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FOCUS ON HAITI

With the special collaboration of the Inter-American Dialogue

Obama and the Haitian earthquake

Daniel P. Erikson



The U.S. must be proactive to stop political unravelling.

When Haiti was struck by a devastating earthquake on Jan. 12, the administration of U.S. President Barack Obama quickly absorbed the depth of the tragedy and necessity of a robust U.S. response. The immediate effort rightly focused on meeting urgent humanitarian needs, but this should not eclipse the larger need to strengthen Haiti's political institutions and lay the groundwork for democratic elections. Unless the U.S. adopts a proactive role, Haiti's fragmented political landscape threatens to deteriorate into a political vacuum that will compound the current crisis.

The scope of the damage was —and remains— simply astounding by any measure. Port-au-Prince lay in ruins in what is almost certainly the single greatest urban catastrophe in modern history. With the official death toll now at 220,000 and rising, the Haitian quake is already one of the 10 deadliest natural disasters in history and is on track to surpass the 2004 Asian tsunami. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) now estimates that the cost of rebuilding homes, schools and infrastructure could cost as much as US\$14 billion —more than double the country's annual GDP.



Photo: U.S. Air Force by Master Sgt. Jeremy Lock/Released

U.S. soldiers and sailors load a helicopter with earthquake relief supplies in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Jan. 23, 2010.

The enormity of the challenge has mobilized the Obama administration to mount an unprecedented effort to help provide relief and assistance in the recovery of its badly damaged neighbour. The U.S. government swiftly readied urban rescue units, medical ships and military forces to aid the country in its time of crisis and played a key role in co-ordinating the support of the broader international community. The government

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FOCAL Views: Thinking through Haiti

Critical and creative thinking is essential to guide reconstruction.

Haiti is famous for its proverbs; most require some knowledge of the country to truly appreciate them. There is, however, one that is understood universally and instantly: "In Haiti, everything is a priority." After the earthquake, what had already been acute challenges are now more complex and more resource-demanding, and will require action beyond past efforts. This reality is not recognized by all. It is thus opportune and necessary to examine the situation critically and creatively.

This does not mean throwing out all that has been done in the past; rather, it means reflecting upon what has worked and what has not, and demonstrating openness toward new ideas.

In a situation as complex as that of Haiti, an ongoing appraisal of development efforts is always needed. As with last year's *FOCALPoint* issue on Haiti, this edition brings together a diverse group of analysts, policy-makers, practitioners and diaspora representatives to offer insight into the challenges confronting Haiti. We especially thank our contributors from the Inter-American Dialogue for their collaboration in this effort to take stock of past efforts and to look ahead.

New international players have taken centre stage in Haiti. David Morin argues in his article that the many Latin American countries involved in Haiti, such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay on one side, or Cuba, Ecuador and Venezuela on the other, may not always speak with one voice, but have all made significant commitments to the same cause. Mexico,

Canada's closest partner in the region, has also been involved in Haiti relief efforts and is looking to co-ordinate its action with Canada.

Indeed, co-ordination will be key to reconstruction efforts in Haiti. Canada will most certainly need to work closely with the United States. President Barack Obama has pledged more than US\$600 million for relief and recovery efforts to date. According to Daniel P. Erikson, the U.S. should continue to work toward building a functional democracy in Haiti as a major policy goal. In the shorter term, it is paramount to strengthen Haiti's institutions and prepare the next democratic elections to avoid a political vacuum.

Donors should also work to address the root causes of poverty and inequality. For example, Jeffrey Puryear and Michael Lisman make the case for an overhaul of the education system that is predominantly private to ensure that the poorest make it into the classrooms.

But this type of effort will be in vain if it is not accompanied by job creation. Beyond bilateral aid, there is a need to forge new partnerships; the private sector should therefore be involved in a sustainable manner. Yves Savain proposes the creation of an independent authority to plan the development and growth of the country in accordance with sound fiscal and economic discipline.


The Haitian diaspora should also be brought on board as an economic player and as a watchdog to guarantee that international efforts serve Haiti's interests, as Kerlande Mibel illustrates.

