



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop and Primate

April 16, 2009

The Hon. Barack Obama
President of the United States
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the Episcopal Church, I write to thank you for your Administration's decision to devote \$20 million to service the remaining debt payments owed by Haiti to the World Bank and other international lenders. I am proud and pleased that the United States has offered to alleviate this significant obstacle to Haiti's ability to fight the crushing poverty and suffering of its people.

Last fall, I had the opportunity to travel to Haiti, the largest diocese of the U.S.-based Episcopal Church. Like so many other visitors, I was shaken by the magnitude of the human need in a country just hours from our own borders. This need has only grown, as Secretary Clinton noted in her remarks to the Haiti Donor's Conference yesterday, because of the "combined winds of hurricanes and the global-economic recession" over the past year.

At the same time, however, my trip gave me the opportunity to witness a country ripe with the energy and ingenuity needed to escape decades of conflict, corruption, and human suffering. I was pleased to meet with President Preval and hear of his government's plans for a renewed Haiti. I was even more pleased to witness a civil-society sector, most especially our church there, operating amazing social-service programs with the scantest of resources. These programs – particularly in the fields of health, job training, and education – are an example of what can be accomplished in Haiti on a much larger scale if resources are made available.

I am acutely aware that there is no single U.S. policy step that will give Haiti all it needs to meet the challenges it faces. Other actions like the continued strengthening of Haiti's trade sector and the granting of Temporary Protected Status to Haitian refugees remain vitally important, as do key steps toward public transparency that the Haitian government must take in the coming months. Your Administration's decision to assist in paying Haiti's remaining international debt, however, was a critical step toward that nation's healing, and a gesture of compassion and human generosity toward a neighbor in desperate need.

With assurance of my continual prayers for you and all who undertake the costly work of public service, I remain

Your servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katharine Jefferts Schori". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katharine Jefferts Schori

CC: The Secretary of State
The Secretary of the Treasury