

UN envoy Bill Clinton to head to Haiti to promote investment



UN Special Envoy Bill Clinton (left) touring a hospital in Haiti during his visit on 9 July 2009

30 September 2009 – The United Nations Special Envoy to Haiti, former United States president Bill Clinton, will embark on a two-day visit to Haiti tomorrow in a bid to boost private sector investment in the impoverished Caribbean nation.

During his trip, Mr. Clinton will meet with President René Préval and Prime Minister Michèle Pierre-Louis, and will also deliver the keynote address at a conference of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Accompanying him on his visit, part of his ongoing efforts to support the Haitian Government create jobs and enhance the delivery of basic services, is Paul Farmer, his Deputy Special Envoy.

Mr. Farmer, a physician and Harvard University professor, was appointed last month to his post. A founding director of Partners in Health since 1987, he has dedicated much of his life to improving health care for the world's most vulnerable people. As a student in 1983, he worked in villages in Haiti's Central Plateau, bringing modern health care to some of the poorest people in the Western Hemisphere.

Starting with a one-building clinic in the village of Cange, Dr. Farmer's project now extends to a multi-service health complex that includes a primary school, an infirmary, a surgery wing, a training programme for outreach workers, a 104-bed hospital, a women's clinic and a paediatric care facility, according to the Office for the Special Envoy to Haiti.

"Paul's selfless commitment to building health systems in the poor Haitian communities over the last 20 years has given millions of people hope for a brighter future for Haiti," said Mr. Clinton.

Earlier this month, the former US leader told the Security Council that the country has "a remarkable opportunity" to overcome decades of misrule and neglect, but major hurdles remain and the international community must step up its support to ensure the Caribbean country can consolidate its gains.

The outlook for Haiti was positive, he said, with a Government committed to building a modern State, large pledges of aid from donors, a diaspora willing to help and goodwill from the international community.

"I am convinced that Haiti has a remarkable opportunity to escape its past," Mr. Clinton stressed, noting that throughout the region, "there is a deep, wide sense that we can and should support" the country, considered the poorest in the Western Hemisphere.

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