



Haiti earthquake:

Habitat for Humanity
begins emergency response,
readies recovery plan

OUR GOALS IN HAITI ARE TO SUPPORT:

11,700

people with emergency shelter kits and solutions.

8,100

people through water, sanitation and hygiene interventions and COVID-19 prevention measures.

3,000-5,000

people with unconditional cash to cover basic needs, especially for vulnerable families.

2,700

people through transitional shelter solutions.

5,000

people through permanent housing solutions.

SITUATION REPORT

On Aug. 14, 2021, a magnitude-7.2 earthquake struck Haiti's southwestern peninsula, causing significant damage in the region, including the cities of Les Cayes, Jérémie and Anse-à-Veaux. As of Aug. 23, the death toll stood at more than 2,000, with more than 12,000 people injured. Nearly 53,000 homes have been destroyed across the region, and 77,000 others have been severely damaged, according to Haiti's Civil Protection Agency. A governance crisis and social unrest have been ongoing since June, generating a significant number of internally displaced people. The COVID-19 pandemic, a recent tropical storm and the earthquake have compounded the problems in Haiti, creating a complex humanitarian crisis.

HABITAT'S RESPONSE

Immediately after the earthquake, Habitat for Humanity deployed a team to assess the shelter needs in the impacted area and develop response options for early recovery and reconstruction. To provide a comprehensive response to the country's needs, we have issued a preliminary, urgent appeal for \$11.3 million. These funds need to be flexible to adjust to the incredible complexities on the ground stemming from the earthquake damage itself, ongoing safety and security issues, and challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We plan to partner with other organizations to address the vital and urgent needs of families while helping them in their pathways to permanent housing.

“As in previous responses to hurricanes and earthquakes in Haiti, we will offer our technical expertise in housing to other organizations, seeking alliances with those that specialize in other areas of recovery so together we provide holistic support to the most vulnerable communities.”

– Ernesto Castro Garcia, Habitat’s vice president for Latin America and the Caribbean

Our preliminary response strategy in Haiti will comprise three main complementary steps:

1 Respond to the immediate needs of the affected households, including distribution of emergency hygiene and shelter kits; debris removal; financial support of highly vulnerable households; and water, sanitation and hygiene interventions.

2 Complete a housing habitability assessment in partnership with Haiti’s Ministry of Public Works. We will identify houses that are safe to return to and assess those that present a risk to the inhabitants. We will also note which homes need to be demolished according to the assessment methodologies developed after the 2010 earthquake.

3 Begin housing repair and construction. Habitat Haiti plans to collaborate with the national and local government housing authorities to help the most vulnerable households repair or rebuild their homes. We will also educate local masons and technicians in resilient construction.



Construction in southwestern Haiti, particularly in urban areas, is similar to what was found in Port-au-Prince before the 2010 earthquake. The buildings often lacked proper bracing and masonry reinforcements; as a result, most of them flattened during the earthquakes. Habitat has yet to complete detailed assessments of the more than 1,800 homes we built or repaired in partnership with Haitian families after Hurricane Matthew in 2016, but early assessments indicate that roughly 98% of them are safe and without any significant damage after the 2021 earthquake.

“These are the kind of resilient homes we want to help more families build during the earthquake recovery,” says Jean Frenel Tham, national director of Habitat for Humanity Haiti, “and break the cycle of devastation after disasters.”

As in previous responses to hurricanes and earthquakes in the country, Habitat Haiti will offer its housing expertise to organizations in other sectors to provide holistic support to the

most vulnerable communities. In the midst of initial healing and rebuilding, Habitat is preparing for another long-term disaster response, using our Pathways to Permanence approach and our strong relationships with communities, the government and international partners.





HABITAT REMAINS STRONG

Oxelia, like most residents in the nearby town of Corail, was at home when the earthquake hit. “We screamed and ran outside into the street,” she says. “The house shook like crazy for so long. My daughter was still asleep, and it shook her awake before she grabbed her baby and ran into the street.”

Oxelia’s home, which was built by Habitat, suffered no significant damage. But many of her neighbors’ homes caved in or experienced severe structural cracking. Made of low-quality materials and lacking structural reinforcement, those homes were extremely vulnerable to the violent shaking of the earth. Some crumbled to the ground in a heap of dust.

“We were all too afraid to go back into the house because you could still feel aftershocks,” Oxelia says. “But now it has been days, and I see that my neighbors’ houses have a lot of cracks, but mine is fine.”

After the devastating earthquake, Habitat for Humanity Haiti is seeking \$11.3 million in flexible funds to provide a comprehensive response to the country’s needs and provide long-term solutions to mitigate the impact of future disasters. We hope you will join us in helping families in Haiti rebuild their homes and lives.

everyone needs a place to call home



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