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November 21, 2011

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Public Information: 202-712-4810

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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Government Inaugurates New Parliament Building Complex in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti – The U.S. government and the Haitian Parliament today inaugurated a temporary building complex that will be the official center of Haitian legislative power.

The previous Parliament building partially collapsed during the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake. Among the estimated 316,000 who died in the 7.0-magnitude quake were two Parliament members and 32 staff members killed in the collapse of the National Assembly building. Records and archives were buried, and representatives from both the Lower Chamber (Chambre des Deputes) and the Upper Chamber (Senat) were left without meeting and office space at a time of urgent need for efficient, responsive governance.

With the Parliament buildings too damaged to be rehabilitated, the U.S. government pledged to provide semi-permanent office space as a replacement. Until new quarters could be constructed, the Parliament worked out of the Police Academy, and then a damaged Parliament office building.

The new \$1.9 million Parliament complex, funded and constructed through the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of Transition Initiatives, was completed last month through a subcontract with TEMPO Construction, a Haitian firm. It will serve as a home for Parliament for several years until a permanent National Assembly building can be constructed.

“The U.S. Government's partnership is with all branches of the Haitian government, and the Haitian Parliament, which has a critical role in building a better Haiti, now has a location befitting its importance to good democratic governance on behalf of the Haitian people,” said Ambassador to Haiti Kenneth H. Merten, who attended the inauguration along with Haiti President Michel Martelly and Prime Minister Garry Conille.

The site features two large semi-permanent steel-framed structures, landscaping, fencing, lighting and generators. The complex provides more than 22,000 square feet of office space in two co-joined buildings and one joint assembly hall.

“USAID's support to democracy in Haiti aims to be comprehensive, providing not only new space to allow Parliament members to meet but also organizational and administrative capacity building as they fulfill their roles as representatives of the Haitian people,” said USAID/Haiti Mission Director Carleene H. Dei.

USAID has supplied technical and material support to the Haitian Parliament since 2006. A recently completed project provided orientation and technical training for members and staff; support for constituent outreach; the production of a website, TV and radio programs on the work of the Parliament; and equipment and training for the recording of parliamentary sessions.

A new project to extend and expand USAID's support of Haiti's Parliament started in early October. This project will work with Parliamentarians and legislative staff to identify their needs, which may include technical assistance for budgetary and policy analysis, and constituent outreach services. The project aims to enhance Parliament's ability to provide better oversight of government operations and increase transparency and accountability in government operations.

For press inquiries, please contact USAIDPressOfficers@USAID.Gov

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