

“Rebuilding Haiti in the Martelly Era”
Testimony by Gary Shaye, Haiti Country Director, Save the Children
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Mr. Chairman, and members of the Subcommittees,

Save the Children welcomes this joint hearing by the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittees on reconstruction in Haiti. Eighteen months after the January 2010 earthquake and three months after democratic elections, Haiti is at a crossroads, facing both challenges and opportunities. The choices made today by the people of Haiti, their government, and the international community that seeks to support them will be fundamental to rebuilding a better and stronger Haiti - a Haiti that is much stronger than it was before the earthquake.

The devastation wrought by the January 2010 earthquake is well known: 230,000 people killed; 300,000 injured; 2 million displaced from their homes and an estimated \$7.8 billion in damage – an amount greater than the country’s 2009 GDP. The humanitarian response was also significant: as of April 2011, donors had provided 2 billion dollars in financial and other assistance and private donations equaled 1.5 billion dollars. The US government alone provided 1.1 billion by the end of fiscal 2010.

Despite this, the humanitarian effort – much of it implemented by international non-governmental organizations including Save the Children– was challenged not only by the scale of the disaster but by the reality of an already difficult and costly operating environment, made more complex after the earthquake. Government capacity, already limited prior to the earthquake, was devastated by the loss of lives and infrastructure in key ministries. With the massive destruction of life and infrastructure, material and human resources were brought in from the outside at higher cost. Humanitarian relief efforts were further challenged by the cholera epidemic of October 2010, which continues as we speak, and Hurricane Tomas in November of 2010. Budget lines typically reserved for transitional funding at the end of a relief effort were allocated to meet new urgent needs.

And yet tragically, for many Haitians, the services provided in camps during this year of catastrophes – access to clean water and health services, for example – surpassed what they had before. In 2009, UN agencies reported that 50% of Haitians lacked access to potable water; nearly a quarter of the population was undernourished; and an estimated 500,000 children never attended school. As we look to support the reconstruction of Haiti, we need to think past

reconstructing what was there before. A Haiti that looks like it did in 2009 would represent a failed opportunity, and we need to acknowledge this.

Building a better future for Haiti's children will require sustained US engagement that, at a minimum, does three things:

- addresses the remaining impact of the humanitarian crises;
- supports stronger aid delivery through improved coordination and other best practice; and
- invests in key areas, including the capacity of government and the voices of Haitian citizens.

Addressing the remaining impact of the humanitarian crises

While donors are eager to leave behind the relief phase and move to long term development, many Haitians find themselves still living in camps, suffering from cholera outbreaks or facing the daily threat of gender based violence. To date, over 600,000 Haitians are still living in camps or other types of transitional shelter. Many face forced evictions. Crowded and insecure conditions too often facilitate violence against women and children. A household survey conducted by the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at the New York University School of Law in March of this year showed that 14% of respondents in four IDP camps indicated that at least one member of the household had been raped since the earthquake; 60% of respondents reported fear of sexual violence. It is likely that reported cases are well below the real numbers due to the fear of stigmatization, ignorance of existing support mechanisms, and fear of reprisal attacks. With the onset of the rainy season last month, cholera yet again spiked in certain parts of the country and is likely to increase again.

This is all happening just as relief funding for international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) is coming to an end, in many cases without the possibility of renewal. Due to depleted funding, many INGOs have left or reduced their projects in camps, leaving services there limited, non-existent or in disrepair. Some Cholera Treatment Units are scheduled to close in the next months, and in some areas of the country increased caseloads are likely just as they are downsizing operations. While overall the cholera response has been effective, we require more agile and quick decisions so that agencies addressing cholera treatment do not have to close operations and dismiss staff, only to reinitiate operations a few months later.

The desire to avoid a culture of dependency and transition to a longer term development approach is the right one. A holistic resettlement strategy accompanied by a strong livelihoods plan is imperative; solutions to land rights and housing will need to be found to end temporary shelter; investments will need to be made in the health system and in water and sanitation to address cholera; and an economy that guarantees jobs will do more for families and communities than a temporary cash for work program. But the transition from relief to recovery does not

follow the deadlines of when we need to move money from one budget line to another. Relief and recovery must go hand in hand and often need to happen simultaneously in order to be effective.

Even as they support the Haitian government and civil society in addressing the longer term issues, donors need to:

- Work with the Haitian government, UN system, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), Haitian citizens and others involved in relief to identify transition gaps that require more effective transitional funding mechanisms and, based on this assessment, design adequate funding channels to respond to continued needs.
- In response to cholera, which is unpredictable, maintain funding for emergency response, until alternatives are in place to meet health needs and ensure access to water. Funding channels should be established that are sufficient and agile, able to be accessed quickly when spikes emerge
- Improve the coordination between emergency and development funding and ensure integrated approaches to shelter that include funding to livelihoods, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and other basic services.
- Continue investing in security, support and protection mechanisms as well as basic health and psychosocial services to ensure the protection of women, children, and other vulnerable populations. Working with local women's groups should be a key component of this.
- As part of the reconstruction plan, invest significantly in hurricane preparedness and disaster risk reduction.

None of this negates the need to invest in long term development, but recognizes that reconstruction will take time, and immediate needs will have to be addressed both for humanitarian reasons and to avert further crises that may impair recovery. It recognizes as well that meeting these needs requires more of an integrated relief and development approach.

