



# HUIROU COMMISSION

Women, Homes & Community

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Fifty-fourth Session, 2010 February 26, 2010

## **Oral Statement on the Topic of: Ensuring Haitian Women's Participation and Leadership Are Institutionalized in All Stages of National Relief and Reconstruction.**

**Authors:** A coalition statement submitted by the Huirou Commission on behalf of United Methodist Women, Caribbean Association for Feminist Research & Action (CAFRA), CAFRA Haiti, MADRE, Women in Cities International, CDD, Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir Mexico, Ipas Mexico, GIRE, Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida, GROOTS International, Huirou Commission, Gender and Disaster Network, AWID, AJWS

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As organizations committed to partnering with Haitian women to ensure their effective participation in rebuilding Haiti, we call upon member governments and international humanitarian aid agencies present at the CSW to commit to actions that will ensure that all future relief, recovery and reconstruction investments declare and adhere to measurable standards of gender equality. In the current period of relief and temporary shelter, in the design and distribution of entitlements, and in the planning and rebuilding of infrastructure and development programs, we urge implementing actors to establish collaborative processes that are anchored in formal partnerships with Haitian women's groups (particularly local grassroots groups) who are empowered and resourced to take public leadership in the protracted process of reconstruction.

As a coalition of groups and networks active in the global women's movement we will partner with Haitian women's groups to ensure that equitable, transparent, and socially just standards are adhered to in all phases of recovery and will regularly monitor:

**Participation:** Haitian women are disproportionately impacted by the crisis as well as key to their country's recovery. Thus we expect to see a large and diverse number of Haitian women's organizations consulted and included in needs and damage assessments, and in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of post-disaster aid programs. Financing large numbers of grassroots women and their community organizations is essential to ensuring that -- women's needs and priorities are reflected in relief and recovery and that displaced women are socially legitimated as a key stakeholder group.

**Leadership:** The legacy of Haitian women's leadership at home, in workplaces and across communities is a strong foundation for designing, implementing and evaluating long-term recovery as well as continuing aid. Women's leadership and care-giving work **should be recognized and supported by policy and program mandates and transparent resource commitments** that enable women to play meaningful, sustained and formal roles in the long-term recovery process. And, as social and political leadership positions are restored or created Haitian women must hold a proportional share.

Member Networks: Federación de Mujeres  
Municipalistas de América Latina y El Caribe FEMUM/ALC  
GROOTS International | International Council of Women  
Information Center of the Independent Women's Forum (ICIWF)  
Latin American Women and Habitat Network  
Women and Cities International | Women and Peace Network

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**Non-discrimination:** Given that temporary and impermanent settlements and housing arrangements are likely to persist for a long period, measures to protect women from sexual violence must be implemented in all areas of Haiti, especially the capital where security concerns are high. These include: safe access to storm-resistant temporary shelters, adequate street lighting and safe spaces where women can relax and organize around basic needs. As temporary and permanent housing plans and entitlement policies are finalized, the explicit protection of women's land and housing rights—through enforceable tenure security-- must be explicit. Across all states, reproductive health services must be guaranteed and accessible.

**Capacity Development:** Governments and aid agencies should provide resources and facilitate technical assistance to help grassroots and other women's organizations build their capacity to function effectively as development and social justice promoters (short and long term). Such assistance should conform to capacity gaps identified by a wide range of women's organizations and organized networks of grassroots women. (As often as possible, training and other technical assistance should be supplied by grassroots and other women's organizations.) Economic recovery programs must give priority to economically vulnerable women—especially single heads of households and informal sector workers—and offering them a full range of training, credit, and business support services.

**Transparency and Accountability:** Opaque bureaucracy, unfulfilled pledges and self-serving aid policies by donor countries have long plagued Haiti. Thus Aid machinery must be reformed to strengthen democratic governance in Haiti and build the national economy to reflect the rights and priorities of Haitians, not the economic interests of donor countries.

Mindful that a donor's conference is scheduled for the end of March 2010, we call upon member governments at this CSW, and other civil society organizations gathered at this CSW to affirm the principles outlined in this statement and to join us in calling for the inclusion of representatives of Haitian women's organizations (including grassroots groups) at the donor meeting. The design and affirmation of policy targets and aid commitments that institutionalize the participation and leadership of Haitian women in the rebuilding of their country must be a key element of these deliberations. (Resolution 1325 on women's roles in post conflict reconstruction is an important precedent.) This level of inclusiveness is required if Haitian women are to believe the global community is committed to 'building a road' that upholds their human rights, facilitates their citizenship, and builds new economic, political and social structures that will redress the decades of poverty and aid-dependency they have been forced to endure. Only bold action will accomplish this and allow a phoenix to emerge from the earthquake's ashes.

