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IRI Announces Expert Committee to Support Haitian Democracy

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Washington, D.C. -- The International Republican Institute (IRI) today announced its Haiti International Assessment Committee, which will advise Haitians and stakeholders in the international community on preparations for upcoming elections and the establishment of a new, democratically elected government in early 2006. This international, bi-partisan committee is comprised of respected former members of the U.S. congress and international statesmen with significant expertise related to Haiti.



Left to right: Gilman, Graham and McDougall participate in the first meeting of the Haiti International Assessment Committee.

"IRI is looking forward to the engagement of the Haiti International Assessment Committee at a time when both Haitians and the international community must work together to reinforce the country's democratic process," said Georges Fauriol, senior vice president, IRI. "While initially focused on the election season, the committee is representative of a long-term commitment by the international community."

Members of the committee are co-director of the Center for the Study of the Americas at Brazil's Universidade Candido Mendes, Clovis Brigagao, former U.S. Congressman Benjamin Gilman (R-NY), former U.S. Senator Bob Graham (D-FL), former Canadian minister of external affairs Barbara McDougall, and former assistant secretary general of the Organization of American States Ambassador Christopher Thomas of Trinidad and Tobago (biographies attached).

The committee will begin their work today in Washington, D.C. While in Washington, they will meet with congressional members and staff, as well as senior officials at the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Organization of American States.

Over the next nine months, the committee will travel to Haiti four times to support the



country's movement towards democracy. They will meet with leaders of the government, political parties, civil society and the international community. The first mission will allow committee members to assess the state of Haiti's political process as it prepares for upcoming elections. In its second and third missions, the committee will focus attention on the country's political atmosphere, in addition to voter registration efforts, transparency of the electoral process and the state of the local, municipal, parliamentary and presidential campaigns. The fourth mission will take place following the transition to the newly elected government.

IRI has been working with the Haitian people since 1990 to reinforce democratic values among political party and civil society leaders and by promoting coalition building, and greater engagement of youth and women at all levels of the political process.

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Related Links

Haiti International Assessment Committee Biographies

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