



# FOCALPoint

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## FOCUS ON HAITI

### Haiti's Economic Prospects 'Hopeful'

Carlo Dade interviews Paul Collier

#### 30,000 Haitians in U.S. want no deportations

The United States has 30,000 Haitians facing deportation living within its borders. The Haitian government and civil society groups argue that they should receive temporary protected status on the grounds of environmental disaster, rather than be returned to an impoverished and storm-battered Haiti. Environmental disaster as grounds for refugee protection in the U.S. has a precedent with citizens of El Salvador and Honduras gaining refugee status due to natural disasters. The Haitian government argues that an influx of 30,000 deportees would place undue strain on its economy. Haiti is now waiting for U.S. President Barack Obama's administration to issue a final decision. The previous administration denied the requests for refugee status. Some of the Haitians have lived in the U.S. for years or married Americans.

FOCAL's Executive Director Carlo Dade interviewed Oxford University economist Paul Collier about his report, *Haiti: From Natural Catastrophe to Economic Security*, commissioned by United Nations Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon about how to re-start the Haitian economy. This report is available on FOCALPoint's 2009 web page.

**Carlo Dade:** How did this report come about?

**Paul Collier:** Ban-Ki Moon asked me to go to Haiti and try and come up with some ideas that would help the government and to build on the security that UN peacekeepers were providing with some credible prospects of greater prosperity. I think especially after the hurricanes, people were a bit demoralized and worried. That was a major setback.

**Dade:** You had not done work on Haiti before so was he looking for an outsider?

**Collier:** I've done this book, *The Bottom Billion*, Ban-Ki Moon has been rather keen on. He asked me, 'Haiti is a classic country of the bottom billion. Can you help to figure out how the international community can help the government to move on?' That was a pretty sensible request and so I said I would do my best.

**Dade:** Was this your first visit to Haiti?

**Collier:** It was, yes, so I was very careful not to assume it was Africa in the Caribbean. What struck me was what a hopeful environment it was. There were many features which basically spelled opportunity and that Africa didn't have.

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## Note from the Guest Editor — Haiti Needs Jobs To Be Sustainable

**H**aiti is Canada's second largest aid recipient. Despite the economic downturn, Canada has not cut its pledge to Haiti of \$555 million over five years in direct bilateral aid, roughly \$110 million per year. Put another way, Ottawa sends to Haiti each year about one-half of Saskatchewan's equalization payment. Canada has no hard interests, historic link or debt to Haiti and only negligible trade, which makes this sum an amazing contribution and foreign policy commitment.

While the Canadian media has all but ignored Canada's role in Haiti in favour of Afghanistan, the international community is preparing for an international donors conference in April to be in Washington, D.C. In advance of that conference, one must ask, has Canada's aid made a difference? The answer is, yes. Indeed, Canadian aid dollars have mattered in Haiti, from feeding over 300,000 school children each day to building infrastructure and providing emergency relief after hurricanes and flooding. In addition, Canada is providing over \$65 million to support the operation of the Haitian government and parliament, including funds to assist the government in preparing and implementing development plans as well as to work with international donors.


But is Haiti any closer to swimming on its own or is it merely treading water? In Haiti's case, "treading water" means that the country has not fallen apart and mass starvation and pandemics have been avoided. This is a major accomplishment. Yet, are Canada's efforts, combined with the efforts of the international community, advancing the long-term development of a self-sustaining Haiti? Is Haiti now better able to exercise sovereignty over its domestic and international affairs? Are we getting any closer to the point where

massive interventions by donors will no longer be needed? The answer is largely a mixed bag, but appears on the whole to be no.

Haitian President René Préval was the first foreign head of state to meet the new U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. In a week-long visit, Préval pressed Clinton and officials at the Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank and International Monetary Fund for an additional US\$100 million in aid, on top of the US\$250 million in bilateral aid and above the emergency disaster assistance received from the U.S. for the recent hurricanes and floods in 2008.

Finally, after three years into his second and final term as president, Préval has said new emergency aid would focus on creating jobs in Haiti. Formal sector job creation is a crucial missing link for Haiti. Without job creation and economic growth, insecurity remains a concern and the government moves no closer to being able to gain the revenues needed to become self-sufficient, let alone to contribute to funding basic services, infrastructure, security, education or health. Other emergencies have overwhelmed donors from the World Bank to the Canadian International Development Agency, preventing them from focusing on job creation.

This makes the recent report by Oxford economist Paul Collier, author of *The Bottom Billion*, so interesting and timely. Written for the United Nations Secretary General, the report provides a plan that, while not the be all and end all, could help Haiti and donors address job creation. It is also a welcome outsider view of Haiti that may help stimulate fresh ideas and allow donors to take a pro-active, rather than a reactive approach to Haiti. Job creation, if it is to be sustainable and help the economy grow, needs to involve the private sector.

Now it is up to donors and the Haitian government to seize the opportunity of the April donor conference and put job creation and growth as the next step in the international effort to help Haiti get back on its feet. 

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Carlo Dade

*Carlo Dade*

## Collier: Haiti's Economic Prospects 'Hopeful' *(continued from page 1)*

First and foremost, Haiti is in a neighborhood of prosperity and the typical African country is very far from being in a neighborhood of prosperity. And neighborhoods matter. That is a big, big opportunity for Haiti.

Second thing, Haiti is not subject to a lot of ethnic division. It's not ethnically polarized in the way that quite a few African societies are.

Thirdly, it has got this really powerful trade deal with America in the form of Hope II, which as far as I can see is the best trade deal on Earth and is exactly the sort of trade deal that I want to see for the bottom billion and Haiti has got it.

Fourthly, it has got this very big Diaspora in North America. That is a huge potential asset in terms of remittances and skills and lobbying within North America. That is presumably why it has got Hope II because the Haitian community in America set to work and lobbied for it. So that Diaspora community is much bigger relative to population than a typical African society and much more powerful.

Compared to the sort of societies that I was used to, Haiti has a lot of opportunity. That led me to think that Haiti was close to getting out of the trap of stagnation.

I wanted to produce a report that was a very simple and focused agenda, not an overloaded agenda. It's easy to produce a long list of all the things that would make things better. That doesn't help at all. What I tried to aim for was the minimum

that would need to be done in order to be transformative. Once I started to think about that, I recognized that there was no one party that was in a position to deliver on all of it. Obviously, the government of Haiti is enormously important, but so is the international community and so is the international private sector and the domestic private sector. So

Haiti is in a neighborhood of prosperity and the typical African country is very far from being in a neighborhood of prosperity.

that is what led me to the idea that instead of the approach being one of the begging bowl, the approach should be one of mutual commitments to actions that would be mutually reinforcing.

