

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **Irish Businessman Leslie Buckley re-affirms commitment to President of Haiti Michel Martelly**

*Buckley and President Martelly Meet at Clinton Global Initiative in New York*

September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011, New York – Leading Irish businessman Leslie Buckley today met with new Haitian President Michel Martelly at the Clinton Global Initiative in New York. Buckley, founder of Haven - an international NGO that builds houses and sustainable communities in Haiti, has previously met with Martelly in Haiti through the ongoing work of Haven in assisting thousands of people who are still without secure accommodation in Haiti following the earthquake of January last year.

Speaking to Buckley at the international event, President Martelly said he wanted to thank the people of Ireland for their “outstanding efforts” to rebuild his country in the aftermath of last year’s devastating earthquake which left 230,000 dead and over 1.5 million homeless. One of President Martelly’s key priorities in Ireland will be to create a new image of Haiti and leading business people, such as Buckley, will be assisting in these efforts as well as the practical work on the ground.

Following their meeting in New York Leslie Buckley said “I reaffirmed my commitment to Haiti and the people of Haiti and have assured President Martelly that we are making every effort possible to help assist the rebuild of Haiti. This doesn’t only include house building but our training, employment and sanitation programmes that we have running throughout the year.”

Already the poorest country in the western hemisphere, Haiti was left devastated after the earthquake. Buckley says “rebuilding this destroyed country will not happen overnight, but there are key decisions on allocating land, house repairs, providing employment and clearing rubble that can and must be made urgently. We are delighted that President Martelly is playing an active leadership role in addressing these challenges and will be a driver of change. The international community, including NGOs, must unite to support the government so that Haitian authorities will have a real chance of success.”

Michel Martelly was elected President of Haiti in May, 2011. He is known to his supporters by his stage name, 'Sweet Micky'. Before entering politics President Martelly was a successful musician and recording artist. The charismatic leader is seen by the people, not as a politician, but as a man of the people. In running for President he promised to 'rebrand' his country by decentralising its government offices to the rural parts of the country, by developing the tourism industry, and bringing free education to all.

Irish businessman and philanthropist Leslie Buckley has been working in Haiti for 7 years. Brought to the country initially because of his business interests in Digicel, Mr. Buckley and his wife Carmel established Haven in January 2009, with an initial donation of €1 million.

Haven is working to provide shelter, sanitation, training and employment primarily in the capital city of Port au Prince, as well as Gonaives, Ouanaminthe and Léogâne.

## **ENDS**

**For more information please contact Lorna Cronnelly, Communications Manager, Haven:  
Email: [lorna.cronnelly@havenpartnership.com](mailto:lorna.cronnelly@havenpartnership.com) ; Tel: 087 7738853**

## **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:

- By the end of 2011 Haven will have built, repaired and upgraded 3,000 homes in Haiti.
- Haven has built over 1,300 latrines, 308 showers and 20 community shelters.
- 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.
- Over 10,000 children in 13 schools have been provided with clean water, sanitation facilities and hygiene training.
- After Build it Week 2011, over 1,000 volunteers will have travelled with Haven to Haiti. The format of the traditional Build it Week will change going forward.
- For more information see [www.havenpartnership.com](http://www.havenpartnership.com)