

Nine Latin American and Caribbean Countries Meet on Rebuilding Quake-hit Haiti

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CARACAS — Foreign ministers of nine member nations of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) met here on Sunday to discuss how to help rebuild Haiti, which was battered by a 7.3-magnitude quake on Jan. 12, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez announced.

In his nationwide televised Sunday TV/Radio Program “Hello, President,” Chavez said the meeting will work out a mid- and long-term strategic plan to rebuild Haiti, including the rebuilding of hospitals, waterworks as well as projects to boost farm, food and fishing production.

According to the Haitian Interior Ministry, the death toll had surpassed 110,000 in the devastating quake, which had also injured some 200,000 people and left more than 600,000. Haitian officials estimated that the final death toll could reach 200,000.

For the time being, ALBA’s work in Haiti is centered on medical assistance, but its focus will shift to other sectors like education later, Chavez said, stressing that “we have to build schools for the new generations, so that they will not lose their roots.”

Chavez said Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa will travel to Haiti next week on behalf of ALBA to discuss how to carry out the plans with Haitian authorities.

Also during the “Hello, President” program, Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro said he believed “the plan will help rebuild an independent and sovereign Haiti.”

The ALBA is made up of Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Honduras, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

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