



# THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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To: The Mayor

From: Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director *Tom Cochran*

Re: Update on Haiti

During our Winter Meeting in Washington which concluded this afternoon, there was much discussion about the tragic situation in Haiti and what mayors can do to help. A resolution on Haiti, sponsored by North Miami Mayor André Pierre (a Haitian-American), Providence Mayor David Cicilline, and New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin was adopted by the Executive Committee. It is attached. Our resolution addresses both short- and long-term assistance to Haiti and the need to improve and accelerate the process for adopting Haitian orphans.

Yesterday the administration posted an update on Haiti, including specific information on the U.S. response, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/united-states-government-haiti-earthquake-disaster-response-update-12110>. Note that this includes new information on how to locate and contact people in Haiti.

This afternoon we participated in a White House conference call on the situation in Haiti by representatives of the White House, USAID, and Department of Homeland Security.

- The administration again stressed the importance of donating cash to meet the immediate needs of the relief effort. All are now being directed to [ClintonBushHaitiFund.org](http://ClintonBushHaitiFund.org). Also, by texting "QUAKE" to 20222, a \$10 donation to the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund will be added to cell phone bills. Other inquiries about aid are again being directed to the Center for International Disaster Information at [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org).
- There is now a Web site providing information on the specific needs of non-governmental organizations working in Haiti for goods: [www.usaid.gov/haiti/](http://www.usaid.gov/haiti/). Agencies able to donate goods in addition to cash are encouraged to go to this site to match what they have to offer with specific needs on the ground in Haiti.
- A White House staff member who returned from Haiti yesterday afternoon reports that there are now 13,000 members of the U.S. military there. The majority are afloat, and the majority are providing humanitarian aid. The port is operating at about one-third capacity but is expected to increase its capacity as work progresses. About 43,000 hand-crank radios have been distributed to help get information on where and how to get help to the Haitian people. (The staff member also reported a "massive disconnect" between the disorder that Americans are seeing on CNN and what is actually happening on the ground in Haiti.)

- Agencies and organizations are again warned not to attempt to send personnel directly to Haiti. Unscheduled planes are being turned away from the airport.
- The plight of children in general, and the adoption of Haitian orphans in particular, are State Department priorities. To our knowledge, none of the children who had previously been matched with U.S. families for adoption were killed in the earthquake. For children approved for adoption by Haiti, the adoption process is being accelerated. Where the adoption process had been completed for U.S. families, visas for the children are being expedited. At this time, however, the Haitian government is asking to review the files of children previously approved for humanitarian parole, and this will delay the process to some extent. Families wishing to adopt Haitian children are advised that following the State Department process is critically important.
- Regarding Temporary Protective Status, DHS reiterated that it applies only to Haitians in the U.S. as of January 12. Applications for TPS were accepted by DHS for the first time yesterday. TPS fees will be waived for those unable to afford them. Information on the process is available from the agency between 8:00 A.M. and 11:00 P.M. at (800) 375-5283 and on the agency's Web site at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov). On this site, a blog will be used to answer most frequently asked questions. DHS says that a public information campaign will be used to issue warnings to those who would attempt to take advantage of the vulnerable Haitian population.