



Port au Prince, December 30th, 2011

Two years ago this week, a massive earthquake struck Haiti, bringing death and destruction on an unimaginable scale. Many hundreds of thousands of Haitians lost their lives or suffered terrible injuries on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Those who survived faced an uncertain future without homes, livelihoods, protection, or the basic services needed to survive. Yet two years ago this week, the world stood with Haiti and reached out to help the Haitian people. Individuals and governments from hundreds of nations around the world responded with donations and promises of aid. Households in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa contributed to the response in the days and weeks following the earthquake. Many lives were saved, and much suffering was alleviated because donors, international and national NGOs, universities, towns, churches, and millions of individuals took immediate action to help Haiti and its people. As we reach the second commemoration of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, we once again call on governments and individuals to continue to stand with the Haitian people to offer hope for a brighter future.

The Haiti NGO Coordination Committee, represents many of the international NGOs that, in collaboration with their Haitian partner organisations, responded in the days and months following the earthquake, relieving suffering, providing food and life saving water and sanitation, offering safe shelter, and protecting hundreds of thousands of vulnerable children and adults.

Since the earliest days of the humanitarian response, the focus of donors and international organisations in Haiti has rightly been to support the government of Haiti to care for its own people. For years, even before the earthquake, Haiti was known as a “republic of NGOs”. The Haiti NGO Coordinating Committee recognises the opportunity for Haiti to ‘build back better’ and change the status quo of relying upon outsiders for the provision of basic services to the Haitian people. We urge the Government of Haiti to take a strong leadership role in health, education, shelter, employment and economic growth, and we stand ready to work with our government counterparts to transfer skills, resources and capacity, and to gradually reduce reliance on external actors.

However, we must also recognise the reality on the ground in Haiti. Today, approximately 500,000 people remain in tents in Port-au-Prince, Léogâne, Petit-Goâve and other earthquake-affected areas. Infants, young children, the disabled, the elderly and women in camps remain particularly vulnerable to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, and lack adequate protection and support. Access to safe water and sanitation remains a daily struggle for millions around the country. Quality and affordable healthcare and basic education remain elusive for most. The outbreak of cholera across all regions of Haiti has claimed thousands of lives and is still a major threat to public health.

Two years on, despite great momentum to “build back better,” Haiti is struggling to build back at all. Haiti’s government is new, and like the rest of the country, it is struggling to rebuild out of the rubble. We are optimistic about the government, its leadership and about the future in Haiti. We are consistently awestruck at the fortitude and resilience of the Haitian people, and their drive to improve their lives and the lives of their children. But we are also realistic, and recognize that building institutions and increasing capacity to provide for 10 million Haitian citizens will take time and money. While some of the long-term assistance pledged by donor governments in the

immediate aftermath of the earthquake has reached the ground, much has not yet materialized, and the pressure on NGOs to handover services to the government – whether the government is ready or not - is growing. Global financial pressures and cuts to foreign aid budgets are also likely to have severe consequences in this still-needy country.

As a body of NGOs with a strong commitment to Haiti, we call on the international community to honour its promises to Haiti and to stay the course. We must not allow impatience with the slow pace of progress or donor fatigue about ‘last year’s crisis’ to leave the most vulnerable in Haiti – such as the 500,000 sleeping under tents tonight – to fall through the cracks. Now is not the time to pull back; we must scale-up, work in concert, and make and keep real long-term commitments. The Haitian government has a vital role to play, and we must work closely together to support it to reach a point where it can lead and galvanize the efforts of all development actors to rebuild Haiti. We all have a responsibility to remember and honour the promises we made to Haiti two years ago this week.

**Signatories:** Les ONG membres du CCO signataires sont : ACTED, Action Contre la Faim, Care, CESVI, Doctors of the World-Médecins du Monde International, Entrepreneurs du Monde, Finn Church Aid, Habitat for Humanity International, Healing Hands for Haiti, HelpAge International, International Medical Corp, International Rescue Committee, J/P Haitian Relief Organization, MercyCorps, Merlin, Oxfam International, Plan International, Save the children, Tearfund and World Vision International

**About the CCO:** The CCO is a consortium of international NGOs operating in Haiti in humanitarian and development sectors. Its goal is to increase the coherence and effectiveness of the contribution of INGOs in improving the living conditions of Haitians, paving the way to sustainable development by strengthening the institutional dialogue and collaboration between the key actors.