



## CAFC Haiti Earthquake Response

January 14, 2010

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Leading the Caribbean in Joint Training For Fire, Rescue & EMS

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### The CAFC Raison d'être

Because a core principle and raison d'être (reason for being) of the CAFC is to respond to neighboring countries in need, our effort to come to the aide of the earthquake victims in Haiti's communities is now in motion.

We have begun the outreach process to authorities and agencies including CIDEMA, CARICOM, USAID, FEMA and others to work through the multi-agency/multi-layered process and procedures governing our mechanisms of operation.

Events such as this underline a prime reason why the CAFC is here. With one organization able to harness the capabilities of the Caribbean Fire Services and interface with the lead responding organizations, the opportunities for streamlining and the saving of lives improves. The lead responding organizations are taxed quite heavily during such a disaster. It is our responsibility to unify with one support mechanism to minimize the degree to which we bring additional burden to these responding organizations.

Several of the issues we must work through include:

- **Damage Assessment** – Damage assessments are currently underway by all leading authorities including USAID and CIDEMA. Where our support is most needed will be greatly influenced by the results of this assessment.
- **Type of Support** – Crises of this nature start as rescue operations and then transition to recovery. We must assess internally what our capacity is to handle both tasks at this time including both equipment and trained personnel.
- **Duration of Support** – Irrespective of what the 'needs on the ground' may be in Haiti, we must (within each responding Caribbean nation) determine the duration for which our support can be deployed and the CAFC must work to manage this process to ensure we are effective at meeting our tasks within Haiti while not depleting critical resources that need to be held in reserve for our member-nations.
- **Logistical Needs & Planning** – While a good heart wishes to jump into the fray to help a neighbor, this is the type of situation in which leadership is also defined by our own understanding and planning regarding the issues of logistics including:
  - **Transport (Air)** – How do we get our personnel (and other resources) from across the Caribbean to Haiti?

- **Transport (In Country)** – How do we travel within Haiti?
- **Accommodations** – How are our people housed? Tents? If so, how are the tents provided?
- **Food & Supplies** – How do our people get food, supplies and medical supplies in-country?
- **Health & Medical** – Do we need inoculations for all responders before deployment? Are we clear on the health issues inherent to Haiti? Are we clear on the health issues relating to mass-casualty events of this magnitude?
- **Security** – Do we have a security plan for ensuring the physical safety of our deployed support teams in-country?
- **VISA & Passport** – What are the travel requirements under these circumstances for our responding teams across the Caribbean?

While many of the above stated issues will likely be resolved through our interface with the leading responding organizations, as a backup plan and alternative, we also need to know our internal capacities to address these issues as well.

With the assistance of LA Fire Chief Kwame Cooper, we are liaising with Dr. Stephan Hitman of the 9/11 Fund to deliver a trailer-load of aide supplies to the Haiti's earthquake victims. More on this shortly.

Considering these issues, the magnitude of the devastation, the unique situations and capabilities of each of our Caribbean nations and the core principles of the CAFC, we now ask you to respond as rapidly as is possible (within the next 48 hours if at all possible) and let us know "how you can contribute to the unified CAFC response to the earthquake devastation in Haiti.

Sincerely yours,  
*Gregory Richards*  
Chief Gregory N. Richards  
President - CAFC

