



UN NEWS CENTRE

Bill Clinton arrives in Haiti to help with UN post-quake aid effort



5 February 2010 – The former United States president Bill Clinton flew into Haiti today as part of his expanded leadership role for the United Nations in coordinating international aid efforts in the wake of last month's earthquake, and immediately pledged to see the tasks through to their successful conclusion "long after the television crews have gone and emergency response teams have returned to their home countries."

"Flying into Port-au-Prince for the second time since the earthquake, I was pleased to see continued signs of an expanding relief effort," he said in a statement issued on the Clinton Foundation website.

He was quickly briefed by UN staff about the current situation on the ground following the 12 January quake, which killed up to 200,000 people, injured many others and left 2 million in need of aid.

Relief efforts have faced a series of daunting challenges compounded by the enormity of the catastrophe and the lack of infrastructure in providing sufficient food, shelter and other requirements, and Mr. Clinton is due to meet with Haitian leaders and visit the Gheiskio clinic and a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Mr. Clinton UN Special Envoy for Haiti last May, following a visit they made together two months earlier to raise awareness of efforts to help its people and Government bolster economic security of the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

On Wednesday he asked the former president to assume a leadership role in coordinating international quake relief efforts, from emergency response to reconstruction to launching a new funding appeal.

Meanwhile, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reiterated that shelter remains an urgent need, with the focus on providing emergency shelter closer to home or in smaller camps to reduce dislocation. Sanitation is also a significant concern, especially at temporary shelters. Some 7,000 latrines and 25,000 portable toilets are needed.

As of last night, 1.6 million people had received food aid since the quake in and around Port-au-Prince, the capital, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) said. In the past five days, through the fixed distribution points system, 20,000 people have received food rations that last for up to two weeks.

Meanwhile, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported that 23 large tents have been installed in Port-au-Prince to give youngsters a place to seek refuge and play. Many families are wary of sending children to school because they fear that another earthquake could strike. UNICEF is working with the Government to distribute messages to Haitians encouraging them to send their children back to schools.

Next Friday the WFP will host a high-level meeting at its Rome headquarters on agricultural development, food security and nutrition in Haiti, as part of the country's redevelopment plan.

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