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Ricky Martin and Habitat for Humanity International's CEO Jonathan Reckford Travel to Haiti in Support of Habitat's Haitian Recovery Efforts

Habitat for Humanity will help clear debris from home sites, provide shelter kits, and repair and build new houses as part of its recovery plan in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Jan. 19 /PRNewswire/ -- Ricky Martin traveled to Port-au-Prince today with Habitat for Humanity International's CEO Jonathan Reckford to visit one of the earthquake-ravaged neighborhoods in the capital city. Martin was moved by the massive devastation caused by the 7.0-magnitude earthquake that struck last week and just as he did following the Dec. 2004 Asian tsunami, traveled as quickly as possible to the affected region.



(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20050501/NYSU020LOGO>)

"The only words I can think of to describe what I've witnessed here today are that this is a living nightmare. The images that are now in my head will be impossible to erase," said Martin. "Children and families impacted by this disaster will need long-term help restoring their lives, in every sense of the word. Every family is a family in need. I'm asking each of you to think about the future of the children. What they will need to survive after they are properly fed and have received appropriate medical care is a safe and decent home."

The Ricky Martin Foundation (RMF) continues their ongoing partnership with Habitat for Humanity (HFH) by creating the RMF/HFH Haiti Recovery Fund. Both organizations are encouraging supporters to visit www.habitat.org/rmfhaiti to donate now for immediate and long-term efforts in Haiti.

"What we see after a disaster is that families want to return to their homes and begin rebuilding their lives as quickly as possible," said Reckford. "Habitat for Humanity will help as many families as we can in this recovery. We are grateful to Ricky Martin and the Ricky Martin Foundation for their support of Habitat over the years and in this effort. We also are grateful to all of Habitat's partners and supporters who will join us during this critical moment."

Habitat for Humanity's Disaster Response team in Haiti assessed the damage to low-income neighborhoods impacted by the earthquake and will work alongside Habitat for Humanity Haiti in the response and recovery efforts. Habitat for Humanity offers a three-fold response that includes clearing debris from home sites, providing Habitat for Humanity Shelter Kits, and repairing and rebuilding of homes through a transitional housing method.

When families return to their homes from temporary shelters, Habitat will help them remove debris and identify what materials can be reused for rebuilding.

Habitat for Humanity Shelter Kits will be provided that include building materials and tools to make immediate repairs to damaged homes. The kits typically include items such as hammers, nails, buckets, rope, crowbar, a tarp, trowels and handsaws.

Habitat for Humanity will help families repair homes where possible. For homes that are beyond repair, Habitat will help families build new houses that are stronger and more resistant to earthquakes and hurricanes.

"We want to provide the widest range of resources available to get families back into their homes," added Reckford. "We know from previous experience that giving families the tools and working alongside them is the best way to improve their housing conditions after a disaster."

Habitat for Humanity has been at work in Haiti for 26 years and has provided more than 2,000 families with housing solutions through a variety of initiatives including new home construction, progressive building, home repairs and improvements. Habitat also builds capacity in construction skills, disaster mitigation and financial literacy, and works in coordination with community and government agencies.

"I think the last thing any of us wants is for a child to be without a home. Together, we need to protect the children and families displaced by the earthquake in Haiti. Please donate now to the RMF/HFH Haiti fund and help us keep the children safe," added Martin.

Through his ongoing philanthropic endeavors in conjunction with the Ricky Martin Foundation, Martin continues to be one of Habitat for Humanity's most visible supporters. Martin's relationship with the organization began in early 2005, when the Ricky Martin Foundation partnered with Habitat for Humanity to build 224 homes in Thailand in response to the Asian tsunami in Dec. 2004. Martin personally assisted in the building of the home and has said that handing over the keys to the homeowners was one of the most impactful moments of his life.

Martin shared about his first two visits to Thailand on behalf of Habitat for Humanity on the Oprah Winfrey show, as well as at Habitat's Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project in Los Angeles, where he spoke to the assembled Habitat families and volunteers from around the world.

Habitat for Humanity's ability to respond effectively to this disaster will require support from donors, volunteers, corporate partners and other community organizations. Donations to the RMF/HFH Haiti fund can be made at www.habitat.org/rmfhaiti. The Ricky Martin Foundation and Habitat for Humanity want to express their gratitude to Funglode Foundation.

About Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International is an ecumenical Christian ministry that welcomes to its work all people dedicated to the cause of eliminating poverty housing. Since its founding in 1976, Habitat has built, rehabilitated, repaired or improved more than 350,000

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About The Ricky Martin Foundation

The Ricky Martin Foundation advocates for the well being of children around the globe in critical areas such as social justice, education and health. Our flagship program People for Children condemns child exploitation. For additional information, please visit www.rickymartinfoundation.org.

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