

Refugee Community Embraces Haitian Relief Initiatives

Applauding the Obama administration's grant of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians living in the United States following the devastating earthquake that struck their homeland on January 12, the international refugee affairs community joined with other humanitarian advocates in mounting fundraising and informational support initiatives on behalf of disaster victims.

While UNHCR had no direct presence in Haiti since its mandate is mainly in-

involved in situations of forced displacement stemming from targeted persecution or widespread violence, the agency is providing back up expertise to surviving United Nations staff working in Haiti, according to UNHCR chief spokesperson Melissa Fleming in Geneva.

A small team of specialists in protection, camp management, site planning and coordination was dispatched to the Dominican Republic, along with 2,130

lightweight tents and 18,550 plastic sheets for more than 90,000 people from UNHCR's logistics and supplies hub in Dubai, Fleming said

Announcing the 18-month TPS grant, urgently advocated by the Refugee Council USA and nearly 100 members of Congress, DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano noted that it applied only to those who were in the U.S. on January 13.

"Those who attempt to travel to the United States

after January 12, 2010 will not be eligible for TPS and will be repatriated," she said. Earlier at a briefing at Homestead Air Reserve Base in Florida for relief workers heading to Haiti, she warned of the hazards facing those who might be tempted to embark on the 600-mile sea crossing.

Noting that lives are lost every time groups of "boat people" attempt the dangerous crossing, she issued a plea that Haitians avoid disrupting rescue and relief efforts that are going into Haiti by trying to leave.

Napolitano later announced a humanitarian parole policy allowing orphaned children from Haiti to enter the U.S. temporarily to ensure that they receive the care they need. That initiative will be coordinated with the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) conducted a free webinar to help those implementing the TPS decision in determining eligibility, application procedures, fees and other details

More information about the humanitarian parole and TPS is available at: <http://www.uscis.gov/> or by calling USCIS toll free at (800) 375-5283.



USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah meets with Haitian President Rene Garcia and Ambassador Lewis Lucke to coordinate relief efforts.

With ORR Grant, ECDC Launches Technical Assistance Program for MAAs

Through a grant from the Office of Refugee Resettlement, ECDC has launched a technical assistance program to help local refugee service organizations expand capacities and improve programs and services.

Applications for assistance are being sought from ethnic community based organizations and mutual assistance associations (ECBOs/MAAs) serving populations with ORR eligibility, according to ECDC President Tsehaye Teferra, although applicants need not be ORR grantees. Those selected through an evaluation process will be eligible for customized assistance initiatives with values ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000, Teferra said.

Titled MAA Innovations in Technical

Assistance (MITA), the program is part of ORR's long-established use of technical assistant grants to organizations with expertise in a particular areas to assist affiliated agencies in providing high-quality services. Other ORR technical assistance grants address such issues as citizenship and civic participation; child welfare; economic development; asylees; employment; housing and mental health.

Coordinating the project is Tessie Ajala, a former acting director of the National Crime Prevention Council's Outreach to New Americans program. A graduate of Penn State University with degrees in education and performing arts, he has more than 13 years of man-

agement experience with refugee service providers, including an assignment as program director of the Somali Family Care Network.

The MITA program will provide focused assistance in fundraising and resource development; organizational leadership; strategic planning and action; management; and accountability.

For more information, about the program, visit: www.ecdcinternational.org.



Tessie Ajala

*In My Opinion...***USAID: A Unique Moment of Opportunity?**

At his swearing-in ceremony on January 7 as the new USAID Administrator, Dr. Rajiv Shah echoed earlier remarks by both President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton about embracing development as an indispensable element of American foreign policy. “A unique moment of opportunity” is how he described the emerging consensus at the highest levels of government that development is vital both to national security and the shared interests of an interconnected world. Pledging higher standards of partnership and accountability and expressing confidence in the agency’s ability to create massive improvement in the human condition, he concluded by saying: “I can’t wait to get started.”

