

**United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos
Statement to the Press on mission to Haiti**

New York, 04 October 2011

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Thank you.

I've just come back from a two-day visit to Haiti and want to give you an update on the humanitarian situation there.

In Port-au-Prince I met people who are still living with the impact of last year's earthquake and ongoing cholera epidemic. I also met Haitian government officials, representatives of humanitarian organizations and donors.

Around 600,000 people displaced by the earthquake are still living in camps, and are dependent on humanitarian aid for survival. That figure has gone down from 1.5 million last year. They are extremely vulnerable, facing food insecurity, the threat of cholera and, of course, natural disasters, such as the current hurricane season.

I met residents of Accra camp in the Delmas neighbourhood of the capital. They voiced their frustration at being in camps so long. They want to leave but can't afford to pay rent or repair their homes. People want jobs – they spoke very much about this – and security for their families. Women spoke of high levels of sexual and domestic violence.

The President, donors and people of Haiti want to see a much greater focus on development and there is considerable frustration that the pace is slow. But I want everyone to remember that the humanitarian crisis in Haiti is not over. While important efforts are being made to put the country on the road to recovery - and I fully support this - significant humanitarian needs remain and must be addressed.

Some of our NGO partners have pulled out of projects because of lack of money. This means, for example, that hundreds of latrines are now unusable and overflowing, posing a serious health risk – and I saw this for myself in the camp that I visited. We don't want to see further spread of cholera, which has already killed nearly 6,500 people since last October.

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The number of people dying from cholera every month is falling, but heavy rains in September set off new outbreaks throughout the country. Sanitation and the provision of safe drinking water is a national priority and the Ministry of Public Health and Population is progressively improving and taking over the cholera treatment centres.

I also visited the first ever sewage treatment plant in Haiti, which has just opened. The centre is managed by the Haitian Water Authority with support from the United Nations. A CERF grant and money from UNICEF and also from the European Commission helped to finance the project.

In my brief meeting with President Martelly, we agreed that it is essential that humanitarian response complements sustainable development initiatives.

The international community needs to work together to support Haiti. We cannot forget the hundreds of thousands of people living in camps or affected by the cholera epidemic. We have asked for US\$ 382 million for critical relief and protection work this year and have so far received only 57% of the funding needed.

Looking ahead we are already working with our national and international partners on the humanitarian plan for 2012. Its priorities include access to safe drinking water, establishing minimum standards of hygiene and sanitation, and the importance of better food security. Guarding against gender-based violence and forced evictions from the camps also remains a critical concern.

Even as other crises demand our attention, we must also continue to keep our attention focused on Haiti.