

U.S. Team Assesses Haiti's Communications Needs

FCC-Led Team Reports from Port-au-Prince on State of Communications

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Washington, D.C. - A U.S. team is on-the-ground in Haiti evaluating the status of the country's communications infrastructure and services following the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12th. The team was deployed in response to a request from Director General Montaigne Marcelin of Conseil National des Télécommunications (Conatel), the communications agency in Haiti, in coordination with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

"The resilience of the Haitian people through this devastating disaster has been remarkable," said USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, M.D. "The ability for the government, small businesses, medical providers, relief workers and families to communicate easily is essential going forward. We appreciate the generosity of the FCC to immediately lend its expertise in assessing the damage and working alongside the Haitians to accelerate the rebuilding."

FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said, "I am grateful that the FCC can lend a helping hand in the Haitian relief effort by providing on-the-ground support and expertise. The FCC team, led by International Bureau Chief Mindel De La Torre, will continue to work with Conatel and local Haitian telecommunications providers to come up with practical and sound options for restoring communications services to the people of Haiti."

Speaking from Port-au-Prince, Ms. De La Torre said, "After seeing the destruction of the country, and particularly the telecommunications infrastructure, I have a much better understanding of the monumental task to keep communications up and running in such a difficult environment. What is clear is that the communications sector is making a huge difference on a day-to-day basis for Haitians struggling with tremendous personal and property losses. We are honored to be working hand-in-hand with Conatel on the critical task of restoring communications services to our neighbors in Haiti and to all sectors of the country's economy."

International Bureau Chief De La Torre, along with Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB) Chief Engineer, William Lane, Ph.D., is working closely with Conatel to identify the communications needs and priorities of the Haitian government, to assess damage to key communications facilities and services, and to evaluate options for restoration of services.

In addition to the IB Chief and PSHSB Chief Engineer, the FCC team includes three staff who initially deployed to Haiti days after the earthquake to support a FEMA Mobile Emergency Response Team, two additional FCC engineers, and two industry experts. Combined, the

communications sector assessment team brings decades of technical, regulatory and disaster-recovery experience across the communications sector to the people of Haiti.