

DDCI and Christian Aid Ireland call for Haiti's debt to be cancelled

Press Release

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Campaigners Call for Haiti's Debt to be Cancelled

Justice campaigners today criticised the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for offering a US\$ 100 million loan to Haiti as emergency assistance.

Nessa Ní Chasaide of Debt and Development Coalition Ireland, said, *"It is shocking that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has offered financial assistance to Haiti in the form of a loan when Haiti has over US\$ 800 million of debts in urgent need of cancellation. The Irish government should ensure that Haiti receives debt cancellation and grant based financial support - not loans - at this difficult time."*

In June 2009, Haiti secured \$1.2 billion in debt cancellation from its major creditors. However, Haiti remains burdened with a debt of over US\$ 800 million owed to lenders including to the IMF, World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Governmental creditors to Haiti include Taiwan and Venezuela.

Sorley McCaughey of Christian Aid Ireland added, *"When 200,000 people are feared dead and countless more have had their bodies and their lives shattered by horrific destruction which will take years to repair, how can lenders still be demanding their money back?"*

Ms Ní Chasaide commented, *"A significant cause of Haiti's underdevelopment lies in the accumulation of huge levels of illegitimate debts - granted by international lenders to brutal Haitian dictatorships. While debt cancellation in 2009 wiped out much of this debt, Haiti's capacity to cope with disasters has been significantly undermined by its long history of unjust debts."*

For Further information / Interviews Contact:

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Notes to the Editor

· Debt and Development Coalition Ireland is a network of global justice organisations in Ireland working for a just resolution to the global debt crisis. www.debtireland.org.

- Christian Aid is an international aid and development agency working in some of the world's poorest communities in 50 countries. We act where the need is greatest, regardless of religion, helping people build the life they deserve. Christian Aid has a vision – an end to poverty. Our new drive, Poverty Over, explains what we believe needs to be done – and can be done – to make that vision a reality. www.christianaid.ie.
- IMF to Provide US\$100 Million in Emergency Assistance to Haiti: Press Release No. 10/06 January 14, 2010 www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2010/pr1006.htm
- More than half of Haiti's outstanding debt is owed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Inter American Development Bank (IDB). Haiti is projected to pay at least \$100 million in debt payments to the IMF and IDB over the next five years unless these debts are cancelled - and the earthquake has now devastated Haiti's capacity to generate sufficient revenue to afford these payments