



**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 #5, Fiscal Year (FY) 2004

March 9, 2004

*Note: The last fact sheet was dated March 5, 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, approximately 130 people have been killed in the violence.
- 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.

### **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 150<sup>th</sup> 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, the U.N. Security Council authorized the immediate deployment of an international military force to restore order in Haiti. The U.S. has assumed initial control of the multinational force. Troops from other countries will support the military force, followed by a longer-term U.N. peacekeeping mission. There are approximately 1,750 U.S. troops, 600 French troops, 400 Chilean troops, and a small contingent of Canadian troops in Haiti. The troops have spread out throughout Port-au-Prince to secure key areas and facilities, including the presidential palace,

the airport, and foreign embassies. On March 5, U.S. troops in Haiti moved for the first time beyond the capital to Gonaïves and Cap-Haïtien. The troops will assess the needs of the Haitian national police in the two cities and determine the possible scope of future international troop deployments.

- On March 4, the Organization of American States (OAS) announced the establishment of the Tripartite Council, appointed by the GOH, the Democratic Platform coalition, and the international community. Council members include Leslie Voltaire, the Minister of Haitians Living Abroad; former Senator Paul Denis, a member of the Democratic Platform coalition; and Adama Guindo, the U.N. Resident Representative in Haiti. The Tripartite Council has selected the seven members of the Council of Wise Men, which in turn will propose a new Prime Minister to interim President Alexandre.
- On March 7, violence broke out during a protest in Port-au-Prince, resulting in at least six deaths and at least 30 injuries. On March 8, hundreds of looters targeted an industrial park near the Port-au-Prince airport and threatened passing cars with machetes. International media reported that multinational security forces were not stationed in the vicinity during the disturbance. Armed opposition leader Guy Philippe stated on March 8 that armed combatants would take up arms if the multinational security force is unable to disarm the *chimères*, or armed Aristide supporters.
- On March 8, former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide declared from exile in the Central African Republic that he was still the President of Haiti, and called for “peaceful resistance” in Haiti. Interim President Alexandre was officially inaugurated on March 8.
- On March 8, the U.N. announced that an assessment team is scheduled to arrive in Haiti on March 9 to help prepare for the deployment of a peacekeeping mission to the country by June 1. The team will make recommendations to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan regarding the size and composition of the mission.

### *Humanitarian Assessments*

- **Port-au-Prince port assessment:** On March 5, USAID/Haiti officials and a USAID/OFDA team member conducted an assessment of the Port-au-Prince port. There are initial indications that looters stole approximately 10 percent of USG-funded food stocks. As of March 6, U.S. Marines have secured the port area where P.L. 480 food commodities are stored. On the evening of March 6, U.S. Marines exchanged gunfire with would-be looters. Warehouse officials are attempting to conduct a full assessment of current food stockpiles; however, this assessment could be hindered if insecurity recurs in the port area. Non-governmental organizations, including CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and Save the Children-U.S. (SCF-U.S.), will attempt to move their containers out of the port as security permits.
- **Port-de-Paix assessment:** On March 5, representatives of USAID/OFDA, USAID Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP), U.N. World Food Program (WFP), U.N. Children’s Education Fund (UNICEF), and CARE conducted an assessment of the humanitarian situation in the city of Port-de-Paix, located on the northwestern coast. The results of the assessment indicated that there is a lack of security in the city, as eight separate armed groups are intimidating and extorting money from the local population. A committee of notables acts as a liaison between the population and the armed groups; however, this group has no legal authority.
- The Port-de-Paix assessment also indicated that looters broke into the city’s Department of Health office, and the vaccines in the cold chain may have been compromised. There have been no reports of measles or any other disease outbreak in Port-de-Paix. Since major flooding in December 2003 destroyed Port-de-Paix’s water infrastructure, the city has had a water shortage. Access to food is also becoming difficult for the poorest segments of the population, particularly since the suspension of WFP food distributions. Food prices have reportedly increased from 25 to 100 percent. Some fuel is available on the market, though the cost of one gallon has increased from approximately 23 Haitian dollars to 80 Haitian dollars. Lack of fuel has affected the city’s electricity supply and hindered the local hospital’s ability to sterilize equipment (and thereby perform major surgeries).
- **Les Cayes assessment:** On March 5, representatives from USAID/OFDA, USAID/Haiti, CRS, and UNICEF conducted an assessment of the humanitarian situation in the southwestern town of Les Cayes. The security situation in the town is fragile, with narcotic traffickers reportedly influencing local events. The humanitarian situation has not deteriorated significantly as a result of the recent political unrest, and the only sector currently affected appears to be fuel.
- The poor water situation in Les Cayes pre-dates the current political crisis. The water needs to be treated with chlorine, but there is a lack of public education on water safety. CRS stated that there have been some cases of typhoid and diarrheal diseases as a result of the lack of potable water. Health problems in Les Cayes are also chronic and due mainly to the lack of potable water. Food insecurity in the town appears to be primarily due to a lack of purchasing power among some of the population, particularly in the poor area of La Savanne. Food prices have increased in Les Cayes by approximately 30 percent.
- **Cap-Haïtien assessment:** On March 8, the USAID/OFDA assessment team traveled to Cap-Haïtien with representatives of WFP, UNICEF, CRS, and CARITAS to assess the humanitarian situation. The assessment team cited fuel as the main concern in Cap-Haïtien, as in the other towns previously assessed. Though fuel stations remain open, the price of fuel has increased from 17 Haitian dollars to between 60 and 80 Haitian dollars. Stores and schools are also open in the city. No WFP food stocks currently remain in Cap-Haïtien. Since the recent crisis

