



## Strengthening of the Legal Framework for Disabilities in Haiti

### USAID develops new approaches to assist persons with disabilities.



*The Secretary of State for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities hosts a press conference on progress of government policies regarding disabilities.*

USAID's support is helping to build the long term capacity of the GOH to draft, adopt, and implement laws that promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Anticipated results include:

- Creation of an Inter-Governmental action group on disabilities to oversee all aspects of the program.
- Formation of a government policy outlining agency lines of authority and responsibility for policy development with regards to persons with disabilities.
- Support for the efforts in the elaboration of construction codes, acknowledging accessibility in the universal design.
- Creation of a disability caucus in the Haitian Congress.

### Overview

The earthquake that shook Haiti on January 12, 2010, was the most powerful earthquake to strike the country in over 200 years. The earthquake resulted in approximately 230,000 deaths, and an estimated 300,000 injuries. Individuals suffered bone fractures, paralysis, spinal cord injuries, peripheral nerve damage, and an estimated 4,000 amputations occurred. The effects of the earthquake added to the pre-earthquake estimate of 800,000 persons with disabilities already living in Haiti.

The majority of the population survives largely on subsistence agriculture, making persons with disabilities unduly reliant on others for survival. Persons with disabilities, and the family members that support them, are often forced to migrate to urban centers in search of services, including basic health care and education. However, the earthquake decimated the services that had previously been available to persons with disabilities. Furthermore, earthquake relief efforts struggled to integrate access to persons with disabilities into program planning.

USAID has partnered with Organization of American States (OAS) to reverse this trend. USAID and OAS have provided technical support to a series of joint initiatives by the Secretary of State for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities (SEIPH) and the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP) to develop new approaches to inclusion, integration, and assistance for persons with disabilities.

### Objectives

Working in partnership with this project, we aim to establish a permanent, collaborative, and institutionalized response to rehabilitation, inclusion, and assistance for persons with disabilities.

### Activities

1. **Promote the adoption of Haitian governmental policies** and laws that fully integrate an inclusive approach to persons with disabilities.
2. **Support the Government of Haiti** in institutionalizing sustainable government processes, lines of authority, and programs that promote and enforce inclusive policies.
3. **Raise awareness and foster government cooperation** with civil society to promote government accountability and sustainability of the systems and policies adopted.

**Life of Project:** November 2011– November 2014

**Implementing Partner:** Organization of American States