**Dade:** I've worked on Haiti for years and it has led to a great deal of frustration on my end and several others on pushing the private sector agenda. It seems that the focus has been on everything except for economic growth and formal sector job creation. What is your take on that?

**Collier:** I think that the important thing that people didn't realize is that there is a big opportunity to scale up and create jobs for ordinary people through the private sector. What is needed is not some sort of

sweeping ideological commitment to private business. I think that is not a helpful way forward.

What is needed is a very focused agenda. One of the centerpieces of my work was building export zones, where, if you just get things right or right enough, in a very limited geographic setting [and] once you're over the threshold of global competitiveness, then you can really expand jobs pretty much without limits. I think it is possible to generate large numbers of jobs through getting export zones up to decent standards of infrastructure and governance.

**Dade:** Do you think that given the international financial crisis, the opportunity is still present for Haiti or has that window been closed?

**Collier:** No, I think it is still there. I think that in one sense the opportunities have got stronger. China is now recognizing that in order to avoid a domestic recession, it will have to build its own domestic demand. So you'll notice, for example, that China is announcing very big domestic expansion in demand. So the Chinese supply, which is the big competition, will start to be diverted to the home market. In two or three years time, when the American market starts to pick up, the Chinese are not going to crash domestic demand right back down again. That will be politically impossible, I think. As global demand rises, I think there will be an opportunity for new entrants.

Also, the amount of resources that Haiti needs is not overwhelm-

ing. This is not big money by the standards that are being bandied about now.

**Dade:** Resources for creating export zones?

**Collier:** For helping with infrastructure in Haiti and it's a pretty limited agenda, I think. Recovery from the hurricanes and providing decent infrastructure in particular zones so the jobs creation process can get going. That is really a very do-able agenda that is so strongly in both Canada and America's interests to do that because they don't want a fragile state right on their doorstep.

**Dade:** Do you think the Haitian government has the ability to carry out this focused agenda or is that why you are pushing for the ISAs [Institutional Service Authorities]?

**Collier:** That is why I made it a very focused agenda so that it is very do-able by the Haitian government. And I think it is. That includes the independent service authorities that are sort of a new institutional architecture for scaling up basic service delivery in a way that I think would be very helpful to the government because the government would be able to get involvement in basic service delivery for ordinary people. At the moment, 90 per cent of basic services are totally bypassed by the government. Within Haiti, there is a lot of enthusiasm for that idea, including from government.

**Dade:** So what sort of feedback have you gotten from the report? I know that you had the event in Washington, D.C., with the Institute for Peace.

**Collier:** The Haitian ambassador was there and he appeared very supportive. I have since had direct communication from the Haitian government. I have been invited back


next week. Initially it looked like I wouldn't be able to go [but] I got a desperate plea from someone high in the Haitian government who said, 'You must come. We really like what you've done.' So that sounds very encouraging.

**Dade:** Based on this feedback, have you had any adjustments in your thinking?

**Collier:** Because I'm an outsider and obviously not an expert, in a way it's neither here nor there whether I adjust my thinking. I don't see this as my Collier plan. I see this as helping to get the government and the key other actors to think about what would be a really focused, practical agenda, and it will be their agenda, not mine. So, in a way, I've done my best and it's an input into other people's thinking, rather than being the grand plan. I just hope that it has been found to be a helpful input and that it doesn't become a complete Christmas tree where people say that is good, just put this and this and this on and we're back to the problem of an impossible shopping list.

**Dade:** Right. I've started to see that happening a little bit. [...] In terms of your visit to Haiti, and in terms of your report, do you see where Canada can play a particular

role or that Canada has missed?

**Collier:** I think there is an enormous role for Canada. Who really, really matters in this? One of the things that makes Haiti so hopeful, compared to Africa, is that there isn't a donors zoo. In many African countries, everyone and their dog is a donor and in Haiti, it's Canada, it's America, I guess it's France. It's very, very simple. Of course, Canada matters. Canada is a major, major player and a trusted player, I think. You haven't got a bad history, which to an extent, history is not on the side of either France or America. But Canada doesn't have any of that baggage. [...] I hope my ideas provide a way forward and that it kinds of helps to guide a little bit of leadership. Canada has that leadership role, if it wants to step into it. 

*Paul Collier is a Professor of Economics at Oxford University and Director of the Centre for the Study of African Economies. He is the author of the award-winning book, The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can be Done About It? His report can be downloaded at [www.focal.ca/pdf/haiticollier.pdf](http://www.focal.ca/pdf/haiticollier.pdf).*

*Carlo Dade is the Executive Director of the Canadian Foundation for the Americas.*

## Canadian Governor-General visits Haiti again

Canadian Governor-General Michaëlle Jean visited Haiti on January 15-17 for the second time in a show of Canada's support for a country battered by a food crisis, hurricanes and tropical storms in 2008. Her visit emphasized agricultural development as a route to economic recovery on the island. "Agriculture is so important. It is concrete, it is life itself, it is where hope is to be found," she said. She visited projects for rice growers, a bean and banana seed distribution project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, and met with Brazilian NGO Viva Rio, to discuss youth, health, and access to water. Jean also visited a new police station funded in part by Canada, complete with an ethics division.

# Paul Collier's Report on Economic Security in Haiti

*Robert Maguire*

Haiti is not hopeless or doomed to failure. Oxford University economics professor Paul Collier makes this essential and oft-overlooked point in discussions on Haiti in his report on how to establish economic security in Haiti for the United Nations Secretary-General. It is a much-needed change in discourse that, until recently, included the discussion of 'trusteeship.'

Collier does not ignore Haiti's dire circumstances nor does he dismiss the challenges it will confront in 2009. Yet, he concludes that Haiti has "fundamentals that favour economic development," including political leadership that is "good by the standards of most post-conflict situations." This new kind of Haitian political leadership with "integrity, experience and ability, and a deep concern with the maintenance of social peace," as Collier describes it, is an important change in a country known more for leaders who serve themselves, than the nation.

Time is of the essence, says Collier, pointing out the need for rapid action culminating in a donors meeting in April and the implementation of two or three-year strategies agreed upon by all key actors including the government of Haiti, beginning in May. Implementation,

however, will depend on how his ideas revolving around jobs, basic services, food security and environmental sustainability, are received from within Haiti.

