

Clinton Announces Additional US\$10 Million Assistance

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BANGKOK, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced additional assistance of more than US\$10 million (about RM30 million) to support Thailand responding to its worst flood in the country's recent history.

She said, among the US' priorities would be assisting in the re-opening of the Don Mueang Airport here to facilitate tourism and commerce.

The airport which caters to mostly domestic flights has been temporary closed since Oct 25 due to the flood.

The USS Lassen was in port in this country to assist the relief and recovery effort, she said during a joint press conference with Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra at the Government House here, where the Prime Minister's Office is located.

The US, she said, would increase local civilian emergency response and disaster preparation capacity by providing funding for water pumps for flood recovery, as well as supporting health recovery efforts.

Clinton is on a two-day visit to this country, beginning today, to further strengthen ties with its ally, especially during this difficult time as one-third of the country remains inundated, affecting more than five million people.

The death toll has exceeded 500. The devastating three-month flood has caused economic losses of billions of dollars affecting almost all sectors of economies.

The secretary of state said the US would also extend assistance in restoring the country's important cultural sites, including the ancient capital and World Heritage Site at Ayutthaya.

Prior to this, the US has provided initial humanitarian assistance of more than US\$1 million (about RM3 million), apart from technical support.

Clinton has given an assurance that Washington would support Bangkok in its economic recovery process.

She is scheduled to depart here for Bali Thursday to attend the East Asia Summit and US-Asean Leaders Meeting.

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