



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

HAITI – Complex Emergency

Fact Sheet #3, Fiscal Year (FY) 2004

March 1, 2004

Note: The last fact sheet was dated February 27, 2004.

BACKGROUND

- Haiti's 200-year history has been marked by political instability and weak institutional capacity, resulting in a severely debilitated economy and an impoverished population. The current complex emergency is rooted in the country's inability to resolve a four-year political impasse. Following a military coup that ousted elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991, the international community intervened militarily to restore Aristide to power in 1994. In May 2000, Aristide's party, Lavalas Family, claimed an overall victory in disputed legislative and municipal elections. In November 2000, the opposition boycotted the presidential election that Aristide won unopposed with low voter turnout. On December 17, 2001, the crisis escalated as armed commandos stormed the presidential palace in Port-au-Prince in an assault that the Government of Haiti (GOH) characterized as an attempted coup d'état.
- The electoral controversy paralyzed the Aristide administration, and Aristide lost popular support due to the inability of the government to attract investment to the country, create jobs, or reduce poverty. As a result, growing lawlessness, instability, and politically-motivated violence began to overwhelm the country in 2002.
- In late 2003, anti-government demonstrations in Port-au-Prince, Gonaïves, Petit-Goâve, and other towns began to increase in size, frequency, and violence. The most recent surge in conflict and violence began on February 5, 2004, when members of armed opposition groups seized control of Gonaïves, Haiti's fourth-largest city. Armed groups opposed to former President Aristide expanded their control throughout parts of the Central, North, Artibonite, Northeast, and South departments. The democratic opposition has distanced itself from the armed groups. Since the takeover of Gonaïves, up to 100 people have been killed in the violence.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- Structural and institutional weaknesses in Haiti, closely linked to the country's historical, socio-economic, and agricultural development, have had long-term effects on numerous aspects of Haiti's development, such as food security, water and sanitation, health, and nutrition. For many years, Haiti has been the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and is currently the only Least Developed Country in the Western Hemisphere. The country was ranked 150th out of 173 countries in the 2003 United Nations (U.N.) Development Program Human Development Report.
- Due to the ongoing and chronic nature of Haiti's underdevelopment, the country is vulnerable to rapid deterioration of humanitarian indicators in a complex emergency. However, certain impacts of a complex emergency, such as malnutrition, are not sudden-onset situations and typically require several months to develop. Two important factors may contribute to food insecurity in Haiti: rising or unstable prices, and a drop in remittances. Haiti is heavily dependent on remittances, receiving an estimated \$800 million on average annually. In addition to food insecurity, the rising incidence of disease and displacement may also contribute to a humanitarian crisis. USAID and its implementing partners are monitoring all of these indicators as closely as possible.
- The U.S. Government (USG), through USAID, is Haiti's largest bilateral donor. In FY 2003, USAID contributed \$71 million. From FY 1995 to 2003, USAID provided a total of \$850 million in direct bilateral assistance. For FY 2004, USAID has planned \$52 million in assistance for programs including health, democracy and governance, education, and economic growth. To ensure the provision of assistance to Haitians most in need, USAID assistance is channeled principally through non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The USG provides food and food-related assistance directly and indirectly to 640,000 Haitians.

CURRENT SITUATION

Security/Political

- On February 29, Jean-Bertrand Aristide resigned from the presidency. In accordance with the Haitian constitution, Supreme Court Chief Justice Boniface Alexandre was sworn in as President of an interim government. Prime Minister Yvon Neptune will retain his post until a new Prime Minister is selected soon.
- Following Aristide's resignation, the USG sent an initial contingent of approximately 100 U.S. Marines to Haiti as the first wave of an international peace-keeping force; a second contingent is scheduled to arrive on March 1. The Government of France also dispatched a military contingent of 120 to 140 soldiers. Approximately 30 Canadian soldiers took control of the airport in Port-au-Prince on February 29 to evacuate Canadian citizens and to prepare the way for the arrival of the additional U.S. forces. The U.N. Security Council voted on February 29 to authorize the

immediate deployment of an international military force to restore order in Haiti. The Friends of Haiti group, including the United States, France, Canada, Brazil, Chile, and the Caribbean Community (Caricom), presented a draft Security Council resolution that envisions the immediate deployment of a multinational military force for several months, followed by a longer-term peacekeeping force.