Only five days did he have to wait for what was likely the most challenging assignment ever given an administrator at USAID. President Obama named him as

the government’s unified coordinator for relief efforts following the earthquake in Haiti. Even as he was plunged into the immediate task of trying to save lives through aggressive search and rescue efforts, he sought to enhance awareness that success in Haiti and in USAID’s larger international mission required a long-range perspective.

“The object of our aid is to create the conditions where it is no longer needed so that communities thrive, governance is strong and schools and other institutions continue to operate long after we leave,” he said at the swearing-in ceremony.

Present were representatives of government agencies and other public and private organizations engaged in development work, including the Millennium



Tsehaye Teferra, Ph.D.

Challenge Corporation, now headed by Daniel W. Yohannes. MCC’s mission is to reduce global poverty through the promotion of sustainable economic growth.

What Shah and Yohannes define as goals for their agencies is what those of us engaged in refugee affairs recognize as essentials in curbing the flow of refugees on the African continent and around the world. Both leaders are committed to results-focused programs with effective and transparent measurement protocols. Shah said he intends to rebuild the capacities his agency once had to analyze, plan, and invest strategically for the long term and develop new capabilities to pursue innovation, science, and technology. Yohannes’ agency claims to have established a level of transparency and dedication to measuring results that is unprecedented in the foreign assistance community.

Both leaders also bring unique personal and professional qualifications to their new assignments. Through his distinguished career in banking, finance and investments, Yohannes has demonstrated a profound awareness of the need for clearly defined goals and disciplined management of resources. In his former assignments at the Department of Agriculture, the World Health Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Shah has demonstrated a deep commitment to public service and a creative approach to problem solving. Each brings to the development agenda established relationships with private-sector partners that can vastly expand the potential for progress. The Gates Foundation has a global development program focused on alleviating hunger and poverty. The Clinton Global Initiative pursues similar goals and has enlisted an impressive roster of international partners. Shah and Clinton are working closely together in the Haiti crisis, with the former president serving as the United Nations special envoy to Haiti.

By assembling such an impressive team and providing adequate resources and encouragement, President Obama may, indeed, have created a unique moment of opportunity for the United States to improve the human condition.

DOS Announces Doubling Of Per Capita Grant for Initial R&P Services

Responding to inflationary erosion in the value of financial support given to refugee resettlement agencies providing initial reception and placement services, the Department of State announced on January 26 a doubling of its one-time per capita grant from \$900 to \$1,800.

The grant is designed to address the challenges refugees face in their first 30-90 days in the United States, insuring that they “have a roof over their heads, a clean bed in which to sleep and other needed basic assistance,” according to the DOS announcement.

Noting that the value of the grant has declined by 50 percent in real terms since it was initiated several years ago, the announcement said that “the combined level of public and charitable resources available to the program is simply insufficient to do a quality job of initial resettlement.”

ECDC is one of 11 agencies working in partnership with DOS and ORR in providing such services. The new grant rate became effective on January 1.

At least \$1,100 of the grant is designated for direct support of refugees, with \$700 available to cover administrative costs, a nearly 50 percent increase in the previous management ceiling. Those funds will address the need to lower client-to-staff ratios, support positions to coordinate volunteers or develop private resources, or otherwise improve the quality of reception and placement services received by refugees, DOS said.

Nearly 75,000 refugees were resettled in the United States last year. Of that total, 3,880 were resettled by ECDC.

“The program reflects our own tradition as a nation of immigrants and refugees. It is an important, enduring and ongoing expression of our commitment to international humanitarian principles” DOS said. “While the U.S. Government cannot guarantee the success of these refugees, it is capable of providing sufficient support to ensure refugees are able to get on their feet during their first weeks and months in the United States and move quickly toward becoming independent, productive members of their new communities.”

