Resolution on Rebuilding Libraries and Archives Damaged or Destroyed by the Earthquake in Haiti

Whereas, On January 12, 2010 a massive earthquake in Haiti caused the death of over 100,000 people, including library workers and their families; and

Whereas, The ALA Council observed a moment of silence for all of the victims of the tragedy at its Midwinter Meeting on January 17, 2010; and

Whereas, This tremendous tragedy has resulted in damage and destruction to libraries and archives throughout the country; and

Whereas, Libraries and archives are vital to all societies especially in helping citizens recover in times of crisis; and

Whereas, ALA Policy 58.1 (7) objective is “to promote awareness of the importance of the role of librarians, libraries, and information services in national and international development”; and

Whereas, ALA Policy 8.3 states “When a disaster occurs that affects one or more libraries, the staff or friends of those libraries are encouraged to contact the ALA for assistance. Such assistance shall include, at a minimum: (1) the provision of information to the public about the disaster, its effect on the library, and where contributions can be made and (2) information to the library on dealing with disasters”; and

Whereas, ALA Executive Board has established a policy EBD # 12.16 rev. 2004-2005 for reviewing and responding to the destruction of libraries nationally and internationally; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the American Library Association:

1. Expresses its deepest sympathy to the National Library and Archives and the library community in Haiti.
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2. Works in coordination with other U.S. Associations, IFLA and its members, and UNESCO on the international response to this disaster.

3. Publicizes and provides information to the international library community and the public on the importance of rebuilding damaged libraries and their collections; and

4. Publicizes and provides information on how and where the library community and the public can contribute to these rebuilding efforts; and.

5. Urges the U.S. Government and Non Government Organizations (NGOs) to provide funding for the reconstruction and rebuilding of libraries and other cultural institutions in Haiti; and

6. Acts as a conduit for the receipt of funds to assist in the rebuilding of libraries in Haiti; and

7. Urges libraries to provide up-to-date information about social and communication services available in the communities for the Haitian diaspora and links to donation and other relief services.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Wednesday, January 19, 2010
In Boston, Massachusetts

Keith Michael Fiels
ALA Executive Director and
Secretary of the ALA Council