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Bill Quigley: "Ten Things the U.S. Can and Should Do For Haiti"

One. Allow all Haitians in the US to work. The number one source of money for poor people in Haiti is the money sent from family and workers in the US back home. Haitians will continue to help themselves if given a chance. Haitians in the US will continue to help when the world community moves on to other problems.

Two. Do not allow US military in Haiti to point their guns at Haitians. Hungry Haitians are not the enemy. Decisions have already been made which will militarize the humanitarian relief – but do not allow the victims to be cast as criminals. Do not demonize the people.

Three. Give Haiti grants as help, not loans. Haiti does not need any more debt. Make sure that the relief given helps Haiti rebuild its public sector so the country can provide its own citizens with basic public services.

Four. Prioritize humanitarian aid to help women, children and the elderly. They are always moved to the back of the line. If they are moved to the back of the line, start at the back.

Five. President Obama can enact Temporary Protected Status for Haitians with the stroke of a pen. Do it. The US has already done it for El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Sudan and Somalia. President Obama should do it on Martin Luther King Day.

Six. Respect Human Rights from Day One. The UN has enacted Guiding Principles for Internally Displaced People. Make them required reading for every official and non-governmental person and organization. Non governmental organizations like charities and international aid groups are extremely powerful in Haiti – they too must respect the human dignity and human rights of all people.

Seven. Apologize to the Haitian people everywhere for Pat Robertson and Rush Limbaugh.

Eight. Release all Haitians in US jails who are not accused of any crimes. Thirty thousand people are facing deportations. No one will be deported to Haiti for years to come. Release them on Martin Luther King day.

Nine. Require that all the non-governmental organizations which raise money in the US be transparent about what they raise, where the money goes, and insist that they be legally accountable to the people of Haiti.

Ten. Treat all Haitians as we ourselves would want to be treated.

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