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Hip-hop star Wyclef Jean launches Haiti aid drive

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NEW YORK (AFP) — Haitian-born hip-hop star Wyclef Jean has launched a campaign to help his impoverished native country cope with a food crisis that sparked deadly riots last month.

Jean's Together for Haiti campaign, launched Tuesday in cooperation with the UN World Food Program and the Pan American Development Foundation, seeks to raise funds, distribute food aid, create jobs and support local agriculture.

"There have been riots in Haiti, and more can occur," the former member of hip-hop group The Fugees said at a news conference alongside renowned economist Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University and special adviser to UN chief Ban Ki-moon.

"And yet there are solutions," he said. "What is essential is not only to distribute food, but to grow more food, to help the farmers who want to work, to create micro-enterprises".

Jean, the founder of the Yele Haiti charity, which supports development projects in the Caribbean nation, said he hoped to rapidly raise 48 million dollars.

Soaring food prices in Haiti sparked riots in April that left six people dead and 200 more injured, leading to the ouster of prime minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis.

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