



EUROPEAN UNION

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Speech by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on Behalf of the European Union, to the International Conference on Haiti

"A Shared Vision for Haiti – the Next Ten Years"

New York, 31 March 2010

Mr President, Mr Secretary-General, Madam Secretary of State, President Clinton, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends

I speak here today for the European Union – for all 27 Member States, our institutions, and our citizens.

Mr President when I visited Haiti recently. I saw for myself the extraordinary resilience and resourcefulness of the survivors. I pay tribute to their courage.

But I also saw the devastating loss, the destruction, and the shattered lives. President Preval: please accept my condolences – and those of the European Union – for your people.

Our thoughts also go to our lost colleagues from the United Nations and other international organizations. We are here today in the same spirit that moved them: the pursuit of a better future for Haiti.

We have before us the Haitian Government's "Plan of Action." It is based on the best advice that the UN, the World Bank, the EU, the United States and other key partners have to offer. It has benefited from inputs from the private sector, from NGOs, from local government officials and from the Haitian diaspora as well.

But, it is the plan of the Government of Haiti, reflecting its vision for the future. This is as it should be. It is your country, we look to you to take the lead. Our role is to help.

Even as we focus on the here and now – the months ahead – the "Plan of Action" captures the need for a 10-year economic strategy. A plan that goes beyond reconstruction to include drivers for development and growth: de-centralisation, investment in agriculture and tourism, job creation and education. A comprehensive plan leading to a sustainable economy.

P R E S S

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That means physical infrastructure must be a priority, but so must the creation of a legal and constitutional framework to attract inward investment. For the most vulnerable, we need a new social contract.

During my trip to Haiti earlier this month, I met many children in one of the many, crowded camps in Port-au-Prince. Most had lost relatives. Each had their story of how their lives had changed. We have to provide them with "the everyday miracle of a normal life".

Food and water has now reached people. But there is a long journey ahead. And this is what bring us together today: a commitment to build a better future for the next generations.

For the European Union, I pledge € 1.235 billion for the Government of Haiti's Action Plan; the equivalent of over USD 1.6 billion. This is on top of the € 295 million that the EU has already contributed in humanitarian aid.

And it is in addition to the € 650 million that citizens from all across Europe have collected, out of their own pockets, for victims of the earth quake. In total, from European Governments and citizens: a contribution close to USD 3 billion. Our police, our military, and our civil protection personnel remain actively engaged as well.

President Preval, Secretary-General Ban, Secretary Clinton: the EU looks forward to continue to work with you to build a brighter future for all Haiti's citizens. This is just the beginning.

Thank you."
