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

## ***HAITI – Complex Emergency***

Fact Sheet #8, Fiscal Year (FY) 2004

March 24, 2004

*Note: The last fact sheet was dated March 17, 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 insurgents 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.
- 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 in several areas 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 150<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 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***

- The Multinational Interim Force-Haiti (MIF-H), comprised of U.S., French, Canadian, and Chilean troops, has begun to deploy beyond the capital. On March 17, approximately 200 French troops arrived in Cap-Haïtien and 150 French Legionnaires arrived in Gonaïves on March 19. The troops will eventually extend their presence to Fort Liberté in the Northeast Department and Port-de-Paix in the Northwest Department. The mission of the MIF-H includes establishing control in northern Haiti and securing the road from Port-au-Prince to Gonaïves and Cap-Haïtien. U.S. forces will deploy to the southern and eastern areas of the country.

- CARE reported that the situation in Gonaïves continues to improve. Gonaïves police, headed by a new Departmental Director, have returned to the town. The CARE office in Gonaïves is operational, and staff has returned to project sites in the Northwest Department.
- On March 19, a U.N. security assessment mission traveled to the northeastern town of Fort Liberté, where the situation remains tense. Freed prisoners control most areas of the town. There is no electricity or telephone service, nor are there police in the town. Both schools and markets are closed. Many buildings have been burned and the town is nearly deserted, according to the mission. In addition, the port is open but not functioning.

### *Humanitarian Assessments*

- **Hinche Assessment:** On March 19, USAID/Haiti, USAID/OFDA, World Vision International (WVI), and U.S. Embassy representatives flew to Hinche to determine if the humanitarian situation has changed since the assessment conducted by USAID/Haiti and USAID/OFDA on March 3. The results of the assessment indicate that the situation in Hinche and the surrounding area has improved since the March 3 assessment, and the area is mostly calm. While some schools and banks have re-opened, there is no electricity in Hinche.
- **Commerce:** Market activities are reportedly normal, except in areas close to the border with the Dominican Republic. Although the border with the Dominican Republic is open, border crossing is reported to be very difficult, and circulation in the area has been greatly reduced. In addition, *chimères*, or armed Aristide supporters, are reportedly hiding in areas close to the border. Consequently, markets in towns such as Cerca-la-Source are not functioning. Due to insecurity in Port-au-Prince, fear of hijackings, and damage caused to businesses in the capital, the routine transport of goods from Port-au-Prince to Hinche is not occurring.
- **Food:** WVI resumed food distributions on March 15. According to the community representatives, some families in the Hinche area only have enough food to eat one meal every other day, and available fruit or sugarcane on days without meals. WVI beneficiaries have reportedly been sharing their one-month rations with these families in need. There is concern that the rations will not last for the month due to the sharing of food with others.
- The results of the assessment indicate that food prices for items such as rice, peas, cooking oil, and sugar have increased since the recent outbreak of conflict at the beginning of February. Corn, peas, cassava, and sorghum are grown locally, but the lack of other products such as rice and spaghetti has caused a significant increase in prices for local goods. Some people are selling livestock and personal items, such as furniture, for food.
- **Water:** In early March, Hinche residents reported that they had access to water every two days for two hours. At present, water is available for one hour every four to five days in most areas and for one hour every 15 days in some areas.
- **Health:** Four children in Thomassique reportedly died of diseases related to malnutrition, including diarrhea, pneumonia, and gastroenteritis. Cases of typhoid and gastroenteritis are being registered in Hinche. HIV/AIDS is more of a concern, as people are foregoing protection measures due to a decrease in the supply of condoms and the lack of money.
- **Migration:** The assessment team noted that some people from remote areas have been moving to towns such as Hinche to look for work or food. In the past, those in need of work would travel to Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic; however, this is not an option due to the insecurity in the area.
- **Cap-Haïtien Assessment:** On March 21, USAID/OFDA facilitated a U.N. DPKO assessment trip to Cap-Haïtien by providing air transport. The USAID/OFDA team accompanied a five-member U.N. DPKO assessment team on the visit. The results of the assessment indicate that the main issue to monitor is the interplay among the French troops, the insurgents, and the new Haitian National Police detachment. The situation in Cap-Haïtien is gradually returning to normal, the port is functioning, and commercial activity is resuming.
- **Presence of French troops in Cap-Haïtien:** The French troops are currently deployed to Gonaïves and Cap-Haïtien. The French troops, along with other MIF-H troops in other locations, are meeting and negotiating with insurgents to encourage them to disarm and re-integrate into community life.
- **Security:** The new Departmental Director of the police arrived on March 19 and a small detachment of police is re-establishing a presence in Cap-Haïtien. Although *chimères* remain in the city and the hills around the area, they have not been active lately. However, according to local reports, the *chimères* are a continuing threat in Cap-Haïtien. Insurgents reportedly control nearly all areas of the town, with the exception of a few neighborhoods where there seems to be a tacit understanding between insurgents and Aristide supporters that the insurgents will not attempt to establish control. A general impression gathered throughout the assessment is that the population appears to appreciate the presence of the insurgents, as violence has decreased and the situation has begun to stabilize since the insurgents established control.
- **Commerce:** The port of Cap-Haïtien is operational and several ships are docked in the port and off-loading supplies. As of March 21, the insurgents continue to provide security at the port facilities. The border with the Dominican Republic (DR) is now open between Ouanaminthe in Haiti and Dajabón in the DR and informal commercial activity has begun to resume, although the customs function appears to be operating irregularly. There is no legitimate governmental customs office functioning in Ouanaminthe.

