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January 22, 2010

NOTE FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM: G/TIP – Luis CdeBaca

SUBJECT: Child Trafficking in Haiti

G/TIP is gravely concerned about the potential for human trafficking (TIP) in the wake of the earthquake, both as a result of the displacement of the population and the influx of troops and aid workers. Even before the earthquake, there were in Haiti up to 300,000 *restaveks* (children given away or sold by their parents and enslaved as domestic servants), as well as reports that members of MINUSTAH used trafficked women in prostitution. In the 2009 TIP Report Haiti was classified as a Special Case country with governance so dysfunctional it could not be ranked.

The initial disaster response is focusing on immediate needs of food, shelter, and medical care, but has thus far not addressed TIP prevention and protection issues. While attention is being paid to the problems of orphans and adoptees, TIP was not adequately addressed in the UN's initial flash appeal, so it is unclear which agency in the international system has the lead on the ground. UNICEF has the child protection lead, UNFPA leads prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, and IOM is tasked with shelter and camp management. We will work to remedy, in a subsequent appeal, the omission of TIP from the operational plan.

We are moving to redirect \$1 million of program funds that G/TIP has on Hispaniola and to reprogram an additional \$550,000; we will work with PRM to identify other funding possibilities. Working through existing grantees and other experienced NGOs, it is our intention to help resuscitate police child protection brigades that already exist in Haiti, to rebuild capacity of Haitian organizations that protect *restaveks*, to prevent traffickers in the Dominican Republic from enslaving displaced Haitians on farms and in prostitution, and to educate Haitian parents of the risks of giving their children away in this time of crisis. We will consult with partner agencies to ensure that the U.S. presence does not contribute to trafficking. It will be important for the Department's messaging to convey our commitment to fighting human trafficking in both the immediate and long term.

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