

## **AFL-CIO Calls on Unions to Help Haitians**

The earthquake that devastated Haiti on January 12 resulted in thousands dead and wounded, destroyed buildings and infrastructure, and left a country reeling in the face of disaster. The AFL-CIO is calling for the United States and the entire international community, including the local union movement, to “do our utmost to aid our Haitian sisters and brothers in their moment of extraordinary need.”

Unions, charity organizations and the U.S. government launched a massive response to the earthquake that will no doubt continue for some time. A few days after the earthquake, the Department of Transportation (DOT) took action to facilitate the rapid flow of rescue and relief personnel and supplies to Haiti. “The earthquake in Haiti has caused a terrible humanitarian crisis,” U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said. “We want to do all we can to help the Haitian people begin to put their lives back together.” The FAA assembled a seven-member team to provide technical assistance for air traffic management and airport evaluations. The team will work with the Haitians and Department of Defense combat controllers to improve the flow of air traffic moving in and out of the airport in Port-au-Prince.

The AFL-CIO initiated a major campaign aimed at providing support to earthquake victims and assisting in rescue efforts. As with FAA employees, many AFL-CIO union members have been able to help through their jobs. Members of the AFL-CIO Maritime Trades Department unions are crewing ships that will provide aid. Crews of pilots and flight engineers, members of the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), are flying relief supplies to the Caribbean for the U.S. Agency for International Development. More than 7,000 registered nurses responded to the call by National Nurses United (NNU) to provide assistance in Haiti. And search-and-rescue teams from Fairfax County, Va., and Los Angeles County, Calif., comprised of members from the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), are in Haiti helping with rescue efforts.

The AFL-CIO is also making it easy to donate to the relief efforts through its Solidarity Center. The American Center for International Labor Solidarity, which began in 1997, is a nonprofit organization that assists workers around the world attempting to build democratic and independent trade unions. The efforts of the Solidarity Center are ongoing and not isolated to a specific event. The Center is planning to send a delegation of Haitian union activists living in the Dominican Republic to Haiti to contact union partners and conduct a needs assessment that will enable unions to receive support. The Solidarity Center is also working with the Confederation of United Unions (CNUS) to establish a donation center with nonperishable goods that will be shipped to union counterparts in Haiti. Donations to the Solidarity Center’s Earthquake Relief for Haitian Workers fund will be passed to partners there and members of the Center will work to ensure assistance reaches the neediest workers and their families. To find out more about the fund and make a donation, go to [www.solidaritycenter.org/content.asp?contentid=1004](http://www.solidaritycenter.org/content.asp?contentid=1004).

The AFL-CIO also recommended the following organizations for making donations to Haiti:

**American Red Cross:** There are more than 400 Red Cross workers from around the world in Haiti, as well as thousands of local volunteers. People can donate in support of the relief effort in

Haiti at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or by calling 1-800-REDCROSS. Mobile donors can text “Haiti” to 90999 to make a \$10 contribution.

**Partners in Health (PIH):** PIH has been working with the U.S. government, the government of Haiti, the United Nations, other nonprofit organizations and relief agencies to determine the immediate needs in the region. The organization has launched a new website to provide up-to-date information on its efforts at [www.standwithhaiti.org](http://www.standwithhaiti.org). Go to this website to find out how you can donate, volunteer or contribute supplies.

**Doctors Without Borders:** Doctors Without Borders is an international and medical humanitarian organization that was already established in Haiti prior to the earthquake. The staff is currently working through heavy caseloads while addressing problems with supplies and equipment that threaten their efforts. Visit the organization’s website at [www.doctorswithoutborders.org](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org) to make a donation.

**United Way Worldwide Disaster Fund:** United Way Worldwide’s members in the Caribbean have mobilized their staff, volunteers and partners in response to the earthquake and are working to determine the most urgent long-term recovery needs. To make a donation to the fund, go to <https://volunteer.united-e-way.org/uwwwdisaster/donate>.