

“OVERVIEW OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD HAITI PRIOR TO THE
ELECTIONS”

TESTIMONY OF
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BEFORE
THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE, TRANSNATIONAL CRIME,
CIVILIAN SECURITY, DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GLOBAL
WOMEN’S ISSUES

UNITED STATES SENATE
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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Boxer, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the U.S. government’s engagement with Haiti, including efforts related to its upcoming elections. I welcome the chance to provide a brief overview of where we are, to describe next steps, and to answer your questions.

The broad and deeply-rooted ties that link the United States and Haiti operate at the institutional, familial, and personal levels. In every state you will find individuals or groups, non-governmental organizations, faith groups, schools or medical teams, committed – through training, visits, fund-raising, sponsorships, on-site assistance – to helping Haitians better help themselves. In the wake of the devastating January 2010 earthquake, an estimated one out of two U.S. households made some contribution to relief efforts for Haiti. Congress likewise was quick to respond to urgent and longer-term needs. Thanks to consistent, broad, bipartisan support on the Hill, U.S. government assistance to Haiti has been substantial; since the earthquake, \$4.1 billion has been made available.

There is significant progress to report in Haiti, which I will describe shortly. At the outset, I would like to thank Congress for the sustained support it has shown. The Senate and House are invaluable partners in Haiti’s recovery. The assistance funds which have been appropriated are a tangible demonstration of the

United States' unwavering commitment to Haiti. Of that \$4.1 billion total, 80 percent -- \$3.3 billion -- has been disbursed to date. Immediate humanitarian assistance following the earthquake totaled \$1.3 billion and has been disbursed in full. Approximately \$2.8 billion has been made available for long-term reconstruction and development, and of this, some 71 percent -- \$2 billion -- has been disbursed to date. No less important has been Congress' sustained attention in encouraging steps in Haiti's democratic development. We encourage Congressional visits to Haiti to see firsthand what U.S. assistance is accomplishing.

Our engagement with Haiti has involved both near-term and longer-term goals. Having helped address Haiti's immediate humanitarian needs in the wake of the earthquake, the United States now directs attention and resources to the country's longer-term development, working in partnership and through a Haitian-led process to help the country build a more promising future for its citizens.

Where do things stand in these efforts? Unquestionably, there is still much to be done. Even before the earthquake, Haiti faced enormous economic and political challenges. Development work there is not easy; there are no quick fixes or shortcuts. There are areas in which we all, Haitians and Americans both, hoped we would be further along by now. There are projects which did not attain the results initially expected and based on lessons learned we have made course corrections. For example, we shifted from building a new port to rehabilitating the existing port at Cap Haitien, and we shifted from building houses to providing technical assistance and financial products that will enable Haitians to build and improve their own homes. Despite having fallen short of our original objectives in certain cases, we can nevertheless credit U.S. assistance for positive and lasting developments in Haiti. But we are not finished.

Since 2010, U.S. post-earthquake assistance to Haiti has helped to measurably improve key economic and social indicators and build infrastructure necessary for self-sustaining growth. Our funding helped house more than 328,000 earthquake-displaced Haitians by providing transitional shelters, repairs to damaged homes, support to host families, and rental vouchers. Almost 95 percent of displaced persons have left the tent camps, which are all but gone. We have funded the removal of some 2.7 million cubic meters of earthquake rubble -- 36 percent of the estimated 7.4 million cubic meters of total rubble removed.

Our support for Haiti's infrastructure includes the reconstruction of Haiti's University Hospital and other damaged health facilities, and the construction of

seven police stations and the presidential security unit barracks. Nearly half of all Haitians have access to basic health services at U.S.- supported health facilities, and we have provided \$95 million for cholera treatment and prevention, including clean water and sanitation activities. This has led to improved basic health indicators and a dramatic decrease in the incidence of cholera.

The United States has also helped Haiti increase agricultural productivity by introducing improved seeds, fertilizer, and technologies to more than 70,000 farmers, which have helped increase yields for rice, corn, bean, and plantain crops as well as increase mango exports by 175 percent. Our funding has placed over 33,000 hectares of hillside farmland under improved watershed management.

The United States has funded the rehabilitation and upgrading of five electrical substations in Port-au-Prince, and the construction of a 10-megawatt power plant to serve the Caracol Industrial Park and 8,000 local households and businesses in Haiti's north. Primary school enrollment is up, with the United States funding the construction of more than 600 semi-permanent furnished classrooms, enabling over 60,000 children to return to school. We have helped more than 100,000 households and businesses convert from charcoal to more efficient cook stoves, and supported the planting of five million fruit and forest tree seedlings.

