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PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE

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DIMITRI SOUDAS (Press Secretary to the Prime Minister): So we will take a few questions. We'll start with Craig Oliver, CTV.

REPORTER: Prime Minister, (inaudible) Haiti, the world pays a bit of attention. As soon as it's stabilized, it moves out and Haiti doesn't seem to make very much progress. Can you tell us whether there's any plan post-earthquake in Haiti, particularly because of Canada's significant interest there, and in a sense, tell us why Haiti should not be as centre...as such a centrepiece to Canadian foreign policy as, say, Afghanistan is?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): Well, Haiti is a huge part of Canadian foreign policy. In fact, it is far and away the largest target of Canadian international aid in the hemisphere, the second largest in the world. But Craig, first of all, I think it's important to note, even before this particular earthquake, and obviously the tragic events that have been following, it has been the conviction of the international community that this time we have to go into Haiti and finish the job. The international community has been present in a very big way in Haiti and Canada has been one of the four or five countries leading that effort over the past several years. Based on the experiences in the past, particularly in the 1990s, I think everybody recognizes that to go in, sort of stabilize things for a couple of years and then leave, would be a disastrous approach. The international community is determined not to repeat that. Obviously while the interventions and the scale of development efforts in Haiti were already large, they're going to have to be that much larger in the future, that much more coordinated and that much higher on the international communities agenda. I

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think everyone recognizes that. I had a brief conversation already with the Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon on that subject, and I know other international leaders are speaking about it. Obviously today our efforts will remain on search and rescue and of course the delivery of emergency humanitarian aid next, but a sustained and increased development effort will follow inevitably. I don't know if Minister Oda may want to add some additional comments on the thinking there.

BEV ODA (Minister of International Cooperation): As you know, over the last two years, the international community has been working with the Haitian government on developing its plans, and Canada played a very instrumental role in that, and we will continue to work with the government of Haiti to ensure that we not only reconstruct, but we also ensure that we are going to continue development in a positive way. Our Haiti mission, as far as development, it is our largest mission, development mission in the Americas, our second largest worldwide, and we will of course have to respond accordingly. Haiti is very important internationally in this hemisphere, and particularly to Canadians. So we will be responding accordingly.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Obviously, Craig, if I just add one other thing, the great, one of the great tragedy here is obviously the international community has felt, we felt that in the past couple of years, some progress has been made in Haiti. I'm not going to exaggerate it, but I think important long-term progress had been made. I think it's safe to say that has been virtually wiped out, and we are starting from scratch.

DIMITRI SOUDAS : Nous allons continuer avec Daniel l'Heureux, Radio-Canada.

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JOURNALISTE : Daniel l'Heureux de Radio-Canada. J'ai une question pour Monsieur Cannon à qui je veux demander s'il est au courant qu'un groupe de policiers, pompiers, une centaine devaient partir de Montréal ce matin, et le gouvernement fédéral s'y serait objecté, au grand déplaisir des autorités québécoises. Mais d'abord, à vous Monsieur le Premier ministre, il y a une nouvelle qui...il y a une dépêche qui est sortie hier de la Presse canadienne indiquant la possibilité qu'un groupe de 800 soldats de Valcartier soit dépêché en Haïti. Est-ce que cette option-là est considérée? Est-ce que c'est envisagé d'envoyer un large contingent de militaires canadiens en Haïti?

TR. HON. STEPHEN HARPER : D'abord, je vais répondre aux deux sujets avant de donner la parole à Lawrence. Mais premièrement, nous déployons déjà des forces canadiennes dans les chiffres... aux chiffres considérables. Ça va augmenter dans des journées à venir. J'ai déjà donné au ministre MacKay la possibilité d'augmenter notre...nos déploiements, mais on n'a pas encore pris une décision finale sur les chiffres, et le ministre va avancer ça dans des jours à venir.

