



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

As delivered

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**Opening remarks to High-Level Meeting on
Durable solutions to displacement in urban settings: the case of Haiti
New York, Friday, 24 October 2014**

Welcome and thank you for being here today to talk about durable solutions for the people of Haiti.

Since the devastating earthquake in 2010, Haitians have seen considerable progress. Nearly all of the 10 million cubic meters of rubble that buried Port-au-Prince has been cleared. More than 94 percent of the almost 1.5 million people left homeless have moved out of camps to more permanent housing. In the last decade, Haiti has registered important advances on maternal mortality and access to primary education.

However, Haiti is still fragile, and is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to natural disasters including hurricanes, landslides, drought, flooding and heavy winds. Nearly 60 per cent of Haitians live below the poverty line; half the population have no access to healthcare; a third have no access to safe water, and only a quarter of Haiti's people have access to improved sanitation. This year, 800,000 Haitians will need humanitarian aid.

The majority of people who have left the camps are still not enjoying the standard of living they had before 2010, and most of them still consider themselves to be displaced. Conditions in the camps have deteriorated rapidly, and there are worrying reports on health, nutrition and access to water and sanitation. Prolonged displacement has very serious physical and emotional effects, particularly on women, who may feel excluded from society, and on children, who may be unable to get the education they need.

Haiti is now at a point where traditional humanitarian assistance is at its limit, and sustainable long-term solutions are needed to meet people's needs and support their right to a more secure future.

Humanitarian agencies must increase our engagement and collaboration with development partners. If we fail to work together to build resilience in communities, we risk losing all the gains we have made over the past decade next time there is a major disaster.

Today we are here together with the Government of Haiti, our development partners, NGOs and the Red Cross, and I would like to ask for your concrete suggestions on how

we can address the needs of the most vulnerable Haitians, particularly those living in urban areas.

The international community has been generous to Haiti, and we count on that generosity continuing into the next phase.

Thank you again for your commitment and engagement, and I look forward to our discussions today.