



**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 #7, Fiscal Year (FY) 2004

March 17, 2004

Note: The last fact sheet was dated March 12, 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 of the country. The democratic opposition has distanced itself from the armed groups. Since the most recent crisis began in February 2004, an estimated 300 people have reportedly been killed due to violence throughout the country.
- 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. On March 9, Haiti's seven-person advisory council selected Gérard Latortue, a former United Nations (U.N.) official and foreign minister, as Haiti's new Prime Minister.

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 U.N. Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Report.
- Due to the ongoing and chronic nature of Haiti's underdevelopment, the country is susceptible to a 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 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 in the areas of 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 March 15, former President Aristide arrived in Jamaica to be reunited with his daughters, who were sent to the U.S. before Aristide's departure from Haiti. According to Jamaica's Prime Minister P.J. Patterson, Aristide has not been granted asylum in Jamaica and may spend up to 10 weeks there. Haiti's interim Prime Minister, Gérard Latortue, indicated that the GOH viewed allowing Aristide's visit as an "unfriendly act" by Jamaica that will increase

tensions in Haiti. On March 15, Prime Minister Latortue froze diplomatic relations with Jamaica and recalled Haiti's Ambassador from Kingston. Latortue also suspended Haiti's membership in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The GOH fears that Aristide's proximity to the country will revive violence by Aristide's supporters. The Government of Jamaica has indicated that Aristide has agreed not to interfere in Haiti's political affairs or pursue a campaign to return to the presidency during his stay in Jamaica.

- On March 16, Prime Minister Latortue appointed a new cabinet that excludes members with direct affiliation to any political party, including Aristide's Lavalas party. Former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune stated that the omission of members of the former administration risks further polarizing the country. The 13-member Cabinet will form Haiti's transitional government and is expected to be sworn in on March 17.
- On March 14, a U.S. Marine was injured when a military patrol was attacked in the Port-au-Prince district of Belair, where support for Aristide remains strong. This marks the U.S. troops' first casualty in Haiti. Residents of Belair accuse U.S. soldiers of killing two unarmed men on March 12. The U.S. military stated that the soldiers were responding to firing.
- According to CARE, during the weekend of March 13 fighting broke out between the "Resistance Front" and pro-Aristide supporters in the Northwest Department resulting in four deaths in Port-de-Paix and two deaths in Bassin Bleu. As of March 16, the situation in Bassin Bleu has returned to normal.

Humanitarian Assessments

- The U.N. reported that the two-vehicle U.N. convoy that traveled on March 10 to Cap-Haïtien returned to Port-au-Prince on March 11 without incident. In addition, the U.N. deployed an overland security assessment team to the town of Jimani in the Dominican Republic on March 12 to assess cross-border operations. The U.N. reports indicate that road conditions are good, fuel stations along the route are open, and the Haitian National Police is present in Ganthier, a town located between Port-au-Prince and the Dominican Republic border.

Food

- USAID/Haiti's P.L. 480 Title II food assistance program is implemented in seven of Haiti's nine Departments through Save the Children – U.S. (SCF-US), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), World Vision International (WVI), and CARE. Approximately 12,500 metric tons (MT) of food assistance per year are distributed to 360,000 direct beneficiaries, while approximately 640,000 Haitians benefit from the Reduced Food Insecurity Program through credit, agricultural, education, and health programs.
- The primary impediments to the smooth continuation of USAID/Haiti food programs are fuel and insecurity. Shipping agents for NGOs are currently assessing port losses.
- CRS is in contact with Les Moulins d'Haiti (LMH) to arrange for the shipment of 8,300 MT of wheat in late April. LMH recently shipped 300 MT of wheat flour to Port-de-Paix and 400 MT of flour to Cap-Haïtien. CRS is also requesting military escorts for food distributions in Port-au-Prince and the transport of food to Les Cayes. CRS has not made a food distribution in the South Department for one month due to a lack of lentils. CRS has indicated that the distribution of food to its orphanages and other institutions in Port-au-Prince within two weeks is critical. Ensuring security for this distribution will be a priority.
- WVI has sufficient stocks of commodities at project sites in the Île de la Gonâve and the Central Plateau region to continue operations during March. However, WVI will need to transport commodities from Port-au-Prince to the Central Plateau within the next two weeks to ensure continuity of operations. WVI reports that schools, businesses, and banks are open in Hinche and the situation remains calm. Due to continued insecurity, the only areas where WVI has been unable to work are near the border with the Dominican Republic.
- SCF-US's food stocks in the Central Plateau region are at critically low levels, thus another distribution in two weeks is essential to avoid a disruption of services. SCF-US reports that the situation in Maïssade remains calm with schools and businesses open.
- CARE has not conducted food distributions in the Northwest Department for more than a month due to insecurity and the forced distribution of CARE's food stocks from its main warehouse in Gonaïves on February 18. CARE staff in the Northwest is currently assessing the situation. The CARE project manager indicated that Gonaïves remains calm and that CARE has resumed its personnel shuttle from Port-au-Prince to Gonaïves.
- On March 14, the U.N. World Food Program (WFP)'s truck carrying food commodities from Port-au-Prince to Cap-Haïtien arrived safely. WFP indicated that port security in Cap-Haïtien is still needed even though three commercial vessels docked and discharged cargo during the previous week. In addition, two trucks of fuel arrived on March 14 from Gonaïves. WFP is preparing a six-month Emergency Operation (EMOP) to provide assistance to the most affected people in the northern areas of the country. WFP's assistance, in partnership with other agencies, aims to ensure that children and their families meet daily nutritional needs in order to prevent a decline in their nutritional status. WFP has also launched a Special Operation (SO) to increase logistics and communications capacity for WFP and NGO programs in northern Haiti. The two operations are included in the U.N.'s Flash Appeal.