Collier acknowledges the important role Haitian actors must have in determining strategies and programs for their own country, a

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persistent problem that has undermined the government's ability to act. In December 2008, speaking at the United States Institute of Peace, former Haitian prime minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis lamented the tendency of international actors to prescribe programs for Haiti, often without input from the Haitian government. In mid-January 2009, Jean-Max Bellerive, the Minister of Planning and External Cooperation, said Haitian officials are tired of donors pledging money without coor-

inating with the government. Both men seek better awareness and coordination of activities undertaken by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Haiti. Of the estimated 3,000 NGOs operating in Haiti, said Bellerive, only 400 were registered with his office.

Haitians are not the only ones making this point. World Bank President Robert Zoellick, speaking in mid-January 2009, concluded that Haiti is "the site of too many feel-good projects draped in national flags." He suggested the creation of a trust fund for donors to pool resources to achieve a convergence of strategies. Collier's complementary idea of a quasi-independent, public coordinating agency—an "Independent Service Authority"—to regulate and coordinate the provision

of basic services in a context where the state seems willing but not able to provide services, merits serious consideration.

Haiti's structural problems are not benign. Despite significant foreign aid, Haiti remains a society where benefits accrue at the top and most Haitians remain deeply impoverished. Seventy-eight per cent of Haiti's people survive on less than US\$2 per day. "Haiti does not have the intractable structural socio-

political problems that beset most other fragile states,” claims Collier. However, he underestimates the obstacles that Haiti's deeply rooted inequality and social division based on skin color, prejudice, class and geography, present to achieving economic security for all. There are good reasons scholars have assessed Haiti's political economy as ‘apartheid in the Caribbean.’

Thus, Collier's proposals to move Haiti from natural catastrophe to economic security must address two key questions:

1. Who are the beneficiaries of the proposed initiatives?

2. How do these initiatives help to resolve the underlying cause of Haiti's poverty and underdevelopment: long-standing, uneven social, economic, and political relationships among Haitians?

Asking these questions is important when promoting the garment industry as a key component of economic security as Collier does.

Without doubt, HOPE II, which gives Haiti preferential market access to the United States, is an important part of the overall equation for creating jobs and providing work opportunities to destitute people. It is important not to repeat the mistakes of the Seventies and Eighties, when Haiti was predicted to become the “Taiwan of the Caribbean.” This earlier experience with assembly plants did not address uneven, exploitive relationships that undergird Haiti's chronic poverty and instability. Factory workers are among those struggling to survive on less than \$2 per day. Indeed, highly concentrated, urban-centric investment exacerbated inequalities between rural and urban, and between ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots.’

Collier's suggestion of several ‘export zones’ will help to mitigate some past mistakes. Equally important, employers must exhibit social responsibility toward workers. Low cost gestures by factory owners—subsidized child care, cafeterias, and transportation—will help to alleviate workers' burdens. Upward wage adjustment is warranted. The garment sector must generate a Haitian government revenue stream for strengthening institutional capacity, perhaps in the area of port management and taxation authority.


Collier's endorsement of the *Rapport d'Evaluation des Besoins post-Desastre* (PDNA) presupposes actions to extend crucial investment for jobs and production to rural locations—where some 60 per cent of Haitians live. Neglect of rural investment in the Seventies and Eighties doomed Haiti to dependence on increasingly costly imported food and sent farmers onto hillsides to make charcoal, into urban slums or to south Florida.

Before the 2008 hurricanes, Haitian government investment was heavily weighted toward improving the ability of the country to feed itself. This indicates not just the government's priority, but also that lessons have been learned.

Obstacles identified by Collier to expand the garment sector will take precious time to overcome. The ‘youth tsunami’ Collier cites as accelerating already acute pressure on Haiti's fragile landscape is a potential geyser of instability. Given the need to pay urgent attention to this tsunami, ‘shovel ready’ labor-intensive job creation to rehabilitate Haiti's natural environment and productive infrastructure as well as provide youth with a stake in their country's future

is needed. The government's interest in creating a National Service Corps merits serious consideration. Real wages, not ‘food-for-work,’ should be paid.

Regionally, Collier identifies narco-trafficking as the principal problem in Haiti's neighbourhood. Narco-trafficking and the corruption and violence it brings are ‘game changers’ in a negative sense. Any economic gains made in the next year could be undermined by this criminal activity.

Haitian President René Préval has been pleading for help on narco-trafficking since becoming president in May 2006. Little has been forthcoming. He has expressed concerns about narco-traffickers gaining a foothold in his government. This is a recipe for catastrophe and a problem that Haiti cannot solve on its own. The United States and Canada can—and should—address this challenge. 

*Dr. Robert Maguire, on sabbatical from Trinity Washington University, is a Jennings Randolph senior fellow at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., United States.*

## Correction

Cuba, through Cubapetroleo S.A., terminated its agreement with Pebercan's subsidiary, Peberco Limited. The reverse was reported in the February *FOCALPoint* news brief “Pebercan Cuba Surprise”. The production sharing contract was signed in 1993 and scheduled to expire in 2018.

# Le Rapport de Paul Collier sur la sécurité économique en Haïti

*Robert Maguire*

**H**aïti n'est ni dans une situation désespérée ni voué à l'échec. Tel est en gros l'argument que défend Paul Collier dans son rapport au Secrétaire général des Nations Unies sur la manière de rétablir la sécurité économique en Haïti, un argument souvent évincé des discussions concernant le pays mais qui s'écarte heureusement des analyses qui, jusqu'à une date récente, prônaient même la 'tutelle' de l'ONU.

Collier, qui est professeur d'économie à l'Université d'Oxford n'ignore ni les conditions terribles en Haïti ni les chocs que le pays devra affronter en 2009. Cependant, il soutient que Haïti a des « fondamentaux favorables au développement économique », y compris des dirigeants politiques qui sont « bons d'après les critères d'évaluation des pays sortant des conflits ». Ces nouveaux dirigeants politiques haïtiens, « intègres, expérimentés et capables », qui se soucient beaucoup du maintien de la paix sociale comme la décrit Collier, représentent une importante évolution dans un pays connu pour des leaders qui se préoccupent d'eux-mêmes plutôt que du bien de la nation.

Mais, la vitesse s'impose, dit Collier, face à l'impératif d'une action rapide à l'approche d'une réunion des donateurs en avril et à la mise en œuvre, dès mai, des stratégies prévues pour deux ou trois ans et convenues entre tous les principaux ac-

teurs dont le gouvernement d'Haïti. La mise en œuvre dépendra de la réception que les Haïtiens réservent à ses idées concernant la création d'emplois, les services de base, la sécurité alimentaire et la durabilité de l'environnement.