Further, although the diaspora's capacity to scale up its current effort should not be overstated, Manuel Orozco argues among other things that funneling remittances more efficiently through microfinance institutions, for instance, could increase the credit portfolio available to small businesses. He notes that the diaspora could also benefit from sound technical advice to determine how its philanthropic efforts can yield the greatest impact.

Most importantly, Haitian grassroots organizations and civil society should be tapped into to foster self-help initiatives and local know-how as stressed by Jenny Petrow, as well as Melina Schoenborn and Myriam Fehmiu. They also remind us that in doing so, we should not neglect rural Haiti.

We hope that the following articles will contribute to constructive new thinking to help the country rise from the rubble.

As a final note, we wish to dedicate this edition to the men and women—many of them friends, associates and colleagues of FOCAL and our contributors—who perished in the earthquake or have lost family and friends.

Kenbe fem. 

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Obama and the Haitian earthquake

(Continued from page 1)

initially offered US\$100 million to contribute to the relief and recovery effort and by Feb. 17, the amount of money mobilized or pledged by the U.S. government totalled US\$636 million according to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Some 40 per cent of that amount — totalling US\$250 million— represented the expense of the U.S. military support for humanitarian relief supplied by the Pentagon, but USAID also provided more than US\$380 million in aid, principally through the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. The strong initial U.S. response, backed by former Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush and endorsed by members from both parties in the Congress, was one of the few bright spots during an undeniably tragic moment.

But the earthquake and its aftermath have severely jeopardized the slow but steady climb out of the political and economic abyss that Haiti had witnessed prior to Jan. 12. Haiti's recent stability had been a hard won but fragile achievement. In 2008, widespread riots were prompted by a 40 per cent rise in the costs of basic food commodities, which cut deeply into the standard of living of a majority of the population subsisting on less than two dollars per day. At the time, the Haitian food crisis contributed to the ousting of Prime Minister Jacques-Édouard Alexis and led to months of political instability. His successor, Michèle Pierre-Louis, fared little better and was removed from office after a 14-month tenure that was dogged by political infighting and concerns over misspending of hurricane relief funding. Her replacement, Jean-Max

Bellerive—a respected technocrat who previously served as Minister for External Co-operation— was appointed two months before the quake struck. During an interview in mid-February, he signalled that the emergence of political divisiveness in Haiti threatens to undermine future progress: “You have the feeling that everyone is trying to do his little part and accuse the other one of not doing his part ... Everyone is trying to create conflict when we have the same enemy right now: it's misery, it's disaster.” Bellerive is now sounding the alarm: the earthquake may unleash new political forces that will jeopardize the ability of Haitian leaders to govern.

The perilous state of Haiti will challenge the U.S. government's efforts to portray it as a modest success story, following a decade of tumult and setbacks. President René Préval, who was elected in February 2006, is kept in power today principally by the 9,000-strong, Brazil-led United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), a force that entered the country in summer 2004. Haiti remains a source of regional instability and is a continuing political problem.

The U.S. has long been in a quandary about where exactly to place Haiti in the context of its overall foreign policy in the Americas, but there is little question that the country has now planted itself as a central priority on Obama's foreign policy agenda. Haiti presents itself as an enduring concern for U.S. policy-makers due to the country's deep levels of poverty and ongoing humanitarian crisis, which sustain the flow of migrants to the U.S., and because of its role as a transit point for the flow of Colombian cocaine through the

Caribbean. There is also a long-standing desire to establish a functional democracy in Haiti, which has been touted as a principal goal of U.S. policy.

Préval is nearing the end of his presidential term and once the Haitian parliament expires he will be left to rule by decree in a country virtually devoid of institutions. There is no obvious successor to Préval, although Haiti has no shortage of aspirants judging by the 34 candidates who sought the top job in the 2006 elections. One wildcard lurks in South Africa, where controversial former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide is undoubtedly weighing whether he retains enough support in Haiti to launch an effort to return.

In 2010, the Haitian government will need to work actively with key partners to prevent the emergence of a political vacuum that would hamper the international community's ability to address the country's brutal poverty and gaping inequality. The Obama administration could make a positive contribution to democratic governance and the rule of law in Haiti by using its leverage, both in Haiti and with the broader international community, in order to facilitate timely elections and reinvigorating efforts to create a solid development path for the country. If the Haitian earthquake is followed by the country's political unravelling, then the damage from this natural disaster will be magnified even further and U.S. interests in Haiti will be even harder to achieve. 🌐

Daniel P. Erikson is the Senior Associate for U.S. policy and Director of Caribbean programs at the Inter-American Dialogue.

