

HAITI'S CHILDREN BEST SERVED BY CARE, NOT REMOVAL

SAN DIEGO, February 3, 2010 – Concerned United Birthparents (CUB) urges the governments of Haiti and the U.S. to stand strong against suggestions that the best way to help Haiti's children is by removing them from their families, culture and homeland.

A national non-profit of birthparents, adoptees and adoptive parents, CUB shares the world's concern for Haiti's most vulnerable in the wake of the devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010. But the 33-year-old non-profit says it has a unique understanding of how important it is to reject quick-fix solutions when it comes to a child's life, especially in its time of greatest need.

“Years of working with family members who were separated by adoption have taught us that good intentions are not enough,” said CUB president Mary Lou Cullen. “The hasty transfer of traumatized children, many with family status unknown, to foreign shelters, foster care or adoption agencies, should not be tolerated. Haiti's devastation should not be compounded by anything that inadvertently, or intentionally, contributes to the risk of family separation for any purpose.”

As the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) and its partners – including the Haitian Government and the Red Cross – establish safe spaces for the hundreds of thousands of children separated from their families before and after the earthquake, and begin to register all unaccompanied minors, CUB urges the governments of the U.S. and Haiti to halt any further airlifts of children or any new adoptions.

In addition, CUB urges that any groups with clear or potential conflicts of interest – such as adoption agencies and ministries – be removed from the decision-making process about how best to serve Haiti's children. Humanitarian policies should be applied on a case-by-case basis for those children whose legal adoption had already been approved, and were in the process of being adopted, with the support of the latest and best practices in the field. “But,” Cullen says, “all other pending adoptions should be immediately suspended.”

Haitians living in the U.S. should get help to locate their youngest relatives on the island, and the transfer of any children with documented parents or family members in the U.S. should be expedited, for temporary or permanent placement.

The recent arrest of an Idaho church group for transporting 33 Haitian children across Haiti's border – without papers or approval – has drawn the world's attention to what can happen when well-meaning but ill-informed forces swoop in to “help.”

MORE ABOUT CUB: Through a network of regional groups and an annual conference, CUB provides mutual support for the ongoing challenges of adoption – resources, referrals and a strong network – and works to educate the public about adoption issues and realities. It also assists adoption-separated relatives searching for family members,

opposes unnecessary family separations and supports adoption reform in law and social policy.

For more information or to arrange an interview with a CUB representative, please contact Eileen Drennen at 800-822-2777, ext. 81, or send an email to vpmedia@cubirthparents.org.
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