

Ex-president Clinton to lead UN-backed trade mission to Haiti



UN Special Envoy Bill Clinton greets a child at hospital in Gonaives while on visit to Haiti in July 2009

10 August 2009 – Former United States president Bill Clinton plans to lead a trade mission to **Haiti** in October on his second visit since being appointed United Nations Special Envoy for the impoverished Caribbean nation.

“We have a unique opportunity to act now to reclaim Haiti’s proud past while shaping a better future,” Mr. Clinton told the Second Annual Congress of the Haitian Diaspora in Miami yesterday, citing the leadership shown by the Haitian Government and Parliament, expanded US duty-free treatment for Haitian apparel exports, the recent \$1.2 billion in debt relief from the international community, and the strong resolve of the Haitian people.

But, he warned: “Every single day a child is hungry; a parent comes home without a job, a mother dies in childbirth, a community is uprooted by a storm, the window of opportunity we have today closes a little more.”

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Mr. Clinton, who first visited Haiti in his new capacity in July to assess how to support Government efforts to brace the country for hurricanes, generate new jobs and boost the delivery of basic social services, also cited a series of other measures to help the country.

These included the Haiti Invest Project, an equity-investment programme launched by the Soros Economic Development Fund with an initial commitment of up to \$25 million.

Haiti Invest already has approached potential partners in an effort to expand this initial capitalization six-fold to as much as \$150 million, and is considering investments in garment manufacturing, agriculture, logistics, tourism, energy, and housing.

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