

PRESS RELEASE

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Irish Star Paul O'Connell Announced as New Haven Ambassador

Haven Six Nations Rugby Luncheon Attracts Rugby Greats to Lineout and Support Haiti

Conor O'Shea Receives *Outstanding Irish Contribution to Rugby Award*

Today (09/03/12) at the *Haven Annual Six Nations Rugby Luncheon*, **Paul O'Connell** was announced as the new **Haven Ambassador**. O'Connell, who is out of contention for the remainder of the Six Nations campaign due to injury, will be lining out for Haven as the charity raises awareness and funds for its work in Haiti.

According to **Leslie Buckley**, Founder & Chairman of Haven, "It is a great honour to have Paul O'Connell on board with us as our new Haven Ambassador. We are delighted to have such a stalwart of Irish Rugby who is willing to give generously of his time to support those thousands of people living in appalling conditions in Haiti".

Haven is building homes and sustainable communities in Haiti, where over half a million people remain in basic camps since the catastrophic earthquake of 2010. **Paul O'Connell**, who is hoping to travel to Haiti in the near future, said "I am extremely excited about coming on board with Haven. The work they are doing is changing lives every day and it is an honour to be part of that. I hope my support can help shine a light on the hardship and poverty endured by hundreds of thousands of people in this small country."

Also attending the *Six Nations Rugby Luncheon* in the Four Seasons Hotel was **Conor O'Shea**, RTE pundit and Director of Rugby at Harlequins. Conor was awarded with the '**Outstanding Irish Contribution to Rugby Award**' for his feats on and off the pitch. According to O'Shea "It is a great honour to be chosen as the recipient of this Award. I am in a lucky position to love what I do and when recognition such as this comes with it, it is very flattering. The work Haven is doing in Haiti is truly admirable and I am a big supporter of the charity."

Paul O'Connell who took part in a Q&A at the Lunch with **George Hook** and **Jim Glennon** also said "It is shocking to see that this country has been ravaged so drastically for generations, both through natural disasters and corrupt governance - the result being that hundreds of thousands have nowhere to call home, so many children have never been to school and poverty and ill health are part of the daily struggle."

Also attending the lunch in the Four Seasons were prominent businessmen **Denis O'Brien** and **Terence O'Rourke** among others.

Haven's Annual Rugby Luncheon aims to raise €30,000 to support the ongoing projects in Haiti. The charity will be bringing 45 volunteers to Haiti in May for Build It Week and has a target of building 10,000 houses in Haiti by 2014.

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Notes to Editor:

About Haven

Haven was set up by Irish businessman, Leslie Buckley and his wife, Carmel Buckley, in January 2009. The NGO is working solely in Haiti, building houses and sustainable communities, while providing emergency relief in the wake of the earthquake which struck last January 2010, killing 230,000 people and leaving 1.5 million people homeless.

Examples of work to date:

- Haven has to date built, repaired and upgraded over 2,000 homes in Haiti.
- Over 1,300 latrines, 308 showers and 20 community shelters have been provided in IDP camps.
- Over 3,000 local people have been trained in hygiene promotion, conflict resolution and vocational training to empower communities to pursue their livelihoods.
- Haven has employed 600 local people in their projects.
- More than 10,000 children in schools have been provided with clean water, sanitation facilities and hygiene training.
- Over 1,000 volunteers have travelled with Haven to Haiti to assist on house building projects.
- Haven is currently recruiting 45 volunteers to travel to Haiti in May for one week.
- For more information see www.havenpartnership.com