Entre stabilisation et reconstruction: L'Amérique latine au chevet d'Haïti

David Morin

(English translation follows)

Les gouvernements d'Amérique latine viennent en aide à Haïti.

Suite au séisme qui a frappé Haïti en janvier 2010, les gouvernements latino-américains ont multiplié les marques de solidarité envers leur « sœur caribéenne ». Cet élan illustre leur implication croissante en Haïti depuis plusieurs années et conforte le souhait de certains États, dont le Canada et le Brésil, de privilégier une approche hémisphérique dans ce dossier. Si certains y voient la confirmation d'une dynamique interaméricaine sans précédent, les événements de ces dernières semaines ont également montré qu'en Haïti, l'Amérique latine est encore loin de parler d'une seule voix.

La présence latino-américaine se remarque d'abord au sein de la mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti (MINUSTAH). En décembre 2009, pas moins de 13 pays du continent y comptaient des militaires ou des policiers, ce qui en fait la « première mission de paix latino-américaine » sous le Chapitre VII de la Charte de l'Organisation des Nations Unies (ONU). Depuis 2004, la contribution militaire latino-américaine oscille entre 40 et 60 pourcent de la totalité des Casques bleus déployés dans ce pays. Cet engagement est toutefois très inégal. À eux seuls, le Brésil et l'Uruguay fournissent plus de la moitié des soldats et en incluant l'Argentine et le Chili, ces quatre pays représentent 84 pourcent de la totalité des Cas-

ques bleus latino-américains en Haïti. En réponse à l'urgence, la résolution 1098 du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU a approuvé une augmentation pour six mois de 3500 Casques bleus au sein de la MINUSTAH. Tandis que le parlement brésilien a autorisé l'envoi de 900 soldats supplémentaires, l'Argentine, le Pérou et l'Uruguay ont annoncé leur intention de contribuer à ces renforts.

La plupart des observateurs s'accordent à dire que le Brésil est le principal acteur et le moteur de l'engagement latino-américain en Haïti. Des Brésiliens occupaient deux des postes les plus élevés de la MINUSTAH —celui de Représentant spécial adjoint principal du Secrétaire général et celui de Commandant de la Force— avant que le premier, Luiz Carlos da Costa, ne périsse dans le séisme. Brasilia est aussi actif en Haïti sur le plan politique et, dans une certaine mesure, économique, tel qu'illustré par les nombreuses visites du président Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva à Port-au-Prince, les projets de développement mis en place ou l'accroissement des échanges commerciaux entre les deux pays. Le dossier haïtien constitue un élément clé de la volonté et de la stratégie du Brésil d'affirmer son statut de puissance régionale sur la scène internationale, ce qui irrite parfois ses partenaires. Il n'en reste pas moins que les pays d'Amérique latine ont su établir une dy-

namique relativement cohérente et coordonnée au sein de la MINUSTAH et sur le plan politique à travers l'Organisation des États américains (OÉA) et le Conseil de sécurité notamment.

Au-delà de la mission de stabilisation, plusieurs pays de la région sont également actifs en matière d'aide au développement. Outre les différentes initiatives brésiliennes, le Venezuela —dont la relation avec Haïti s'appuie sur un symbole fort puisque la jeune République a jadis hébergé Simon Bolivar, héros de l'indépendance sud-américaine— a intégré l'île à son programme global de coopération énergétique. Son président, Hugo Chávez, a en outre annoncé l'annulation de la dette haïtienne, dette qui fait du Venezuela le principal créancier bilatéral d'Haïti selon le Fonds monétaire international (FMI). Cuba mène également une politique volontariste avec près de 2000 médecins et infirmiers cubains en Haïti et l'octroi de bourses d'étude pour former des étudiants haïtiens.

Sur le plan multilatéral, la Banque interaméricaine de développement (BID) est le principal bailleur de fonds multilatéral du pays. Présente en Haïti depuis 50 ans, elle finançait fin 2009 plus de 25 programmes, estimés à près de 770 millions de dollars, notamment dans les secteurs de l'infrastructure et de l'agriculture, des services de base et de la gouvernance économique.