Improving aid delivery

Much attention has been given to the shortcomings of the aid effort in Haiti and in particular to the challenges faced in coordination. While all of us would agree that coordination could be improved, it DOES take place and Haiti has benefited as a result of the existing coordination between the various humanitarian actors. With a government that faced monumental challenges, the international community did step up and provide needed humanitarian assistance to save the lives of the victims and the most vulnerable. In the year following the earthquake, for example, international relief activities helped feed more than 4 million people.

Nevertheless, building back better will require strong coordination among donors, the Haitian government, the UN system, NGOs and other Haitian stakeholders and implementers. Thus far coordination has been challenging. On the ground, the scale of the response has actually meant more new actors in Haiti that are providing far more services than ever before often with short term funding matched to specific sector priorities. Short term and sector-specific funding inevitably leaves gaps. The challenges and requirements of Haiti require NGOs and other implementers to make a multi-year commitment, which in turn requires long term funding commitments and resources that are not yet secured. In Haiti, basic principles of aid effectiveness and smart development need to be applied.

The US Government and others should:

- Ensure reconstruction is Haitian-led and Haitian-owned. A plan that will endure when donor attention goes elsewhere is one that reflects the priorities and involvement of the Haitian government and people. Donors should support the Haitian government's efforts to consult its citizens and fund the areas they define.
- Provide long term and predictable support. As already described, the task ahead will require a long term commitment from all stakeholders.
- Raise the role, voice and concerns of women in reconstruction and integrate gender across all programs and strategies. About 43% of families are headed by women, and yet their contributions and status are too often under-valued. Maternal mortality rates remain high. Reconstruction is an opportunity to address historic imbalances and support a significant part of the Haitian population.
- Coordinate aid with other actors. A positive first step has been taken by the Haitian government in the development of a Haitian reconstruction plan that sets out priorities. Donors need to support these and coordinate with one another to ensure areas are adequately covered. The Haiti NGO Coordination Committee (CCO) has set out a number of recommendations to ensure proper coordination among the Haitian government, UN clusters, INGO community and others.

The CCO calls on donors specifically to provide financial support to integrated development and emergency funding that supports relevant Haitian government institutions; support the functioning of the *Tables Sectorielles'* Secretariat, based on the government's assessment of needs; and to more systematically include NGOs in their aid coordination, so they are in a better place to align with government priorities, and engage in a meaningful policy dialogue with the Haitian government and civil society.

Making long term investments in the government and people of Haiti

Building back better will require long term investment in key areas. Haiti's ability to advance and respond to future crises will require investments that address recurrent problems and build the country's economic prosperity, human capital and good governance. The Haiti government's 10-year action plan prioritizes a number of sectors that the international community should support. Territorial rebuilding in targeted areas; economic rebuilding in sectors that include construction, agriculture, and tourism; social rebuilding in health, education, food security, and other sectors; and institutional rebuilding are all key areas for a comprehensive reconstruction plan. But fundamental to achieving all of these is building the capacity of the Haitian government and of the Haitian people.

The US Government should:

- Invest in the long term capacity of the Haitian government. Sustained engagement with the government of Haiti to support its capacity to govern, deliver services, apply the rule of law, and consult its citizens will be necessary to ensure both stability and the basic rights of the Haitian people. The US Government should consider working with other donors and NGOs in a capacity building project for Haitian civil servants. Building national and local capacity can ensure sustainable solutions.
- Support the Haitian people by investing in the social sectors. The US Government and other donors must invest in the Haitian people by investing in their health and education.

Addressing cholera: Cholera requires a long term investment in a comprehensive national water and sanitation program that brings safe drinking water and waste disposal to every community. Infrastructure development needs to be accompanied by a behavior change campaign so that every citizen knows how to reduce his/her risk.

Strengthening the health system: Broader than cholera, investments are needed to build a strong and effective Haitian health ministry and system that is led by the Government of Haiti and able to reach Haitians throughout the country with affordable treatment and care. Harmonizing standards and norms for both public and private providers will be key.

Strengthening the Ministry of Education: President Martelly has expressed his vision for children by announcing a primary education initiative that would guarantee free primary education. We should allow Haitian children to have what every child in North America takes for granted. The education system should be strengthened with regular teacher training, and standards in education that meet that of other countries in the region.

Education not only is fundamental for participating in today's economy but provides a valuable tool for Haitian children to meet their potential.

- Support a development model that includes and benefits the poor people of Haiti, ensuring their livelihoods and food security. Economic growth is a necessary but insufficient condition for poverty reduction. The economic model that is pursued in Haiti must empower Haitians and private sector investment must be geared toward that aim.

In all of this, we must invest in women and youth. Roughly half of Haiti's population is under 18 years of age. Supporting their rights, investing in their potential, and providing a space for their voice will be key to successful reconstruction.

Those that believe there is a "quick fix" to the issues in Haiti are mistaken. Anytime we think progress is not fast enough in Haiti, we should remind ourselves of our own experience with Hurricane Katrina, and how challenging it is to rebuild communities and infrastructure.

But there are many reasons for optimism:

- the resilience of the Haitian people and the potential of Haiti's children;
- the resourcefulness of Haitians living abroad who are committed to Haiti's future;
- Haiti's proximity to the United States with our strong national interest in seeing the country succeed;
- the opportunities presented by unprecedented attention, resources and international partnerships focused on Haiti;
- and the inauguration of President Martelly's new government with an expectation of concerted action.

Long term engagement by the Administration and Congress will be required to ensure Haiti's government and people receive the support they need. With coordinated and energetic leadership from the government and civil society of Haiti, perseverance and sustained commitment from the Haitian people, and long-term wise engagement from the United States and international community, we can support Haitians as they realize their full potential and prosper.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today, and I welcome any questions you may have.