

Volunteers Consider Haiti Logistics Base in Nearby Port

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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Tzu Chi volunteers from the United States are considering the feasibility of a logistics base in a port city in the Dominican Republic, as a trans-shipment point for aid to the neighbouring country of Haiti.

On January 18, four volunteers of the Haiti Relief Team from the U.S. flew to Santo Domingo, capital of the Dominican Republic, which occupies the eastern half of the island of Hispaniola; Haiti occupies the western half. Currently, the only point of access to Haiti is the small airport of Port-au-Prince, which has been taken over by the U.S. army; it is restricting access to other members of the U.S. military and a limited number of international flights – not including those with the foundation’s relief goods. So it has decided the best alternative is to bring the aid over the land border with the Dominican Republic.

In Santo Domingo, the volunteers set up a Relief Distribution Centre. On January 20, they drove five hours to the city of Jimani, on the country’s border with Haiti. There they met Haiti volunteer Steeve and discussed how to deliver relief and medical help to the victims of the Haitian earthquake. Since security in Jimani is not guaranteed, the volunteers decided to consider a logistics base in Barahona, a port city midway between Santo Domingo and Jimani. “For the moment we have settled on Barahona,” said Ge Ji-she chief executive of the Tzu Chi branch in the U.S. “It is not a bad trans-shipment place and has a harbour. Tomorrow we will take a look at the city. If it is feasible, we will set up a warehouse and reception centre there.”

Once they have decided on the centre, then a large-scale transport of relief goods by sea to Barahona will begin. A small amount will be taken by air to Santo Domingo. In the back of the minds of the volunteers was the hope of the Haitian people for help – driving them to understand the situation and provide this aid as best they can.

Source: Daai TV English news