Pour la question des policiers, déjà c'est important de dire que des policiers, des policiers canadiens sont déjà sur le terrain en Haïti. Il y a plus de 80, la plupart, évidemment la plupart du Québec, et c'est vraiment possible qu'on aura besoin de plus dans des journées à venir, mais en ce moment pour la livraison des atouts, tout l'aide de tous les (inaudible) en Haïti, ces déploiements sont coordonnés avec les Nations Unies, avec la communauté internationale. Ce n'est pas possible de livrer immédiatement tous les avions à cause de restrictions. La communauté internationale a priorisé ces déploiements, et évidemment ce n'est pas le cas dont vous parlez,

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ce n'est pas dans la première priorité maintenant, et ce n'est pas une décision du gouvernement du Canada. C'est une décision de la communauté internationale de mettre la priorité sur d'autre aide et des autres atouts, mais on apprécie ces offres et on va poursuivre de l'aide additionnelle comme ça dans des journées à venir. Lawrence?

LAWRENCE CANNON (ministre des Affaires étrangères) : Merci Monsieur le Premier ministre. Daniel, plus particulièrement, je dois dire que j'ai communiqué avec le sous-secrétaire Alain Leroy des Nations Unies. Comme vous savez, les Nations Unies comprennent évidemment et supervisent et coordonnent l'ensemble des opérations avec d'ailleurs le gouvernement d'Haïti. Ce que nous devons faire, et avec Monsieur Leroy, je lui ai parlé justement de cette offre très généreuse qui est formulée non seulement par les gens de Montréal, mais aussi de Toronto et d'ailleurs du pays pour venir en aide. Le défi au fait, c'est d'être capable d'arrimer à la fois la demande avec l'offre, et dans ces circonstances-là, cette information-là a été transmise. Ce que nous avons comme information, c'est qu'au moment où ces effectifs-là seront utiles, besoin se fait sentir, à ce moment-là on fera appel, mais comme le Premier ministre a si bien indiqué, c'est une question de gestion, et c'est une question de mieux coordonner et planifier, alors nous ne refusons pas, au contraire nous sommes très, très, très heureux de la générosité d'abord des Canadiens, mais aussi des organismes à travers le pays.

DIMITRI SOUDAS : Continue with...

TR. HON. STEPHEN HARPER : De plus, pour répéter, la capacité de l'aéroport d'accepter des avions sont très limités en comparaison

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aux atouts qui voudraient atteindre ce pays. Et ça, c'est une des réalités très difficiles de cette situation.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: We'll continue with...oh. Continue with Jacques Bourbeau, Global TV.

REPORTER: Prime Minister, you pointed out that the earthquake has destroyed many major government buildings, it's wiped out much of the basic infrastructure, including telephones. One has to assume that this is severely limiting the ability of the Haitian government to function, so I'm wondering what kind of challenge does that pose to the international community as it tries to help Haiti deal with the catastrophe.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: It's obviously...I'll let Lawrence maybe add to this. It's obviously a significant problem. The Haitian government is obviously a critical partner in these efforts. Its ability to function is extremely limited. I can just tell you, I think it was Wednesday when I spoke to President Obama. Obviously one of the first priorities for the international community, and particularly with the American military was to do what they could to try and establish basic communication facilities for senior members of the government. But even there obviously work has been done, but even there, the facilities, the abilities to communicate and even with some basic communications facilities, Jacques, the reality is that buildings in most cases don't exist, there's nowhere to operate out of. So these are extremely limiting factors. Lawrence may want to add to that.

LAWRENCE CANNON: Yes, thank you, Prime Minister. The only thing I would add to that is the comment that Peter Kent has just made in terms of the support that we're seeing from the CARICOM countries, what we're seeing from Jamaica, for instance, that want to be able to

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deploy there, so Canada will be assisting. That's why Peter will be going there. Canada will be assisting Jamaica in its capacity to deliver heavy equipment to the country so that they can indeed set up communications capabilities. It is extremely difficult. It's difficult for us as well here when we receive over 21,000 calls and try to reach back into Haiti to make sure that that juncture, that that junction takes place. So those are the challenges, and we all recognize that we have to be able to shore up the communications as fast as possible.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: Continue with Brian Lilley, Astral Media.