Photo: UN Photo/Sophia Paris

Major-général Floriano Peixoto Vieira Neto (à gauche), commandant de la Force de la Mission de stabilisation des Nations Unies en Haïti (MINUSTAH), et le Lieutenant-général des Forces armées des États-Unis Kenneth Keen (à droite), parlent à la presse à Cité Soleil, Haïti, où leurs troupes distribuent de la nourriture et l'eau.

Suite au séisme, les pays latino-américains ont multiplié les annonces confirmant leur engagement. Le Brésil, Cuba, l'Équateur, la République dominicaine et le Venezuela ont été parmi les plus prompts à réagir. En réponse au « plan Marshall » censé être discuté lors de la Conférence ministérielle préparatoire de Montréal du 25 janvier, l'Alternative bolivarienne pour les Amériques (ALBA) s'est empressée d'annoncer, le même jour, un « plan stratégique » à moyen et long terme pour l'aide humanitaire et la reconstruction en Haïti, avec la santé pour axe central. L'ALBA en a également profité pour dénoncer « l'impérialisme » des pays donateurs et la présence militaire étrangère, celle des États-Unis notamment. Quelques jours plus tard, l'Union des Nations sud-américaines (UNASUR), créée en 2008 avec l'objectif implicite de se substituer à l'OÉA

perçue comme inféodée aux États-Unis, s'est engagée à remettre 300 millions de dollars pour soutenir la reconstruction d'Haïti. Lors de ce sommet, l'UNASUR a notamment appelé ses États membres à « inaugurer une nouvelle forme de coopération Sud-Sud ».

Suite aux déclarations épicées de certains chefs d'États de l'ALBA, le sommet de l'UNASUR aura eu le mérite de calmer le jeu et de restaurer une certaine harmonie de vues au sein de la communauté latino-américaine. Cependant, derrière cette façade, force est d'admettre que la différence de ton et d'attitude entre Chávez ou Lula par exemple ne manqueront pas de donner des arguments aux tenants de la théorie des « deux gauches ».

Au-delà de la rhétorique, cette dissonance semble traduire des divergences plus profondes et des intérêts difficilement conciliables en Haïti. D'un côté, les pays com-

me le Venezuela, Cuba ou l'Équateur qui se réclament ouvertement de la gauche socialiste défendent une alternative régionale assez opposée à l'approche des principaux acteurs en Haïti (e.g. Canada, États-Unis, France ou Banque mondiale, BID, FMI, Union européenne). De l'autre, les principaux contributeurs de troupes comme le Brésil, l'Argentine et le Chili —qui n'ont dépêché que des représentants de moindre niveau au sommet de l'UNASUR— sont pris entre le marteau et l'enclume. Ils prennent certes soin, chaque fois qu'ils le peuvent, de réaffirmer leur attachement à une approche latino-américaine distincte de celle privilégiée par une partie de la communauté internationale. Dans le même temps, il leur est difficile de ne pas intégrer les standards mis en place par leurs principaux alliés au sein de la MINUSTAH et du Conseil de sécurité, ou de prendre le risque de s'aliéner les deux poids lourds que sont les États-Unis et le Canada. Difficile dans ces circonstances, au-delà de l'imaginaire politique qu'elle alimente, de croire que la reconstruction en Haïti pourrait être ce « laboratoire » qui verra enfin à l'œuvre une Amérique latine parlant et agissant d'une seule voix. 🌐

David Morin est directeur adjoint du Réseau francophone de recherche sur les opérations de paix (ROP) de l'Université de Montréal.

Between stabilization and reconstruction: Latin America at Haiti's side

David Morin

Latin American governments are pooling their efforts to aid Haiti in its current struggle.

Following the earthquake that hit Haiti in January 2010, governments in Latin American countries have expressed solidarity with their “Caribbean sister” in many ways. In doing so, they have demonstrated not only their ongoing and growing involvement in the island over many years, but have reinforced the desire of some states, including Canada and Brazil, to adopt a hemisphere-wide approach to Haiti. While some see this as a confirmation of an unprecedented inter-American dynamic, events over recent weeks have also shown that in Haiti, Latin America is still far from speaking with one voice.

