



Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the U.S.

## VENEZUELA'S AID TO HAITI: TWO YEARS AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

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Venezuela was one of the first countries to deliver emergency assistance to Haiti after a devastating earthquake hit that country on January 12, 2010, and in the two years since, it has remained committed to helping rebuild Haiti by sending humanitarian aid workers, supplies, fuel, financial resources, and other types of aid.

During a visit to Caracas in December 2011, Haitian President Michel Martelly told the Associated Press: "The cooperation with Venezuela is the most important in Haiti right now in terms of impact, direct impact." Martelly thanked President Chávez, saying that power plants installed by Venezuela after the earthquake supply 20 percent of his country's energy, and "with such rich support, we can bring some very important change to Haiti."<sup>1</sup>

Venezuelan aid is rooted in a deep sense of solidarity with the Haitian people. The Haitian Revolution served as an inspiration to 19th century Venezuelan patriots in their struggle to achieve independence, and the Venezuelan liberator Simón Bolívar was aided by Haiti twice in 1816 during battles against Spanish colonialists.<sup>2</sup>

Immediately after the earthquake, Venezuela sent 400 personnel to establish camps for the internally displaced in five towns: Jacmel, Petit Goave, Grand Goave, and Leogane. These camps served 5,413 families - over 25,000 individuals - and have been praised by NGOs as among the most well organized and supplied of all humanitarian camps in Haiti. Now, Venezuela is helping to give permanent homes to the displaced; according to President Martelly, it has already helped build 4,000 new houses through the energy program PetroCaribe.<sup>3</sup>

In 2010 alone, Venezuela sent 8,139 tons of food, medicine and other forms of humanitarian assistance to Haiti by way of 23 flights and seven maritime shipments. The aid continues to flow. In December 2011, an aerial shipment of 10 tons of food, water, clothing and other goods was sent to help victims of a cholera outbreak.<sup>4</sup>

Venezuela has also provided more financial assistance to Haiti than any other nation, pledging \$2.4 billion over six years. This includes the establishment of a \$100 million humanitarian fund through the regional group ALBA (the Bolivarian Alliance of the People of Our Americas), as well as Venezuela's policy of forgiving Haiti's \$395 million debt to PetroCaribe and \$37.2 million debt to UNASUR (the Union of South American Nations).<sup>5</sup>

Venezuela has made a particularly strong effort in the area of energy assistance. An initial donation of 225,000 barrels of gasoline and diesel arrived in Haiti in late January 2010. Another shipment of several hundred barrels of fuel was sent to help power Haitian medical centers. Meanwhile, Venezuela continues to fulfill its agreement with Haiti under PetroCaribe by supplying the country with 14,000 barrels of oil per day with preferential financing.<sup>6</sup>

At a conference of the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA), U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said: "There is no greater energy crisis in our hemisphere than the one happening right now in Haiti. And I want to thank Venezuela... for the support you have given to Haiti, in supplying energy to the people of Haiti."<sup>7</sup>

Venezuela continues to support Haiti by sending doctors, building wells, and providing agricultural support. "Haiti has no debt with Venezuela," President Chávez has said. "On the contrary, Venezuela has a historical debt to that nation, for this country. We do not feel pity but admiration, and share their faith, their hope."<sup>8</sup>

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