



March 06, 2018

Dear Representative Diaz-Balart,

We write to you urgently as organizations and individuals in Florida serving our immigrant communities, to urge you to ensure that Congress' forthcoming appropriations bill includes an authorization to reallocate UN credits to the United States to the UN's cholera response in Haiti. As you may know, the Senate Appropriations Committee unanimously approved the authorization of \$11.7 million for this purpose in the 2018 Department of State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill. We ask you to encourage the leadership of both chambers' Appropriations Sub-Committees on State & Foreign Operations, in particular Representative Rogers and Senator Graham, to support this provision during the ongoing conference negotiations.

As you know, cholera was introduced to Haiti in 2010 because of reckless waste disposal on a UN peacekeeping base. The epidemic has so far killed close to 10,000 Haitians, and over 800,000 have been sickened by cholera, making the death toll comparable to the 2014–2015 West African Ebola outbreak. Cholera has devastated Haiti's poorest communities, leaving families who lost breadwinners destitute and children orphaned. In the United States, our Haitian-American members, friends and neighbors have carried a heavy burden caring for sick and surviving family members in Haiti. Haitian-Americans visiting family in Haiti are also among those who have contracted this disease and died. The epidemic continues to this day and spikes following large rainfall, such as during Hurricanes Irma and Matthew. This poses a particularly urgent threat to the 50,000 Haitians who will be forced to return to Haiti following the recent rescission of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haiti, a designation that you fought to extend.

We were pleased that the UN finally acknowledged its responsibility for the cholera outbreak and launched a "New Approach to Cholera in Haiti" in December 2016 and thank you for your past engagement on this issue, which helped push the UN to this point. The New Approach is a \$400-million plan to end cholera transmission and provide material assistance to those most directly affected. So far, the plan has been successful in reducing transmission, and there is an unprecedented opportunity to eliminate cholera by the end of the year, although public health actors have warned that if funding for current activities is not assured, another outbreak may result. The New Approach would also help innocent Haitians who lost their breadwinners and livelihoods as a result of the epidemic rebuild their lives, and is a critical step towards ensuring that the UN is held accountable when it fails.

To become a reality, however, the New Approach requires funding from UN Member States. Although 31 countries have contributed so far, the U.S. is not among them. The provision in the State & Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill (S.1780, p.16, 2017) authorizing the use of \$11.7 million in UN credits to support the UN trust fund on

cholera would move the New Approach closer to reality. Without appropriating new funds, this modest reallocation will help provide much needed funds towards elimination in 2018, reduce Haiti's long-term need for aid by reducing public health risks and strengthening economic resilience in communities. Reallocation will also underline the United States' commitment to stronger UN accountability. It will likely spur donations from other governments, as many are looking to follow the U.S.'s lead given its historical leadership at the UN and on Haiti-related issues. As the House and Senate Sub-Committees on State and Foreign Operations negotiate a final bill, we urge you to champion the importance of this authorization to Senator Graham and Representative Rogers to ensure that it is maintained in the final bill.

Securing a U.S. contribution to the cholera response is a matter of critical importance to us and many of the constituents we work with. We thank you for your ongoing leadership on issues of importance to immigrant communities, including the Haitian-American community, and urge you as our Representative to champion this cause.

Respectfully yours,

Organizations

1. 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, Monica Russo, Executive Vice President, Florida Region
2. Americans for Immigrant Justice, Cheryl Little, Executive Director, Miami, FL
3. Center for Multicultural Wellness and Prevention, Inc., Marie-Jose Francois, MD, MPH, CHES, President/CEO, Orlando, FL
4. Center for Self Sufficiency, Edeline Mondestin, President, Miami, FL
5. Coalition of Immokalee Workers, Lucas Benitez, Co-Founder, Immokalee, FL
6. SEIU Florida State Council, Monica Russo, President
7. Collective Solidarity Towards Cholera Victims, Jimy Mertune, President, Orlando, FL
8. Excelsior Theatrical Group, Mireille Manuel, President, Miami, FL
9. Fanm Ayisyen Nan Miyami, Inc., Marleine Bastien, MSW, LCSW, Executive Director, Miami, FL
10. Florida Immigrant Coalition, Maria Rodriguez, Executive Director, Miami, FL
11. Florida Student Power Network, David Caicedo, State Director, Orlando, FL

12. Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees, Bud Conlin, Coordinator, Miami, FL
13. Haiti First, Justin Manuel, President, Miami, FL
14. Palm Beach County Coalition for Immigrant Rights, Jill Hanson, Board Member, Palm Beach, FL
15. Sant La, Haitian Neighborhood Center, Inc, Gepsie M. Metellus, Executive Director, Miami, FL
16. SEIU Florida Public Services Union, Alphonso Mayfield, President, Palm Beach, FL
17. Sosyete Koukouy, Jean Marie Denis, President, Miami, FL
18. WeCount!, Jonathan Fried, Executive Director, Homestead, FL

Individuals

19. Bradford E. Brown, PhD, Miami, FL
20. Dotie Joseph, Attorney at Law and Candidate for Florida State Representative, District 106, Miami, FL
21. Dr. Idler Bonhomme, Chairman, Greater Haitian American Chamber of Commerce, Orlando, FL, and Clinical Director, Fyzical Therapy & Balance Center, Orlando, FL.
22. Olicier Pieriche, Representative, Collective Solidarity Towards Cholera Victims, and former Minister for Haitians Living Abroad (MHAVE), Government of Haiti, Orlando, FL
23. Reina Maria Ramirez, Manager, Immigration Services Express, LLC, Hialeah, FL
24. Romane Petit Joseph, Senior Organizer, UniteHere-Local 355, Miami, FL