



Institute for  
Justice &  
Democracy  
in Haiti



Partners  
In Health



ROBERT F. KENNEDY  
CENTER FOR JUSTICE & HUMAN RIGHTS

January 26, 2010

To the Member States of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Your Excellency,

We, the undersigned human rights organizations working for justice in Haiti, welcome the Human Rights Council's decision to hold a special session on "The Support of the Human Rights Council to the Recovery Process in Haiti after the Earthquake of January 12, 2010: A Human Rights Approach." As you consider the dire situation in Haiti, we urge you to clearly articulate the contours of the human rights-based approach to assistance to Haiti, reminding Member States that they have specific human rights obligations when responding to humanitarian emergencies.

Our organizations have worked for several years to investigate challenges to the ability of the Haitian people to enjoy their rights.<sup>1</sup> We have found that in countries like Haiti, where the State has inadequate resources to fulfill the rights of its own people, members of the international community often wield significantly more power than the State and, at times, have worsened the human rights situation through their programs and policies.

We, therefore, urge Members of the Council to encourage the international community to ensure their assistance respects the human rights of persons needing assistance and is done in transparent, non-discriminatory way that builds the capacity of the Haitian government. The Council's attention to the human rights implications of international assistance and the obligations of States delivering such assistance is urgently needed. States need guidance on how

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<sup>1</sup> Our organizations have a long-standing commitment to the human rights-based approach to international assistance in Haiti. *See* Aid Haiti Can Believe In: A Human Rights-Based Approach to Foreign Development (Apr. 15, 2008), available at <http://www.chrgj.org/events/2009.html#haitiaid>; CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS & GLOBAL JUSTICE, PARTNERS IN HEALTH, RFK CENTER FOR JUSTICE & HUMAN RIGHTS & ZAMNI LASANTE, WÓCH NAN SOLEY: THE DENIAL OF THE RIGHT TO WATER IN HAITI (2008), available at <http://www.chrgj.org/projects/docs/wochnansoley.pdf>. Several of the signatories to this letter presented before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on related issues on March 3, 2006.

assistance projects should be designed, planned, and implemented in a way that respects the human rights of the people who need it.

We have attached a joint statement on a human rights-based approach to assistance to Haiti, which provides more detail on how to ensure Haiti's lengthy recovery process in Haiti is guided by human rights principles.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

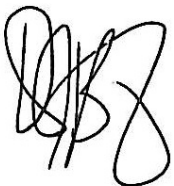
Sincerely,



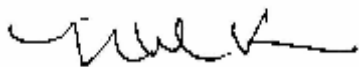
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cc: Mission of Haiti to the United Nations in Geneva