

Patterson Sounds Note of Caution on Relief Delays in Haiti

CARICOM envoy to Haiti, Former Prime Minister P.J. Patterson has cautioned the international community about the growing dangers associated with delays in the relief efforts following the cataclysmic earthquake of January 12.

Speaking at the World Summit on The Future of Haiti held at the Moon Palace Hotel in Punta Cana, the Dominican Republic on Wednesday June 2, 2010, Mr Patterson emphasized that “The implicit truce that followed the catastrophe has dissipated and there are forces that will actively exploit the grievances resulting from the delays which have occurred.” He continued, “Unless there is decisive action and evident momentum, we face the threat of a pervasive and paralyzing crisis which would imperil the social, economic and institutional recovery of Haiti, thereby also preventing a smooth democratic transition.”

Mr Patterson was addressing the World Summit on how to define Haiti’s future hosted by the Dominican Republic and attended by most of the nations of the world. Calling for support for the Haitian government from the international community, the CARICOM envoy pointed to a number of reasons why that support should be forthcoming. Among those he stressed were the continuance of Haiti’s constitutional legitimacy; the strong political support of the regional and international community; the government-led effort to develop an Action Plan and endorsed mechanisms to implement it for the redevelopment of Haiti; also that the government had been able to garner major resources pledged by the international donor community in the rebuilding effort.

The former Prime Minister went on to offer details on how Haiti could ensure a successful continuance of the relief and redevelopment process during an election campaign. Mr Patterson said, “In order to leverage its advantages, the Government of Haiti needs to move strategically, expeditiously and simultaneously on a number of inter-related fronts – humanitarian, political, electoral and reconstruction. It cannot, however, do so in the absence of an adequate institutional capacity which will enable it, in partnership with the international donor community and multilateral agencies, to discharge its central role in realizing the country’s long-term vision for development as reflected in the Action Plan.”

He affirmed that humanitarian relief, human security, reconstruction progress, democratic transition and political stability were intertwined issues and hence must be tackled simultaneously rather than sequentially if the lurking perils are to be conquered.

Mr Patterson is the also CARICOM representative to the IHRC (Interim Haitian Reconstruction Committee) headed by President Preval and co-chaired by Haitian Prime Minister Bellerive and former US President and UN envoy Bill Clinton. The IHRC is expected to begin meeting on June 14.

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