

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 11, 2012

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:

Tomorrow marks two years since a devastating earthquake struck Port au Prince, Haiti, killing hundreds of thousands of people and destroying housing and critical infrastructure. We commend you for your efforts in responding to the cholera outbreak, improving agricultural development and food security, and facilitating the development of a new industrial park. The U.S. has pledged a substantial amount of reconstruction assistance to Haiti, and we remain committed to working with you to ensure Haiti has the resources needed to continue with the long-term rebuilding process. However, we are highly concerned that the challenges Haiti faces have held up aid for hundreds of thousands of Haitians who remain in desperate need. We write to urge you to continue to explore ways to further distribute U.S. aid in Haiti in an effective and transparent manner.

In response to the earthquake, Congress approved the FY 2010 supplemental appropriations bill, which appropriated more than \$1.14 billion in reconstruction funds for Haiti to be available through the end of FY 2012. However, a substantial portion of this funding has yet to be expended. According to the U.N. Office of the Special Envoy for Haiti, a little over half of the \$5.5 billion pledged to Haiti's recovery by international donors at a November 2010 donors' conference has been spent. Approximately \$1.2 billion of that pledge was made by the U.S., with only 30 percent of the U.S. pledge having been disbursed by December 2011. A November 2011 report by the Government Accountability Office highlighted the concern many of us have had about the slow distribution of aid. According to this report, the State Department and USAID had allocated almost \$412 million for infrastructure construction activities as of September 30, 2011. Of that amount, only 0.8 percent had actually been expended.

We understand the enormous challenges Haiti faced before January 12, 2010, which were only exacerbated by the devastating loss of life and destruction caused by the earthquake. Since

then, Haiti has suffered a cholera epidemic that affected over 450,000 people, and political uncertainty has made efforts to rebuild the government, business and civil society sectors extremely difficult. Haiti's new President Michel Martelly was not sworn in until May 2011, and two candidates for the post of Prime Minister were rejected by Parliament before a third candidate was approved in October 2011. Relocating individuals in camps to homes has also proved challenging. While over 140,000 Haitians are now being housed in temporary shelters built with aid from the U.S., approximately 500,000 still remain in camps.

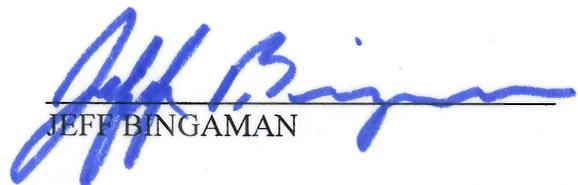
Additionally, the mandate of the Interim Haitian Recovery Commission (IHRC), which was established to approve and distribute aid, expired in October 2011. According to the State Department, the IHRC has approved 89 projects across numerous sectors valued at more than \$3 billion. Since the IHRC's mandate has expired, donors have coordinated among themselves and worked with the Haitian government through representatives. Some have expressed concern that reconstruction efforts may be hampered without a coordination mechanism in place.

For this reason, we respectfully ask that you continue to explore ways to further distribute U.S. aid in Haiti in an effective and transparent manner. As we have previously noted, aid must be distributed in a way that builds the long-term capacity of the Haitian government, businesses and civil society sector. In addition, if the expiration of the IHRC's mandate is determined to have a detrimental impact on the distribution of U.S. aid in Haiti, we urge you to work with the Haitian government to explore options for extending the mandate of the Commission or establishing a new mechanism for aid distribution.

Once again, we commend you for your leadership in overseeing the progress that has been made in Haiti in the past two years. We remain committed to working with you in the upcoming year to ensure progress continues to be made. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


FRANK R. LAUTENBERG


JEFF BINGAMAN


MARY L. LANDRIEU