

Coordination of Humanitarian Public Information in Haiti

Factsheet and Contact Details

Ensuring coordinated messaging to the media on the humanitarian aid effort in Haiti is crucial. Public information Officers (PIOs) working on humanitarian issues are requested to contact the OCHA Public Information team based at the On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) at the MINUSTAH airbase in Port-au-Prince.

The following mechanisms to support coordination on public information and media relations have been established in Port-au-Prince:

1. Daily joint press briefings to the media at 0900 hours, with rotational inputs from cluster/sector lead agencies at the MINUSTAH cafeteria. It is helpful to invite press contacts to attend these briefings, particularly members of the Haitian media. Cluster lead and partner speakers are also encouraged to attend, to ensure more in-depth updates on humanitarian relief efforts. A list of media contacts is also being maintained and circulated. Speakers meet before press briefings to ensure all are updated with the same figures and other key messages.
2. Public information coordination meetings, chaired by MINUSTAH, are convened immediately after the press briefing each day, and more formally as needed (currently x2 per week; next meeting Friday 22 Jan at 1800 at MINUSTAH VTC). OCHA provides coordination support to humanitarian organizations, with MINUSTAH leading the public information effort, especially regarding coherent messaging. A list of PIOs deployed to Haiti or already in-country is being updated and circulated, as are the latest key messages and final sitreps.
3. Coordination of public information for humanitarian organizations is being led by Amanda Pitt, OCHA: pitta@un.org, +1-917-442-1810, +509-3491-1415, +8816 2143-5477.
4. The Spokesperson for the DSRSG/RC/HC/OCHA is Nicholas Reader: reader@un.org, +1-646-752-3117, +8816-3145-7576. All interview opportunities for the DSRSG/RC/HC/OCHA should be coordinated through Nicholas Reader, whether originating inside or outside Haiti.
5. Coordination of information and messaging to the affected population and with CDAC (Internews and ThomsonReuters Alertnet) is Kristen Knutson: Knutson@un.org, +1-646-785-0415. She is coordinating with clusters on content for radio broadcasts (MINUSTAH and local radio stations) and seeking speakers on technical issues in French and Creole.

Contacts:

PI coordination in Port-au-Prince

Amanda Pitt
Tel: + 1 917 442 1810
Email: pitta@un.org

Spokesperson for the DSRSG/RC/HC

Nicholas Reader
Tel: +1 646 752 3117
Email: reader@un.org

OCHA Spokesperson (New York)

Stephanie Bunker
Tel: +1 917 367 5126
Email: bunker@un.org

OCHA Spokesperson (Geneva)

Elisabeth Byrs
Tel: +41 22 917 26 53
Email: byrs@un.org

Communications for Disaster-Affected Populations (CDAC) in Haiti Fact and Contact Sheet

CDAC's central objective is that its members provide a coordinated service to enable humanitarian operations to get life-saving information to populations and to channel their voices back to the providers of assistance.

On 13 January, the day after the Haiti earthquake, an emergency meeting of the CDAC Steering Committee¹ set up the CDAC Haiti Operations Group. Internews, which already had a project in Haiti, immediately deployed staff, as did the ThomsonReuters Foundation, with their Emergency Information Service (EIS) - a system to get information to and from disaster survivors by text message. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) took on responsibility for coordination among members at the global level and charged Internews with coordinating group members in the field. OCHA is now also working closely at the field level to provide coordination support for this work.

So far, CDAC organizations have:

- Helped search-and-rescue teams identify survivors trapped beneath the rubble through text messaging.
- Used text messaging to direct survivors to hospitals with capacity.
- Promoted the ICRC reunification service and locations of working internet cafés where survivors can access the ICRC website, including collecting data from audiences to locate cafes.
- Undertaken a quick assessment of local media and audience access to information.
- Secured the Minister of Information's support for the work of the CDAC group.
- Brought others working in this area, including the UN mission radio station MINUSTAH FM, into the coordination mechanism.
- Begun liaising with the humanitarian operation through the cluster system.
- Set up a joint mechanism whereby aid agencies can feed ideas for content and key messages to all CDAC members.

- Internews is producing a daily humanitarian radio show in Creole called *Nouvelles Utiles* (News You Can Use) to be broadcast across as many existing radio stations as possible. It is produced by a local Haitian team alongside local television and print operations to ensure they can use the content in their own work. This work is being developed and coordinated with UN MINUSTAH radio.
- BBC and Radio France international are collaborating on emergency broadcasts in Creole to Haiti, and will have access to information developed by CDAC coordinators.
- EIS is using SMS to transmit information about aid and collect data from populations using a dedicated shortcode 4636. Survivors wishing to use this service within Haiti can simply text this number to subscribe. The service is free.
- The need for distribution of wind-up radios is currently being assessed.
- Please check our NING site for regular updates at: <http://crisescomm.ning.com/>

Contacts:

Imogen Wall
OCHA Geneva
Switzerland
Tel + 41 22 917 4694
Mob +44 7932 973 551
Email: wall@un.org

Kristen Knutson
OCHA
Port-au-Prince
Haiti
Tel: +1-646-785-0415
Email: Knutson@un.org

CDAC Humanitarian Liaison
Jacobico Quintanilla
Internews
Sat: +881631673312
Tel: +34617259600
Email: jquintanilla@internews.org

¹ Current members of the CDAC Steering Committee are British Red Cross, BBC World Service Trust, Internews, Irish Red Cross, Save the Children Alliance, ThomsonReuters Foundation and OCHA. A wider working group of some 40 NGOs is active and has subscribed to the CDAC vision statement, which is to save lives, reduce vulnerability and maintain dignity amongst communities affected by disaster, by promoting and adequately resourcing effective communications between those communities and those who aim to assist them.