

Campaigners express dismay at IMF's new debts to Haiti

We express our serious disappointment that the International Monetary Fund has extended \$102million loan to Haiti, with no mention of debt cancellation. Haiti will now owe the IMF over \$250million.

Hundreds of thousands of activists have called on their governments in recent days to ensure that substantial grant aid, rather than loans, is given to Haiti and that all of Haiti's debts are wiped out.

Although IMF head Dominique Strauss-Kahn had given his support for efforts to "delete all the Haitian debt, including our new loan" last week, there were no signs of cancellation at the IMF meeting which took place in Washington DC last week. The World Bank (owed \$39million) and Inter-American Development Bank (owed \$447million) have also expressed support for debt cancellation, though have yet to formally agree a deal. Much of this money was lent at a time when Haiti had massive, odious debts recklessly and immorally lent to dictatorial regimes.

Only two days after a developing country – Venezuela – announced it's intention to cancel Haiti's debt outright, we find it unconscionable that the IMF, run by the richest countries in the world, cannot do the same. We are concerned that the Haitian disaster – like the financial and economic crisis last year – has become another opportunity for the IMF to extend its operations. This is further proof of why the IMF should not be involved in development.

Moreover, the IMF communication is misleading in announcing loans as part of the relief effort that the international community has mobilised for Haiti. Actually the IMF loan will have to be spent as part of Haiti's current programme with the Fund, which includes harmful economic and policy conditions which undemocratically force Haiti, amongst other things, to raise electricity tariffs and freeze public sector pay. We call on the IMF and its Board to lift them immediately.

We support the views of Haitian civil society groups like PAPDA: the Haitian Advocacy Platform for Development:

"The debts imposed by the IFIs and the major world powers have contributed to destroying our country. It's the equivalent of an earthquake which has lasted from late in 1983 when we signed the first standby agreement with the IMF. These loans have caused earthquakes, aftershocks and tremors which have undermined our institutions and our capacity to respond to a crisis of this magnitude."

We call on the IMF to immediately and unconditionally cancel all of Haiti's debt, including its new loan, and for rich countries to make large grant aid available to Haiti as restitution for centuries of damage inflicted on that country.

Signed:

Jubilee Debt Campaign, UK
Debt and Development Coalition Ireland
11.11.11- Coalition of the Flemish North-South Movement
Plate-forme Dette & Développement
CCFD-Terre Solidaire
Jubilee Scotland
Campagna per la Riforma della Banca Mondiale
Observatorio de la Deuda en la Globalización
European Network on Debt and Development
Both ENDS

Share the World's Resources

Ekvilib Institute

Diakonia

Committee for the Abolition of Third World Debt

The Norwegian Coalition for Debt Cancellation

Norwegian Church Aid

Attac Norway

The Norwegian Solidarity Committee for Latin America

Latin American Solidarity Centre

KOO- Koordinierungsstelle der Österr. Bischofskonferenz f. internationale Entwicklung und Mission

World Development Movement UK

Aktion Finanzplatz Schweiz

new economics foundation uk

Forum Syd

Ecologistas en Acción (Spain)

CNCD (Belgium)

Attac España

erlassjahr.de

Freedom From Debt Coalition

The Development Research Center (Bulgaria)

Vision du Monde

Christianaid (UK)

Berne Declaration (Switzerland)

Broederlijk Delen (Belgium)

Campaña ¿Quién debe a Quién?

Manuel zaguirre, President SOTERMUN (Spain)

Santiago González, Inernational Dep. USO (Spain)

COEH: Coordination Europe-Haïti (a platform of 65 European NGO's and solidarity groups in Europe working with Haïti)