



**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 #9, Fiscal Year (FY) 2004

March 31, 2004

Note: The last fact sheet was dated March 24, 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.
- 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.
- 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 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.
- 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 to provide \$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

General

- On March 26, the 15-nation Caribbean Community (CARICOM) decided to neither recognize nor reject the interim Government of Haiti (GOH), headed by Prime Minister Gérard Latortue. At the end of the two-day summit, the Caribbean leaders announced intentions to discuss the issue of whether to recognize the GOH at the next CARICOM meeting in July 2004. During the summit, CARICOM leaders also indicated that they will request that the U.N. General Assembly or Secretary-General Kofi Annan oversee an investigation into former President Aristide's departure and resignation on February 29. CARICOM may continue with announced plans to send humanitarian assistance and contribute troops to a U.N. peacekeeping force that would replace the current Multinational Interim Force-Haiti (MIF-H) by June.

- According to data released by the Central Bank of Haiti (BRH), the flow of remittances distributed by foreign exchange brokers decreased from \$33.5 million in January to \$14.6 million in February, due to the closure of financial institutions in mid-February and the socio-political disturbances that followed. Banks and brokers reopened during the second week of March.

Humanitarian Assessments

- **Môle St.-Nicolas and Bombardopolis Assessment:** On March 24, USAID/Haiti and USAID/OFDA conducted an assessment of the humanitarian situation in the northwestern towns of Môle St.-Nicolas and Bombardopolis. The assessment indicated that there are no major security concerns in either town, and that the main issues in the area are the need for greater access to food and medicine, the provision of healthcare, and improved roads and infrastructure. Some public institutions, such as the justice system, are not functioning in the area. There is no police presence in either town. Community representatives in Môle St.-Nicolas and Bombardopolis indicated that the area's problems are chronic and not a result of the recent crisis.
- **Food security:** The Môle St.-Nicolas and Bombardopolis area does not have an agricultural base to support the local population, and residents normally rely upon food distributions and the importation of food from other areas of the country to supplement local production. However, in recent months, these towns have been unable to import food due to the lack of transport resulting from the politically fueled insecurity. For this reason, food reserves are much lower than normal. In Môle St.-Nicolas, some street vendors and small businesses that sell food are closing down because of the lack of supply and price increases. Prices of food commodities have doubled. In addition, the December to January harvest represented only 30 percent of the normal harvest due to drought.
- **Health situation in Môle St.-Nicolas:** At the CARE-supported health center in Môle St.-Nicolas, staff indicated that there have been fewer patients than normal, as patients cannot afford to pay for medicine. However, between January and February and the present, the number of children with malnutrition increased by seven percent at the local health center. Health center staff attributed the increase in malnutrition to the lack of access to food.
- **Health situation in Bombardopolis:** At the Hôpital Evangelique de Bombardopolis, staff indicated that the health situation has deteriorated from two months ago, when there were no reported cases of kwashiorkor or marasmus. In March, there were two cases of kwashiorkor and one case of marasmus in children under five years of age. In children over five years of age, there was one case of kwashiorkor and two cases of marasmus. The staff attributed the increase to the scarcity of rain since December 2003, the lack of food reserves, the lack of food distributions, prices increases, and transportation difficulties to other towns, especially Port-au-Prince, due to insecurity.
- **Migration:** According to community representatives, some individuals have moved from Gonaïves and other towns to the Bombardopolis and Môle St.-Nicolas area due to insecurity. At the same time, some people have left the Bombardopolis and Môle St.-Nicolas area looking for food.
- **Fuel prices:** The price of gasoline has decreased from 60 Haitian dollars per gallon (approximately \$6.60) during the height of the crisis in February to 28 Haitian dollars per gallon (approximately \$3.10) at present. The price of diesel fuel has also decreased from 50 Haitian dollars per gallon (approximately \$6.30) in February to 22 Haitian dollars per gallon (approximately \$2.80) at present. These prices are slightly higher than normal.
- **Port-de-Paix Assessment:** According to the March 29 Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC) Periodic Report, Alisei, an Italian NGO, is currently conducting an assessment trip to Port-de-Paix. Alisei reported that a new chief of police is expected to assume control in Port-de-Paix on March 31. Alisei has been able to move around the city without problems. Although schools have been open in Port-de-Paix since March 22, attendance has been low. Alisei reported that access to food continues to be difficult, especially since the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) suspended distributions. Food prices, which had increased between 25 to 100 percent during the height of the political crisis, are stabilizing, but have not yet decreased to pre-crisis levels. The price of one gallon of fuel in the Port-de-Paix area increased to 80 Haitian Dollars during the crisis, but has decreased to 25 to 30 Haitian Dollars as of March 26. USAID/OFDA facilitated the transport of Alisei to Port-de-Paix on March 26, and will facilitate the return of Alisei on April 3.

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 are distributed to 360,000 direct beneficiaries during FY 2004, while approximately 640,000 Haitians benefit from the Food Insecurity Program through credit, agricultural, education, and health activities.
- The primary impediments to the smooth continuation of USAID/Haiti food programs are lack of fuel and insecurity. 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.
- The WFP Haiti Emergency Operation (EMOP 10347.0) was approved on March 23. The EMOP, valued at \$7.9 million, will provide 9,800 MT of emergency food assistance to 140,000 beneficiaries during a period of eight months. The goal of the EMOP is to prevent deterioration in the food security situation. 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. On March 26, a WFP-chartered cargo vessel carrying approximately 1,550 MT of food commodities, the largest shipment of food assistance to northern Haiti since the start of the crisis, arrived in Cap-Haïtien.

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 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 and were donated to the PROMESS program.
- USAID/OFDA provided \$400,000 for PAHO to purchase additional medical supplies and to conduct emergency medical activities in Haiti.
- USAID/OFDA has approved \$300,000 for the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) to support immunization (EPI) activities, including vaccines and the cold chain. USAID/OFDA has also contributed \$54,806 for 6,000 hygiene kits, requested under the U.N. Flash Appeal. The kits will be consigned to UNICEF for distribution to vulnerable populations.
- USAID/OFDA contributed \$412,287 to CRS for emergency cash grants to support local institutions and provide services for the most vulnerable populations. USAID/OFDA has also provided \$500,026 in funding to WVI for emergency relief kits and cash-for-work initiatives.
- USAID/OFDA has provided \$340,981 to Air Serv International 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 throughout the country. Various USAID partners, including the U.S. Embassy, U.N. agencies, CARE, CRS, WVI, SCF-U.S., and the Organization of American States (OAS), have accompanied the USAID/OFDA team and USAID/Haiti staff on assessment trips.
- 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 total value of USAID/OFDA relief assistance to date is approximately \$2.1 million.
- 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 International Committee of the Red Cross (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 International	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 (EPI)	Nationwide	\$300,000
USAID/Haiti	Twelve emergency medical and three surgical kits, including transport	Port-au-Prince and other affected areas	\$137,000
USAID/Haiti	6,000 hygiene kits consigned to UNICEF, including transport	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

¹ USAID/OFDA funding represents committed and/or obligated amount as of **March 31, 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/.