Dear Friends,

As we mark the 6-month anniversary of the magnitude 7.2 earthquake which struck Haiti’s southwestern region on August 14, 2022, we now know the full magnitude of the destruction. In total, more than 83,000 homes were damaged, and 54,000 homes were destroyed. Unfortunately, many homes in the region are built with large openings on the ground floor, little or no reinforcements, and are made from low-quality materials. They often suffer serious damage in earthquakes, and, as we saw for far too many families in August, they can collapse entirely.

Our organization, which has worked in Haiti since 1984, has a strong, ongoing presence in the region impacted most by the earthquake. We have partnered with over 300 families in the region to provide them with safe, decent, and affordable housing and are thrilled to report that 98% of their homes suffered no major damage during the earthquake. For those who homes were destroyed, Habitat was ready to respond. In coordination with government and humanitarian agencies, we have continued to provide emergency assistance for the most vulnerable families. We are pleased to share an update on our response and share the stories of the lives you have helped impact. As we look forward, I know you will join me in praying for Haiti and for our colleagues who will continue to uphold Habitat’s mission of ensuring everyone has a decent place to live. Thank you again for your support.

In partnership,
Jean Frenel Tham
National Director
Habitat for Humanity Haiti
SITUATION REPORT

On August 14th at 8:29 am local time, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck the southwestern coast of Haiti causing large-scale damage across the country’s southern peninsula. The Haitian Civil Protection Agency reported that the death toll surpassed 2,246 with more than 12,763 individuals injured. According to government figures corroborated by the country shelter group in which Habitat for Humanity participates, over 54,000 homes were destroyed and more than 83,000 sustained damage. Additionally, many public buildings, schools, and churches suffered significant damage or were destroyed. As a result, some 690,000 people – 45% of the area’s entire population of 1.6 million — have been left in need of shelter assistance.

Indeed, when the earthquake occurred, the southwest region of Haiti was still languishing under the devastating impacts of Hurricane Matthew in October 2016, which affected more than 200,000 homes and caused more than $856.28 million USD in damage and losses. The cycle of disasters, including earthquakes and hurricanes, has had a significant impact on the basic needs of households in this region, specifically shelter and non-food items, with many homes destroyed and essential items either abandoned or stolen.

HABITAT’S RESPONSE

On August 15, one day after the earthquake, the Habitat construction team living in the affected communities were already on the ground in the communes of Pestel, Corail, Beaumont, and L’asile to visit families, meet local authorities and assess the extent of the damages caused by the earthquake. Above all, they sought to provide support to those affected and identify their most urgent needs. A week later, the Haiti national office deployed a team of 12 additional staff to extend the coverage to other localities affected by the earthquake. Rapid assessments indicated that the priority needs were food, shelter material, income generation and basic items, including sleeping materials.
Housing Assessment

In September 2021, seven Habitat engineers trained in building assessment techniques began partnering with the Ministry of Public Works, Transport, and Communication to assess the buildings of public service providers (health centers, school, churches, community centers, etc.) to ensure the safety of the community members who will be entering those buildings for services. The engineers jointly evaluated and then "tagged" the public buildings using a color-coded system (Green = safe, Yellow = inhabit after repairs, Red = unsafe for occupancy.) These assessments will facilitate the reconstruction work that will be undertaken in the south of Haiti as the service providers, the building owners, the government, and civil society members will know exactly what type of work needs to be undertaken for each building.

Shelter Kits

In close coordination with the government and local communities, Habitat initially distributed hygiene kits containing soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, masks, towels, and other items. This was followed by several distributions of shelter kits, 797 kits in collaboration with Start Fund and 1,990 kits in partnership with ShelterBox. ShelterBox provided technical support and training in how families could best use the kits, which contained tarps, tools and fixings, thermal blankets, solar lights, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, mosquito nets and water carriers. Habitat collaborated with the government and local communities to identify families and lead distributions. In all, Habitat supported more than 13,935 people in the scope of the emergency response to help Haitians households affected by the devastating earthquake.
CASH DISTRIBUTION

In addition to shelter, the families had enormous needs, including access to food, household items, clothing, health care services, and education as well as support to restart income generating activities. Therefore, Habitat also responded by implementing a cash distribution to the most vulnerable families. Habitat’s cash distribution program included conditional cash transfers and unconditional cash transfers. The conditional cash program employed over 160 youth from the targeted communities to train and assist the families in the assembly of the shelter kits, including the removal of the debris or rubble. Under the unconditional cash transfers, Habitat distributed 300,000 USD to 2,000 households. The households each received a one-time transfer of US$ 150 to enable them to meet basic needs and access essential services, as well as enable them to extend their assets through the purchase of household items and livestock. A survey found that most households used the cash received to address the following needs: labor to assist with rubble clearance, skilled labor for repairs, purchase of construction material, and food.

Ivania (bottom right) used it to pay for important school fees. Ivania told us when she received her cash transfer, it was like a gift from God that came at the exact right moment. Her eldest daughter had been studying accounting and was set to graduate, but she didn’t have enough money to pay for the necessary fees. As they were wondering how they would come up with the money, she found out that a cash distribution was being made to all the people who had received kits. She felt incredibly grateful to be able to help her daughter further her education and be able to provide a better life for herself. She also put a bit of money aside to buy food and chickens, which she raises on her property and uses to sell eggs.
JOSETTE’S STORY

Josette is the sole caretaker for her husband, Sidéron, and her mother, Janise. Both individuals live with disabilities that leave them dependent on her for even the most basic needs. When the earthquake struck on August 14, the family initially experienced a moment of terror. “On the day of the earthquake, my mother and I were outside, but my husband was lying in bed and rocks fell on top of him.” Thankfully, help was nearby, and the family all survived. “We’re lucky my son who lives in Les Cayes wasn’t far away and was able to come help us and pull him out. If not, he may have died. His bed was destroyed in the end,” Josette told us.
Through Habitat’s partnership with ShelterBox, Josette and her family received a shelter kit, which contained essential items, including tarps, tools and fixings, thermal blankets, solar lights, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, mosquito nets and water carriers. “When I was chosen to receive the kit, it helped me a lot. Everything in the kit was useful to me, the kitchen items, the lamp, and the tarpaulin! There’s some rot in that part of the ceiling, I was able to tie some tarp underneath it to catch the water and keep the inside dry.” She also used the jug to keep the rainwater that they’ve collected and additional tarp to help section off parts of the house into separate rooms. The solar lamp has been especially useful to them at night, as she uses it inside their house in the evenings to be able to get around. With the lack of electricity in the region, the alternative prior to this was to constantly purchase batteries to power a small lamp.

Josette also received a cash donation of $150, which she used to buy medicine for her husband who had fallen ill and purchase sheep. Livestock is essential for families in the region who rely on these animals for food and income. She jokes that the livestock is a souvenir from Habitat. She prays every day that Habitat and Shelterbox will be able to help even more people as they have helped her. As the only caretaker for her husband and mother, Josette tells us that this kit and the cash that came with it were a godsend and helped her get through the holidays and end of the year.

**THANK YOU**

Through your support, Habitat will continue to serve families affected by the 2021 earthquake. This work was made possible by leveraging funding from our generous donors. We are grateful for you.