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Situation in Haiti a year after the earthquake - humanitarian aid and reconstruction

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

The European Parliament,

– having regard to the International Donors' Conference Towards a New Future for Haiti held in New York on 31 March 2010, and to the New York mission report of the delegation of the European Parliament's Committee on Development,

– having regard to the 'Action Plan for Recovery and Development in Haiti: Immediate Key Initiatives for the Future' (March 2010),

– having regard to the conclusions of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Brussels on 18 January 2010,

– having regard to the statement on the Haiti earthquake made by the Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on 19 January 2010,

– having regard to the conclusions of the preparatory ministerial conference held in Montreal on 25 January 2010,

– having regard to the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid signed by the three EU institutions in December 2007,

– having regard to its resolution of 10 February 2010 on the recent earthquake in Haiti,

– having regard to the report on the mission to Haiti of Parliament's Committee on Development (25-27 June 2010),

– having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the earthquake (7.3 on the Richter scale) which hit Haiti on 12 January 2010 left in its wake 222 750 dead, affected the lives of 3 million and displaced 1.7 million from their homes; whereas more than a million homeless are still living in supposedly temporary housing camps,

B. whereas a year on from the earthquake, the situation in Haiti remains chaotic, the country is still under a state of emergency and reconstruction has scarcely taken off,

C. whereas decades of poverty, environmental deterioration, vulnerability to diverse forms of natural disaster, violence, political instability and dictatorship have left Haiti the most impoverished country in the Americas, while the fallout from the earthquake has further undermined the ability of the state to provide even the most elementary public services or to respond actively to the aid and reconstruction efforts,

D. whereas to date only a few hundred million of the USD 10 billion dollars pledged at the International Donors' Conference for the reconstruction of Haiti, held in New York on 31 March 2010, have actually been paid,

E. whereas the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC) was set up at Haiti's request to coordinate the resources and ensure that they are used effectively, and to implement the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti; whereas the European Commission, as the leading donor, is a voting member of the IHRC,

F. whereas the removal of debris is a major challenge for reconstruction in the country (less than 5% of the wreckage has been cleared) and at the current rhythm it will take 6 years to remove 20 million m3 of debris, and clearing the wreckage will require 180 lorries working 24 hours a day for 18 months,

G. whereas the cholera epidemic which broke out on 19 October 2010 has to date claimed 3 333 lives and has affected a further 148 000 people; whereas the spread of this epidemic has pointed up the obvious structural deficiencies of the Haitian state and the limitations of the international aid system and the Minustah (UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti), while action on cholera is now being visibly affected by the political crisis in the wake of the elections,

H. whereas the elections of 28 November 2010 whose results were declared in early December led to violent demonstrations in Haiti and numerous complaints of fraud; whereas the international community must support a transparent and legitimate electoral process in order to ensure the clean elections that are essential for the reconstruction of the country,

1. Recalls the strong mobilisation of the international community following the devastating earthquake in Haiti, and its genuine political commitment to supporting reconstruction in the country on a different basis that would not repeat the errors of the past and confronting once and for all the deep-lying causes of poverty in Haiti;

2. Deplores the amplitude of the disaster in Haiti, with its effects still highly visible a year on from the earthquake, and welcomes the extent of the humanitarian aid granted to Haiti by the Commission (EUR 120 million, including 12 million for the anti-cholera campaign), as well as the commitment shown by the Commissioner responsible for international cooperation, humanitarian aid and civil protection and by DG ECHO and its experts;

3. Stresses that the establishment of 'clusters' has enabled the ground-level coordination of humanitarian actions, but that this approach has revealed its limits in the face of the great diversity of humanitarian players and the complex nature of the emergency situation thanks to the high urban population density;

4. Salutes the efforts and work of the humanitarian organisations (the Red Cross, NGOs, the UN) and the Member States, and stresses the need to communicate the non-visible effects of the humanitarian actions and the fact that it has been possible to control the situation, notably by taking responsibility for the wounded, supplying drinking water and food and providing temporary housing;

