

BACKGROUNDER FOR THE MEDIA

The Secretary-General's Initiative for the Elimination of Cholera in Haiti UN Headquarters, North Lawn Building, Conference Room 1 Tuesday, 11 December 2012, 5:00 pm-5:30 pm

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is today launching a new initiative to support expanded access to clean water and sanitation, improved health care and the global mobilization of resources to tackle cholera in Haiti in 2013 and beyond.

The Secretary-General's Initiative for the Elimination of Cholera in Haiti aims to scale up the country's current response to cholera through an integrated programme that includes prevention and treatment measures, water and sanitation projects, and support for the oral vaccination campaign being led by the Government of Haiti.

The Secretary-General is announcing \$215 million from bilateral and multilateral donors to support the implementation of ongoing immediate and long-term elimination efforts. The United Nations is committing a further \$23.5 million in support of the Secretary-General's initiative.

The main focus of the funding will be to invest in clean drinking water and sanitation systems. The funding will also be used to ensure vaccines are targeted at Haitians living in high-risk areas, such as densely populated urban neighbourhoods and rural districts isolated from health-care services.

The United Nations Deputy Special Envoy for Haiti, the world-renowned physician and humanitarian Dr. Paul Farmer, is being appointed as a Special Adviser to the Secretary-General. Dr. Farmer will support the Secretary-General's Initiative by advising on community-based medicine and lessons from Haiti and how they can be applied to other countries.

The Secretary-General's Initiative will reinforce the broader Hispaniola Initiative, which was launched in January 2012 by the Presidents of Haiti and of the Dominican Republic, with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO)/Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The Hispaniola Initiative requires \$2.2 billion for Haiti and \$70 million for the Dominican Republic over the next 10 years. It is estimated that Haiti will need \$500 million over the next two years alone to implement its national operational plan for dealing with cholera.

Under the Secretary-General's Initiative, the UN will advocate for greater engagement and financial resources from the international community in the battle against cholera. The UN will also support the Government of Haiti's efforts to monitor cholera spending and the impact of all interventions.

The Secretary-General's Initiative builds on the ongoing efforts of the United Nations, in support of the Government of Haiti, to eliminate the disease.

The UN has spent \$118 million in its response since the outbreak began. This includes helping to set up treatment centres and oral rehydration points, provide hand-washing facilities and toilets to schools, train health-care workers, distribute water treatment products and deliver humanitarian supplies.