

Letter from the Haitian members of the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission to Co-Chairmen of the Commission

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Prime Minister Jean Max Bellerive, Co-Chair
President William Jefferson Clinton, Co-chair
Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission

We, the 12 Haitian members of the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission (IHRC) present at this meeting, on account of the experience we have accumulated on this Commission since its establishment, feel obliged to express the following, regarding the analysis of strategic plan on our agenda.

The twelve Haitian members present here feel completely disconnected from the activities of the IHRC. There is a critical communication and information shortage at the TIC [Information and Communication Technology] on the part of the Executive Secretary and even more from the Executive Committee. In spite of our role in the governance structure of the institution, we have so far received no follow-up on the IHRC activities.

In general, contact is only established one day before the board meetings. Board members have time neither to read, nor analyze, nor understand--and much less to respond intelligently--to projects submitted at the last minute, despite all the complaints expressed and promises made on this subject.

Moreover, board members are not in a position to answer, for lack of basic information, the public's or any interested person's basic questions. Many think board members are being stingy with information.

Distinguished co-chairmen,

No actual functional relationship exists between the Executive Secretary and the Haitian side of the council, or between the latter and the Executive Committee. Projects are often forwarded as summary tables to the Board, only on the eve of meetings. Procedural changes related to the formalities around submission of online projects vary without notice.

Staffing and consultant selection are undertaken unbeknownst to the Haitian members of the board. No documentation on hiring criteria or candidate selection was sent to inform board members. The same is true for selected consultants; the Haitian board members don't even know the names of the consultants who work for the IHRC nor their respective tasks.

In view of these difficulties, distinguished co-chairmen, the Haitian part of the council had invited the Executive Director to explain how the two bodies should collaborate. The invitation was ignored.

In reality, Haitians members of the board have one role: to endorse the decisions made by the Director and Executive Committee. Prof. Jean-Marie Bourjolly made a comment, in his October 4, 2010 memorandum, which summarizes the situation well: "We should focus more on building a plan that is strategically and tactically consistent with the general principles set forth in the Plan of Action."

"Our actions have been bound to approving projects on, as far as I can judge, a first informed, first served basis. We risk ending up with a variety of ill-assorted projects, some or which are certainly interesting and useful taken individually, but which collectively can neither meet the urgency nor lay the foundation for the rehabilitation of Haiti, and even less its development. "

Distinguished co-chairmen,

As far as protocol goes, the way Haitians who are not members of the Executive Committee are being treated is very revealing of the desire to minimize their part in the council. This was made evident in the unacceptable reception they were given at the September 20, 2010 meeting in NY, where several Haitian members of this committee were not even granted a place at the table.

As Haitians members of this committee, we consider it our particular responsibility to ensure the proper functioning of the commission in its mission, so that reconstruction of the country is undertaken in the interests of Haiti and Haitians, both at home and abroad.

Signatories:

Joseph Bernadel
Lucien Bernard
Jean-Marie Bourjolly
Jean Renald Clerisme
Lucien Francoeur
Claude Jeudy
Gary Lissade
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