The presence of Latin America is notable within the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). In December 2009, there were military and police officers from at least 13 countries in the continent, making it the “first Latin American peace mission” under Chapter VII of the United Nations (UN) Charter. Since 2004, the military contribution from Latin American countries ranged between 40 and 60 per cent of the total number of UN peacekeepers deployed in Haiti. However, this commitment is quite unequally dispersed. Brazil and Uruguay provide more than half of the soldiers and, together with Argentina and Chile, these four countries represent 84 per cent of the total contingent

of Latin American Blue Berets in Haiti. In response to the urgency following the earthquake, the UN Security Council’s resolution 1098 approved the addition of 3,500 peacekeepers for six months as part of MINUSTAH. The Brazilian parliament authorized the deployment of 900 additional soldiers while Argentina, Peru and Uruguay announced their intention to contribute to these reinforcements.

Most observers agree that Brazil is the key player and the engine driving Latin American involvement in Haiti. Brazilians held two of the most senior positions within MINUSTAH, namely Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Force Commander, before the former, Luiz Carlos da Costa, lost his life in the earthquake. Brasilia is also politically active in Haiti and, to some extent, economically as illustrated by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s many visits to Port-au-Prince, the development projects under way and increased trade between the two countries. The Haitian file is a key component of Brazil’s will and strategy to assert its regional power status on the international scene, which sometimes aggravates its partners. Notwithstanding, Latin American countries have managed to establish a relatively coherent and co-ordinated dynamic within MINUSTAH and, at the

political level, within the Organization of American States (OAS) and, particularly, the UN Security Council.

Beyond the stabilization mission, several countries in the region are also active in development aid. Aside from Brazil’s many initiatives, Venezuela — whose ties with Haiti are based on a powerful symbol as the young republic once provided refuge to Simon Bolívar, the hero of South America’s independence— has included the island nation in its global energy co-operation program. In addition, President Hugo Chávez has announced the cancellation of Haiti’s debt, which made Venezuela Haiti’s main bilateral lender according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Cuba has also been supporting the island nation with a voluntaristic policy that has brought nearly 2,000 Cuban doctors and nurses to Haiti and by granting scholarships to train Haitian students.

On the multilateral level, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is Haiti’s main lender and has been in the country now over the past 50 years. By the end of 2009, the IDB financed more than 25 programs, estimated at over US\$770 million, mainly in the areas of infrastructure building, agriculture, essential services and economic governance.

In the wake of the earthquake, Latin American countries con-



Photo: UN Photo/Sophia Paris

Major General Floriano Peixoto Vieira Neto (left), Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and U.S. Army Lieutenant General Kenneth Keen (right), speak to the press in Cité Soleil, Haiti, where their troops are jointly distributing food and water.

firmed their aid commitment through various announcements. Brazil, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Venezuela were the first to respond. In response to the “Marshall Plan” slated to be discussed at the Montreal Ministerial Preparatory Conference on Jan. 25, 2010, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) quickly announced the same day a medium and long term “strategic plan” for humanitarian aid and the reconstruction of Haiti, with health as the central focus. ALBA also seized the opportunity to denounce the “imperialism” of donor countries as well as the presence of foreign troops, particularly from the U.S. A few days later, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), created in 2008 with the implicit goal of replacing the OAS —seen as too

subservient to the U.S.— committed US\$300 million to support the reconstruction of Haiti. During this summit, UNASUR called particularly on member states to “establish a new form of South-South co-operation.”

After the critical comments made by some ALBA heads of state, the UNASUR summit provided an opportunity to tone things down and restore some harmony within the Latin American community. However, behind this facade, one must admit that the difference in tone and attitude between Chávez or Lula, for example, will surely provide ammunition to those who subscribe to the theory of the “two lefts.”