Collier reconnaît le rôle important que doivent jouer les Haïtiens dans la définition des stratégies et des programmes visant leur propre pays, un problème persistant qui a miné le champ d'action du gouvernement. En décembre 2008, invité à s'adresser à l'Institut de paix des États-Unis, l'ex-premier ministre d'Haïti, Jacques-Édouard Alexis, s'est lamenté du fait que les acteurs internationaux ont tendance à prescrire des programmes à Haïti, souvent sans consultation préalable du gouvernement haïtien. Vers la mi-janvier 2009, Jean-Max Bellerive, le ministre de la Planification et de la coopération externe, a dit que les responsables haïtiens en ont assez des donateurs qui prennent des engagements sans concertation avec le gouvernement. Les deux hommes souhaitent qu'il y ait une meilleure communication et coordination des activités entreprises en Haïti par les organisations non gouvernementales. Des quelque 3 000 ONG travaillant dans le pays, précise Bellerive, seulement 400 sont inscrits auprès du ministère.

Les Haïtiens ne sont pas les seuls à avancer cet argument. Robert Zoellick, le président de la Banque

mondiale en a fait de même lorsqu'il a déclaré à la mi-janvier que Haïti est le « site de trop nombreux projets revêtus de drapeaux nationaux et propres à apaiser les consciences ». Aussi propose-t-il la création d'un fonds fiduciaire pour permettre aux donateurs de mettre en commun leurs ressources et mener à bien les stratégies convergentes. Une autre idée de Collier, à savoir la création d'une autorité administrative indépendante, un organisme public qui réglera et coordonnera la prestation des services de base dans le cas où l'État serait incapable de le faire, mérite une considération sérieuse.

Les problèmes structurels d'Haïti sont épineux à tel point que, malgré l'aide importante qu'il a reçue de la communauté internationale, Haïti reste une société où les privilégiés se disputent des avantages et où la majorité des Haïtiens sont pris dans l'étau de la pauvreté. De fait, 74 pour cent des Haïtiens vivent de moins de deux dollars par jour.

« Haïti ignore les problèmes sociopolitiques structurels tenaces que connaissent la plupart des autres États fragiles », écrit Collier. À l'évidence, il sous-estime les obstacles que présentent à l'avènement de la sécurité alimentaire pour tous les inégalités millénaires et la division sociale, fondée sur la couleur de la peau, le préjugé, la classe et la géographie. Les chercheurs ont de bonnes raisons de caractériser

l'économie politique d'Haïti comme étant « apartheid aux Caraïbes ».

Les propositions de Collier visant à faire en sorte que Haïti passe des catastrophes naturelles à la sécurité économique doivent s'attaquer à deux questions clés :

1. Qui sont les bénéficiaires des initiatives proposées ?

2. Comment ces initiatives vont-elles aider à résorber les causes sous-jacentes de la pauvreté et du sous-développement en Haïti, à savoir les inégalités millénaires entre les Haïtiens sur les plans social, économique et politique ?

Il est important de poser ces questions lorsqu'on veut faire de l'industrie de vêtement un composant clé de la sécurité économique comme le fait Collier.

Sans doute, HOPE II, le programme d'accès préférentiel d'Haïti au marché américain, est une partie importante de la démarche créatrice d'emplois au profit des démunis. Mais, il est tout aussi important de ne pas répéter les erreurs des années 1970 et 1980 lorsque Haïti s'est vu prédire un destin radieux, celui de « Taïwan des Caraïbes ». En effet, cette première expérience, celle des usines d'assemblage, n'a rien changé dans les relations inéquitables et exploitatrices à l'origine de la pauvreté et de l'instabilité en Haïti. Les ouvriers d'usine sont parmi ceux qui se débrouillent pour vivre de moins de deux dollars par jour. Les investissements fortement concentrés en milieu urbain ont exacerbé les inégalités non seulement entre le monde rural et urbain, mais aussi entre les nantis et les démunis.

L'idée de Collier consistant à créer plusieurs « zones franches » aidera à atténuer les conséquences des erreurs passées. Mais tout aussi im-

portant est le fait que les employeurs doivent faire preuve de responsabilité sociale à l'égard des employés. Par exemple, des mesures peu onéreuses en leur faveur —garderie, cafétéria et transport subventionnés— viendront alléger le fardeau des employés. Le rajustement hausier des salaires aura le même effet. Le secteur de vêtement doit générer des recettes pour le gouvernement d'Haïti afin qu'il puisse renforcer les capacités institutionnelles, peut-être dans les domaines de la gestion portuaire et de l'administration fiscale.

Collier appuie le *Rapport d'évaluation des besoins post désastre* (PDNA). Cet appui suppose des mesures permettant d'élargir aux zones rurales, où vivent près de 60 pour cent des Haïtiens, des investissements propices à la création d'emplois et aux gains de productivité. Pour avoir écarté le monde rural des investissements faits dans les années 1970 et 1980, Haïti s'est vu condamné à dépendre des aliments importés à prix d'or et a vu les cultivateurs gagner les collines pour y fabriquer du charbon, se concentrer dans les taudis urbains ou partir s'établir dans le sud de la Floride.

Avant les cyclones de 2008, les investissements du gouvernement d'Haïti étaient fortement orientés vers l'autosuffisance alimentaire, une priorité gouvernementale ambitieuse sil en est, preuve que les leçons ont été bien comprises.

Les obstacles à l'élargissement de l'industrie de vêtement, tels que cernés par Collier, prendront du temps à être surmontés. La « situation explosive des jeunes » qui vient aggraver encore la pression déjà extrême sur le paysage fragile du pays est une source potentielle d'instabilité. Devant la nécessité de s'attaquer

d'urgence à ce raz-de-marée, il faudra mettre en chantier des projets à forte intensité de main-d'œuvre, donc créateurs d'emplois, afin de réhabiliter l'environnement naturel et l'appareil productif du pays et de donner aux jeunes des raisons de croire en l'avenir d'Haïti et de s'y investir. La création d'un Corps de service national, comme l'envisage le gouvernement, mérite une considération sérieuse. Toutefois, il faudra verser de vrais salaires, et non des vivres contre travail.

Sur le plan régional, Collier signale que le trafic de drogues est le principal problème que Haïti doit affronter, puisque le trafic et son cortège de vices (corruption, violence, criminalité) « changeront la donne » et pourraient même miner les gains économiques escomptés dans l'année qui vient.

