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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On Heels of Two-Year Commemoration of Haiti's Earthquake, U.S. Representatives, Haitian Delegation and NGOs Focus on Reconstruction, U.S. Aid Efforts Jan. 23-25

*Briefings to Examine Land and Housing, Cholera, Women, Accountability and a Just
Reconstruction in Haiti*

Washington, D.C. (Jan. 20, 2012) – The **Haiti Advocacy Working Group (HAWG)**, comprised of leading U.S. organizations devoted to a fair and more effective reconstruction process in Haiti, is promoting a “Haiti Advocacy Week” Jan. 23-25 on Capitol Hill. The status of U.S. aid to Haiti will be fully examined as will signs of progress in the poorest country in the hemisphere. The Haitian government estimates that 316,000 people were lost in the Jan. 2010 earthquake.

Haitians, Haitian-Americans and Haitian development and human rights experts will bring their voice to Washington next week for the three days of briefings. They will be in sessions with HAWG members and government officials, sponsored by five Members of Congress: Representatives Yvette Clarke (NY), Barbara Lee (CA), Donald Payne (NJ), Maxine Waters (CA) and Frederica Wilson (FL). Additionally, there will be a reception in the Capitol Building (House Visitors Center 215), sponsored by HAWG, where Members of Congress, Haitian grassroots, civil society and Diaspora leaders will convene at 6:00 p.m. Monday.

“Haiti’s reconstruction process will only be a success when the Haitian government and international donors begin to listen to the real needs of the Haitian people,” said Pierre DouDou, National Coordinator of RENHASSA (Network for Food Sovereignty and Food Security), who works closely with ActionAid as a member of the growing “Je nan Je” or “Eye to Eye” land and housing rights platform. “Expert farmers must be involved in the reconstruction. Women’s groups. Poor people living in the camps. Only then will we start to see sustainable results.”

The briefings will include candid looks at gender-based violence, the cholera epidemic, aid accountability, land and housing, and democracy in Haiti. (Briefing schedule on pgs. 3-4.)

The delegation from Haiti will include 10 political and civil rights leaders, such as Antonal Mortime, director of the Haitian Human Rights Platform (POHDH) a coalition of nine Haitian human rights organizations advocating for victims in Port-au-Prince's 1,300-plus refugee camps. Also in attendance will be Marie Ange Noel, coordinator of Women Decide (“Fanm Deside”), a Haitian NGO based in the southern city of Jacmel with more than 20 years experience in women's health and human rights. Former Justice Minister Rene Magloire will also be part of the Haitian delegation. (MORE)

HAITI BRIEFINGS (page 2)

More than two years after the devastating earthquake on January 12, 2010, conditions in Haiti remain dire. Today there are still over half a million displaced Haitians and the lack of food,

clean water, and other necessities is an ongoing crisis throughout the country. Cholera has claimed the lives of more than 6,700 Haitians and hospitalized more than a quarter of a million others. The ongoing plight of Haitians, their spirit of perseverance, and how Haitian grassroots and other civil society leaders are striving to create a more equitable Haiti will be examined at the briefings.

“The U.S. government has taken important steps in prioritizing the recovery and reconstruction process in Haiti, such as setting a clear housing strategy with quantifiable goals. Now, it must fully honor those commitments by meeting its number targets and supporting the Haitian government in its land reform and housing development efforts. Most importantly, this must be done through direct consultation with Haiti’s grassroots and civil society groups, listening to the people living in the camps, women’s groups and peasant movements in decentralized areas,” said Elise Young, Senior Policy Analyst, ActionAid USA.

HAWG has identified action items for all facets of the U.S. government that would help set a better course for U.S. involvement in Haiti, including:

- Secretary of State Clinton should publicly state her support for resolving Haiti’s many critical land issues in a way that prioritize the needs of vulnerable populations, and she should clearly oppose forced evictions.
- Support passage of the Assessing Progress in Haiti Act, S.1576, in the Senate, introduced by Sen. Mary Landrieu.
- Set and report on specific targets for each USAID Haiti project, to make sure a certain percentage of funds are used for local contracting and subcontracting and for Haitian labor.
- Expedite disbursement of the nearly \$1.2 billion in approved but mostly undisbursed post-earthquake multi-lateral grants, prioritizing aid that benefits the most vulnerable. (The World Bank is Trustee of the multi-donor Haiti Reconstruction Fund).
- Co-sponsor and support passage of a Congressional House Resolution on Gender-Based Violence in Haiti, to be introduced by Rep. Frederica Wilson of Miami, FL, on January 23, 2012.

(MORE)

HAITI BRIEFINGS (page 3)

According to advocates, including Haitian women in the rebuilding process is very important. Another problem is unfair trade and agriculture restrictions, which have created severe food insecurity in Haiti. HAWG members are requesting that the U.S. government consult with and

meet the needs of peasant farmers in the overall plans. They are also calling for the U.S. to support more aid accountability and prioritization in land and housing development.

