compassion on behalf of the American people, appointed Administrator Raj Shah to coordinate the response of government agencies, and invited President Clinton and President Bush to lead a bi-partisan private relief effort. Our Conference also very much welcomed the Administration's prompt and positive response to our appeal to grant Temporary Protected Status to Haitians present in the U.S. at the time of the earthquake.

The Conference of Bishops and our relief and development agency, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), also took immediate and urgent steps to respond to the crisis. CRS deployed personnel and resources to initiate an immediate and large-scale response to help the victims in Haiti. USCCB took up a special collection on the weekend after the earthquake in all U.S. parishes to benefit the relief and recovery efforts for the people and Church in Haiti.

Beyond these necessary immediate steps, our nation needs a long-term strategy to help a country recover, rebuild and reduce poverty. As Bishop Pierre-André Dumas of the Diocese of Anse-a-Veau and Miragoane and President of Caritas Haiti affirmed: "At the moment it's all about the emergency, but one day the questions will be about reconstruction."

Our Conference recommends that the U.S. government adopt a coherent strategy for long-term sustainable development that coordinates different U.S. government agencies in a comprehensive approach, engaging other groups with expertise and experience with Haiti. Our recommendations are based on both the teaching and experience of the Church, our longstanding solidarity with the Church in Haiti, and the particular expertise of CRS, which for 50 years has worked in Haiti.

We affirm the decision of the Administration to provide full debt relief and offer grants instead of loans for Haiti's recovery. U.S. leadership will be needed to encourage other governments as well as 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. We recall, Secretary

January 26, 2010

Page 2

Geithner, the extraordinary cooperation we and other faith-based organizations received from you a decade ago, when you and then Secretary Summers did so much to bring about the Heavily Indebted Poor Country debt relief program. We ask you to take the lead to bring about the debt relief so urgently needed by the Haitian people.

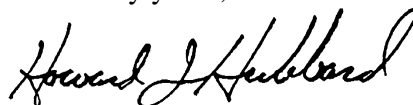
When the international community and Haitians move beyond the most urgent aspects of the emergency, we urge a substantial and sustained commitment by the U.S. Government to provide long-term funding for reconstruction and poverty reduction. At the same time, our nation should work to support and strengthen the role of the Haitian Government and institutions in the reconstruction and long-term development of their nation. This will require dependable flows of international assistance that target all sectors of Haiti's needs, including infrastructure, health care, education, psycho-social support, law enforcement, judiciary, and economic and agricultural development. Encouraging local government and institutional transparency and accountability are essential to ensure that funds are used for the benefit of the people and are not diverted for other purposes.

It will also be important to expand the trade preferences Haiti was granted through the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Acts (HOPE I and HOPE II), which the Conference strongly supported. Trade preferences can help the Haitian economy create badly needed jobs and can reduce poverty in the long-term. Unfortunately, Haitian factories are still limited in what they can produce and export under the U.S. preference program to basic garments that have "little" added value. This causes investment to be limited in Haiti. Expanding the list of goods that can be produced and exported by Haitian factories to include more "value added" goods will produce jobs and encourage exporters to rebuild more quickly. While implementing a broader preferential treatment for Haitian goods may take some time, it will be an important aspect of the longer-term and sustainable development of Haiti.

Finally, it is highly unlikely that 18 months will afford sufficient time for Haiti to be rebuilt in ways that make it safe for Haitians to return to their country and find employment. As you know, Haiti was only beginning to show signs of new economic life before the earthquake. The United States should be prepared to extend Temporary Protected Status when it comes up for renewal and not let it expire.

Thank you for your leadership in responding to this human catastrophe and for recognizing the need for a long-term coherent strategy for recovery, development and poverty reduction in Haiti. Be assured that the Conference of Bishops and Catholic Relief Services are also doing everything possible to act in solidarity with the people and Church in Haiti at this time of terrible loss and suffering.

Sincerely yours,



Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard

Bishop of Albany

Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace