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Canada's history of helping Haiti

By CBC News

Canada has been one of Haiti's biggest aid donors over the years.

The earthquake that rocked Haiti on Jan 12 prompted an outpouring of sympathy and cash from around the world.

Tens of millions of dollars flowed in for immediate aid, with Canada pledging \$80 million in humanitarian relief, the most ambitious response to a humanitarian disaster in its history.

Canada clearly has a soft spot for Haiti.

It is the second largest recipient of foreign aid, after Afghanistan, and Canada has been at the forefront of an international effort to help stabilize and develop the country.

In fact, Canada was the only country at an international donor conference in 2006 to commit to a five-year aid program for the embattled Caribbean nation, to be delivered mostly through the Canadian International Development Agency. [<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/haiti-e>]

Vital role

Carlos Dade, the executive director of the Canadian Foundation for the Americas, an independent think tank, says one of the keys to effective foreign aid is coordination among the different agencies and that is where Canada has shone.

"Canada has played a vital role," Dade says. "The coordinator gets things done."

Dade believes that, as the sponsor of Monday's international donor conference in Montreal, it will again fall to Canada to coordinate a long-term plan for Haiti.

Here are some of the principal contributions Canada has made:

- Between 1994 and 2001, Canada sent Haiti \$200 million in direct aid.

- Between April 2004 and September 2007, Canada contributed close to \$332 million to development efforts, including food and medical aid, and \$17 million for elections.
- From 2006 to 2011, Canada pledged \$550 million dollars, the primary purpose being to strengthen political institutions and the rule of law.

Five-year plan

The most recent five-year plan, 2006-11, has been directed at helping Haitians organize elections and produce a national plan of their own for economic growth and poverty reduction.

More than 40 training sessions have been held for judges, police officers and court personnel to improve their knowledge of the justice system.

As well, human rights officials also received more education to carry out their work and some courts have been upgraded and prison facilities improved.

Money is also being spent to improve the quality of teacher training and provide tuition so that more children can go to Haiti's private schools. There are few public schools on the island.

On the health front, Canada helped vaccinate more than a million children against polio and to a lesser extent measles, diphtheria and tuberculosis.

Health officials have also trained more people in the health field and provided education to protect against HIV/AIDS, one of the biggest killers in Haiti.

Security

Canada has also made a substantial contribution to policing on the island, including training the Haitian National Police Force.

Since 1993, over 1,000 Canadian officers have served on UN missions to Haiti, making it Canada's largest and longest international policing commitment [<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/po-mp/missions-curr-cour-eng.htm#haiti>].

At the time of the earthquake, 82 officers were in the country, including RCMP Supt. Doug Coates, who was acting as police commissioner for the United Nations in Haiti and Sgt. Mark Gallagher, an RCMP media relations officer.

Both men died [<http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2010/01/21/ottawa-hait-rcmp-coates-gallagher.html>] in the quake.

Canadian soldiers have also been part of UN missions
[<http://www.unac.org/peacekeeping/en/un-peacekeeping/fact-sheets/canadian-participation-in-un-peacekeeping-a-chro>] to help stabilize the country for two decades.

These missions include:

- 1990-91: ONUVEH-United Nations Observer Group for the Verification of the Elections in Haiti. Canada sent a contingent to Haiti to observe and safeguard the electoral process.
- 1993-96 UNMIH-United Nations Mission in Haiti. Canada contributed 750 military personnel and 100 civilian police.
- 1996-97: UNSMIIH-United Nations Support Mission in Haiti. Canada contributed 752 military personnel and 100 civilian police.
- 2004-ongoing: MINUSTAH-United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. Canada is contributing 66 civilian police and 5 military personnel.
- 2010 - Canadian sends 1,000 soldiers after the January earthquake.