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From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
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FYI

From: Simon, Jennifer J
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To: Curtis, Meghann A
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IRL said nice things about the UN, Cheryl, and you --

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. Ros-Lehtinen) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my longstanding commitment to assist the Haitian people in their pursuit of a stable, prosperous and democratic future.

During my trip to Haiti, I was reminded of the tremendous challenges facing this island nation. The U.N.'s appointment of President Clinton as special envoy to Haiti has helped to keep a much-needed spotlight on Haiti. President Clinton's appointment of Dr. Paul Farmer as the Deputy U.N. Special Envoy for Haiti, adds an invaluable wealth of experience and knowledge to the U.N.'s work in Haiti.

As a founder of Partners in Health and the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti, Dr. Farmer has demonstrated a selfless commitment to the advancement of health and democracy in Haiti for the past 20 years. I have witnessed firsthand Dr. Farmer's dedication to helping improve the lives of those in need.

He has strong south Florida ties. I am proud to call him a friend, along with our mutual friend, Jennie Block, who has also worked so hard on issues of concern to the Haitian community.

I understand that the conference on the Inter-American Development Bank in Haiti went quite well. I was pleased to see that the United Nations voted unanimously this week to extend the authorization for the U.N. Mission in Haiti for another year.

I would also like to take a moment to express my condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in last weekend's plane crash during a U.N. mission. The U.N. mission in Haiti has helped to play an important role in bringing security and stability to some of the most dangerous neighborhoods in Haiti. I continue to support its mission and the many men and women from around the world who work to carry it out.

However, it seems that Haiti just can't get to the next step. From assistance to debt relief, from trade benefits to hurricane recovery, U.S. policy toward Haiti has run the gamut, but it is not achieving the long-term goals that we had hoped for for the Haitian people and that the Haitian people want for themselves and their nation.

I am pleased to know that our State Department is taking a closer look at some of the challenges we are facing in Haiti. Last week, Secretary Clinton's chief of staff and her point person on Haiti briefed Members on some of the initial findings of this review.

I am confident that this review will help us to better understand how U.S. assistance to Haiti can be better targeted and supportive of Haiti's own plans and goals; how assistance within the donor community can be better coordinated; how the U.S. can better engage the Haitian Diaspora in our assistance efforts; and, finally, how the U.S. can finally make our assistance sustainable so that outside efforts can ultimately be transferred into the hands of the Haitian government and its people.

It is crucial that the efforts made by the U.S., the U.N. and others are effectively coordinated to ensure maximum efficiency and maximum benefit for the people of Haiti. Innovative microcredit and microenterprise programs would help to empower individuals, create self-reliance and create sustainability at the grassroots level. We should also look at the very small-scale renewable energy programs for impoverished rural villages and settlements that are not served by electric grids.

One of the immediate ways we can help the people of Haiti would be to grant temporary protected status to the Haitians currently living in the U.S. Granting TPS to Haitians is the missing piece of a successful U.S. approach to supporting the people of Haiti in the short and long term. I will continue to work with my colleagues to encourage the administration to take this important step.

In addition, I will continue to support Haiti's inclusion in security initiatives, such as the Merida Initiative, to ensure that the U.S. is doing all we can to help President Preval in his efforts against the narcotraffickers.

Success in Haiti is in the U.S. national security interest, and we must work together to help address the many challenges we face and that our Caribbean neighbor faces day in and day out.