

## UPDATE: JDC'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO THE HAITI EARTHQUAKE

January 19, 2010

**JDC Response:** Within hours of the devastation wrought by the January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake in Haiti, JDC opened a mailbox to begin collecting funds for relief efforts. JDC immediately coordinated with partners to determine how to most effectively and quickly provide the essential relief needed on the ground in Haiti.

JDC's goal during the first stage of a disaster of this magnitude is to provide emergency relief efforts that meet the immediate needs of survivors. JDC is currently working in two main areas: **providing medical supplies and equipment**, and **providing food**.

### *Medical Supplies and Equipment*

News outlets report death tolls of between 50,000 and 100,000, with many more victims of the earthquake badly injured. JDC is supporting the provision of medical equipment by three different ground agencies—one Israeli, one American, and one local:

1. JDC is working with the **Medical Corps of the Israel Defense Force** whose team of medical professionals landed in Haiti this past Friday to set up a field hospital on a soccer field near the city center that is now caring for hundreds of wounded citizens. JDC's donated funds purchased medical equipment, including infant incubators for a neonatal unit and orthopedic devices. A baby was born in the unit over the weekend; the first-time mother named her new son "Israel."
2. **Heart to Heart International**, a U.S. nongovernmental organization (NGO) already operating on the ground in Haiti, is providing emergency medical assistance with equipment and supplies purchased by JDC. Heart to Heart International works in 60 countries and has partnered with JDC in the past to provide medical equipment and medical supplies to vulnerable Jewish communities around the world.
3. Medical supplies and equipment were scarce in Haiti even before the disaster, but in light of the devastation and considerable number of injured, the impact of this shortage is the immediate loss of lives. Working with the **Afya Foundation**, a container of mattresses and much-needed medical supplies has been sent to a well-respected local NGO called Zanmi Lasante (Partners in Health), started in Haiti by Dr. Paul Farmer. JDC is also supporting the shipment of two additional containers through the Afya Foundation. Currently, there is considerable difficulty in getting supplies into Haiti due to damage to the port and extensive airport traffic.

### *Food Provision*

Ready-to-eat food and clean water are among the most pressing needs at this stage. JDC is supporting a

soup kitchen operated by **EcoWorks International**, a not-for-profit NGO working with poor communities around the world to help break the cycle of poverty through the development of sustainable projects that promote self-reliance, improvement of standards of living, and protection of natural resources. EcoWorks already has an operational presence in Haiti with a strong network of grassroots organizations, and is experienced in emergency relief and reconstruction, having worked in countries destroyed by natural disasters (Armenia) and by war or genocide (Somalia, Rwanda).

**Next Steps:** JDC will reserve a large portion of funds for sustainable intermediate and long-term rebuilding and reconstruction programs. JDC's experience during the 2004 Tsunami in South Asia exemplified that the organization could have the greatest impact on the affected communities during the recovery and development phases. JDC will develop initiatives with both international and local partners to provide the victims of this earthquake with opportunities for sustainable improvements in the areas of health, education, and employment using its core professional competencies to serve vulnerable populations.

**In the coming weeks JDC will:**

- Continue to monitor its immediate relief efforts on the ground in Haiti;
- Send staff to the region as soon as it is clear we can do so without endangering their lives or imposing any strain on the local population;
- Explore additional partnerships with local NGOs to provide emergency assistance during this initial stage of the disaster response;
- Continue to coordinate activities with the White House, Department of State, the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Israeli relief agencies, and the United Nations;
- Coordinate efforts of the Jewish Coalition for Disaster Relief—an alliance of 45 U.S. and foreign Jewish agencies. This coalition provides a united Jewish response to humanitarian disasters and has formed a new coalition for Haiti relief.