Beyond the rhetoric, this dissonance seems to reflect more profound divergences and interests that are hard to reconcile in Haiti. On the one hand, countries such

as Venezuela, Cuba or Ecuador, which openly label themselves the socialist left, are in favour of a regional alternative that is rather contrary to the approach adopted by the key players in Haiti (e.g. Canada, U.S., France, IDB, IMF, World Bank, EU). On the other hand, the main contributors of soldiers, namely Brazil, Argentina and Chile, which only sent a low-level delegation to the UNASUR summit, are caught between the hammer and the anvil. Whenever they can, they certainly take care to reaffirm their commitment to a Latin American approach that is distinct from the one espoused by a segment of the international community. At the same time, it is difficult for them not to integrate the operational standards implemented by their main allies within MINUSTAH and the UN Security Council. Otherwise, they risk alienating two heavyweights: the United States and Canada. Under these conditions and beyond the powerful political symbolism that it sustains, it is difficult to believe that the reconstruction of Haiti could be the “laboratory” that will finally give rise to a Latin America speaking and acting with a single voice. 🌐

David Morin is Deputy Director of the Francophone Research Network on Peace Operations (ROP) at Université de Montréal.

Haiti's educational moment

Jeffrey Puryear and Michael Lisman

Post-quake Haiti should accept and build on its largely private education system.

In addition to killing hundreds of thousands of people, the tragic January 2010 earthquake in Haiti destroyed countless schools. Rebuilding those schools—and establishing new ones—clearly deserves high priority. Yet, it may be just as crucial to consider an overhaul of the education system to help it produce the learned and skilled citizens Haiti so desperately needs.

Developing countries whose populations are poorly educated seldom have the human resources and institutions necessary to break the cycle of poverty and sustain economic growth. Haiti is one of those countries.

Haiti is the country with the least-educated citizens in the Americas. Approximately half the population can neither read nor write. School enrolment rates are low at all levels and only two-thirds of those who start primary school complete it; the limited information available on student learning also points to its poor quality. Government spending on education is roughly two per cent of GDP—among the lowest in the world. By most measures, Haiti's schools are closer in educational quality and quantity to those of the poorest countries of Sub-Saharan Africa than to any of its neighbours in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Haiti's schools also stand out for another reason: they are mostly private. The country is one of very few worldwide that educates most of its students in private schools, with 80 per cent of primary and secondary enrolments compared with just 20 per cent in pub-

Public / Private Enrolment and Spending on Education			
<i>Based on official estimates for 2006</i>			
	Public	Private	Total
Basic education (Fondamental 1-2)	390,000	1,716,000	2,106,000
Lower Secondary (Fondamental 3)	87,400	248,900	336,300
Upper Secondary (Secondaire)	55,400	181,800	237,200
Higher Education	28,000	12,000	40,000
Spending on Education as a percentage of GDP	1.97%	6.57%	8.54%

Source: MENFP, 2007
Originally published in *Education in Haiti: The Way Forward* (2008) by Laurence Wolff (PREAL)

lic institutions (the higher education sector is small and roughly two-thirds public). These private schools include church, community and for-profit institutions. Some are better and others are worse than the public schools, which tend to be overcrowded and poorly managed.

Private schools have emerged over the past several decades because the government has failed massively to meet the growing demand for schooling. Private spending has filled this gap: at more than six per cent of GDP, private expenditure on education in Haiti is among the highest in the world. Estimates suggest that many poor families invest as much as 30 per cent of their scarce resources in education. Clearly, Haitian parents are willing to make extraordinary sacrifices to educate their children.

The predominantly private character of Haiti's schools is unlikely to change any time soon. The government's ability to manage its social services, inadequate enough prior to the earthquake, has been devastated. It would have to more than quadruple its education spending just to enrol

the children currently attending private schools, and would still have the lowest per-pupil expenditure in the hemisphere. That kind of spending increase is not going to happen.

This may be a pivotal moment for Haitian education, an opportunity to look beyond the short term crisis and set the long term foundation for what is to come. Beyond the massive challenge of reopening schools, Haiti and its partners should consider systemic changes that may do a better job of educating the poor than the pre-quake schools. Central to that process will be recognizing the predominantly private character of Haitian schools and building upon it.

There are, of course, no quick fixes, but several ideas ought to be on the table. First, donors should be willing to help any school—public or private—that serves the poor and is willing to improve the quality of its education system. In the short term, direct support for private and community schools that serve the poor may be the most productive approach, as long as their administrators agree to meet reasonable standards and be accountable.

