

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 27, 2004

Mr. Andrew S. Natsios
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
130 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20523

Dear Mr. Natsios:

I write today in the aftermath of catastrophic flooding that tragically ended the lives of hundreds of Dominicans and Haitians this week, urging the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide all necessary disaster relief assistance required to meet both the immediate and long term needs of the victims of this horrific disaster. The \$50,000 in funds that USAID has agreed to provide to assist in the response efforts is a start, but more is needed.

Furthermore, I ask that USAID act immediately to assess the level of assistance that will be required and to work with the governments of the Dominican Republic and Haiti to ensure that all funds are transmitted in an effective and accountable manner that will benefit the victims of this disastrous event.

Torrential downpours and constant flooding along the border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, have caused the deaths of roughly 1,950 people and have forced the evacuation of more than 13,000 people. Hardest hit were the Dominican town of Jimani and the Haitian town of Mapou. These floods represent some of the deadliest in the past decade since Tropical Storm Gordon killed at least 829 Haitians and follow in the wake of a deadly flood that killed nearly 30 people in St. Marc, Haiti this past September.

It is imperative that USAID moves quickly to ease the pain and suffering of those who have been adversely affected by this terrible disaster.

I look forward to hearing back from you shortly on this urgent situation.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate