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READER'S CORNER

Toward 'New Haiti'

On the Opinions page, Saturday's paper featured an impressive editorial and cartoon illustrating the current plight of Haiti and calling for the whole world to respond. The editorial mentions "scrambled infrastructure" as one of the reasons why aid flow is not proceeding as quickly as all would like. While the pace of aid delivery will continue to increase and Canadians will continue to support current relief efforts, we must also look at the long-term goal.

Having been to Haiti a number of times, admittedly in the 1990s, I feel I have a certain understanding of the challenges that will confront its citizens as they struggle, once again, to transform their country from adversity to an acceptable standard of living.

Nova Scotians have responded admirably to the current appeal for help — individual donations are high; the contributions of the navy and other members of the Armed Forces and of aid agencies of all types have set an example for action that must be continued.

It is time to convene a gathering of Canadians, Haitians and others who are interested in dealing with the challenges of governance, infrastructure, reforestation, education, medical, food supply, etc., that must be faced in the decades ahead by Haitians and the international community. Such a gathering of academics, practitioners, business folks, media representatives, aid organizations, etc., could set a path for the future and suggest concrete actions. Nova Scotia possesses the expertise to organize and host such a meeting — let us act now in the interests of the future of "The New Haiti."

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