

Speech
His Excellency Michel Joseph Martelly
President of the Republic of Haiti
11 January 2012

On the eve of the second anniversary of the terrible earthquake that devastated our country, marked progress has been made toward reconstruction, but much remains to be done. To add to our ills, another scourge has descended on our people since October 2010; we must now unite to combat CHOLERA.

Many of our citizens are still suffering from this illness, transmitted by a lack of access to safe drinking water and the deficiencies of our sanitation system.

Decades of neglect and the failure to invest in these areas have led to many illnesses associated with the consumption of contaminated water, lack of education in the practice of good hygiene, and poor excreta management, to mention but a few factors. More than ever before, now is the time to address these deficiencies.

Hence, our commitment to improving the lives of Haitians by providing them with clean water, while continuing to educate them about good hygiene. In addition to the commitment of the Presidency and the Government, we will need investment by our partners in the international community if real results are to be forthcoming.

Fellow citizens, friends of Haiti, and partners, join me and the Pan American Health Organization, UNICEF, the Centers for Disease Control, and the many nongovernmental and local organizations involved as we undertake to build a better life in Haiti.

We have received many pledges of aid for reconstruction, but we must now move to action. Safe drinking water and adequate sanitary facilities are the right of every Haitian. Only a joint, comprehensive strategic approach can help us eliminate cholera, which has stricken half a million Haitians and killed thousands. Such an approach will enable us to have a healthy, cholera-free Haitian population a decade from now. In collaboration with our neighbors in the Dominican Republic, we can create a better future for all the citizens of Hispaniola. Today, I am asking our Minister of Health to meet with our neighbors from the Dominican Republic and the international and local partners who are supporting our efforts to develop a joint strategy for eliminating cholera from our island.

My thanks to all of you for working with us in this noble struggle to eliminate cholera on Hispaniola.

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