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Haiti to Get Emergency Food Aid Through OAS-PADF Initiative

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By SC Admin

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April 13, 2008 -- Some 400 tons of fortified rice, worth more than \$1.5 million, is available for delivery as emergency food aid to Haiti, especially for those in greatest need, the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), an affiliate of the Organization of American States, announced in Washington on Thursday.

Food to be distributed to schools

April 13, 2008 -- Some 400 tons of fortified rice, worth more than \$1.5 million, is available for delivery as emergency food aid to Haiti, especially for those in greatest need, the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), an affiliate of the Organization of American States, announced in Washington on Thursday.

OAS Assistant Secretary General Albert R. Ramdin chaired the meeting of the Organization's Group of Friends of Haiti, at which PADF Executive Director John Sanbrailo announced the proposed aid package. Sanbrailo also appealed to OAS member states and other interested parties to help mobilize some \$200,000 in funds to underwrite the cost of shipping the rice.

The food would be distributed largely to schools (under the school feeding programs), health centers for women and children, hospitals and community groups operating in Cité Soleil, Bel Air and other locations where PADF has programs, Sanbrailo explained.

In addition to the food security question, Ramdin identified the need for efficient food distribution systems to ensure those most in need receive help, and in that regard he praised the PADF's effective network for aid delivery. Ramdin also cited immediate employment opportunities as a way to help maintain political and social stability in Haiti, arguing that street cleaning projects would generate useful short-term employment.

Several member state representatives reiterated their support for urgent action to mobilize assistance for the sister country of Haiti, detailing their respective government's initiatives, such as food and security assistance provided by Brazil, Canada and other governments. Bahamian Ambassador Cornelius Smith conveyed the solidarity of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) governments, assuring the Friends of Haiti meeting that, "We stand ready to assist in whatever way we can."

On behalf of his government, Haiti's Permanent Representative Ambassador Duly Brutus thanked the OAS and the PADF as well as member states and the other interested partners, for their demonstration of commitment to his country.

Ramdin suggested the "Friends of Haiti," which includes OAS member states and observers as well as key inter-American institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the Pan American Development Organization (PAHO), meet again before a meeting in Haiti this coming April 24 and 25 to consider funding for the government's National Strategy Paper on Growth and Poverty Reduction.