

**Remarks of Commissioner Mignon L. Clyburn
on Martin Luther King, Jr. and Haiti Earthquake Relief Efforts**

Federal Communications Commission

January 15, 2010

As our nation celebrates the legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I am reminded of the lessons and universal relevance of his eloquent words. Perhaps most poignantly, Dr. King wrote in the spring of 1963: “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

In the same year that Dr. King wrote those words, engineers at the Department of Defense’s Advanced Research Project Agency began discussing the idea of connecting computers. Now, almost 50 years later, we have a network of mutuality that has the potential to connect and improve the lives of billions of people worldwide.

Our network of mutuality – both on-line and off – is also evidenced by the unimaginable devastation wrought by the earthquake in Haiti on January 12. It is incredible to witness the outpouring of international support for a country that, even prior to this most recent natural disaster, had faced significant economic challenges. The world’s reaction has brought to life Dr. King’s pronouncement that whatever affects one, affects all.

I applaud Chairman Genachowski’s leadership on this issue. The Commission’s Media Bureau is providing guidance to noncommercial broadcasters on the procedures for obtaining expedited approval to engage in fundraising on behalf of the Haitian people. Commission staff is also talking with USAID about relief and restoration on the telecommunications front and reaching out to Haitian communications providers to assess the needs for satellite, wireless, wireline, submarine and broadcast communications both within the country and with the U.S. There have also been news reports of the efforts that many in our industry have undertaken to lend financial aid and other assistance to Haitians. These efforts truly honor Dr. King’s vision.

As we move forward with our mission to develop a National Broadband Plan, we should be mindful of Dr. King’s prescient words. We are inextricably interconnected one way or another, and our efforts must recognize the importance of our shared destinies.