

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 12, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Rajiv Shah
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523

Dear Secretary Clinton and Administrator Shah:

Today we mark one year since a devastating earthquake struck Port au Prince, Haiti, killing hundreds of thousands of people and decimating the government, hospitals, schools and businesses. It is clear that rebuilding Haiti will be rife with unexpected challenges, as demonstrated by the recent cholera outbreak and fraught election, and we applaud your and your team's on going commitment to Haiti and to a plan to "build back better." As you know, doing so requires distributing aid in a way that builds the long-term capacity of the Haitian government, businesses and civil society sector.

The Department of State received \$1.7 billion in supplemental funds for Haiti in Fiscal Year 2010, including \$917 million dedicated to the rebuilding process. As stated in the spending plan for these funds, the U.S. government "will make strategic investments...with a core objective of assisting Haiti in building its own institutions and capacity." We appreciate your efforts to do so in a very difficult situation. As we cross the one year mark, we write to seek more information on the following critical areas discussed in the spending plan:

1) "The [U.S. Government] will also seek to improve the capacity of [Government of Haiti]-owned enterprises and increase direct engagement with the Haitian private sector." What specifically is USAID doing to help build the capacity of government institutions and how is the U.S. government ensuring that programs support Haitian ownership? How is the U.S. government supporting local business and what is the process to ensure that, wherever possible, supplies and materials are being purchased from Haitian companies?

2) "Assessments of local NGOs will be conducted and technical assistance provided to build their organizational capacity to receive and effectively manage direct awards." Has this assessment taken place and how are funds being tracked regarding distribution to Haitian organizations?

3) As the spending plan also references, it is critical that some of these funds be directed toward "growth poles" outside of Port au Prince, as designated by the government of Haiti. How much of the funds are going to, or slated to go to, local entities outside of the capital area?

4) "[T]he USG will also seek to tap the expertise and energy of the Haitian-American community." What has been done to secure the input of Haitian-Americans in the rebuilding process?

We continue to be committed to supporting the people of Haiti and look forward to working with you to ensure our aid is as effective as possible. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. We look forward to hearing from you.

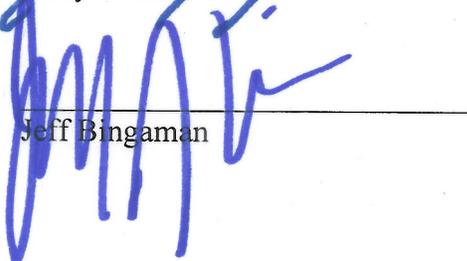
Sincerely,


Frank R. Lautenberg


Kirsten Gillibrand


Mary Landrieu


Bill Nelson


Jeff Bingaman