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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**NORWAY AND AUSTRALIA TO JOIN THE HAITI RECONSTRUCTION FUND: US \$30 million approved to support Haiti and total contributions reach US\$ 100 million**

**June 18<sup>th</sup> 2010.** At its first meeting, the Haiti Reconstruction Fund allocated US \$30 million to help the Government of Haiti fill its budget gap to provide vital services and social assistance. Money from the Fund will leverage an additional US \$30 million of grants from the World Bank for budget support. The Fund is a partnership between the Government of Haiti and the international community to help finance reconstruction following the devastating January 12 earthquake. Its governing body is chaired by the Haitian Minister of Finance and its priorities are set by the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission.

Honoring their pledges announced during the New York international conference held on March 31 2010, the governments of Australia and Norway signed contributions to the Haiti Reconstruction Fund (HRF) for 10 million Australian Dollars (US\$ 8.64 million) and 200 million NOK (US 31.2 million), respectively, and the United States announced its initial contribution of US \$30 million. Norway's signing entitles it to become a member of the Fund's Steering Committee (SC), joining Brazil, and Haiti. Accordingly, the Special Envoy to Haiti from Norway, Ambassador Halvor Saetre, participated in the first meeting of the SC held in Port au Prince on June 17 2010.

*"We hope that the Haiti Reconstruction Fund will become the most important tool to ensure flexible and coordinated funding to the Government's recovery plan. If the Fund performs well, we intend to provide additional support later this year or next year",* says Norway's Special Envoy to Haiti Halvor Sætre.

The administrative agreement to materialize the contribution from Australia was signed by the Deputy Director of AusAID, Mr. Blair Exell, on June 10 2010.

The SC meeting followed the first IHRC meeting held during the morning of June 17 2010 also in Haiti. Co-chairs of the Commission, Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive, and Special UN Envoy, Bill Clinton, participated in the Steering Committee meeting and reported on the status of the Commission and the Board meeting. During both meetings, the close working relationship between the IHRC and the Fund was confirmed, including the location of the Fund's Secretariat with the Commission.

The Fund's Steering Committee is now fully operational: its Operations Manual and administrative budget were discussed and approved during the meeting in Port au Prince.

The first SC meeting was also attended by high level representatives from countries like Colombia, Canada, Saudi Arabia, the United States, France and Spain. All of them have shown interest in joining the Fund. With the contributions from Brazil, Norway and Australia the Fund's total resources are close to reach the 100 million dollars.

*“We have taken the first steps but still have a long journey. The international community has pledged US\$ 9.9 billion dollars for the reconstruction, and the Fund can be a flexible instrument for using a part of those funds for Haiti’s recovery”* said Josef Leitmann, the Fund's manager.

The Haiti Reconstruction Fund (HRF) was established to support the Government of Haiti's (GoH) post-earthquake Action Plan for the Recovery and Development of Haiti and related initiatives. At the GoH's request, the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank Group has been asked to serve as the Trustee and fiscal agent for the Fund. Both the UNDP and the Inter-American Development (IDB) are partner entities. The HRF is expected to finance technical cooperation (including capacity building), investment grants and budget support.

The HRF aims to respect and encourage government leadership, to build on existing capacity (and hire local staff when available). It will draw on comparative advantages of both partner entities and implementing agencies and aims to foster coordination and harmonization. All activities funded by the HRF will support the four priorities laid out by the government of Haiti in the Action Plan: territorial rebuilding, economic re-foundation, institutional strengthening and social and cultural development.

For more information on the Haiti Reconstruction Fund (HRF) please visit <http://www.haitireconstructionfund.org/hrf/>.  
For information about the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC) please visit <http://www.cirh.ht/>