



## Haiti Telecom Voilà Teams with Relief Agencies on Wireless Communications Projects

### *Voilà Technicians Launch Innovative Text Message Services and Help Government Agencies Set Up Communications Networks*

**Port-au-Prince, Haiti - February 5, 2010** – Haiti telecom operator Voilà has been busy since the January 12 earthquake providing local and international service to over a million Haitian customers and thousands of incoming relief workers. However, Voilà technicians are also assisting a host of agencies – from the US Coast Guard to international NGOs – to set up or restore public safety communications networks and to launch new text services tailored specifically for disaster relief.

Working with the [Irish Red Cross](#) and the [International Federation of the Red Cross Red Crescent \(IFRC\)](#), Voilà is sending text messages with vital health-related information to all of its customers over a 10 day period. Each message will appear in Creole and will be distributed as a public service. The Irish Red Cross, IFRC, and Voilà plan to support this service with voice recordings about vaccination programs, sanitation tips, and other advice that users can access with a few keystrokes on their phones. As Voilà customers pass the messages to others by word-of-mouth, the information campaign should reach 3 to 4 million Haitians. Robin Padberg, Voilà's CEO, said "We are pleased to partner with the Irish Red Cross and IFRC in providing a critical service that stands to protect a significant number of people from the inevitable spread of disease following this tragedy."

In collaboration with the US embassy, Voilà is also participating in [Mission 4636](#), which enables a mobile phone user to use a short code – 4636 – to text a free request for medical help or food to appropriate relief agencies. Organized by [Samasource](#) and [Crowdfunder](#), the project uses thousands of volunteers to translate the incoming messages to English and to redirect them to the Red Cross, Ushahidi, and a variety of NGOs, along with data indicating the location of each sender. The agencies can then direct aid where and when it is needed.

Besides using its own wireless network to connect Haitians who need assistance with those who can provide it, Voilà is helping Haitian and US government public safety agencies deploy their own communications systems, so that they can fulfill their public safety, rescue, and relief responsibilities:

On the island of La Gonave, sitting in the gulf off of Port-au-Prince, police and fire radio services were knocked out by the earthquake. Voilà technical experts travelled to the island, and installed new electrical equipment, a fuel tank and a generator, enabling Haitian police and fire authorities to respond to local needs. Voilà will continue to monitor the ongoing emergency communications needs of the police and fire departments and supply additional fuel to the Gonave communications facility.

The US Coast Guard needed an immediate means of inter-agency communications to manage vital missions: processing emergency requests for help, medevac-ing injured Haitians to hospitals throughout Haiti, and coordinating the repair of Haiti's ports. Voilà technicians worked with the US Coast Guard to place radio antennae on a strategically-located Voilà tower to provide the necessary communications links for the Coast Guard's network.

Haitian government personnel in Port-au-Prince need a dedicated private communications network that will enable them to work as a cohesive group. In order to accelerate the launch of this system, Voilà has offered space on its towers, as well as access to electricity and backup generators, for the transmitters and receivers that the government needs to install. "We have given them power and authorized them to mount their equipment on our towers," said Edgar Geidans, Trilogy International Partners' Vice President of Engineering and Operations, who flew to Port-au-Prince the morning after the earthquake to help Voilà's engineers manage their network. "This provides the government with a back up for communications in addition to the operating networks in Haiti."

Voilà, and its parent company, Trilogy International Partners, are committed to the recovery of Haiti. After celebrating 10 years in Haiti in October 2009, Trilogy and Voilà were awarded the U.S State Department's prestigious [Award for Corporate Excellence](#) by Secretary Hillary Clinton, in recognition of Trilogy's and Voilà's commitment to social improvement through youth and education programs and significant contributions to the economic development of Haiti.

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#### **About Voilà and Trilogy International Partners**

Voilà is a leading mobile telecommunications operator in Haiti, providing high-quality, affordable wireless service. Since its inception 10 years ago, it has invested over US\$200 million in Haiti. Voilà employs over 500 local staff and provides indirect employment to more than 15,000 Haitians through a micro-enterprise venture whereby local entrepreneurs sell time on a customized cell phone.

Voilà is a subsidiary of Trilogy International Partners LLC, a privately-held company based in Bellevue, WA. Trilogy also owns wireless communications systems in the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, and New Zealand. For more information on Trilogy, please see its website: [www.trilogy-international.com](http://www.trilogy-international.com).

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