

Canadian Postsecondary Institutions Working Together to Support Canada's Efforts in Haiti

Ottawa, March 29, 2010 – The January 12 earthquake in Haiti devastated the country, its people and its infrastructure. The Haitian people and their government are now focused on rebuilding for a sustainable future.

Haiti's "knowledge infrastructure" has been deeply affected. Several universities, colleges and schools and related facilities were destroyed, more than two hundred professors and teachers were killed and thousands of students were displaced and unable to continue their studies.

- Canada and Canadians have taken a lead role in responding to the Haitian crisis. Canada's universities and colleges and the national and provincial associations that represent them are also responding to the devastation in Haiti.
- The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie, the Canadian Bureau for International Education, the Council of Rectors and Principals of Quebec Universities, Cégep International and World University Services of Canada are working together to achieve a coordinated response. The effort is guided by the principles of sustainability, responsiveness to local needs, mobilizing local capacity and leveraging existing mechanisms.
- Many of our members and some provinces (for example, Quebec and New Brunswick) have taken immediate action to waive tuition and residence fees for Haitian students and provide other forms of support including scholarships, counseling services and emergency financial aid.
- Our sector has considerable experience and capacity, as well as extensive networks on the ground in Haiti, to assist in the longer-term reconstruction and development effort.
- Postsecondary institutions in Canada and in Haiti have a critical role to play in sharing expertise and training Haiti's current and future leaders to address food security, basic health and education, economic recovery and governance needs.

While the immediate concerns are relief and recovery, the Haitian government and international donors will meet in New York City on March 31 to map out an action plan for reconstruction efforts over the next 10 years. The Haitian government has identified higher education as a priority sector within its broader plan of action.

Given the Canadian government's clear commitment to Haiti over the long term, we urge that postsecondary education be a central component of Canada's plan of action and a feature of discussion at the donors' conference.

One step in this direction is an upcoming conference hosted by the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie – an international organization with 728 members including eight Haitian universities. On May 25-26, 2010, the [Assises internationales](#), hosted by the Université de Montréal, will allow members, partners and key donors to develop an action plan for the reconstruction of Haitian postsecondary education based on needs and priorities identified by Haitian academic leaders.

This is a major initiative to support Haiti's long-term development and we encourage active participation and support from the Canadian government. We and our members will contribute actively to ensure an effective and coordinated Canadian effort results from the conference deliberations.

On behalf of Canada's postsecondary sector, we stand ready to support Canada's efforts in Haiti and look forward to making a meaningful and lasting contribution to Haiti's future.



The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada is the voice of Canada's universities. It represents 95 Canadian public and private not-for profit universities and university-degree level colleges.

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