5. Notes that the cholera epidemic has demonstrated the near-total incapacity of the Haitian state in the face of a disease which is not difficult to prevent or cure, as well as the limitations of the international aid system, in a country now benefiting from a massive humanitarian deployment (12 000 NGOs); stresses that it is not for the humanitarian workers to go on palliating or replacing the deficiencies of the Haitian state, and that urgent action must be taken for long-term development, notably by ensuring access to healthcare, drinking water and sanitation;

6. Welcomes the collective commitment made by the Commission and the Member States at the International Donors' Conference for the reconstruction of Haiti to donate a total of EUR 1.2 billion, including EUR 460 million in non-humanitarian aid from the Commission; reiterates its call for the EU, as the leading donor, to exercise political leadership in the context of the reconstruction effort;

7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to integrate local food production and secure food supplies into the reconstruction efforts in Haiti, via the development of rural infrastructures and aid to small farmers, in the context of their joint approach to programming their resources for reconstruction in Haiti and of the mid-term review of the programming of the remaining Commission funds, i.e. the EUR 169 million still to be allocated from the EUR 460 million announced in New York;

8. Deplores the late start to the work of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission, which should be playing a central role in coordinating reconstruction; is disappointed at the lack of information concerning its operation and effectiveness, and calls on the European Commission, as a member of the IHRC, to intervene with a view to speeding up the implementation of the latter's mandate and to submit a report to Parliament on the IHRC's activities, its use of resources and the proportion of the funds pledged at the New York conference that has actually been committed to reconstruction;

9. Acknowledges that the effective operation of the IHRC, as the central body responsible for managing the reconstruction effort, is contingent on rebuilding the capacity of the Haitian state and renewing Haiti's political leadership following transparent and fair elections, and on a genuine political will to take the decisions that will have to be made before embarking on this gigantic project;

10. Deplores the fact that Haitians only have shovels, pickaxes and wheelbarrows for clearing (on a 'cash for work' basis) the tonnes of debris now filling up the capital; considers this to be totally inadequate in view of the gravity of the situation; stresses that removing the rubble is essential to the reconstruction of Haiti, and regrets the all but total absence of funding for this purpose;

11. Deplores the major housing crisis existing in Haiti; stresses that relocation of the homeless, who are mostly being housed in temporary camps, mainly in the capital, Port-au-Prince, is being prevented by a lack of available land, the absence of a land register and the fact that many plots of land are owned by expatriate Haitians; calls on the Haitian authorities to make a political commitment to proactive measures, including compulsory purchase;

12. Is increasingly concerned at the situation of children in Haiti, following an earthquake which has directly affected more than 800 000 children who have been exposed to risks of violence, sexual abuse, trafficking, exploitation and abandonment; calls on the EU and in particular the Commission to take firm action with a view to re-establishing protection and security for these children, supporting the introduction of a welfare state in Haiti and encouraging educational reform;

13. Calls on the EU to cooperate with the Haitian government with a view to drawing up a legislative framework to protect children's rights and ensure that national law reflects the obligations arising from the numerous international instruments ratified by Haiti concerning children's rights, human rights, the elimination of slavery and child protection;

14. Believes it essential that the Commission support the process of identifying and registering children separated from their families and searching for their relatives, and ensuring special precautions at the borders so as to prevent trafficking in children and illegal adoption;

15. Stresses the need for immediate action to rebuild the capacities of the Haitian state in terms of democracy and good governance, which are essential for national reconstruction, and to ensure the participation of civil society and the Haitian people;

16. Is disturbed by the current political crisis following the presidential and parliamentary elections, whose results were widely contested while the foreign observer missions gave them only partial endorsement; notes that a recount is now under way, supervised by OAS experts;

