

April 27, 2021

Antony J. Blinken
U.S. Secretary of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

Recent violent protests in Port-au-Prince underscore the Haitian people's acute frustration with weak democratic governance, systemic corruption and the severe poverty that results from the avarice of government officials. The most glaring example of this malfeasance was seen in the PetroCaribe scandal in which an estimated \$2 billion was misappropriated. Indeed, in Transparency International's most recent Corruption Perception Index, Haiti scored just 18 out of a possible 100, making it one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Given the Biden administration's stated foreign policy goal of addressing the "Achilles' heel" of corruption around the globe, an array of anti-corruption, transparency and human rights organizations believe the United States must assist the Haitian government in developing critically important anti-corruption measures.

Within a larger strategy to support democratic governance in Haiti, we call on the Biden administration to play a convening role by establishing a "Haiti Cooperation Group" (HCG) which would bring together multilateral institutions, donor countries and like-minded governments in the region. The Group would work with political leaders in Haiti's Parliament, among others, to help create processes, legislation and regulations to foster transparency, oversight and accountability in government contracts, elections and government operations. Members could include Brazil, Canada, CARICOM, Chile, Colombia, European Union, France, Germany, the Inter-American Development Bank, Japan, Mexico, Norway, the OAS, Spain and Sweden.

In addition, the HCG should, in conjunction with the United Nations and the government of Haiti, support the creation of an autonomous anti-corruption investigation and prosecution body modeled on the Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Guatemala (CICIG). The fundamental mission of this organization, to be called the Commission Internationale Contre l'Impunité en Haiti (International Commission Against Impunity in Haiti), would be to root out grand corruption in government ministries. It is imperative that the impunity enjoyed by government officials for many years is no longer tolerated.

Moreover, to address petty corruption within the police force and in government agencies that provide services to citizens, the HCG should work with the government of Haiti to establish an Anti-Corruption Commission comprised of, and in consultation with, government, business, civil society and religious leaders. This Commission would investigate and adjudicate grievances from citizens seeking redress from the chronic low-level corruption that impinges their daily lives.

In the past, the Haitian government has demonstrated the political will to address corruption as was seen in their ratification of the United Nations Declaration Against Corruption and Bribery in International Commercial Transactions, the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. By convening the Haiti Cooperation Group and facilitating discussions aimed at implementing good governance systems, the United States would be instrumental in creating robust institutions and a renewed credibility in the government. A new statutory and regulatory framework of transparency in Haiti would bolster efforts to fight corruption at all levels of government, would empower civil society and would foster a stable U.S. ally in the region.

We hope the administration takes this opportunity to assist Haiti in strengthening its democracy.

Sincerely,

Academics Stand Against Poverty
Coalition for Integrity
EG Justice
Friends of Angola
Global Financial Integrity
Government Accountability Project
Haitian Center for Socio Economic Policy
Instituto de Desarrollo de la Economía Asociativa (IDEAC) de República Dominicana
International Anti-Corruption Resource Center
Jubilee USA Network
Missionary Oblates
New Rules for Global Finance
Our Lady Queen of Peace Haiti Ministry
Transparency International (U.S. Office)
Women Alliance of Miami-Dade & Broward, Inc.

CC: Senator Robert Menendez
Senator James Risch
Senator Timothy Kaine
Senator Marco Rubio
Senator Patrick Leahy
Senator Ben Cardin
Representative James Clyburn
Representative Tomasz Malinowski
Representative Hakeem Jeffries
Representative Michael Waltz
Representative Gregory Meeks
Representative Michael McCaul
Representative Albio Sires
Representative Mark Green
Representative Yvette Clarke
U.S. Ambassador to Haiti Michele Sison

For contact purposes:

Tom Cardamone
President & CEO
Global Financial Integrity
Washington, DC 20036
tcardamone@gfintegrity.org