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Air Canada airlifts relief supplies and rescue workers to Haiti; Launches in-flight donations program for earthquake victims

MONTREAL, Jan. 15 /CNW Telbec/ - In response to the devastation brought by the recent earthquake in Haiti, Air Canada has been working since the outset of the disaster with Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Canadian Red Cross and the ONEXONE Foundation to support relief efforts in the region.

Air Canada will dispatch a dedicated relief flight to Port-au-Prince, Haiti that will carry a full load of humanitarian relief supplies and approximately 100 search and rescue technicians from the Service de Police de la Ville de Montreal (SPVM), the Service de sécurité incendie de Montréal (SIM), and the Sûreté du Québec.

The donated Air Canada aircraft and volunteer crew are scheduled to depart Saturday morning at 06:30 ET from the carrier's Montreal headquarters base to Port-au-Prince, once the necessary preparations have been finalized overnight. The return flight later the same day will be used to transport evacuees, in collaboration with DFAIT and the Canadian Embassy in Port-au-Prince.

Air Canada employees are working around the clock to prepare a Boeing 767-300ER aircraft for the relief flight.

All usable space in the belly and in the passenger cabin will be used to transport relief supplies. The Boeing aircraft has a cargo capacity of approximately 14,800 kgs and seating for 211 passengers allocated for search and rescue workers, medical personnel, Air Canada volunteers, and, for the return flight, evacuees returning to Canada.

"On behalf of Air Canada and our 25,000 employees worldwide, I want to express our sadness, and extend our sympathy and support to the people of Haiti and their loved ones affected by this devastating event," said Calin Rovinescu, President and CEO of Air Canada. "Air Canada is doing its part in the international relief effort by bringing much needed supplies and rescue workers to those in need of assistance following this major disaster." In addition, Air Canada today announced that effective tomorrow all proceeds from its on-board donation program, Every Bit Counts, will be directed to registered relief agencies in support of Haiti.

"This program provides an opportunity for Air Canada customers - Canadians and travelers from around the world - to show their support and solidarity in this time of crisis. In addition, Air Canada, through its community investment program Kids' Horizons, has committed to undertake an employee-led humanitarian project to assist children in Haiti as part of the re-building efforts that will be necessary."

To help in this relief effort, several Air Canada suppliers such as Cara Operations have donated their services.

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