REPORTER: Prime Minister, a quick question for yourself and then a quick question for Minister Kenney. To you, sir, the government's decision to put forward aid money in the terms of matching grants, the UN calling for \$550 million; is there an importance to you in terms of going towards the matching grants and saying to Canadians, "You give a dollar, we'll give a dollar"? And to Minister Kenney, the important announcement you made today, if you've got a sister in Haiti that you want to bring over but you've never made an application, is it too late?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: I'll give a quick answer to that question before going to Minister Kenney. Minister Oda may want to add to what I have to say. We have used, as you know, in some recent cases, we have used this system of matching grants or this approach of matching grants, which has been, we think, extremely effective in identifying and first of all in getting the people of Canada as a whole behind efforts of aid. Obviously the generosity here has been extraordinary, and also helps direct money towards those organizations that are specialized in these kinds of efforts and

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most able to deliver on the ground. So this is an approach we used in the past. It's been very successful, and once again, I think...very successful here. I mean, the generosity of Canadians in this case has just been extraordinary. The numbers are quite impressive. I should maybe mention, you know, the government did announce an expected ceiling to this. I should be clear that that is not a hard and fast ceiling. We will be...we will obviously adapt if the generosity exceeds our wildest expectations, we're prepared for that. But I think it has been an extremely successful approach, and we're very proud. You know, it's always reassuring for the government to be able to help, but to do so knowing that we're doing this with the broad and active support of ordinary Canadians across the country. Now, I should just be clear that no one expects that this emergency assistance being given immediately by the government and also by the government through matching funds, that this is the end of the effort, as Craig asked earlier. The necessity of increased foreign aid to this country over the long haul to be very, very real, and that will be something that obviously we'll be working on with our international partners in the weeks and months to come.

BEV ODA: If I could just add, as you say, as you've said, the government does want to support and recognize the generosity of Canadians. I would just advise all Canadians to ensure that they are making their donations to reputable organization, and those that will...whose funds will be matched are listed on the appropriate websites, if you go to the websites there. I also encourage Canadians, and this is the recognition that dollars are the most effective ways to contribute to the emergency relief efforts that are being made. So we will be monitoring it. We are very encouraged,

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and as we said before, we will always support Canadians in their expression of compassion and their willingness to help those in need.

JASON KENNEY (Minister of Immigration and Citizenship): In terms of family sponsorship, no, it's not too late to make an application. They will be considered on a priority basis. I should re-emphasize that obviously this is based on the normal parameters of the family sponsorship program, so we're talking about close family members. We define that as being spouses, dependent children under the age of 18, parents and grandparents, and adopted children who are being sponsored for adoption. And this of course, the priority treatment will be for those who have been severely and directly affected by the earthquake. We have we estimate about 2000 family sponsorship applications for Haitian nationals by permanent residents from Haiti in Canada, or Canadian citizens of Haitian origin, and so we anticipate there will be a number of new applications, which we will treat on a priority basis. We encourage people out there submitting those applications to probably write "Haiti" on the envelope when they send it in for the application so that we can triage those and treat them quickly.

DIMITRI SOUDAS : On va continuer avec Mallory Beauchemin, La Presse.

JOURNALISTE : Oui, d'abord une précision pour Monsieur le Premier ministre. Allez-vous devoir rappeler la Chambre si les questions d'envoyer davantage de troupes en Haïti? Ensuite une question pour Monsieur Cannon : vous dites que vous êtes à réorienter les efforts du côté plutôt de la réponse humanitaire. Est-ce qu'après plus de 80 heures votre espoir de trouver encore des survivants s'amenuisent?

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TR. HON. STEPHEN HARPER : D'abord, pour la première question, la réponse est non. La politique du gouvernement est d'évidemment d'avoir l'appui du parlement pour des actions dans une guerre ou dans un conflit militaire. Ce n'est pas seulement pour le déploiement des troupes dans une mission...en appui d'une mission humanitaire. Et déjà nous sommes...et même avant ça, nous avons été déployés en Haïti pour des raisons de développement et des raisons humanitaires, et nous n'avons jamais demandé au parlement un tel appui pour ça. Ce n'est pas...c'est un déploiement humanitaire et temporaire, et ce n'est pas une controverse comme une guerre ou comme un conflit militaire. C'est une autre affaire. Mais je devrais dire que j'apprécie les commentaires et les conseils d'aide de certains membres de l'opposition. J'ai parlé à Monsieur Layton et nous apprécions son attitude de l'aide avec la situation.