- Chaos broke out in the capital city of Port-au-Prince after Aristide's resignation. Chimères, or armed supporters of Aristide, reportedly roamed the city armed with shotguns and machetes, while looters ransacked businesses and police stations. Guards abandoned their posts at the main prison in Port-au-Prince, allowing the release of approximately 2,000 inmates.
- On March 1, armed opposition groups entered Port-au-Prince and the headquarters of the national police, and were welcomed by hundreds of city residents. Since the arrival of the armed combatants, civil unrest in Port-au-Prince has abated somewhat. Guy Philippe, a leader of the opposition, has stated that the armed opposition will support interim President Alexandre and the nation's democratic process.
- Armed opposition groups control all of northern Haiti, including the cities of Hinche, Ounaminthe, Cap-Haïtien, and Port-de-Paix. In addition, armed opposition groups have taken over Île de la Tortue, an island with a population of 50,000 located off the coast of northern Haiti. The armed opposition has effectively isolated the north from the rest of the country by blocking the two main highways at Gonaïves and Hinche, preventing the northward transport of food and oil.

Food

- USAID's NGO development food aid partners and the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) currently have nearly 15,000 metric tons (MT) of food stocks in country. The European Union (EU) has 2,500 MT of food at a warehouse and 600 MT at the port in Port-au-Prince. Other donors have an estimated 2,000 MT available. Thus, the total amount of food assistance available from all donors is approximately 20,000 MT. This figure depends on the amount of food stocks that may have been looted.
- On February 27, looters carried out renewed attempts to break into warehouses in the Port-au-Prince port, and reports indicate that they may have taken 800 MT of European food commodities. On the same day, looters made an unsuccessful attempt to loot warehouses containing USAID-funded commodities. On February 28, approximately 2,000 people participated in looting at the Port-au-Prince port, until police and port security guards retook control of the port later in the afternoon. Intermittent looting continued on February 29. It does not appear that there has been major looting of USG-funded food stocks. USAID implementing partner Catholic Relief Services (CRS) reported on March 1 that looters stole 30 pickup trucks from the CRS garage in Port-au-Prince. The looters also stole medical supplies during the night of February 29.
- According to World Vision International (WVI), the number of food assistance beneficiaries in the Central Plateau Department has recently increased due to the addition of a new community, Boucan Carré, to the program. In February, WVI delivered food to 100 percent of its beneficiaries. WVI estimates that its distribution in March will reach 70 percent of those targeted in the Central Plateau. WVI does not anticipate a food crisis erupting in its targeted areas of Central Plateau and Île de la Gonâve, even if distributions stop for a few months, because of the strong coping mechanisms among the populations and the good December harvest.
- According to CRS, only 30 percent of orphanages in Haiti recently received food supplies to meet needs into the next month. Other orphanages may begin to run out of food by early next week, and CRS is considering using available funds to provide these orphanages with cash to purchase food on the local market. According to the Regional Red Cross in Hinche and the Central Plateau, one orphanage in Hinche closed due to the lack of food for the children.

Humanitarian Access

- USAID and its implementing partners continue to report that the primary humanitarian concerns at present are access, security, and safe passage for the transport and distribution of relief supplies, fuel, and food commodities. NGOs have asserted the need for a statement on behalf of all parties to the conflict ensuring the free passage of humanitarian operations.

Fuel

- Access to fuel continues to be a concern for both humanitarian and general consumption. Further exacerbating the situation is the destruction of at least one fuel station in Port-au-Prince as part of the general unrest. Fuel is vital not only for transport, but also for the continued operation of facilities and equipment such as hospitals, bakeries, and forklifts at ports.
- USAID reports that there are no large fuel depots outside of Port-au-Prince. In regional towns, fuel is stored at service stations, most of which have fuel tanks that store between 6,000 and 10,000 gallons of fuel. Other small towns have gas stations as well. These stations are supplied under normal circumstances via tank trucks that typically hold 9,000 gallons of fuel.

- The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reported that it may have the means of moving fuel to various hospitals within the next few days. The fuel would be used for hospital generators that provide electricity and for refrigeration capacity for vaccines.

