



Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress

22 Ball Street, Suite 100; Irvington, NJ, 0711
973.371.0089 (Ph); 973.372.7677 (Fax)
www.haitiandiasporacongress.org

FINAL CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS FROM FOURTEEN (14) WORK SESSIONS AND THREE (3) PLENARY SESSIONS, READ TO AND APPROVED BY THE ASSEMBLED, SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 2009

RESOLUTIONS FROM FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 2009

Work Session 1A: Prioritizing Domestic Agriculture

The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress resolves and recognizes the priority of domestic agriculture in Haiti's development. This includes the necessity of good site selection, quality control, best practice methods and training for farmers. In addition, we recognize the value of roundtable discussions among people in all phases of agriculture, and a role for agricultural development banks.

Work Session 1-B: Meeting Education and Health Goals

On the subject of education, The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress is resolute on 1. Reducing the rate of illiteracy by ten percent next year, then five percent in each successive year, 2. Accessible, universal primary education over the first four years of school, that is amply funded through government budget and foreign aid, and with regional professional development centers for all teachers. There is also the need for new facilities, capabilities and positions to create new institutions such as a Volunteer Education Corps comprised of young adult students in Haiti and from abroad, and a national academy for education in science, technology and environmental restoration

On the subject of health, the Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress is alarmed at the continued decreasing quality of medical education and training in Haiti. It therefore resolves to seek remedies including 1. expanded number and quality of international teacher and student exchanges for training abroad, and 2. better use of professional medical "opportunity travel" to attract quality teachers, physicians and other medical personnel to Haiti. The Congress also recognizes the need to address the continuing difficulty and expense of 1. furnishing and equipping hospitals and medical schools and 2. facilitating the delivery of urgently needed shipments of humanitarian supplies through customs; in that regard, it is resolved to find partners in Haiti who can expedite the clearance, delivery and tax exemption of such shipments.

Work Session 2-A: Restoring Forests & Ecology; Improving Water & Energy Management

The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress is united on the priority of caring for the environment. In particular, there is the need for ecological restoration of Haiti's water, landscape, coastal zone, biodiversity and natural resources. This requires national education and action to save the environment. In particular, there is the desire to 1. Establish research centers to study, plan and implement projects to fix the environment and 2. Lobby the government to donate and designate land as forest preserves.



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Work Session 2-B: Removing Roadblocks to Investing in Haiti

The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress recognizes several common and unique obstacles to investing in, opening and operating new businesses in Haiti. These obstacles include lengthy and costly applications and permits, inconsistent and costly rules and procedures, and poor access to critical information relating to business development. Therefore, the Congress resolves to demand that the government and others remove these obstacles in order to attract and speed Diaspora investment in Haiti.

Work Session 3-A: Stimulating Tourism and Artisanal Industry

The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress resolves to take the necessary actions to increase the number of visitors to Haiti from 120,000 in 2008 to 250,000 in 2011. These will be mainly from the Diaspora in the Caribbean region and from around the world. To achieve our goal: 1. We unified Haitians; conscious of our values will channel our forces, resources and energy toward building a new image for our country. 2. The Haitians living abroad and people of Haitian origin will visit the native land at least once a year by means of congresses, sports events, themed travel, family gatherings, religious purposes, etc. 3. Haiti will ensure the necessary conditions – security, human development, applied legal framework and investments – to attract and welcome visitors and investors, mainly from the Diaspora. 4. The international community should focus all the resources available for Haiti in building infrastructure along and around tourism circuits, i.e. roads, regional and international airports, sustainable systems, etc., and insure sustainable practices for the economic development and the creation and equitable distribution of wealth in Haiti. Furthermore, The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress agrees to petition the American government to remove all travel restrictions and advisories concerning Haiti. It also encourages conferences to be held in touristic locations such as The Citadel in northern Haiti, per the recommendation of the Minister of Tourism. Finally, given that sustainable, community-based tourism is the way forward for sustainable/economic development in Haiti, the Congress will form a grassroots support network through which resources can be shared and funding obtained and distributed to organizations with viable plans for tourism development.

Work Session 3-B: Harnessing Development Funds for Haiti

For Haiti, funds for development are often unavailable, insufficient, ill-timed and poorly administered. The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress resolves to: 1. Have a continuing investment forum where these limiting factors are explored and remedied. 2. Introduce, create and/or improve the purchase of development bonds and operation of stock markets, and 3. Search for initiatives at the state level in the United States where funds and other resources can be made available to organizations in Haiti.



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Work Session 4-A: Interlinking Infrastructure and Job Creation

The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress recognizes the need for solid preliminary research and analysis to assuage the fear of potential investors into Haiti, especially those who would invest in infrastructure. Further, it should explore and endorse appropriate actions to encourage the growth of Haiti's export sector. In turn, this will create economic demand for new ports, essential for decentralization, with efficient transport along the country's thousand miles of coastline. The Congress also endorses waterway infrastructure such as dams, that 1. Establishes a Haitian National Commission on Dams, with membership in international commissions and other bodies concerning dams, reservoirs, water management and hydroelectricity. 2. Plans for and design dam projects aimed at flood prevention, irrigation, hydropower and hybrid storage for wind and solar energy. 3. Emphasizes agricultural/agro-industry uses for hydropower. 4. Sets up educational programs to train engineers and technicians in Haiti on dam technologies. 5. Shares the vision of dams, reservoirs and other forms of water containment, and motivates and inspires Haitians to develop and share this vision and the potential for positive economic impact.