LAWRENCE CANNON : Au fait, nous gardons toujours l'espoir, mais la réalité, c'est que les efforts de retracer des survivants, comme vous l'avez mentionné, diminuent d'heure en heure. Et dans des étapes très critiques au moment où on se parle, je rappellerai qu'il y a tout près de 23 pays incluant le Canada qui sont sur le terrain et qui contribuent aux efforts de sauvetage, mais il faut constater aussi que tantôt il y a des succès, mais aussi au fur et à mesure que les heures fuient, on risque de changer...la situation, je dois dire, risque de changer considérablement.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: Continue with Juliette O'Neil, CanWest.

REPORTER: Sir, can you explain in English the – over here – the factors that are at play in deciding when and whether to deploy the 800 troops that are on standby, for one thing, and can we have more detail as

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well on the immigration program? How many do you expect to come? How many are already in Canada whose visas will be extended, and how can you possibly have an orderly program given the situation down there and the number of missing Canadians?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Very quickly, Canadian forces are preparing for additional deployment now. I've given Minister MacKay pretty wide latitude in terms of those deployments. Obviously we will continue to talk to our international partners and our own people on the ground, get an assessment of how many people can be deployed effectively, how quickly, and those announcements will be made, as I say, in the not too distant future. In terms of immigration, I'll let Minister Kenney answer those questions. Obviously the accepting of any kind of additional applications, our actual coordination on the ground in Haiti at the moment is extremely difficult, and we're not going to try and fool anyone about that, but we have got people in the queue now, and that is particularly where our emphasis is to facilitate those transitions and particularly facilitate those people who may already, for various reasons, be on Canadian soil, but I'll let Jason answer that in detail.

JASON KENNEY: In terms of that first question, how many Haitians were in Canada, well, according to the last census, there were approximately 65,000 Canadian citizens who indicated Haitian origin. We estimate there's actually a significantly larger number of Canadians of Haitian origin. We had about 2000 applications pending that we've received from Canadian citizens or permanent residents in Canada for family sponsorship. How many do we anticipate? It's hard to make an accurate estimate, but based on special measures of this nature that we implemented in previous natural disasters such as the tsunami and previous earthquakes, based on the

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population of eligible people to make family sponsorship applications, my best guess would be in the range of a few thousand, probably less than 5000 that we would anticipate in terms of new sponsorship applications. And you ask a great question about how can we provide service in Haiti, given the situation. It's very difficult. Most of the paper files for the Immigration Ministry are inaccessible, and we obviously have very...just serious logistical problems there, which is why we're looking at opening a satellite office in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic to provide additional service to Haitian nationals, and of course we have a lot of information in our files, either electronically or paper files here in Canada that we'll be extracting to provide priority treatment.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: We have time for one last question, dernière question, Madeleine Blais-Morin, Radio-Canada.

JOURNALISTE : Oui, ma question était aussi pour le ministre Kenney. Vous dites qu'il y a déjà 2000 applications, formulaires qui sont dans la machine bureaucratique. Généralement ça peut prendre des années traiter de tels formulaires, jusqu'à cinq ans on nous dit. La situation est urgente. Il y a des problèmes logistiques évidents. Ça peut prendre combien de temps pour les familles qui tentent de réunir, justement, de se réunir avec un proche là-bas?

JASON KENNEY : C'est difficile à faire une estimée là-dessus parce qu'à cause des problèmes, des défis logistiques sur le terrain, mais je peux vous donner un exemple. Après les tempêtes aux Philippines l'année dernière, on a introduit les mesures spéciales comme celui-ci, et à la suite duquel on a rapatrié, on a permis l'entrée au Canada des membres des familles parrainées dans un délai de quelques semaines, pas plus de trois mois

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je dirais, en moyen temps. Ça veut dire quand le système marche, quand on a un bureau dans la région qui fonctionne, j'espère on peut traiter des demandes pour le parrainage familial dans une période de quelques semaines ou quelques mois, mais ça prendra pas quelques années comme habituellement, parce qu'à cause de l'accélération et le traitement prioritaire des dossiers que nous avons annoncés aujourd'hui.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: Great, thank you very much everybody. Merci beaucoup.

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