

## US Congresswoman Calls on Haiti to Solve “Electoral Crisis”

February 5, 2013 | 5:56 pm |



*Above: US Congresswoman Maxine Waters (Photo: Ward Wesley)*

**By the Caribbean Journal staff**

Haiti needs “free, fair and inclusive elections” to have a functioning Parliament and a stable government, according to United States Congresswoman Maxine Waters.

The California Democrat was speaking at a Washington briefing on post-earthquake reconstruction organized by the Haiti Advocacy Working Group.

Waters pointed to recent reports over US money for Haiti that had not yet been disbursed.

“Accountability requires oversight in Congress and in the donor community,” she said. “It also requires effective political institutions and stable, just and democratic governance in Haiti. Reconstruction and development require organization, planning, and oversight. These are functions that are properly carried out by a government.”

The Congresswoman said Haiti was currently facing an “electoral crisis,” citing the failure of Haiti’s government to formalize a Permanent Electoral Council necessary for holding legislative elections.

“Because of the overdue elections, one third of the seats in the Haitian Senate are vacant,” she said. “Indeed, it is very difficult for the Senate to meet at all because if even a few Senators are absent, there is no quorum. Meanwhile, President Martelly has appointed mayors to replace the mayors whose terms have expired, but these mayors lack the legitimacy of duly elected mayors.”

She echoed similar remarks made last week by outgoing MINUSTAH Chief Mariano Fernandez on the electoral delay, which has now reached 14 months.

Waters, who has been a Member of Congress since 1991, representing three different districts, said she had been concerned for some time about the need for good governance in Haiti.

"Haiti has a long, tragic history of dictatorship under the regimes of "Papa Doc" and "Baby Doc" Duvalier, which lasted from 1957 until 1986," she said. "Since then, Haiti has not been able to build strong and enduring democratic institutions."

The briefing was held under the theme "Building back better needs open doors: Accountability is essential for a just reconstruction."

"It is obvious that Haiti needs a credible and representative CEP in order to organize free, fair and inclusive elections — and Haiti needs free, fair and inclusive elections in order to have a functioning parliament and a stable, democratic, and effective government," she said. "Haiti will never be able to determine its own future until it develops good governance."