Depuis son arrivée au pouvoir en mai 2006, le président d'Haïti, René Préval, sollicite de l'aide pour lutter contre le trafic et ses appels incessants sont restés lettre morte. Il s'est dit inquiet de voir les trafiquants infiltrer son gouvernement. Il s'agit là d'une tournure catastrophique et d'un problème que Haïti ne peut résoudre tout seul. Les États-Unis et le Canada peuvent —et devraient— l'aider à relever ce défi. 🌐

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# Ignoring rural Haiti is a recipe for failure

*Yasmine Shamsie*

**H**aitians encountered an extraordinary amount of adversity in 2008.

The worldwide price hikes in basic commodities and fuel caused severe hardship. Food prices alone increased by almost 80 per cent between August 2007 and March 2008 and caused a wave of political demonstrations across the country. Then, just as protests waned, the country was hit by three hurricanes and one tropical storm, all in the space of a month, leaving more than 800 people dead, tens of thousands homeless and about US\$1 billion in damages.

The Haitian government, the UN mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and international donors responded quickly to the humanitarian emergency, which has allowed the country to regain its footing, but just barely. Although political stability has been restored and humanitarian efforts are underway, there is a heightened sense of urgency in the air. Both the Haitian government and international donors believe that while the moment may still be raw, it is also ripe for an economic reactivation and development plan that will rapidly improve the everyday lives of Haitians.

To that end, three plans are currently floating around policy circles: the 2007 National Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), developed in 2007 by the Haitian government and international donors; the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), an evaluation of the impact of the 2008 storms, car-

ried out by the Haitian government, World Bank, and UN agencies, that presents a recovery framework to move Haiti toward long-term development; and a January 2009 report by distinguished economist Paul Collier, commissioned by the United Nations to draft an economic reactivation strategy.

These multi-sectoral plans devote varying degrees of attention to the following development and recovery objectives: job creation through infrastructure building and export-processing zone development, support to agriculture and food security, increased provision of basic services, and environmental restoration. While all these axes of action have their merits and deserve the support of international donors, agricultural and non-agricultural rural development, are indispensable. There are three reasons for this.

First, a survey of the literature on poverty reduction indicates that poor countries which have successfully generated pro-poor growth, did three things: they explicitly targeted rural areas; developed policies aimed at improving incomes in the agricultural sector; and actively promoted labour-intensive economic development activities. These lessons are directly applicable to Haiti since the largest proportion of its poor live in rural areas, the majority of Haitians depend directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihood, and their labour is the factor of production that Haiti's poor possess and use most. The evidence in support of a focus on agriculture in poor

countries is abundant and powerful. Countries that have achieved poverty-reducing growth, focused on boosting productivity and incomes in agricultural and non-farm rural sectors. Studies indicate that, while expanding the agricultural sector directly impacts employment and incomes in farming, it also leads to a potentially immense demand for local non-tradable goods and services from rural areas (house building, bicycle repairs, crafts, furniture, dress-making, food processing, food retailing, and a host of other rural services). These goods and services are highly labour intensive and also aimed and used mainly within local rural communities as opposed to traded in international markets.


There is another reason for a greater rural and agricultural focus. Haiti's PRSP identifies agriculture and rural development as a key vector of economic growth. In short, President René Préal has committed himself and his government to making this sector a pillar of Haiti's development strategy—a first for Haiti. The international community, for its part, has identified local ownership as crucial to moving development plans forward. In order for a partnership to be based on mutual-ity and trust, Haitians need to see their concerns reflected in donor priorities. Indeed, donors maintain they are supporting a made-in-Haiti strategy.

A final reason for paying greater attention to rural Haiti is the link between economic development and advancing and consolidating

democracy—a critical goal of Canadian policy in Haiti. Historically, Haiti's rural citizens were politically overlooked. The ministry of agriculture has been chronically under-resourced, despite the predominantly rural nature of the country. The Haitian state has consistently failed to incorporate the needs of rural people into state policies or to institutionalize their interests within the state. In Haiti we cannot talk about restoring budgetary priority to the agricultural and rural sectors since they have never been accorded priority status. Donor interventions must support the broad-based incorporation of previously excluded groups such as the rural poor.

Despite these arguments, agriculture has received little attention, with the notable exception being the Inter-American Development Bank. This is not unexpected. Economic development policies in the Caribbean Basin have tended to be urban-based. Policymakers are particularly sensitive to the plight of the urban poor, in part because they are more likely to make their pain known through civil unrest.

Yet, those who are chronically poor and hungry come from several different demographic groups. According to the UN Millennium Project's Hunger Taskforce (2005), "50 per cent are smallholder and subsistence farmers who farm their own land; 22 per cent live in rural areas but own no land; 20 per cent live in urban areas; and eight per cent are pastoralists, forest dwellers, and fisher folk." As the Taskforce notes, 80 per cent of food-insecure people worldwide live in rural areas, with fully half of them coming from the ranks of small holder farmers.

While urban-based economic development is critical, rural regions, which have been overlooked over the past three decades, deserve more attention than they have received. A World Bank working paper by M. Ravallion and G. Datt that examines poverty in India is instructive. After studying each state's economic development strategy, the authors found that agricultural and rural growth were able to reduce poverty drastically, while industrial and urban growth had only a small effect on poverty, if any at all. To be sure, Canada's interventions are helping to drive pro-poor growth by contributing to electric power generation, environmental protection, and rapid job creation. Agriculture is getting some attention through Ottawa's contributions to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, which is helping farmers increase their incomes and improve their output and through the United Nations Development Programme, which is assisting rural development in the north-east. At the same time, despite the fact that gains in agricultural productivity are essential to reducing poverty and food insecurity, donors seem to be hindered by a generalized political ambivalence about rural development. Regrettably, this ambivalence results in few programs aimed at rural producers, which inevitably restricts the growth of off-farm employment opportunities that could greatly benefit Haiti's poor. 

*Yasmine Shamsie is an assistant professor at Wilfrid Laurier University and a non-resident Fellow at FOCAL.*

## Préval visits Washington to request additional aid for Haiti

Haitian President René Préval visited Washington, D.C., United States, on February 6, 2009, to meet with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The purpose of Préval's visit was to draw attention to the dire economic straits of Haiti and request additional international aid. The Haitian President also met with representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. While the U.S. already gives \$250 million in aid to the impoverished Caribbean nation, Préval was requesting an additional \$75 to \$100 million. Clinton promised to consider the plight of Haiti, but offered no guarantee of additional funding.

Haiti has seen decades of political turmoil and extreme poverty, but 2008 saw the island wracked by two hurricanes and a tropical storm in one month. The loss of life, and damage to crops and livestock, places the already precarious economy in a position of increased vulnerability. The cost of the storms was estimated at more than US\$900 million.

While the international community recognizes Haiti's severe need for financial aid, major donors are showing signs of fatigue with the lack of results achieved by their substantial funding.

Despite millions of dollars in aid and an equally pricey U.N. peacekeeping mission, corruption, political instability, and severe poverty have impeded significant improvements.

# On court à l'échec si le monde rural en Haïti est ignoré

*Yasmine Shamsie*

**E**n 2008, les Haïtiens ont connu une suite d'événements calamiteux aggravés par la flambée mondiale des prix des denrées de base et du pétrole.

À eux seuls, les prix des produits alimentaires ont augmenté de presque 80 pour cent, entre août 2007 et mars 2008, ce qui a provoqué dans tout le pays une vague de manifestations politiques. Mais, juste au moment où ces manifestations ont commencé à diminuer, trois ouragans et une tempête tropicale ont frappé le pays dans l'espace d'un mois : bilan plus de 800 morts; des dizaines de milliers de sans-abri et des dommages matériels estimés à près d'un milliard de dollars. Le gouvernement d'Haïti, la MINUSTAH, la mission onusienne en Haïti, et les donateurs internationaux ont vite réagi à l'urgence humanitaire et permis au pays de reprendre pied, mais à peine. Bien que la stabilité politique ait été rétablie et que les efforts humanitaires soient déployés, il règne au pays un vrai climat d'urgence. Aussi le gouvernement haïtien et les donateurs internationaux estiment-ils que, même si la situation semble encore délicate, le moment est aussi propice à la mise en œuvre d'un plan de relance et de développement économiques afin d'améliorer rapidement la vie quotidienne des Haïtiens.

Actuellement, trois plans circulent dans les cercles gouvernementaux : le Document de Stratégie Nationale

de Croissance et de Réduction de la Pauvreté (DSNCRP), élaboré en 2007 par le gouvernement d'Haïti et les donateurs internationaux; l'Évaluation des besoins après désastres (PDNA), une étude réalisée par le gouvernement d'Haïti, la Banque mondiale et les organismes des Nations unies, à la suite des cyclones en 2008, et offrant un cadre d'action vers le développement à long terme du pays; et un rapport remis en janvier 2009 par l'éminent économiste Paul Collier, à la demande des Nations unies, en vue d'élaborer une stratégie de relance économique.

À divers degrés, ces plans multisectoriels mettent l'accent sur les objectifs suivants en matière de développement et de renouveau économiques: création d'emplois par la relance des travaux d'infrastructure et la mise en chantier de zones franches industrielles; soutien à l'agriculture et à la sécurité alimentaire; renforcement des services de base; et restauration environnementale. Même si ces champs d'action se justifient et méritent l'appui des donateurs internationaux, l'agriculture et le développement du monde rural non agricole sont indispensables, et ce pour trois raisons.

Tout d'abord, un examen sommaire des études sur la réduction de la pauvreté indique que les pays pauvres où les démunis ont profité de la croissance ont fait trois choses, à savoir qu'ils ont systématique-

ment ciblé les zones rurales, adopté des politiques haussières du revenu agricole et favorisé exprès des activités économiques à forte intensité de main-d'œuvre. Ces leçons s'appliquent directement à Haïti, puisqu'une très forte proportion des pauvres vivent en zone rurale, la majorité des Haïtiens vivent directement ou indirectement de l'agriculture et les pauvres ne disposent pour l'essentiel que de leur travail comme facteur de production.

Les preuves à l'appui des politiques fortement orientées vers l'agriculture dans les pays pauvres sont nombreuses et incontestables. Les pays qui ont inscrit un taux de croissance réductrice de la pauvreté ont augmenté aussi la productivité et le revenu agricoles et des secteurs non agricoles du monde rural. D'après certaines études, l'expansion du secteur agricole n'a pas seulement des incidences directes sur l'emploi et les revenus agricoles. Elle fait monter en flèche potentiellement la demande locale des biens et services non exportables (construction d'habitations, réparation de vélos, créations artisanales, mobilier, confection de vêtements, transformation de produits alimentaires, vente au détail d'aliments et bien d'autres). Ces biens et services, fortement tributaires de la main-d'œuvre, sont consommés aussi sur place, au sein des collectivités rurales, plutôt que d'être commercialisés sur les mar-

chés internationaux.

En deuxième lieu, le DSNCRP du gouvernement d'Haïti précise que l'agriculture et le développement rural constituent un vecteur clé de la croissance économique. En somme, le président René Préval et son gouvernement entendent faire de ce secteur le pilier de la stratégie de développement du pays, une première en Haïti. Pour sa part, la communauté internationale estime que la propriété locale est nécessaire pour faire avancer les plans de développement. Pour fonder un partenariat sur la mutualité et la confiance, les Haïtiens doivent voir concorder leurs préoccupations et les priorités des donateurs qui prônent déjà une stratégie adaptée à la réalité haïtienne.

Enfin, le lien entre le développement économique et le renforcement, voire le progrès, de la démocratie, un objectif décisif de la politique du Canada, est la troisième raison pour laquelle le monde rural en Haïti doit être privilégié. Historiquement, les habitants des zones rurales ont toujours été des laissés-pour-compte sur le plan politique. Pour preuve, le ministère de l'Agriculture manque péniblement de ressources malgré le fait que le pays est de nature fortement rurale. L'État haïtien a systématiquement écarté les besoins des paysans de ses préoccupations politiques ou n'a jamais cherché institutionnellement à leur donner voix au chapitre. En Haïti, on ne peut parler du rétablissement de la priorité budgétaire des secteurs agricole et rural puisqu'ils n'ont jamais été prioritaires. Il est donc impératif que les donateurs interviennent de manière à faire entrer dans les structures décisionnelles les groupes jadis exclus tels que les pauvres en milieu rural.


Malgré ces raisons ou arguments, l'agriculture a reçu très peu d'attention, exception faite de la Banque interaméricaine de développement (BID). Il fallait s'y attendre vu que les politiques de développement économique du bassin des Caraïbes tendent globalement à favoriser les régions urbaines. En effet, les décideurs sont surtout sensibles à la misère des pauvres qui y vivent, en partie, parce qu'ils vont très probablement se faire entendre par des troubles civils.

