



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT**

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**Title:** Haiti  
**Date:** 22 January 2010  
**By:** Carwyn Jones, the First Minister

The recent disastrous earthquake in Haiti has devastated what was already a poor country. It is currently being estimated that up to 50,000 people have died and an additional 3 million are suffering severe consequences as a result of the huge damage caused by the quake. International relief efforts are underway involving all key global organisations, national governments from across the world, and emergency relief agencies, but there are clearly also significant challenges around transport access and security in Haiti.

I am sure all our thoughts are with the people of Haiti at this extremely difficult time, and especially those who have lost friends and relatives in this disaster.

The Department for International Development is leading the immediate response on behalf of the UK Government and has sent a team of emergency workers to Haiti and has allocated £20million for the relief fund. The rescue team included firefighters from the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service who have been helping to look for any remaining survivors in the

rubble, making damaged buildings safe, and putting up temporary shelter structures for people who have lost their homes and are now living out in the open. I am proud that Welsh people are playing a vital part in this massive humanitarian effort.

At home in Wales we can also provide valuable support and I know many people and organisations are already fundraising to assist the relief work. On behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government I have put out a call urging people to donate to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal. The DEC is an umbrella organisation of 13 major charities which co-ordinates a number of aid agencies so that they can carry out immediate and longer-term relief work in the affected area. Making a contribution this way ensures that money is spent by the agencies who are already on the ground in Haiti in the most effective way possible.

For information, the member agencies of the Disasters and Emergency Committee are:

- Action Aid
- British Red Cross
- CAFOD
- Care International UK
- Christian Aid
- Concern Worldwide
- Help the Aged
- Islamic Relief
- Merlin
- Oxfam
- Save the Children
- Tearfund
- World Vision

People should resist the natural desire to collect goods to send directly to Haiti, as previous experience tells us that sending packages from many independent sources can clog up airports and docks with materials that may not be used and can prevent other essential supplies from getting through. The larger aid agencies are best placed to order the most appropriate supplies in bulk, and a cash donation to them helps them to buy whatever is needed most – often locally. If people are making donations to appeals from organisations outside the DEC, we would recommend that they ask how that money will be spent and consider whether the channel for getting the relevant support into Haiti is clear.

A joint DfID / Welsh Assembly advice booklet called 'Disasters and Emergencies Overseas – How you Can Help', which addresses these issues, is available on the front page of our website.