Work Session 4-B: Improving Human Rights and Foreign Relations

The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress resolves to 1. Recognize and support the vision and efforts of the Government of Haiti to reform its judicial system, namely, the reinforcement of a Rule of Law, the establishment of an independent judiciary, and a guarantee of access to justice for all, through the agency of the Presidential Working Group on the Reform of Justice, 2. Recognize and encourage the continued financial and expert assistance of international agencies in supporting the reform of justice in Haiti; and 3. Recognize that the Government of Haiti must deal with alleged illegal arrests and detentions as well as the alleged failure to accept large numbers of complaints of serious human rights abuses that give rise to the charge of widespread impunity. Further, the Congress resolves to 1. Encourage the Government of Haiti to expand the membership of the Working Group on the Reform of Justice to include more participation from the human rights sector and grassroots advocates and to more widely publicize its reform efforts; 2. Requests the Government of Haiti to circulate in all official places its commitment to follow the law governing arrests and detentions; and 3. Requests the Government of Haiti to name sufficient numbers of Investigating Judges to handle the backlog of serious cases of abuse of human rights. Further, the Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress supports efforts to 1. Form partnerships with universities to train people to perform criminal and legal investigations, 2. Help identify funds to provide a rehabilitation system, 3. Establish a team of experts to formulate specific action steps/recommendations/and Diaspora support toward public security and justice reform and 3. Increase the budget of the Ministry of Justice.



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Special Roundtable Plenary: NGO's Contribution and Improving Aid Effectiveness

As appealed by NGO representatives in plenary session, the Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress supports 1. Tangible and operational cooperation among NGO's, working in Haiti, 2. Improved customs/import procedures in order to speed up the process and increase transparency, and 3. A website for compiling and displaying the skill-sets and human resources among the Diaspora that NGO's can access for their work in and about Haiti. The Congress further resolves to work to improve the way foreign aid to NGO's is conceived, fulfilled, delivered, monitored and evaluated. It is further resolved to recognize the multiplicity of voices among and varieties of assistance offered by NGO's working in and about Haiti.

Work Session 5-A: Overcoming Migration and Justice Inequalities

The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress resolves to 1. Form a follow-up committee that networks among conference participants and key groups, to achieve real remedies to problems concerning migration and justice inequalities, 2. Work together to provide better immigration services, and 3. Promote education in immigration law for Haitians everywhere, in various settings and over the Haitian media.

Work Session 5-B: Acculturating Families, Organizing Communities

The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress recognizes the need to acculturate immigrant families and organize Diaspora communities. In particular, this means 1. Going beyond summit meetings to foster leadership and systematic approaches for continuous work, 2. Making better use of the media, parent-teacher association and other support organizations, 3. Promoting stories of Haitian success in community life, and 4. Continuing with education on the rights and privileges afforded Diaspora families and communities.

Work Session 6-A: Protecting, Guiding and Connecting Diaspora and Haitian Youth

The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress resolves to 1. Create national youth congresses in Haiti and Diaspora countries, 2. Offer opportunities for youth travel and exchange between Haiti and Diaspora countries, 3. Appoint a national coordinator in the United States to assist programs concerning the protection and guidance of Diaspora youth, and 4. Select Palm Beach County, Florida as a first location where the Congress can demand and work towards educational changes for young Haitians.



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Work Session 6-B: Promoting Civic Involvement and Advancement

The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress recognizes the need for more civic involvement and advancement. It therefore resolves to 1. Promote the civic engagement of Haitians abroad, 2. Change United States' policies toward Haiti and Haitians and 3. Prevail upon Haitian consulates to sponsor civic events in large venues such as parks and auditoria.

7-A: Recovering Economic and Business Development

The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress resolves to create an Economic Development Board with members from the Diaspora, government and international communities.

Work Session 7-B: Making the Most of Media

The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress resolves the following actions: 1. Sponsorship of activities to train media workers in Miami, setting standards that will be adopted by all journalists. 2. Urge the joint ownership of media outlets throughout the Diaspora. 3. Review and study the possibility of partnerships with public radio and television stations and 4. Follow-up on these and other items before the end of the year.

Plenary Session: Dual Citizenship

The Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress resolves: 1. That Haitians who have become naturalized citizens of their resident-nations are not foreigners but Haitians with their full rights; 2. That by adopting the citizenship/nationality of their resident-nations, Haitians have not repudiated their Haitian citizenship/nationality; 3. That individuals born of a Haitian mother or a Haitian father, wherever in the world, are Haitians citizens; 4. That dual citizenship/nationality should be fully allowed by the Haitian Constitution.