Pourtant, les pauvres et les affamés appartiennent à des groupes démographiques bien différents. Selon le Groupe de travail spécial contre la faim du Projet objectifs du millénaire des Nations Unies (2005) « 50 pour cent sont des petits propriétaires et agriculteurs de subsistance; 22 pour cent vivent en milieu rural mais n'ont pas de terres; 20 pour cent vivent en milieu urbain; et 8 pour cent sont des gardiens de troupeau, habitants des forêts et pêcheurs. » Comme le souligne le Groupe de travail spécial, 80 pour cent de la population mondiale touchée par l'insécurité alimentaire vit en milieu rural et la moitié est issue des rangs des petits propriétaires.

Même s'il faut bien orienter le développement économique vers les milieux urbains, le monde rural, délaissé au cours des trois dernières décennies, mérite plus d'attention qu'il n'en a reçu jusqu'ici. Un document de travail que M. Ravallion et G. Datt ont préparé pour la Banque mondiale et qui examine la pauvreté en Inde est éclairant à ce sujet. Après avoir étudié la stratégie de développement économique de chaque État, les auteurs ont conclu que la croissance agricole et rurale a fait réduire considérablement la

pauvreté tandis que la croissance industrielle et urbaine n'a eu qu'un effet dérisoire, s'il en est.

Sans doute, les interventions du Canada contribuent à impulser la croissance économique en faveur des pauvres, que ce soit par la production d'énergie électrique, la protection de l'environnement et la création rapide d'emplois. Cette aide profite aussi à l'agriculture grâce aux contributions du gouvernement canadien à l'Organisation des Nations unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (OAA), lesquelles aident les agriculteurs à augmenter leur revenu et leur productivité, et au le Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement qui favorise le développement rural dans l'axe nord-est.

Or, malgré le fait que les gains de productivité agricole sont essentiels à la réduction de la pauvreté et de l'insécurité alimentaire, les donateurs semblent se heurter politiquement à une certaine ambivalence face au développement rural. De cette ambivalence résulte malheureusement, très peu de programmes visant les producteurs ruraux, ce qui entrave inévitablement la création des possibilités d'emplois hors la ferme alors que ces dernières pourraient beaucoup profiter aux pauvres en Haïti. 

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# Reforming the Haitian National Police

Timothy Donais

Five years after Aristide, Haiti finds itself at a crossroads between stabilization and consolidation.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the security sector. The reform of the Haitian National Police (HNP) remains very much a work in progress, even as the wave of violence and instability that followed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's controversial departure has largely subsided. The HNP itself—the cornerstone of Haiti's security architecture since the abolition of the country's armed forces—is no longer a scourge, if still not yet trusted. It is once again capable of basic policing even if it remains outmatched by Haiti's serious criminals.

Haiti and the HNP has been here before. In the mid-Nineties, after the U.S.-led intervention that restored Aristide to power, the development of a professional, impartial, national police force was the centrepiece of the internationally-supported peacebuilding project in Haiti. The HNP was viewed, for a time, as “the most honest and effective component of the Haitian bureaucracy.” The political crisis which culminated in Aristide's departure in 2004 reversed these early gains; the HNP was drawn into the growing conflict between pro- and anti-Aristide factions, and emerged as corrupt, politicized, and largely de-legitimized. By the time MINUSTAH, the latest in a long line of UN peace support missions, arrived in Haiti in mid-2004, the police development project

was almost back to square one.

Despite the urgency of getting police reform back on track in Haiti, MINUSTAH's first two years on the ground were lost years as far as the HNP was concerned. The controversial manner of Aristide's departure left Haiti in turmoil and Haitians themselves were deeply divided. The hastily-installed interim government of Gerard Latortue was widely viewed as both dysfunctional and illegitimate, while MINUSTAH's peacekeepers were seen simultaneously as incompetents and occupiers. Hundreds of Haitians died in sporadic violence between mid-2004 and the end of 2005. Many Haitians saw the paramilitary-style police response to ongoing insecurity as an organised assault on Aristide supporters, carried out with MINUSTAH's tacit blessing, rather than an effort to restore law and order. As a result, MINUSTAH endured criticism not only for its failure to stem the violence but also for its single-minded focus on elections amid a deepening security crisis.

The transformation of the political environment following René Prével's election to the presidency in February 2006 was nothing short of miraculous. The election of the former Aristide protégé tempered, at least somewhat, the conflict between pro- and anti-Aristide forces. The emergence of a legitimate, democratically-elected Haitian leader fundamentally changed the dynamic among the Haitian public, its government, and the international

community. From the perspective of public security, Prével was the public face of an anti-gang initiative in late 2006 which led to the arrests of some 750 gang leaders and produced immediate dividends in terms of improved security, especially in and around Port-au-Prince. Equally important, Prével's electoral victory ushered in an era of relative political stability, which enabled a shift from reactive crisis management to more pro-active structural reform.

In the wake of Prével's election, the HNP has made a gradual recovery. It remains possible to be guardedly optimistic that the second attempt to professionalize policing in Haiti will produce better results than the first. Under the leadership of Director-General Mario Andresol—once described by the *Los Angeles Times* as “a rare Haitian hybrid of Frank Serpico and Eliot Ness”—the HNP has grown through new recruitment from 3,500 in 2005 to 8,550 in mid-2008. Delays in recruitment and training mean that the force will be hard-pressed to reach its target of 14,000 by 2011.

The delicate process of removing the criminal, the corrupt and the incompetent from the HNP's ranks has also begun, even if questions remain as to whether the process will be sufficiently thorough or comprehensive. Andresol himself has gone on record as saying that up to one-quarter of his officers are corrupt. For its part, the international community appears to have learned the right lesson from its premature

withdrawal of the late Nineties and now seems committed for the long haul in Haiti. The Canadian International Development Agency's recent \$15 million police training initiative is one such commitment.

Despite some visible signs of progress, however, the challenge of consolidating the rule of law in Haiti remains daunting. The country's judicial system is almost comprehensively dysfunctional. The relationship among judges, prosecutors and police remains notoriously acrimonious. The task of ensuring that police are subject to appropriate oversight while insulated from inappropriate political influence—crucial in a country where police power has traditionally served the regime rather than the public—has barely begun.

At the same time, the continuing failure to address the chronic poverty and inequality at the root of Haiti's instability could yet undermine the best-laid plans for institutional reform and recovery. As the 2000-2004 period demonstrated, conditions of renewed political turbulence could quickly render meaningless the 'policing as public service' vision of HNP reform plan.