“The Haiti Advocacy Working Group (HAWG) has sought to build relationships with Haitian organizations and ensure their voice reaches the halls of power in Washington,” said Ian Schwab, Associate Director, Advocacy at American Jewish World Service. “Through greater dialogue and partnership, the U.S. can ensure resources are maximized and their plans fit the needs of the Haitian people. The range of perspectives that will be presented this week only occurs when a diversity of people and organizations are committed to working together.”

The Haiti Action Working Group includes: ActionAid USA, Alternative Change/Chans Alternativ, American Jewish World Service, Center for Economic and Policy Research, Center for Gender and Refugee Studies–University of California Hasting College of Law, Church World Service, Environmental Justice Initiative for Haiti, Fonkoze USA, Gender Action, Grassroots International, Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, International Rescue Committee, Jesuit Refugee Service/USA, Latin America Working Group, Li, Li, Li, Read, MADRE, Mennonite Central Committee U.S.–Washington Office, National Lawyers Guild–Environmental Justice Center, Oxfam America, Partners in Health, The Andora Project, The Haiti Fund at the Boston Foundation, TransAfrica Forum, United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, University of Miami School of Law–Human Rights Clinic.

Schedule & Panelists for Haiti Earthquake 2-Year Public Briefings

Jan. 23-25, 2012

Monday, January 23

4-6pm, House Rayburn Building - B-369 Briefing: Gender-Based Violence

Sponsors: Reps. Frederica Wilson, Barbara Lee, Maxine Waters.

Panelists: Marie Ange Noel, Fanm Deside

Emmania Duchard, Commission of Women Victims for Victims (KOFIV)

Marguerite Salomon, GCFV

Margaret L. Satterthwaite, NYU

Ambassador Melanie Vermeer, State Dept (invited)

6-8pm, Capitol House Visitor Center - 215: Haiti Reception, sponsored by HAWG.

Tuesday, January 24

9am-10:30am, House Rayburn Gold Room Briefing: Cholera

Sponsors: Reps. Barbara Lee, Yvette Clarke, Donald Payne, Frederica Wilson, Maxine Waters.

Panelists: Dr. Louise Ivers, Senior Health and Policy Advisor, Partners In Health

Ralph Ternier, Director, Community Health, Zanmi Lasante/Partners In Health

Jordon Tappero, Director, Health Systems, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

Dr. Mirta Roses, Director, Pan American Health Organization

(MORE)

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Noon-2pm, House Rayburn – 2103 Briefing/Documentary: ‘Where did the money go?’

Sponsors: Reps. Yvette Clarke, Barbara Lee, Donald Payne.

Panelists: Mark Schuller, CUNY
Manolia Charlotin, Boston Haitian Reporter
Ben Smilowitz, Disaster Accountability Project
Michele Mitchell, News at 11
Mark Weisbrot, Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR)
Nicole Lee, **TransAfrica Forum**

2-4pm, House Rayburn – 2103

Briefing: Land and Housing Rights

Sponsors: Reps. Barbara Lee, Frederica Wilson, Yvette Clarke, Donald Payne,
Maxine Waters.

Panelists: Pierre DouDou, Network for Food Sovereignty & Food Security (RENHASSA)

Colette Lespinasse, Support Group for Refugees and Repatriated Persons (GARR)

Atonal Mortime, , Haitian Human Rights Platform (POHDH)

Brian Concannon, Institute for Justice and Democracy (IJDH)

Dominique Toussaint, Mobilize for Haiti

Michelle Karshan, Li, Li, Li, Read

6:30-8:30pm: TransAfrica Forum and CEPR hosting book event for “Tectonics Shift: Haiti Since the Earthquake, at Busboys and Poets, 14th and V St NW

Wednesday, January 25

9:00am-10:30am, House Rayburn – 2103

Media room for interviews with Members, Haitian delegation, HAWG members.

Sponsors: Reps. Barbara Lee, Frederica Wilson, Yvette Clarke, Donald Payne,
Maxine Waters.

10:30am to 12:30pm, House Rayburn – 2456

Briefing: Who Runs Haiti? Governance, Political Power, and Democracy in Haiti

Sponsors: Reps. Maxine Waters, Barbara Lee.

Panelists: Thomas C. Adams, Haiti Special Coordinator, U.S. Department of State

Rene Magloire, USIPS, Previous Haitian Justice Minister

Brian Concannon, Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH)

Mark Weisbrot, Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR)

Peter Sallis, Inter-American Development Bank

Marguerite Salomon, Groupe Concertation des Femmes Victimes (GCFV)

For more info or to RSVP for the reception, email: hawgtwoyear@yahoo.com

To arrange an interview, please contact Barbara Fallon, (703) 489-0880,
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