Clinton Pledges Emphasis on Results-Based Developmental Aid

While developmental aid was once the province of humanitarians, charitable institutions and governments, it is today a strategic, economic, and moral imperative as central to advancing American interests and solving global problems as diplomacy and defense, the nations top diplomat said in Washington in early January.

Addressing the Center for Global Development, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the Obama administration is embarking on a new approach based on

partnership, not patronage.

“It’s time for a new mindset for a new century,” she said. “Time to retire old debates and replace dogmatic attitudes with clear reasoning and common sense. And time to elevate development as a central pillar of all that we do in our foreign policy. And it is past time to rebuild USAID into the world’s premier development agency”

Citing the Millennium Challenge Corporation’s focus on rigorous criteria and results-based allocations, Clinton

said the administration is seeking partners who have demonstrated a commitment to development by practicing good governance, rooting out corruption, making their own financial contributions to their own development.

“We expect our partners to practice sound economic policies, including levying taxes on those who can afford them, just as we do; or, in countries rich in natural resources, managing those resources sustainably and devoting some of the profits to people’s development,” she said.

Among six initiatives the administration is implementing—ranging from integrating development more closely with defense and diplomacy and appropriating new technologies—is a heightened focus on women and girls in developing countries in Africa and around the world.

“Women and girls are one of the world’s greatest untapped resources,” she said, describing them as critical to advancing social, economic and political progress.

Recalling the proverb, “Give a man a fish and he’ll eat for a day, but teach a man to fish and he’ll eat for a lifetime,” Clinton said: “Well, if you teach a woman to fish, she’ll feed the whole village.”

The Center for Global Development is an independent, nonprofit policy research organization that is dedicated to reducing global poverty and inequality and to making globalization work for the poor.

First Family Observes MLK Day With Service

Calling on Americans to observe the annual Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday by performing acts of service to those in need, President Obama linked the appeal to victims suffering from the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti.

In his Proclamation designating January 18 as a national holiday in King’s honor, Obama noted that the famed civil rights leader’s life and message transcended national borders.

“The devastating earthquake in Haiti, and the urgent need for humanitarian support, reminds us that our service and generosity of spirit must also extend beyond our immediate communities,” Obama said. “By lifting up our brothers and sisters through dedication and service—both at home and around the world—we honor Dr. King’s memory and reaffirm our common humanity.”

Acting on his call for service, Obama and his family joined other volunteers at a local charity in the District named So

Others Might Eat, helping serve lunch to homeless clients. Among them, reported Paula Wolfson of VOA News, was a homeless man named Demetrius who was surprised to receive from the President a heaping plate of chicken, potatoes and bread.

Still shaking as he sat at a table with other diners, Demetrius said: “I’m still nervous. I still want to shake his hand again. I am proud that he is showing support for the homeless and everything.”

Many other members of the President’s inner circle volunteered for similar service contributions.

Obama later hosted a gathering in the White House of black elders and their grandchildren to discuss the meaning of the civil rights movement across generations. He closed the day of activities by attending a musical celebration at the Kennedy Center featuring the Let Freedom Ring Choir and singer-songwriter India Arie.

FY 2010 African Refugee Admissions			
As of January 31, 2009		● Ceiling for FY 2010 is 15,500	
Country of Origin	Refugees	Country of Origin	Refugees
Burundi	112	Liberia	82
Cameroon	1	Mauritania	8
Central African Republic	9	Rwanda	34
Chad	8	Sierra Leone	15
Congo	85	Somalia	1,111
Dem. Rep. Congo	289	Sudan	109
Equatorial Guinea	9	Togo	1
Eritrea	508	Uganda	11
Ethiopia	76	Zimbabwe	5
Gambia	1	TOTAL	2,474
Guinea	2		

Source: U.S. Department of State, PRM

SAVE THE DATES
MAY 3-5, 2010

ECDC’S
**16TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE
 ON AFRICAN REFUGEES
 AND IMMIGRANTS**

Arlington Holiday Inn at Ballston
 Arlington, Virginia

[For more information and registration forms, visit: www.ecdc-cari.org]

NEWS BRIEFS

U.S. Applauds Agreement On Chad-Sudan Relations

While the U.S. State Department issued a statement congratulating the governments of Chad and Sudan for signing an agreement in N'Djamena on January 15 to normalize relations, aid workers in the volatile eastern part of Chad remain anxious about security if United Nations peacekeepers are forced to leave when their mandate expires in mid-March.

