



Clinton Foundation facilitates \$45 million Haiti hotel deal

By the CNN Wire Staff

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(CNN) -- Two years after a 7.0-magnitude earthquake leveled Haiti's capital, a deal brokered by former President Bill Clinton's charitable foundation will add new lodging for aid workers and other travellers to Port-au-Prince -- in the form of a \$45 million hotel.

With only about 500 operable hotel rooms, the city has limited space to house aid workers, potential investors and other visitors, according to a news release Monday by the future hotel's owner and its operator.

Caribbean cell phone provider Digicel will own the hotel, which will have 173 new rooms and create 175 new jobs. Marriott Hotels and Resorts will operate the hotel upon completion in 2014. Construction is set to begin in 2012.

Clinton praised the project for creating jobs and attracting visitors in a statement from the William J. Clinton Foundation. "My foundation has worked with both Marriott and Digicel, and encouraged them to form this partnership," the president said.

The Clinton Foundation "visited proposed construction sites with the parties and facilitated introductions to the Haitian government and the Haitian Tourism Association," according to Digicel and Marriott.

Digicel claims to be Haiti's largest private investor and cell phone provider and touts its charitable contributions to the Clinton Global Initiative.

Clinton has been involved in helping Haiti since soon after the January 12, 2010, quake. At the time, he was named a U.N. special envoy to Haiti.

President Barack Obama asked Clinton and former President George W. Bush to raise money for relief and recovery in Haiti. In response, the two former commanders-in-chief established the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund.

The 7.0-magnitude earthquake killed about 316,000 people and affected about 3 million of Haiti's 9 million residents, according to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).