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ASSESSING PROGRESS IN HAITI ACT OF 2014

JUNE 26, 2014.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. MENENDEZ, from the Committee on Foreign Relations,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 1104]

The Committee on Foreign Relations, to which was referred the bill (S. 1104), to measure the progress of recovery and development efforts in Haiti following the earthquake of January 12, 2010, and for other purposes, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill, as amended, do pass.

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of S. 1104, as amended, is to assess the progress of, identify current challenges to, and devise a comprehensive strategy to improve the recovery and development efforts implemented by the Government of the United States to mitigate the catastrophic consequences of the earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010. S. 1104, as amended, directs the Secretary of State to prepare a report that highlights the current status of United States Government-supported reconstruction programs and identifies any significant challenges to advancing the objectives set forth by the ongoing efforts. S. 1104, as amended, also requires the State Department to develop a comprehensive three-year strategy that clearly identifies constraints to economic growth and challenges to the consolidation of democratic government institutions in Haiti, includes an action plan that outlines policy tools, technical assistance, and anticipated resources, and lays out specific steps and verifiable benchmarks for enhancing the ongoing recovery efforts in Haiti.

II. COMMITTEE ACTION

S. 1104 was introduced on June 6, 2013, by Senator Bill Nelson and co-sponsored by Senators Cardin, Gillibrand, and Landrieu. On June 24, 2014 the committee considered S. 1104 and ordered it reported favorably by voice vote, with one amendment.

III. BACKGROUND

On January 12, 2010 a massive earthquake struck near the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, leaving an estimated 220,000 people dead, as well as 300,000 injured, 115,000 homes destroyed, and 1,500,000 people displaced. According to the Post Disaster Needs Assessment conducted by the Government of Haiti, with technical assistance from various international organizations, an estimated 15 percent of the population was directly affected by the disaster. The international community, led by the United States and the United Nations, mounted a humanitarian response for relief, reconstruction and development efforts in Haiti. The United States Congress played a vital role by authorizing \$3,600,000,000 in assistance for the government and people of Haiti.

IV. DISCUSSION

A section-by-section discussion of S. 1104 follows.

Section 1

Section 1 names the bill.

Section 2

Section 2 presents key findings regarding the devastating consequences of the earthquake in Haiti, including the number of victims, economic losses, and the public health crisis that stemmed from an unprecedented cholera outbreak. This section also elaborates upon the challenges faced by the international community in implementing recovery programs, and the need for donor assistance to Haiti to be met with a commitment by the Haitian Government to transparency, rule of law, democracy, and human rights.

Section 3

Section 3 states that it is the policy of the United States to support Haiti's rebuilding and development in a manner that promotes efforts to support the long term capacity of the Government of Haiti and civil society; builds community-level resilience to environmental impacts; promotes the holding of free, fair and timely elections; and ultimately reflects the priorities of all Haitian citizens.

Section 4

Section 4 expresses the sense of the Congress that transparency, accountability, democracy and good governance are key factors in any congressional decision regarding any United States assistance, including assistance to Haiti.

Section 5

Section 5 requires the Secretary of State to submit to Congress a report on the status of post-earthquake recovery and development

efforts in Haiti. The report must be submitted no later than December 31, 2014, and annually thereafter through December 31, 2017. The report must include a summary and a comprehensive assessment of “Post-Earthquake USG Haiti Strategy: Toward Renewal and Economic Opportunity”—a document produced by the Department of State—that incorporates any significant changes to and a detailed description of the progress of the goals, objectives, benchmarks and timeframes specified in the Strategy, as well as a breakdown of the work done in Haiti by United States agencies other than USAID and the State Department. Furthermore, the report must include a description of measures taken by both the United States and Haiti to strengthen Haitian governmental and nongovernmental capacity to undertake and sustain U.S.-supported recovery programs, as well as a detailed account of current U.S. efforts to consult and engage with the Government of Haiti, its ministries and local authorities on establishment of goals and timeframes for existing and potential new programs.

Section 6

Section 6 requires that, 180 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, through the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, shall coordinate and transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a 3-year strategy that identifies the challenges to economic growth and the consolidation of democratic government institutions in Haiti. The Committee on Foreign Relations recognizes the important role that the Secretary of State’s Special Coordinator for Haiti will play in drafting the strategy and overseeing its implementation, but nevertheless deems it necessary that the Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs lead the process of coordination in order to ensure that the United States Government’s efforts in Haiti are linked more directly to the United States’ overall strategy and objectives for the hemisphere. The Committee on Foreign Relations notes that the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs has significant experience in defining strategies focused on addressing obstacles to economic growth and strengthening democratic governance, and is in a position to reinforce this strategic planning effort.

The strategy shall also include an action plan that outlines policy tools, technical assistance, and anticipated resources to address these challenges, as well as specific steps and verifiable benchmarks for achieving these goals. All United States Government efforts to support the consolidation of democratic government institutions in Haiti should be based on respect for internationally recognized human rights of all Haitian citizens.

The strategy should include detailed steps for engagement with the Haitian Government on achieving shared priorities, such as bolstering the capacity of Haitian institutions, reducing corruption, consolidating the rule of law, strengthening the civilian police force, developing sustainable housing, fostering economic growth, improving food security and access to potable water, and obtaining access to safe and affordable supplies of energy. In devising this strategy, the Secretary should coordinate with all United States Government departments carrying out work in Haiti, and consult with the Haitian Government, as well as all relevant multilateral organizations present in Haiti. Additionally, the Secretary of State should consult

with non-governmental sectors in Haiti, including grassroots and community-based organizations. At the request of the relevant congressional committees, the Secretary is to provide quarterly briefings that review the implementation of the strategy.

V. COST ESTIMATE

In accordance with Rule XXVI, paragraph 11(a) of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the committee notes that the cost estimate provided by the Congressional Budget Office was not available for inclusion in this report. The estimate will be printed in either a supplemental report or the Congressional Record when it is available.

VI. EVALUATION OF REGULATORY IMPACT

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 11(b) of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the committee has determined that there is no regulatory impact as a result of this legislation.

VII. CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with Rule XXVI, paragraph 12 of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the committee has determined that there is no change to existing law made by the bill, as reported.

