April 7, 2022

Open Letter About Food Aid to Haiti

Dear Development Aid Agencies and International Institutions Active in Haiti,

Our respective organizations provide a wide range of services in agriculture, healthcare and community development throughout Haiti. While there are many challenges facing our country, we come together to appeal to you in particular regarding food aid arriving in Haiti.

The world appears to be on the precipice of a global food crisis of historic proportions. While years in the making, it has been triggered by the war in Ukraine disrupting crucial grain exports. Whereas nations the world over will face this new crisis while still reeling from the pandemic, economic disruption and supply chain slowdowns, Haiti will have the added burden of responding in the midst of political instability and the aftermath of the August 2021 earthquake in the southern region.

The United Nations has warned that close to half of Haiti’s entire population will be confronting severe hunger no later than June, with 1.3 million Haitians one step further to the emergency stage of hunger which is just short of outright famine. This is the result of the domestic situation in Haiti even before the added pressures of a global food crisis, which will then further exacerbate the situation as international food prices continue to spiral. This will have a disproportionate effect on a country like ours that imports approximately 40
When the food emergency is manifest and new commitments of international aid are directed to our nation in response, the Haitian community has two requests that are accompanied with thanks, in advance, for your generous support:

- We ask that organizations like ours, and the many others like us throughout the nation that serve rural communities, be involved in helping to distribute food aid. Throughout the decades we have grown to know those communities and can help with efficient distribution, coordination and to avoid both duplication and ensure reaching areas that are often missed; and

- We ask that every effort is made to purchase emergency food aid from local sources, both to support smallholders and to prevent free food, however much it is needed, from undermining the long-term viability of local agricultural economies.

While the first priority will be to reach the most vulnerable with food during the emergency, we have two additional requests:

- We ask that long term aid directed at Haiti be used to support the estimated one million smallholder farm families to become more productive, climate-smart and integrated with healthcare initiatives to promote nutrition as a key to improving health and wellbeing; and

- We ask that all international aid be coordinated more directly with national and regional Haitian authorities, that clear delineations of responsibility be identified within that new coordination process, and that our respective organizations have the opportunity to both inform and help implement programs in agriculture, healthcare and community development resulting from this more inclusive consultative process.

All of us stand ready to help in the spirit of “konbit”, a Haitian tradition whereby neighbors help neighbors. May we rise together as a community united.

José Andrés, World Central Kitchen
Allison Archambault, EarthSpark International
Skyler Badenoch, Hope for Haïti
Conor Bohan, HELP
Steve Brescia, Groundswell International
Beaver Brooks, Much Ministries Inc.
Kathy Brooks, 2nd Story Goods
Ben Burke, Manzanita Outreach
Sue Carlson, Raising Haiti Foundation
Reginald Cean, Association Zanmi Agrikol
Nathan Chariot, Mission Bon Berger d’Haiti
Sheila Davis, Partners in Health
Jean Raymond Delinois, ACAPE
Jean Marc deMatteis, Hôpital Albert Schweitzer
Patrick Dessources, CASELI
Lucia Di Poi, Centre Haitien du Leadership et de l’Excellence
Ulrick Gaillard, Batey Relief Alliance
Timote Georges, Smallholder Farmers Alliance
Frank Giustra, Acceso
Cassandre Honore-Paul, Partners Worldwide
Cantave Jean Baptiste, FOHMAPS/PDL
Sasha Kramer, Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods - SOIL
Suzanne Langlois, Meds & Food for Kids
Ann Lee, Community Organized Relief Effort
Michael Leland, New Generation Ministries
Renee Lewis, Project Medishare
Louise Lindenmeyr, Hispaniola Health Partners
Troy Livesay, Heartline Ministries
Hugh Locke, Impact Farming Foundation
Guerda Nicolas, Ayiti Community Trust
Ann Piper, North Coast Development Corp.
Danielle Saint Lot, Danielle Saint Lot Haiti Women's Foundation
Ony Saint-Hilaire, ASSOADEK
Leslie Sosnowski, BoulderShares
Jean Thomas, Haiti Christian Development Fund
Daniel Tillias, Jaden Taptap
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Jane Wynne, Foundation Wynne pour l'Environnement
Chad Bissonnette, Roots of Development