The agreement pledges joint efforts by the two countries to prevent armed groups from using the territory of either state against the interests of the other and to establish mechanisms to monitor their common border.

The U.N. peacekeepers have been charged in part with protecting civilians, including the 450,000 refugees and IDPs in eastern Chad. Even with the presence of military and police, aid workers and other civilians in eastern Chad are regularly subject to carjackings, kidnappings and robberies by armed groups, IRIN reports.

Ethnic Conflict Spawns Refugee Exodus in DRC

UNHCR began registering in mid-January more than 100,000 civilians who have fled ethnic conflict in the northwest of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and found shelter in neighboring Republic of the Congo in the past three months. The exodus followed a series of

deadly assaults by ethnic Enyele militia-men over fishing and farming rights in the Dongo area of Equateur.

A team of about 50 people, comprising UNHCR staff and local authorities, is carrying out the registration to determine their specific needs and develop appropriate assistance programs.

HIAS Establishes New Unit On Refugee Integration

HIAS, the international migration agency of the American Jewish community, has established a new National Center for Refugee, Immigration and Integration Services to assist and engage local organizations and Jewish communities that serve newcomers.

The new center will unite HIAS' service-oriented work in New York with its advocacy efforts in Washington, DC, and "will facilitate and enhance the mission of rescue, resettlement and reunion that HIAS has carried out since the organization's founding in 1881," said HIAS President Gideon Aronoff.

Somali Conflict Fuels Continuing Refugee Flight

An estimated 63,000 people have been displaced from their homes in Somalia in just the first few weeks of this year due to ongoing fighting, UNHCR reported in late January. Some 14,000 of them were uprooted in the capital, Mogadishu, where recent clashes be-

tween government forces and Al-Shabaab and Hisb-ul-Islam militants left at least 10 people dead, including children. Similar clashes last year in the capital displaced hundreds of thousands of people, many of them for the second time in the course of a year in the strife-torn nation, which has not had a fully functioning national government since 1991.

African Nations Respond To Haitian Quake Victims

Despite their own financial difficulties and development challenges, many African nations are joining with the international community to donate money and lifesaving or emergency support services to the people of Haiti, reports America.gov's Charles Corey.

South Africa deployed two search-and-rescue teams and South African NGOs launched appeals nationwide for \$4 million in emergency aid. The Democratic Republic of the Congo said it is sending \$2.5 million. Senegal has offered \$1 million. Gabon, the Republic of the Congo and Namibia are each pledging \$1 million.

Equatorial Guinea has pledged \$2 million. Mauritius has pledged \$500,000. The diocese of Port-Louis, the capital of Botswana is donating \$150,000. Rwanda is sending \$100,000, as is Sierra Leone. Noting that its relationship with Haiti dates to its own founding, the government of Liberia announced a \$50,000 donation.

CALENDAR

May 3-5, 2010 — ECDC's annual national conference on African refugees will be held at the Arlington Holiday Inn at Ballston in Arlington, Virginia.

June 2-4 — InterAction's Forum 2010 will be held at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. The event assembles leaders engaged in humanitarian and development work to explore new opportunities and increase collaboration. For details, visit: www.interaction.org.

RESOURCES

Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development is the sub-title of the 2009 Human Development Report from the United Nations. It explores how better policies towards mobility can enhance human development, tracing the contours of human movement and arguing for practical measures that can improve prospects and benefits both for destination communities and for places of origin. To review the report online, visit: hdr.undp.org.

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