

USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah Visits Haiti

Examines Project Sites, Meets with Government of Haiti, NGO Leaders, and Applauds Efforts of Americans Providing Relief

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PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI - Just before the six-month commemoration of the earthquake that struck Haiti last January, Dr. Rajiv Shah, Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), traveled to Haiti today to see relief and recovery projects, speak with civil society members, review the progress of USAID's efforts and meet with U.S., Haitian, UN and NGO leaders. As part of the visit, Dr. Shah also met with Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive, who is also co-chairman of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC).

"Since the first days after the earthquake, USAID has worked closely with other U.S. Government agencies, the Government of Haiti, the international community, and directly with the Haitian people to save lives and begin taking important steps to build back better," Dr. Shah said. "Now our focus is turning to long-term, high-impact development that will improve Haiti's outlook as well as the lives of its citizens."

"The challenges that remain are formidable, but the U.S. Government remains deeply committed and confident in the long-term success and prosperity of Haiti."

As part of the visit, Prime Minister Bellerive and Dr. Shah, who traveled with Haiti Task Team Coordinator Paul Weisenfeld and USAID Chief of Staff Sean Carroll, toured the former U.S. Embassy compound, which was rehabilitated after the earthquake through USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives to house the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Planning. Dr. Shah also spoke with Gabriel Verret, Acting Executive Director of the IHRC, which also operates on the compound grounds.

Additionally, Dr. Shah visited a community in the Delmas section of Port-au-Prince severely affected by the earthquake and spoke with the Haitian Ministry of Public Works and the Pan American Development Foundation about their work. Engineers are assessing structural damage and identifying repairs needed so that families can rebuild and return home.

U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Haiti Kenneth H. Merten and USAID Mission Director Carleene Dei also met with Dr. Shah, along with representatives from the U.N., International Organization for Migration, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and other USAID partners. Dr. Shah also met with the men and women who work for USAID in Haiti to thank them for their tireless efforts to help build Haiti back better on behalf of the American people.

