



Urgent appeal for PEN Haiti

July 20, 2010

Six months ago, the Port-au-Prince earthquake destroyed PEN Haiti's offices and killed its founder and president, Georges Anglade, and his wife Mireille.

Georges was deeply committed to the work of PEN and devoted many years to promoting literature and defending the right to freedom of expression. Early in his long and varied career as a democratic activist, he was jailed and tortured by the Duvalier regime. Afterwards, he came to Quebec and distinguished himself as a university professor and writer in Montreal, all the while maintaining a deep involvement in Haitian politics and the media. He was well known to the PEN International community and widely admired by his colleagues, not least for his seemingly indefatigable energy. When the earthquake struck, he and Mireille were in Port-au-Prince preparing for a conference to which fifty authors had been invited.

Georges played a central role in setting up the Haitian PEN centre, with support from Québec-PEN (where he was a board member for several years) and PEN Canada. In April, four regional PEN centres – American PEN (New York), PEN Canada, PEN USA (Los Angeles), and Québec-PEN – agreed to coordinate their fundraising for the relaunch of the Haitian centre. Each of these organizations is inviting its members to support the *Cercle des amis PEN Haïti/Circle of the Friends - PEN Haiti* initiative, with a single \$100 donation.

This is an opportunity for PEN Canada to show its solidarity and strength by joining our colleagues in this determined response to the tragedy in Haiti, the loss of the young PEN Centre there (a centre which PEN Canada with then-Executive Director Isobel Harry helped to set up), and the very sad loss of Georges Anglade and his wife. Please join me personally and others on the board by sending a cheque.

With the agreement of the new Board of PEN Haiti, and its recently elected President, Jean-Euphèle Milcé, its Secretary Emmelie Prophète and its Treasurer, Verly Dabel, all contributions to *Cercle des amis – PEN Haïti* should be made out directly to the Centre Québécois du PEN International. The funds raised by *Cercle* will be deposited in a specific account managed by Québec-PEN and transferred directly to PEN Haiti. Disbursements will be made according to a rigorous timeline and will be accounted for in the Centre's subsequent reports. Initially, the funds will be used to rent, refurbish, staff and manage new offices. An additional room will be dedicated to a small library (la Bibliothèque Georges Anglade) that will be available to members and to the Haitian youth who used to frequent the area before the earthquake.

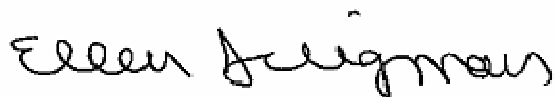
Cercle's fundraising is expected to be only a temporary measure. After a few months, it is hoped that PEN Haiti will seek and obtain from local, international or diplomatic sources the financial support necessary to continue its programs. At that time, *Cercle* will, of course, continue to support PEN Haiti and to facilitate its continuing and dynamic presence in the PEN International community.

Here's how to make your donation: Send a \$100 cheque to *Cercle des amis – PEN Haiti* to Centre Québécois du P.E.N. International, 3492, Avenue Laval, Montréal, Québec H2X 3C8.

Québec-PEN is a registered Canadian charity, and will issue tax receipts directly. You will also receive periodic updates on how funds raised through this appeal have been spent in Haiti.

PEN Haiti was set up in 2008 under the auspices of PEN Canada and Québec-PEN. Its importance as a social and cultural resource has become even more apparent since the terrible events of January 12. Given PEN Canada's role in the formation of the centre, I do hope that you will consider giving generously to this initiative.

Sincerely,



Ellen Seligman
President, PEN Canada