

Lillian Boyce, local Haitians send two plane loads of relief items to earthquake victims

By Vivian Tyson

Two truck loads of relief supplies raised from people of the Turks and Caicos Islands and spearheaded by former Deputy Premier and Minister of Government, Lillian Boyce, and the top brass from the local Haitian Community, were shipped to that impoverished nation on Thursday, January 28.

Aside from the non-perishable foods, the supplies including bed linens, toiletries and clothes. It took Air Turks and Caicos two trips to deliver the items. Air Turks and Caicos provide regular scheduled flights to that country.

The relief campaign was launched immediately following the monster 7.0 quake, which ravaged the country's signal of authority – its capital Port au Prince - on January 12. Hours after the earthquake, Mrs. Boyce, the President of Airport Hotel and Turks and Caicos National Car Rental, organized a meeting of Haitians living in the Turks and Caicos Islands at her private office in the Airport Plaza, and coordinated the relief effort. Scores of Haitians responded with enthusiasm.

Speaking during a media conference at the Provo Air Centre, Mrs. Boyce said: “The first two flights of goods will be taken over to Haiti that you, the people of Providenciales, have so generously given to us. We are continuing our efforts to this worthy cause, and we thank those who dropped off goods at all our locations. May God bless you, and may He continue to bless you and those people in Haiti, who need far more things than the six loads of stuff that we have collected.”

She told media representatives that supplies continue to come in for the people of Haiti through the generosity of the Turks and Caicos Islands people, as her group received a container of beds, and would make provisions to have it shipped to Haiti in the coming days.

“And so, I am calling on the corporate citizens who want to sponsor these flights to please, give generously, because your monies are going to good cause. The Haitian people are our brothers and sisters. I have always loved them and I will do anything in continuing to help them, because they are God's creation, just like us, and we are living together here on earth. Please give, because you will get your blessings back in ten fold,” Mrs. Boyce said.

For his part, Pastor Morency Solomon, of the Abundant Life Example of Christ Church, said he was thankful to all Turks and Caicos Islanders and Haitians who rallied for the cause. He said after Mrs. Boyce called him and told him that something would have to be done to raise funds for Haiti, he responded with alacrity.

He said Radio Creole played a great part in rallying local Haitians to respond to the cause.

Instead of Port au Prince, Pastor Solomon said the relief supplies would be sent to that country's second city, Cap Haitien, since they were experiencing difficulties in getting them the epicenter of need.

“The reason we are sending them to Cap Haitien is that we don't have the opportunity to send to Port au Prince, and firstly, we would like for the things to reach to those people, who need them,” he said.

He said telecoms company – LIME – played a key role in having the items shipped to Haiti, as Country Manager, Drexwell Seymour, quickly forked out \$2,000 to pay for the flight, while Air Turks and Caicos significantly reduced the cost to carry the cargo. He noted also that United Baptist and All Saints Mission Church supported the effort.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Simone Been, Vice President in charge of Customer Service at LIME, remarked that the donation served as a gesture that her company was at one with the people of Haiti in the wake of the disaster. She said the earthquake touch not only Haitians living in Haiti and its diaspora, but every nationality also.

I don't think anywhere in the world has been untouched by the earthquake and the devastation that they have suffered. And it is such a pleasure for LIME to assist the national here, as well as those in Haiti, in their relief efforts, and also to help them find some sort of normalcy to life.

We are all human beings. We are women, we are men, and we have children. And so, we feel the pain that they are suffering with, and we just want to encourage other corporations and other citizens within the Turks and Caicos, regardless of their nationality, to continue to give to the Haitian people,” Been noted.

She also cautioned donors against giving items to organizations that are not reputable. New corporations covering the earthquake in Haiti have claimed that a number of so called humanitarian organizations have emerged from the woodworks seeking assistance in giving to Haiti, but many of them turned out to be fraudsters seeking the gain from the disaster.

“Make sure that it is going to established groups, like those headed by Pastor Solomon, other churches and the Red Cross. We want to ensure that the offerings that we are giving are reaching the people that are truly in need,” Been said.

Other individuals that spoke at the event were Donald Mettelus, who is the representative of the Haitian Government in the TCI; Pastor Alces Dor and