Health

- According to assessments by the USAID/OFDA team, the current health situation in Haiti is not at an emergency level. However, the health care system is experiencing a rupture in supplies, due to the insecure environment for drug deliveries and a lack of health staff reporting to work due to insecurity.
- USAID/Haiti reported on March 11 that the Hospital Albert Schweitzer, located in Deschapelles in the Central Plateau region, is functioning and received diesel fuel during the week of March 8 to continue limited operations. At present, the hospital is only able to provide emergency surgeries because of a shortage of medical and surgical supplies and drugs. The hospital's field activities have continued with some limitations due to the lack of vehicles. The hospital staff provides services for the entire Artibonite Valley region through seven satellite dispensaries and health centers.

Fuel

- The fuel situation remains uncertain in Haiti as insecurity, including thefts of truck and fuel, continue to plague some areas of the country. With protection from private guards, shipments have been successfully delivered to cities north of the capital, such as St. Marc, Gonaïves, Gros Morne, and Cap-Haïtien. According to local reports, an ocean oil tanker scheduled to arrive at the Port-au-Prince port on March 15 has been delayed until approximately March 26. Haiti could experience major fuel shortages if this date slips further.

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

- From February 9 to 11, the USAID/OFDA Senior Regional Advisor and a USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor 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. In response, USAID/OFDA has 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 March 4, USAID/OFDA distributed one medical kit each to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), CRS, and WVI, and nine kits to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)-supported PROMESS warehouse. The PROMESS warehouse will store the nine kits on behalf of Management Sciences for Health (MSH), PAHO, and USAID/OFDA. USAID/OFDA has also approved \$400,000 for PAHO to purchase additional medical supplies and to conduct emergency relief activities in Haiti. In addition, USAID/OFDA has approved \$412,287 for CRS for emergency cash grants to support local institutions and provide services for the most vulnerable populations. USAID/OFDA has approved \$300,000 for UNICEF to support expanded program on immunization (EPI) activities, including vaccines and the cold chain. USAID/OFDA has provided \$340,981 to Air Serv for emergency air transport. Two light planes, each with capacity for nine passengers, have been available to the USAID/OFDA team to conduct assessments and deliver relief supplies in Les Cayes, Port-de-Paix, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, and Île de la Gonâve. Various USAID implementing partners, including U.N. agencies and NGOs, have accompanied the USAID/OFDA team and USAID/Haiti staff on assessment trips. USAID/OFDA has also provided \$500,026 in funding to WVI for emergency relief kits and cash-for-work initiatives. USAID/OFDA has also contributed \$54,806 for 6,000 hygiene kits to be distributed by UNICEF.
- 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 March 7, a Military Liaison Officer joined the team in Port-au-Prince. The USAID/OFDA assessment team is currently comprised of the Regional Advisor as Team Leader, an Information Officer, and a Military Liaison Officer.
- The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) has provided \$20,000 to the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince for assistance to returned Haitian migrants. In addition, State/PRM has contributed \$900,000 to the ICRC for its activities in Haiti, which include strengthening medical/surgical capabilities at hospitals in Port-au-Prince and Gonaïves, as well as improving security at hospitals and medical facilities throughout the country.

U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO HAITI

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA Assistance¹			
Air Serv	Emergency air transport for USAID/OFDA, NGOs, U.N. and other humanitarian organizations	Nationwide	\$340,981
Catholic Relief Services	Emergency cash grants	Port-au-Prince and the southern peninsula	\$412,287
Pan American Health Organization	Medical equipment and emergency health activities	Nationwide	\$400,000
UNICEF	Expanded Program for Immunization	Nationwide	\$300,000
USAID/Haiti	Transport and distribution of emergency relief supplies; 12 emergency medical and 3 surgical kits	Port-au-Prince and other affected areas	\$137,000
USAID/Haiti	Transportation and distribution by UNICEF of 6,000 hygiene kits	Nationwide	\$54,806
World Vision International	Emergency relief kits and cash-for-work initiatives	North, Central Plateau, South, West, and Northwest departments, and Île de la Gonâve	\$500,026
Total USAID/OFDA.....			\$2,145,100
State/PRM Assistance			
U.S. Embassy/Port-au-Prince	Assistance to Haitian migrants	Nationwide	\$20,000
ICRC	Strengthening medical and surgical capabilities at hospitals	Nationwide	\$900,000
Total State/PRM.....			\$920,000
TOTAL USG Humanitarian Assistance to Haiti in FY 2004 (to date)			\$3,065,100

¹USAID/OFDA funding represents committed and/or obligated amount as of **March 17, 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/.