- Electricity: Sogener, the privately owned local electricity provider, had a contract with the Government of Haiti (GOH) to provide electricity for the north, but the GOH has not paid Sogener for more than three months. Until this problem is resolved, there will be no electricity in Cap-Haitien.
- **Les Cayes Assessment:** On March 22, USAID/Haiti, USAID/OFDA, U.N. DPKO, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) representatives traveled by air to Les Cayes to determine if the humanitarian situation has changed since the assessment conducted on March 5.
- Electricity and fuel: There has been no electricity in Les Cayes for more than one month, due to the lack of fuel.
- Health: According to the assessment team, the number of patients in the Immaculée Conception Hospital has remained more or less the same since the recent crisis began; however, there have been slightly more trauma patients on a sporadic basis. There have been no major increases in morbidity in recent weeks. As previously noted, health problems in Les Cayes are chronic and due mainly to the lack of potable water. The hospital staff indicated that major priorities at the hospital include the need for electricity, fuel, sterilization equipment, and a more powerful generator.
- Food: CRS resumed food distributions on March 16 to more than 150 sites in the southern peninsula. CRS has not had any problems with distributions, but will not conduct distributions in the southwestern town of Tiburon, where the security situation is reportedly poor.
- **U.N. Assessment Mission to St. Marc:** On March 16, representatives of the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UN OCHA visited St. Marc to assess humanitarian conditions. The mission determined that although St. Marc was a site of recent violence and unrest, the city has not been affected as much as other Haitian cities. Basic social services and commerce are slowly resuming, and those who fled the city are returning. According to the mission assessment, city residents are apprehensive, and this tension is unlikely to dissolve until the present political uncertainty is addressed. The mission also noted that many of the problems in St. Marc are structural issues that existed prior to the current crisis.
- According to the mission, commercial activities appeared to be resuming in St. Marc: banks, businesses, and the City Library were open. The port appeared to be functioning, although local residents indicated that it had been looted during the last few weeks. Many goods for sale at the main market are assumed to be stolen goods from port warehouses.
- The mission visited two schools in St. Marc, both marked by low attendance. The mission also visited the Hospital Saint Nicolas. Hospital staff indicated that they have been able to continue operations and have been assisted by medicines and materials provided by the ICRC and Médecins Sans Frontières–Belgium (MSF-B).

### ***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), CRS, 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. NGO staff continue to assess losses at the port in Port-au-Prince, and final commodity loss reports will be available soon. CRS reported that it has 3,000 metric tons (MT) of food commodities at the port, which it plans to move to warehouses in Port-au-Prince and Les Cayes, as well as to institutions within the capital. WVI did not suffer any losses at the port, and currently has 1,000 MT of food in the warehouse in Port-au-Prince. SCF-US currently has 2,660 MT of food commodities at the port. CARE has 2,000 MT of food commodities at the port and believes that nine out of 147 containers have been damaged.
- USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) has authorized the use of P.L. 480 Title II food commodities for emergency purposes in Haiti during the current crisis. USAID/FFP Development Programs Division will replace looted and distributed food commodities for current food security programs, once the final commodity loss reports are received.
- 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 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. WFP's Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO), which targets populations affected by drought in the Northwest Department, has been extended for five months.

### ***Fuel/Electricity***

- According to the USAID/OFDA assessment team, Electricité d'Haiti (EDH), the national electric company, is currently in deficit and is unable to obtain funding for fuel from the GOH. Private energy providers are also unable to obtain funding. Until the GOH is able to fund EDH and private energy providers, electrical power in Haiti will continue to be scarce to non-existent.

**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 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. The surgical kits arrived in Port-au-Prince on March 19. USAID/OFDA will donate the kits to the PROMESS program for distribution. 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, Île de la Gonâve, and Hinche. 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, requested by the UNICEF under the U.N. Flash Appeal. The kits will be consigned to UNICEF for distribution to vulnerable populations. To date, the total value of USAID/OFDA relief assistance is approximately \$2.1 million.
- 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>
<b>USAID/OFDA Assistance<sup>1</sup></b>			
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	Transport and distribution of 6,000 hygiene kits consigned to UNICEF	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
<b>Total</b>			
<b>USAID/OFDA.....</b>			<b>\$2,145,100</b>
<b>State/PRM Assistance</b>			
U.S. Embassy/Port-au-Prince	Assistance to Haitian migrants	Nationwide	\$20,000
ICRC	Strengthening medical and surgical capabilities at hospitals	Nationwide	\$900,000
<b>Total State/PRM.....</b>			<b>\$920,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USG Humanitarian Assistance to Haiti in FY 2004 (to date) .....</b>			<b>\$3,065,100</b>

<sup>1</sup> USAID/OFDA funding represents committed and/or obligated amount as of **March 24, 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](http://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](http://www.usaid.gov) → “Our Work” → “Humanitarian Assistance” → “Disaster Assistance” → “How Can I Help”
- The Center for International Disaster Information: [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org) or (703) 276-1914
- InterAction: [www.interaction.org](http://www.interaction.org) → “Guide to Appropriate Giving”
- Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID web site at [http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/disaster\\_assistance/](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/).