

## Caribbean Media Team Leaves For Haiti

A team of regional journalists will this week embark on a familiarization trip to Haiti under the banner "Echo Haiti" ("Echo Ayiti" in Creole).

The trip runs from March 17 to 24 and will coincide with the presidential run-off slated for March 20. It will give the reporters an opportunity to better understand the complexities of the French-speaking CARICOM country and share stories about life in Haiti, particularly since the January 12, 2010 earthquake.

"The Association of Caribbean Media Workers is proud to be associated with this event. We are certain it will provide regional media with the high quality stories and analysis required to produce a well informed body of public opinion on developments in Haiti," said President Wesley Gibbings.

"That media workers have taken this initiative must signal to media owners and managers the need for proactive investments in the coverage of public affairs from the standpoint of the regional paradigm," he added.

Echo Haiti was made possible with assistance from the CARICOM Representation Office in Haiti, American Airlines, Choice Hotels International, the Caribbean Media Exchange, and the Association of Caribbean Media Workers.

Group leader Anika Kentish expressed her gratitude to the various entities partnering with Echo Haiti on the initiative and praised the all-female group for taking a keen interest in reporting on Haiti.

"Haiti is a part of the Caribbean Community and the little we see of the country is through the eyes of the international media. We wanted an opportunity to tell the story of our CARICOM sister from a Caribbean perspective and now, with the help of our partners we are able to do so. These companies and organizations obviously recognize the importance of keeping Haiti on the front burner," Kentish said.

"The fact that these reporters have all volunteered to travel to Haiti speaks volumes. Their commitment to and enthusiasm for this project should not only be commended, but emulated," she added.

While in Haiti, the group will explore of the northern city of Cap Haitien, the first capital of the Kingdom of Northern Haiti under King Henri Christophe. They will also tour Port-au-Prince and interview experts in government, business and industry as well as international agencies operating there.

In addition to reporting for their respective media houses, Echo Haiti will distribute stories through the region and the Diaspora by utilising the ACM and CMEx networks.

The group members are:

- Marcella Andre, Observer Media Group (Antigua)
- Maria Fontenelle, Freelance (St. Lucia)
- Clare Forrester, Office of the Special Representative of CARICOM on Haiti (Jamaica)
- Julia Johnson, Prime News (Guyana)
- Anika Kentish, Observer Media Group and Caribbean Media Corporation (Antigua)