Consistent with Haitian priorities to promote economic growth outside of Port-au-Prince, the United States has targeted some of its most significant assistance to one of Haiti's poorest regions in the North. The Caracol Industrial Park is a public-private partnership that is funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and is owned by the Government of Haiti. Conceived as a long-term public-private investment, Caracol will require time and continued support to reach its full potential. As of July 2015, however, in just three years of operation, approximately 7,500 jobs have been created at the Caracol Industrial Park. More jobs are expected as facilities expand. Anchor tenant Sae-A is projected to eventually create 20,000 jobs, and the Haitian-owned Coles Group has announced it will create 2,500 jobs at Caracol once further phases of construction are completed.

The United States is also working in partnership with the government of Haiti to help improve judicial and police institutions, and enhance citizen security for all Haitians. Since the earthquake our assistance has made possible the training and commissioning of 3,300 new officers in the Haitian National Police (HNP). We have helped create a new HNP community policing unit, which has grown to

over 80 officers, in partnership with the New York City Police Department and the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). The United States has also helped fund the reconstruction of more than 32,000 judicial case files following earthquake loss or damage. We have trained over 2,700 justice sector actors on basic and advanced criminal justice skills to improve their ability to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate criminal cases. Security in Haiti has significantly improved -- violent crime rates, in particular kidnappings, are down dramatically compared to past years.

We are also following closely the situation along Haiti's border with the Dominican Republic. We are concerned by reports that tens of thousands of people, mostly Haitians and people of Haitian descent, have crossed the border from the Dominican Republic into Haiti since early June. We are monitoring the situation closely and actively engaging with the Government of the Dominican Republic, the Government of Haiti, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, civil society organizations, and the international community to confirm that the appropriate authorities work to ensure security and the protection of human rights. The United States is also funding civil society organizations and international organizations, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to assist in these efforts. We continue to encourage the Governments of the Dominican Republic and Haiti to consult and collaborate with each other and with civil society groups and international organizations to develop processes that uphold the rule of law, provide procedural safeguards, and are consistent with each country's international obligations and commitments.

It is up to the Haitians themselves to secure and build on these accomplishments. We can advise and assist, but Haiti's development must reflect goals and priorities that the government and people of Haiti have identified, and for which they are exercising ownership. The confidence of the Haitian people in their government will in large part depend on its effectiveness in delivering basic services. Capacity building and effective governance are thus central to sustaining Haiti's progress. This will require responsive, accountable, and transparent institutions; the just application of the rule of law; new laws and changes in existing ones to attract investment; and a fully staffed and functioning government in every branch. Haiti's leaders must strive for a political, economic and societal climate that fosters economic development and prosperity. An indispensable step for this involves the holding of successful parliamentary, local government, and presidential elections.

The United States strongly supports the right of all Haitians to go to the polls in a timely manner to express their views through a credible and transparent process. Congress shares this goal with the Administration, and I thank you for consistently emphasizing the importance of Haitians voicing their democratic preferences at the ballot box.

The United States commends Haitian President Michel Martelly and the members of Haiti's independent Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) for their efforts to prioritize the holding of elections this year. We are pleased that an electoral decree and calendar have been published, and we are committed to working with the Government of Haiti and its international partners to facilitate appropriate assistance – including international observation – to help ensure that the elections are inclusive, transparent and credible. As electoral planning continues, the United States supports the CEP, the United Nations, the OAS and the Government of Haiti (including its national police) in their efforts to coordinate and execute successful 2015 elections. We encourage all actors to participate fully in the electoral process, to abide by the rule of law, and to adhere to accepted standards of transparency. Let me stress that the United States has no vote in these elections and does not support any candidate or group of candidates.

Successful elections have the potential to break the political gridlock that has imposed opportunity costs on the people of Haiti. The impasse between Haiti's executive and legislative branches has stymied the passage of legislation in such important areas as an updated business code, an updated criminal code, clarification of property rights, and the provision of electronic signatures. Progress in these areas would strengthen investor confidence and help Haiti strengthen, expand, and diversify its economy. Without a doubt, no long-term development goals in Haiti can be sustained or fully realized without the engagement and support of the private sector.

Successful elections thus are understandably the highest priority of our near-term engagement with Haiti. The citizens of Haiti choosing their leaders and representatives through fair, democratic means directly reinforces our goal of fostering good governance.

I have been describing the progress that U.S. assistance has helped Haiti achieve in its effort to rebuild. But I do not mean to minimize the challenges still ahead. To be sure, it will take many more years to make the kinds of far-reaching and lasting improvements we all wish to see in Haiti. The past five years have been marked by measurable improvements in the lives of Haitians and genuine

accomplishments in Haiti's recovery and development. We must maintain an open and frank dialogue with the Haitian people and their leaders, and focus on how we can help the country's institutions build capacity to be effective providers of basic services. Much will depend on building political stability through successful democratic elections. But I continue to believe that, through our long-term commitment, the United States is helping Haitians achieve a better future.