

(Mr. UDALL of Colorado assumed the Chair.)

#### HAITI EARTHQUAKE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in 2003 I joined my friend, then-Senator Mike DeWine, in visiting Haiti. While no longer in the Senate, Mike remains a tireless advocate for Haiti. Also joining us were Senator BILL NELSON and Representative KENDRICK MEEK.

At the time, the country was trapped in a political and economic slump. Yet, amid the country's grinding poverty and broken political system, the Haitian people maintained an incredible vibrancy and kindness. It is a warmth one notices among the many Haitians living in the United States, including the more than 7,000 who call Chicago their home.

I have never forgotten that experience, and over the years I have worked to support development and economic programs to help the Haitian people. Last year I introduced a bill with Senator BROWBACK to help reforest Haiti with techniques proven in other nations.

A year ago I had the chance to return to Haiti—this time with Senator JEFF BINGAMAN, Congressman MEEK, and an Illinois State Senator whose parents are from Haiti, Kwame Raoul. While the country still faced terrible poverty, much had improved since my earlier visit. The government and political system had stabilized.

A multination U.N. peacekeeping force had brought an end to most of the gang violence, kidnappings, and lawlessness. Special trade programs with the United States had sparked a rebirth of the garment industry, providing thousands of Haitians with jobs. Groups such as Partners in Health and Hands Together were making progress in building health care capacity and educating children from the poorest slums of Port-au-Prince. The country had even rebounded from a series of devastating hurricanes and tropical storms.

And most recently, former President Bill Clinton had become the U.N. Special Envoy to Haiti, bringing his skill and energy,—along with Secretary Clinton's leadership in the State Department,—to help improve the lives of the Haitian people. While still desperately poor, many had sensed the country was turning a corner.

Then tragedy struck. On January 12, the largest earthquake in this hemisphere in 200 years devastated Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, and several surrounding towns. The Haitian Government estimates that 200,000 people died. Sadly, that number is almost certain to grow. A staggering number of houses and buildings simply collapsed. It is estimated that 1 million people may now be homeless. Hospitals and government buildings were heavily damaged or destroyed. The U.N. headquarters crumbled to the ground, killing hundreds of international staff who

had dedicated their lives to helping the people of Haiti. Only a short 90-minute plane ride from our shores, a small, poor nation has suffered an almost unimaginable catastrophe.

President Obama immediately did the right thing. He mobilized the whole of the U.S. Government to help our neighbors in Haiti. Less than 36 hours after the earthquake struck, President Obama pledged to the Haitian people that America would not forget them or forsake them in their time of need. He pledged \$100 million in emergency aid for Haiti. This aid is in addition to the regular development assistance the United States provides to Haiti, which totaled at least \$287 million last year and was planned to reach at least \$340 million this year.

In addition, over 17,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines—including 17 members of the Illinois Guard—have been dispatched to assist in Haiti recovery and relief efforts. We have all seen their heroic efforts: medical treatment provided in the most challenging of conditions, survivors pulled from the rubble of collapsed buildings.

American leadership is helping to coordinate the largest international relief effort since the cataclysmic Asian tsunami in 2004, with governments throughout the world joining in. In Europe, the 18 member nations of the European Union have pledged a total of \$575 million in emergency aid to Haiti. The E.U. has also sent security forces to help strengthen security in the devastated nation. Planeloads of rescue teams and relief supplies have been dispatched from nations including Britain, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia, and Spain. Other countries—in South America, the Middle East, and Asia—have pledged to help. And government help is only the beginning.

In typical American fashion, people and organizations from all over our country have donated money, organized shipments of medicine, food and water, and traveled to Haiti as emergency relief workers to help rescue and treat the earthquake victims.

The Chronicle of Philanthropy conducted a survey. It found that in the first 13 days after the earthquake struck Haiti, individuals and groups donated \$470 million to 39 U.S. nonprofit organizations for Haiti relief. Despite the economic pain and anxiety so many American families are feeling, Americans are once again demonstrating great generosity when it is so desperately needed. The American people have responded generously.

According to the Chronicle of Philanthropy survey, the pace of giving for Haiti is running ahead of the amount donated in the same period after the September 11 attacks in 2001 and the Asian tsunami in 2004, and nearly as fast as the unprecedented outpouring of donations that followed Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Never before have so many Americans donated so much, so fast, to the

people of another nation in need. And they have done so in large and small ways, including a novel approach that has made a significant mark for the first time—using their cell phones to “text” donations—a method that didn't even exist a few years ago.

The American Red Cross has received more than \$33 million through text-messaged gifts of \$10 each. Other organizations have also tapped into the “mobile giving” movement to raise funds for Haiti.

A global telethon last week has raised \$66 million so far, with money still coming in from music downloads and other sources.

Corporations are also stepping up. The Business Civic Leadership Center, a nonprofit group affiliated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, reports that 265 companies have contributed more than \$122 million for Haiti relief.

Families around the world, including many in Illinois, have found that the Haitian orphans they were in the process of adopting are caught in the earthquake's uncertain aftermath.

My heart goes out to these families and these children. We have been contacted by a number of Illinois families who are asking for help locating or reconnecting with a loved one who was caught in the quake. We have been working to minimize the redtape and put the families directly in contact with the U.S. Government task force and other groups who are on the ground in Haiti working on locating people and getting them to safety.

With loving families waiting anxiously for news, we are doing all we can, in coordination with the Haitian Government, to help these children. We are also working to find and move to safety newly orphaned children.

That is why I was heartened by the announcement by Department of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano that her agency and the Department of State have implemented a humanitarian parole policy that allows Haitian children already identified as orphans before the earthquake to enter the United States temporarily under certain circumstances.

We will continue to address the most immediate needs in Haiti: rescuing survivors; providing shelter, food, water, and medical treatment; and avoiding the spread of disease. And we must commit to working with the Haitian people and international partners to help get Haiti back on its feet over the long term.

The United States should join in the upcoming international donor conference that will shape a long-term plan to help put Haiti back on its feet in a way that is sustainable in the years ahead. We cannot undo the terrible loss Haiti has suffered, but we can show the best of American compassion, generosity, and ingenuity in helping the Haitian people rebuild their nation. I urge my colleagues to support these efforts.

I yield the floor.