

2015-J5027

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION expressing sincere, heartfelt condolences to the people of Ecuador in the wake of the devastating earthquake which struck the country on April 16, 2016

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body recognizes the epic devastation that has been caused by the natural disaster that hit Ecuador, and the far-reaching loss of life and damage that has been sustained by the victims of this tragedy; and

WHEREAS, On Saturday, April 16, 2016, the deadliest earthquake to hit the nation since March of 1987, leveled a long swath of its coastline and dealt a major blow to the oil-producing nation's already fragile economy; the cities of Manta, Portoviejo and Pedernales, tourist destinations, saw the most devastation, however, damage was widespread throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, Currently, all six coastal provinces, Guayas, Manabi, Santo Domingo, Los Rios, Esmeraldas and Galapagos, are in states of emergencies; and

WHEREAS, This horrific magnitude-7.8 earthquake left 654 people dead, 16,600 injured, and 58 people still missing; in addition, the quake destroyed 7,000 buildings, triggered mudslides and tore up roads; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 25,000 people are sleeping in shelters, their homes and livelihoods crushed; meanwhile, survivors in isolated communities struggle without water, power or transport; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations Children's Fund reported Tuesday, April 19, that the earthquake damaged 119 schools, affecting at least 150,000 children; and

WHEREAS, Concerned family members, government officials and Ecuadorian citizens quickly raced to the scene to search for survivors and help in any way possible; and

WHEREAS, A United States government agency will send two teams to Ecuador, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will deploy one team to assist the government by studying the country's damage and needs; the second team will work with the United Nations to help organize international rescue activities; and

WHEREAS, Moreover, thousands of soldiers and police have been deployed throughout Ecuador to provide temporary shelters and food; aid workers from many nations, including Spain, Peru, Cuba, Bolivia and Venezuela, have also arrived to help; and

WHEREAS, Unfortunately, a few days later, a second magnitude-6.2 earthquake shook Ecuador's already devastated Pacific coast before dawn on Wednesday, April 20, terrifying residents and hindering rescuers searching for survivors of the initial and larger quake; and

WHEREAS, The latest big tremor, which followed several hundred after-shocks from Saturday's magnitude-7.8 quake, hit 25 km (15 miles) off the island of Muisne on the northwest coast; and

WHEREAS, This natural disaster will go down in history as one of the worst the country has ever experienced; without warning, much of the country was reduced to rubble, destroying the lives and livelihoods of thousands; and

WHEREAS, On behalf of the people of the State of New York, the members of this Legislative Body offer their deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of those who were killed or injured, and pledge their heartfelt support through this time of grief, sorrow, and rebuilding; and

WHEREAS, The community of the State of New York is greatly enriched by the culture, traditions, and contributions of the many Ecuadorian Americans now living in New York, many of whom are immediately making their way there to search for family members and aid in rescue and relief efforts; and

WHEREAS, At this time of devastation and turmoil, New Yorkers, along

with people across the United States and around the world, share their grief and their concern for the safety and welfare of the victims and their future; and

WHEREAS, Now, as New Yorkers, Americans and the family of Nations continue to help the people of Ecuador in their struggle back from chaos to order and the rebuilding of their lives, it is appropriate to pause to reflect on this catastrophe, to profoundly mourn the tragic loss of life and livelihood, and to applaud all those who have offered, and who will continue to provide, the aid and support which will be needed, not only immediately but for many years to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to express sincere, heartfelt condolences to the people of Ecuador in the wake of the devastating earthquake, and to honor the memories of all those who lost their lives, remember the survivors, and praise all those who came to their assistance; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Linda Machuca, Consulate General of Ecuador in New York.