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World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim today pledged US\$50 million ahead of the "Haiti: Clean water, Improved sanitation, Better health" conference and called on donors and other partners to join forces and help improve access to safe water and sanitation for all Haitians to prevent waterborne diseases. "We have made significant progress in controlling the cholera epidemic in Haiti, but too many people are still getting sick, mainly because they don't have access to clean water and lack sanitation systems. Cholera remains endemic and waterborne diseases are one of the leading causes of infant mortality in Haiti, said Kim. "Expanding coverage of safe water and sanitation is possible. We cannot ignore this opportunity to prevent thousands more Haitian children from dying from waterborne diseases, he added. The announcement spearheads a high-level conference to be chaired by Kim and United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, inviting leading partners to join in an effort to substantially improve water and sanitation coverage in Haiti, and strengthen health services. Diarrhea causes more deaths in children under five than HIV/AIDS, malaria and measles combined, according to UN figures. New costing analysis conducted by the World Bank and Haiti's Department of Health and National Department for Water and Sanitation (DINEPA) estimates that US\$310 million investment in water, sanitation and health is needed to save lives and prevent cholera in high prevalence zones over the next three years. The new US\$ 50 million Bank pledge will contribute to the implementation of a project that will reach about two million people in cholera hot spots of rural Haiti. All schools and clinics in the communes covered by this initiative would receive priority water and sanitation services. Haiti's Ministry of Health already implements US\$ 90 million initiative financed by the World Bank which will provide access to adequate health services for 1.8 million mothers and children over the next 5 years. "This meeting is an opportunity for dedicated partners to address the plan to eliminate Cholera in Haiti and to improve access to clean water and sanitation initiatives. Further we need to assure that the commitments are met and Haiti remains on track to eliminate cholera within its borders," said Haiti's Prime Minister, Laurent Lamothe. The conference follows a technical meeting during the last World Bank Group and IMF Spring Meetings where leading cholera experts discussed the need for a comprehensive diagnostic and a results-oriented investment roadmap to support Haiti's 10-year plan to eliminate cholera. In response, the government launched with UNICEF and development partners a National Sanitation Campaign, which will be partly financed through commitments made today. "I had an emotional visit to Haiti in July, when I heard first-hand how cholera has affected families," said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. "I also saw what communities can do, with a little bit of help, to address the underlying risks and be free of disease. Together with Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe, we launched the total sanitation campaign to raise sanitation standards and improve health conditions. Today's conference is an important step to remind the international community of the long-term work needed in Haiti to build systems that will prevent other outbreaks of waterborne diseases, including cholera, he added. About 38 percent of Haitians lack access to safe drinking water, and only 24 percent of Haitian families have access to improved sanitation. Evidence shows that for every dollar invested in water and sanitation, seven dollars are gained in healthcare savings and productivity in Latin America and the Caribbean. This new initiative calls for concerted push for water and sanitation will help save lives and improve people's health. Background on cholera
Since the 2010 outbreak, there have been a total of 706,862 cases and 8,584 deaths. The average number of cases has come down from a monthly average of more than 35,000 cases in the first year of the epidemic, to about 1,000 per month in 2014. The fatality rate has dropped to 0.4% in 2014, or one in 250 people. However, cholera resurgence remains a threat and waterborne diseases are one of the leading causes of infant mortality in the country. World Bank response to cholera
The World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) has been financing cholera response activities since the outbreak in the end of 2010. It disbursed US\$ 15 million as part of a cholera emergency response project which closed at the end of March 2014. More than three million people benefited from prevention education campaigns, training, and direct treatment through the project. Specifically, more than 5,400 community health workers and medical personnel were trained. US\$20 million for cholera prevention and treatment have been made available to the Ministry of Health under a new health project (total US\$ 90 million) for epidemiological surveillance, treatment, including rapid response mobile teams, hygiene and health promotion, and water and sanitation activities. IFC, the largest global development institution focused exclusively on the private sector, is also providing affordable water for sale to underserved neighborhoods in Port au Prince. Together with the Haitian Authorities, the Bank just announced a new water and sanitation project (US\$ 50 million) targeting high incidence zones for cholera, which will be submitted to the board in a couple of months. For more information: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2014/09/30/haiti-clean-water-improved-sanitation-better-health>

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