began in early February, looters have stolen 800 MT of assorted food commodities from the WFP warehouse, in addition to 15,000 bags of commercial rice from the port. No major shipment of food, commercial or humanitarian, has arrived in Cap-Haïtien since the current political unrest began.

- The USAID/OFDA team met with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Cap-Haïtien on March 8. According to ICRC, the priority areas for the provision of humanitarian assistance in Cap-Haïtien, and the northern department in general, are as follows: fuel, vaccines (the re-supply of vaccines as well as fuel to maintain the cold chain), security for the “humanitarian corridor” from Port-au-Prince to Cap-Haïtien to allow for the transport of food and relief supplies, oxygen for hospitals, and security for hospitals.

### ***Food***

- USAID’s NGO development food aid partners and 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.
- WFP is preparing a six-month Emergency Operation (EMOP) to provide assistance to the most affected people in the north 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 is also preparing a Special Operation (SO) to increase logistics and communications capacity.
- On March 5, WFP delivered between 12 and 16 MT of food rations to a hospital and orphanage in Port-au-Prince. This marked WFP’s first food distribution since the outbreak of unrest in the country in early February 2004. WFP indicated that, if the security situation does not deteriorate, WFP will carry out its planned March distributions to 66,000 people at 23 health centers in the capital. All of the 94 schools in Port-au-Prince that normally benefit from WFP food distributions remain closed.

### ***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 that exists for drug deliveries and a lack of health staff reporting to work due to insecurity. The poor public health infrastructure is a chronic problem that needs to be addressed as soon as possible.
- The ICRC surgical team working at Canapé-Vert Hospital in Port-au-Prince is providing treatment free of charge for the wounded. The numbers of injured had decreased, until the outbreak of violence in Port-au-Prince on March 7. On March 4, ICRC brought in surgical supplies from the Dominican Republic to establish a supplementary operating theatre at Canapé-Vert Hospital. Additional beds have also been installed, bringing the total number to 100. ICRC has provided surgical kits (each kit contains supplies for 100 surgeries) to hospitals in Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, and Port-au-Prince. On March 6, an ICRC convoy traveling from the Dominican Republic across the Dajabon-Ouanaminthe border arrived in Gonaïves with a generator for the city’s public hospital. The convoy also carried fuel for National Society ambulances and ICRC vehicles. ICRC plans to bring a surgical team to the hospital in Gonaïves, security permitting.

### **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 World Vision International (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 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 CRS for emergency cash grants to support local institutions and provide services for most vulnerable populations.
- 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.
- USAID/OFDA has provided \$340,981 to Air Serv for emergency air transport. On March 3, two light planes contracted by USAID/OFDA with Air Serv arrived in Port-au-Prince. The planes, each with capacity for nine passengers, are available to the USAID/OFDA team to conduct assessments and deliver relief supplies throughout

the country as required. Various USAID implementing partners, including U.N. agencies and NGOs, may accompany 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.
- 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 Haitian migrants. In addition, State/PRM will support the ICRC appeal for Haiti. The final amount of funding for the appeal is pending approval.

#### 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>			
USAID/Haiti	Transport and distribution of emergency relief supplies; 12 emergency medical and three surgical kits	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
Air Serv	Emergency air transport in support of USAID/OFDA, NGOs, U.N. and other humanitarian organizations	Nationwide	\$340,981
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 USAID/OFDA.....</b>			<b>\$1,790,294</b>
<b>STATE/PRM ASSISTANCE</b>			
U.S. Embassy/Port-au-Prince	Assistance to Haitian migrants	Nationwide	\$20,000
<b>TOTAL STATE/PRM.....</b>			<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO HAITI IN FY 2004 (TO DATE) .....</b>			<b>\$1,810,294</b>

<sup>1</sup> USAID/OFDA funding represents committed and/or obligated amount as of **March 9, 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/).