

## **OPERATION BLESSING INTERNATIONAL PREPARING FOR HURRICANE STRIKE IN HAITI**

### **With 1 Million People Still Living In Tents, Plus Current Cholera Outbreak, Storm Has Potential To Be Extremely Devastating, Says Bill Horan**

**Port au Prince, Haiti (November 2, 2010)** – Operation Blessing International (OBI) is preparing for a possible hurricane strike later this week as Tomas spins nearer to the island nation. Current National Hurricane Center predictions show the storm intensifying as it passes southeast of Jamaica and then turns north directly towards Haiti later this week.

Bill Horan, president of Operation Blessing International, says, “If Tomas strikes Haiti as a major hurricane, this has the potential to be one of the biggest disasters in recent memory. There are over one million vulnerable people living in tents, and there’s also an outbreak of cholera - which would only escalate as torrential rains cause flooding, spread disease and contaminate drinking water. It’s unfathomable to think what might happen.”

To prepare for this storm, Operation Blessing International has mobilized its disaster relief team in Haiti. Today, David Darg, international disaster relief director for the charity, readied a WMI water purification plant for deployment on a truck so that it can be sent to the hardest hit area within hours of the storm. The unit is able to produce up to 10,000 gallons of clean drinking water each day. OBI currently operates 33 WMI purification units in and around Port-au-Prince as well as in areas hit by recent cholera outbreak.

The team also prepared a number of portable family-sized water purifiers and other supplies including tarps and non-perishable food. Depending on the path of the storm, the team will be staged in either Port au Prince or Jacmel.

OBI is also continuing its efforts to combat the cholera outbreak. One of the first responders in the St. Marc region, the team has deployed five WMI water purification plants including three in remote villages that were using the contaminated river for drinking water, one unit that was flown by a UN helicopter to another remote village last Thursday, and one installed yesterday in St Marc’s central hospital at the request of Partners In Health, who is managing the outbreak on behalf of the Haiti Ministry of Health. OBI has also distributed dozens of Lifesaver Jerry cans in the area.

For more information on OBI humanitarian efforts in Haiti or around the world, please log on to [www.ob.org](http://www.ob.org).

#### **ABOUT OPERATION BLESSING INTERNATIONAL:**

Operation Blessing International (OBI) is one of the largest charities in America, providing strategic disaster relief, medical aid, hunger relief, clean water and community development in 23 countries around the world on a daily basis. In 2009, OBI was awarded Charity Navigator’s coveted 4 star rating for sound fiscal management for the

fifth year in a row, a feat that only 4% of rated charities have ever achieved. Forbes, which currently ranks OBI as one of "America's Most Efficient Charities," awarded OBI a perfect 100% rating in fundraising efficiency and 99% efficiency in charitable commitment. Additionally, the Chronicle of Philanthropy currently ranks OBI as the 23rd largest charity and the 6th largest international charity. Founded in 1978, Operation Blessing International has touched the lives of more than 235 million people in more than 105 countries and 50 states, providing goods and services valued at over \$2.7 billion to date.

OBI has been working in Haiti on HIV/AIDs initiatives for more than 5 years. During 2009, OBI expanded their efforts in Haiti to also focus on projects with Partners in Health (PIH) and the Haiti Ministry of Health. Those efforts include providing potable water systems for PIH hospitals, launching a nationwide anti-parasite initiative to treat all school-age children and partnering in an innovative microenterprise fish farm project to help some of Haiti's most impoverished families.

When the 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck in Haiti, OBI mobilized its international disaster relief teams and provided emergency aid to tens of thousands of Haitians in the most devastated areas. Included in the relief efforts, OBI donated over 120 tons of medicine to the Haitian Ministry of Health, ran a medical clinic inside the Sylvio Cator Soccer Stadium where displaced people had set up a camp, and deployed over 30 water purification plants throughout Port-au-Prince – including in National Stadium and in General Hospital, the largest hospital in Haiti. In the first month of the disaster, OBI distributed 1702 pallets of emergency supplies, food, water and medication with total weight of 2,416,559 lbs (1208 tons). OBI's ongoing efforts include support of numerous schools, orphanages and tent camps with food, water and relief supplies, in addition to establishing Zanmi Beni, a home for disabled orphans and abandoned children in partnership with Zanmi Lasante (PIH).

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