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## **Mayor Manny Diaz and World Vision Expand Long-Term Partnership to Help Haiti**

**(Miami, FL)** –City of Miami Mayor Manny Diaz and World Vision, an international relief organization, have joined forces to support rebuilding efforts in Haiti after a devastating hurricane season. Through Operation: Hope for Haiti, Miami immediately provided critical emergency relief and aid. Now, Haiti finds itself in the reconstruction phase and the City of Miami is in a unique position to convert its solidarity into structured action, which is necessary to establish long-term remedies aimed at prevention and sustainability.

“The residents of Miami have been incredibly generous in their help to our Haitian neighbors and there is a solid foundation in place to take this community’s response to the next level,” says Mayor Diaz. “I call on our community to unite once again and make a long-term difference in one devastated rural area, creating a model for other cities to follow. Sustainability is critical to the survival of Haiti.”

Julie Grimes, Owner Representative of the Doubletree Grand, is serving as the partnership’s chairperson. She has advocated steadfastly for the Miami community to continue its support of Haiti’s reconstruction efforts. “This unimaginable human tragedy unfolding at our doorstep requires an urgent call for action. As Haiti’s closest American neighbor, we must be a voice for the voiceless—to wake up our nation to the horrors of Haiti. America is the richest nation on earth, yet we can barely respond to the cries for help from our desperate neighbors,” says Ms. Grimes.

The targeted area selected for the partnership project is Hinche, the capital of the Central Plateau rural region, an area gravely impacted by the destructive storms. The River Guayamouc overflowed causing severe damage to property and lives with over 750 families losing their homes. World Vision has been operating in this area for several years, but their transformational development interventions efforts have been severely set back by the severe flooding and global food crisis leaving people fighting for survival.

The proposed project is aimed at dealing with the root causes that are preventing community sustainability in Hinche and the surrounding area. Through a holistic model, the vision is to protect families and their livelihoods by stemming the threat of future flooding for the population near the Guayamouc River. The project will include the installation of watershed walls and anti-erosion structures along the river, reforestation, and ongoing World vision holistic interventions around health, education and economic development.

In partnership with World Vision, there are numerous ways for the community to support specific interventions in a devastated rural area. In January 2009, Team World Vision will debut at the ING Miami Marathon. Individuals and groups can sign up through the organization to “Run for Haiti” raising funds and awareness.

“There is a role for everyone in the Miami community to help Haiti rebuild,” said Lisa Torres, World Vision’s area director for South Florida. “The Miami Marathon offers a hands-on way to get involved.”

Operation: Hope for Haiti was created in response to the devastation left after the country was hit by several hurricanes this summer. Over \$70,000 was raised and through a World Vision grant from USAID's Food for Peace program. Each of those dollars was multiplied by three, leveraging donations to more than \$200,000. This 3 to 1 food match is still in effect and gifts can be online at [worldvision.org/FoodforHaiti.com](http://worldvision.org/FoodforHaiti.com).

If you would like to support rebuilding efforts in Haiti:

- **Join Team World Vision:** Run for Haiti at the ING Miami Half or Full Marathon. Proceeds raised by the runners will be directed to Operation Hope for Haiti. Contact [kstearns@worldvision.org](mailto:kstearns@worldvision.org) for more information on how to participate.
- **Sponsor a Child in Haiti:** contact [ramos@worldvision.org](mailto:ramos@worldvision.org) to request your sponsorship packet or a presentation for your company, school or organization.
- **Online:** Make a contribution to [www.firstgiving.com/haitirelief](http://www.firstgiving.com/haitirelief)
- **Mail:** World Vision, Attn: Haiti Relief, 7220 NW 36th Street, Suite 228, Miami, FL 33166. Please make all checks payable to "World Vision."

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**Please contact the Office of the Mayor at (305) 250-5300 for more information or World Vision at (305) 463-0403.**

**Interviews with World Vision staff in Miami about the ongoing relief and rebuilding efforts in Haiti are available by contacting Laura Blank at (646) 245-2496 or [lblank@worldvision.org](mailto:lblank@worldvision.org).**