Health

- Medical staff at the Hospital Communauté Haitienne in Port-au-Prince reported an increase in the number of trauma patients at the hospital. In addition, the hospital is in need of surgical and medical kits and has been operating mainly on generator power, but is running precariously low on diesel fuel.
- According to CARE, the hospital in Gonaïves is experiencing serious shortages of medical supplies, such as oxygen tanks, antibiotics, and other drugs. In addition, cases of diarrhea and fever are increasing due to the lack of fuel required to operate the water pumps that provide potable water to the city. Although the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delivered medical supplies to the hospital in Gonaïves, there remains a great demand for medical care and additional supplies.
- **ICRC operations:** On February 27, negotiations between ICRC and the GOH regarding the expansion of ICRC operations in the Canapé Vert hospital in Port-au-Prince ended without agreement. ICRC subsequently reported direct threats against expatriates and decided to evacuate all but two expatriate staff. However, due to security concerns, the evacuation was not possible. According to ICRC, there are no doctors at the Canapé Vert hospital.
- **EPI program:** The USAID/OFDA team recently met with the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) to discuss the new emergency task force for vaccinations. The task force includes representatives from UNICEF, PAHO, and the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) at the Ministry of Health (MOH). Within the last week, the MOH's EPI program conducted a nationwide assessment of the status of the cold chain. The MOH had access to information from 40 percent of the cold chain sites, most of which lack propane gas to maintain the integrity of the cold chain. The number of vaccines that have been lost and will need replacement must be determined. The EPI has sentinel sites in Haiti, of which 30 to 40 percent are still functional and operating. Currently there are no reports of an outbreak of the six major childhood vaccine-preventable diseases.
- **PAHO operations:** PAHO utilizes Haiti's central pharmacy, PROMESS, to warehouse pharmaceuticals. Since 1992, PROMESS has supplied essential drugs for Haiti, and is supported by in-kind and cash contributions from a number of donors. The PROMESS system reports some rupture of certain medical stocks, and limited quantity (enough for 12 months) of other stocks, such as contraceptives. On average there is a three-month supply of essential medicines.

Displaced Populations

- USAID and its NGO partners continue to report very limited displacement and no "sites" with concentrations of internally displaced persons (IDPs). According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), numbers of IDPs cannot be accurately assessed at present. However, UN OCHA notes that significant numbers of residents are moving from insecure cities toward other areas or returning to their native villages in the mountains. Movements have also been reported from rural areas to main cities.
- According to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, approximately 400 Haitians have fled to the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Cuba since early February 2004.

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

- From February 9 to 11, two USAID/OFDA Regional Advisors traveled to Port-au-Prince to assist USAID/Haiti and partner organizations with contingency planning for humanitarian assistance.
- On February 18, U.S. Ambassador to Haiti James B. Foley issued a disaster declaration due to the ongoing complex emergency in Haiti. USAID/OFDA provided \$50,000 through USAID/Haiti to support the transport and distribution of emergency relief supplies, including 12 medical kits and three surgical kits, valued at approximately \$87,000. Each medical kit is equipped to serve 10,000 people for approximately three months. On February 26, the medical kits arrived in Port-au-Prince. USAID/OFDA has approved \$400,000 in funding for PAHO to purchase additional medical supplies and to conduct emergency relief activities in Haiti. In addition, USAID/OFDA has approved \$412,287 for Catholic Relief Services (CRS) for emergency cash grants to support local institutions and provide services for most vulnerable populations.
- On February 23, the USG deployed approximately 50 U.S. Marines to Port-au-Prince as part of a Fleet Anti-Terrorist Security Team to secure the U.S. Embassy and staff. The forces' mandate does not extend to any stability operations within the country.
- On February 24, USAID/OFDA deployed a three-person team to Port-au-Prince, including a Senior Regional Advisor as Team Leader, a Health Officer, and an Information Officer.
- On February 29, the USG sent an initial contingent of approximately 100 U.S. Marines to Haiti as the first wave of an international peace-keeping force; a second contingent is scheduled to arrive on March 1.

U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO HAITI

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
USAID/Haiti	Transport and distribution of emergency relief supplies	Port-au-Prince and other affected areas	\$137,000
Pan American Health Organization	Medical equipment and emergency health activities	Nationwide	\$400,000
Catholic Relief Services	Emergency cash grants	Port-au-Prince and the southern peninsula	\$412,287
TOTAL USAID/OFDA.....			\$949,287
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO HAITI IN FY 2004 (TO DATE)			\$949,287

¹ USAID/OFDA funding represents committed and/or obligated amount as of **March 1, 2004**.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for their response efforts in Haiti can be found in the “How Can I Help” section of www.usaid.gov/haiti. USAID encourages cash donations because they: allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc.); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.

More information on making donations and volunteering services can be found at:

- USAID: www.usaid.gov → “Our Work” → “Humanitarian Assistance” → “Disaster Assistance” → “How Can I Help”
- The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or (703) 276-1914
- InterAction: www.interaction.org → “Guide to Appropriate Giving”
- Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/.