

## **Economic and Social Council**

### **Civil society hearing on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system**

#### **Statement submitted by the Peacebuilding Solutions, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

Recalling General Assembly resolution 64/236, Peacebuilding Solutions' (PS) humanitarian operations in Haiti and elsewhere will hold among its guiding principles that sustainable development must include a balance between economic, social and environmental considerations while reaffirming the need to respect the human dignity of all communities we find ourselves fortunate enough to serve. It is PS' belief that the principles of accountability and community empowerment must be at the heart of the SDGs; PS holds that development is little progress if it comes at the expense of pride and inclusion.

Cite Humillier is about 40 minutes west of Port au Prince, just outside of Gressier. There are 60 IDP families living there on privately owned land and their conditions have not much improved since the 2010 earthquake. While PS' work will address MDGs, the manner in which PS will implement this and future operations will move the communities we serve beyond the MDGs and toward the post-2015, Sustainable Development called for at Rio +20.

After surveying the leaders of Cite Humillier in order to determine their wants and needs, PS settled on the following plan, which will move this IDP community closer to reducing hunger and improving access to water and sanitation. This calls attention to that which PS holds must be the first guiding principle of SDGs: accountability. To avoid aid imperialism, PS worked directly with the IDP community leadership during the planning of our Phase I operations, considering their wishes and soliciting their input at every stage of this first operation.

PS deployed new tarps in order to give the IDPs better protection from the elements, constructed composting latrines and a composting bin to provide better sanitation and a means of creating topsoil, deployed rain-barrel water collectors with portable filters to increase access to potable water, and finally, provided four goats and six saltwater shore-to-sea fishing rods with tackle and equipment to enable the IDPs to supplement their food supplies and to earn a livelihood as fisherman, if desired. To implement Phase I, PS employed local labor, including the able-bodied adults of Cite Humillier, which gave them a sense of ownership and accomplishment as well as the opportunity to earn a livable wage; reaffirming the second principle PS would see as part of any set of SDGs: community

empowerment. By employing the local community PS did not simply deploy tarps or lay down water collectors. We also gave the community the means to improve their own long-term chances to further their own development, thus breaking the crippling cycle of dependence that can all-too-often hamper well-intentioned humanitarian work.

While this is certainly a small-scale project by UN standards, PS hopes that the principles of accountability and community empowerment will be at the center of UN humanitarian aid programs undertaken in the developing world. The wisdom of transitioning to more sustainable development is clear, and PS applauds the work of this body and its members toward a post-2015 development agenda.