Indeed, it is nearly impossible to underestimate the importance of political stability as a pre-requisite for sustained and sustainable police reform in Haiti. The past 12 months—marred by food riots, serial hurricanes, an extended prime ministerial crisis, and a tragic school collapse—were profoundly de-stabilizing and marked the definitive end to President Préval's honeymoon. With a new round of elections already on the horizon (in which Préval is ineligible to run), it remains unclear whether the window of opportunity

## Haitians Building Democratic Culture

*Nicholas Galletti and Lauren Ravon*

The 2006 transfer of power in Haiti from the transitional government to an elected government under President René Préval opened a rare window of opportunity for finally addressing the ills that have plagued this poverty-stricken country for decades. The election did not turn Haiti into a fully functioning democracy, but it did provide the basis upon which one could be built.

Predictably, the expectations and renewed hope that the elections created within the Haitian population have been largely unmet. If the Haitian population saw in Préval the hope for better lives, this has not yet materialized. Unemployment, hunger and lack of access to basic services have all been slow to improve. While Préval's "Social Appeasement" policy has reduced insecurity in the capital and other major cities, with the assistance of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the democracy "dividend" has not yielded greater short-term prosperity.

opened by the 2006 elections remains open or whether it is, in fact, already closing. 

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The problems inherited by Préval's administration were daunting. The absence of the state in most parts of the country made it difficult to intervene positively in a short timeframe. The lack of donor coordination and the limited ability of the state to absorb and prioritize where to spend donor money compounded the problem. The weakness of the executive branch and the obstructionist role often played by parliament and political parties made day-to-day governing a monumental task, let alone planning for long-term development. Finally, political squabbles between Préval and entrenched political elites paralyzed the country and left it without a government when it was most needed, during the crisis brought on by successive natural disasters and rising world commodity prices.

News stories on Haiti give the impression of a country fraught with marauding gangs, held hostage by poor governance and political in-fighting. However, what is often missing from the news and from the policy discussions dealing with Haiti in official circles, are the positive developments that have created a real opportunity for change. Indeed, despite repeated setbacks, Haitian citizens are taking advantage of the presence of a legitimately elected government, which is willing to listen and move forward on a number of long-neglected files. This cooperation between the state and society in Haiti is already leading to some significant results.

Even before the 2006 elections, civil society in Haiti set the groundwork for a society based on the rule of law. In preparation for that election, the interim government of Gerard Latortue, with support from the Organization of American States (OAS) and funding from Canada, planned a nationwide registration process. The electorate needed to be identified to hold elections. However, registration only for elections was not enough. A more comprehensive registration and identification was needed to ensure the rights of the population after the vote. Sustained pressure and the reasoned arguments of civil society and a few allies in decision-making positions persuaded the government and donors to issue national identity cards. Haitians could use this new recognition of their right to nationality to claim other rights, such as access to a fair trial, education and other social services. Civil society continues to work with the new government department charged with managing the national identification and civil registration process to ensure every Haitian is registered without discrimination.

In a country with so many human rights problems, the most vulnerable sectors of the population are often left off the list of priorities and forgotten altogether. Such is the case of people with disabilities. Notwithstanding the historic coming into force of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the fate of the disabled did not figure into the plans and priorities of the international donor community for Haiti. Still, people with disabilities in Haiti would not be cowed by the invisibility of their

cause. They organized, lobbied, and successfully caught the attention of the president, who created the position of Secretary of State for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities. By naming the leader of the civil society movement to this new position, the Haitian government recognized its own citizens' important contribution to strengthen the state's capacity to fulfill its human rights obligations.

This was not the first time that civil society mobilized to demand their rights through greater state capacity. The women's rights movement, which led the democracy movement that brought about the fall of President Jean-Claude Duvalier and later denounced the grave crimes of Cédras, continues to play a key role in Haiti's democratic process. Women's rights groups convinced Aristide upon his return in 1994 to create the Ministère de la Condition Féminine in order to ensure that the rights of women were taken into account throughout the public sector. Thanks to their efforts to build up the Ministry, it is now one of the strongest and most effective government agencies in Haiti, despite limited resources. Groups like Kay Fanm continue to work with the state to build up its capacity to protect human rights, most recently by partnering with the Public Prosecutors office in Port-au-Prince to better track and prosecute crimes of sexual violence.

The food price crisis and last year's hurricanes devastated large parts of the rural sector in Haiti, further weakening the state's capacity to realize its international obligation of the right to food. Notwithstanding the deplorable state of the agricul-

tural sector, the Haitian population continues to struggle to ensure that the country can meet its populations' subsistence needs. Peasant groups, non-government organizations, agronomist associations and trade unions are working with the Haitian government to develop a national policy to ensure respect for the right to food. This process begins with the ratification of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which is the subject of constructive debate in Haiti between all branches of government, civil society organizations and political parties.

What these examples demonstrate is that despite the hardships and looming disaster being projected for Haiti by many international observers, the democratic culture needed to sustain lasting reforms is being built. The Haitian state alone cannot accomplish what is being asked of it; it needs the contribution of civil society, organized or not, to sustain progress. The international donor community needs to ensure that in its discussions with Haiti it includes the perspectives of its citizens, and makes them equal partners in the reconstruction process. A democratic society based on the rule of law is the only solution to long term development. Haitians are building this society and they must be supported before the window of opportunity closes again. 🌐

*Nicholas Galletti is the Executive Assistant to the President and Lauren Ravon is the Americas Regional Officer at Rights & Democracy, which supports democratic development, the fulfillment of human rights, and greater state-society relations through its Port-au-Prince office and with the support of CIDA.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### International Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Congress

May 4-6, 2009

#### Cartagena, Colombia

The Colombian government is organizing this congress to “highlight the importance of community-based reintegration as the most viable reintegration strategy for the long term success of social and economic reintegration processes for demobilized persons.” It has the support of the World Bank’s Social Development Department and the United Nations Development Programme’s Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. The congress is targeted at policymakers, academics, experts and practitioners.

### What Role for Canada in the Americas? Meeting the Challenge of Human Rights, Democratic Development and Economic Justice in a Time of Global Crisis

March 25, 2009

#### Ottawa, Canada

The Canadian Council for International Cooperation is hosting this roundtable which will include Victor Báez Mosqueira, Secretary General of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas. For further information or to register, please contact the CCIC Americas Policy Group Coordinator William Payne at 613-241-7007

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