17. Calls on the EU to take all possible steps to support fair and transparent elections and the proper conduct of the second round scheduled for February, so as to prevent Haiti from relapsing into a worse crisis; believes that only a legitimately elected president and parliament can take the necessary decisions, and that reconstruction calls for stability and political determination;

18. Calls on the international community and the EU to cooperate closely with the Haitian authorities and accompany them in the organisation of their institutions, with a view to ensuring a new equilibrium at all levels and fully operational democracy throughout the reconstruction process;

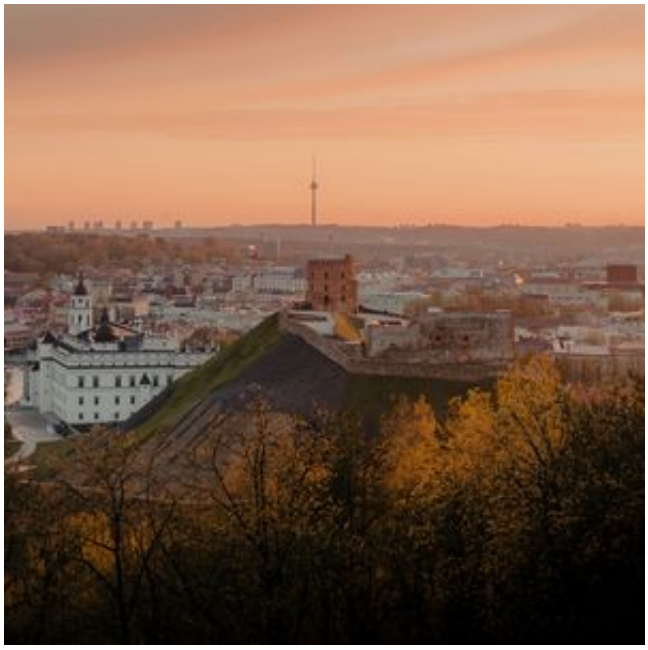
19. Calls on the Commission, in the spirit of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, to ensure that a significant effort is made – in conjunction with the government, local authorities and civil society – to incorporate disaster preparation and risk minimisation into the emergency and longer-term development phases;

20. Notes that there has been a humanitarian aid presence in Haiti for decades, and that the link between emergency aid, rehabilitation and development has only become more important in this crisis; advocates, therefore, closer dialogue and coordination between humanitarian organisations and development agencies, both on the spot and within the EU institutions and the Member States;

21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the EU Member States, the President and Government of Haiti, and the UN Secretary-General

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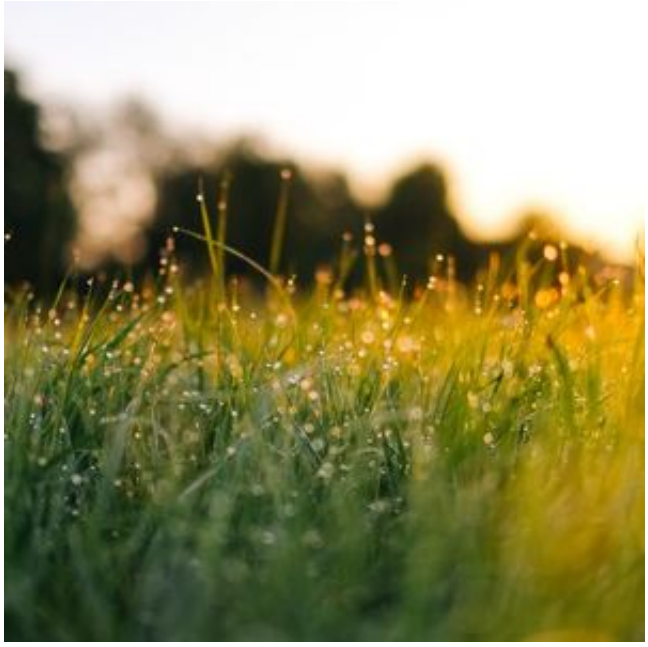
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Responsible MEPs



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