

Dick Lugar

U.S. Senator for Indiana

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Administration should include education assistance in supplemental funding request for Haiti, Lugar says

Getting Haitian children back in classrooms should be a priority in U.S. assistance to Haiti, U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar said today after attending the White House Rose Garden ceremony with President Barack Obama hosting Haitian President René Préval. Earlier in the day, former President Bill Clinton also told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that this should be a priority.

“As the Administration prepares to present its supplemental appropriations request for Haiti, a top priority for recovery and long term reconstruction efforts in Haiti should include significant assistance to get Haitian children quickly back into the classroom,” Lugar said. “Assistance for infrastructure, technical assistance for instruction and curriculum development especially should be included. Only with a strong education initiative will Haiti have a chance at a better future.”

Lugar directed two staff members to accompany a Congressional Delegation to Haiti on Friday, March 5. During the visit, staff saw firsthand the devastation experienced by Haitians and reported to Lugar that thousands of schools in and around Port au Prince could remain closed for months or never reopen. As a result, Haitian children could be left languishing in refugee camps. Before the January 12 earthquake approximately one-half of Haiti’s school-age children were enrolled in classes. Children make up about 45 percent of Haiti’s population.

“The relationship between the United States and the Haitian government should be a consensual, cooperative arrangement that preserves Haitian participation in decisions, while ensuring that the resources and expertise of the United States Government and international community are brought to bear on the daily problems of Haiti. Education of the Haiti’s youth is an appropriate starting point,” Lugar said.

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