In the longer term, emphasis should be on helping Haiti convert its *de facto* public-private education system into a properly managed, *de jure* one. Donors should work not only with the government, but with the private sector as well, recognizing the comparative advantage each brings to the table. They should take a lesson from successful public-private education initiatives worldwide, particularly in countries such as Bangladesh, Belgium, the Netherlands and Pakistan. The goal should be to create a system that, although diverse in its methods, is subject to common standards of performance and united by its aim to educate all children, including the poorest.

Several components of successful education systems ought to be considered. A good step forward would be to establish modern learning standards that specify what students ought to have learned upon completing each grade. These can be limited at first to reading and mathematics which are relatively easy to test and are essential skills for all other learning. Then, a simple but rigorous student testing system can be implemented to assess whether students are attaining learning standards or not. Haiti already has considerable experience with national student achievement tests. A testing authority need not be lodged in the government, but could be quasi-public or fully private, as is the case in many other countries.


Donors could help private school associations regulate the performance of their membership and support efforts to raise quality of education. These associations should rethink ways to attract, train and retain qualified teachers, and provide incentives to serve in poor schools.

To reach more remote and underserved populations, the government

and donors could explore proven approaches such as radio schools, which do not require sophisticated management or infrastructure. Radio education is a documented success in many countries and is usually cost-efficient. Haiti already has experience with radio schools and may be able to expand them rapidly.

The government and donors could expand existing small and experimental scholarship programs that provide families in need with funds to attend private schools, and consider rolling them into a multi-purpose conditional cash transfer program that reaches a significant portion of these families.

Finally, the government's role in education should also be restructured to concentrate on setting and enforcing standards, assessing quality, promoting equity and providing parents with user-friendly information on how well their children's schools are performing.

By investing their meager funds in private schools, Haitians have dramatically demonstrated their demand for education. Haiti's government and the international community should respond by rethinking how the system works, and helping guarantee that all schools, public and private, do a better job of serving their students. 

Jeffrey Puryear is the Vice-President for social policy at the Inter-American Dialogue and Co-director of the Partnership for the Revitalization of Education in the Americas (PREAL). Michael Lisman is the Education Associate at the Inter-American Dialogue and Co-ordinator of Central America and Caribbean programs for PREAL. For more information, readers can download Education in Haiti: The Way Forward (PREAL / Inter-American Dialogue, 2008): <http://www.thedialogue.org/page.cfm?pageID=32&pubID=1600>.

Micro-lending

Bank gives boost to Haitians

Haiti's alternative bank for the organized poor, Fonkoze, is continuing to extend its aid to Haitians in need. Composed of three institutions, Fonkoze's mission is conveyed in its name, an acronym for the Haitian Creole phrase "Fondasyon Kole Zepòl," which translates to "Shoulder-to-Shoulder Foundation."

Fonkoze, grounded in principles such as solidarity, sustainability, transparency and priority to women, is working toward battling the many challenges that Haitians currently face in their dire situation. The organization estimates that 8,000 to 10,000 of its clients have lost their homes, their business or both. Fonkoze cites that one of their most urgent concerns is how to rebuild these staples that Haitians have lost. Other challenges that Haitians face include acquiring sufficient food and water, securing adequate shelter prior to the forthcoming rainy season, reuniting with family members and controlling the potential spread of disease.

The organization is structured in four ascending steps, in terms of what it offers in its outreach: reaching out to the poorest of the poor; providing small credit; organization into a solidarity group; and providing year-long loans for business development.

For the latest information about Haiti's state and to contribute to the "Relief and Rehabilitation Fund," please visit www.fonkoze.org.

Taking direction from the grassroots

Jenny Petrow

Engaging rural community organizations can close the aid gap and promote equitable development.

The first waves of humanitarian aid to reach Haiti after the earthquake were, rightly, directed toward easing the suffering of those directly hit. However, the international focus on Haiti's population centre of Port-au-Prince has had the unintended consequence of masking the suffering of the rural poor and widening the aid gap between the capital and the rest of the country. To close this gap and promote more equitable development, donors, international NGOs and the Haitian government will need to engage rural grassroots organizations.

Decades of rural neglect has led to crumbling infrastructure, severe environmental degradation, deficient education and health care, and levels of economic and social inequality unparalleled in the Western Hemisphere. This hardship is compounded by almost half a million Haitians seeking shelter with close family or distant relatives in the *sections communales*, or rural areas, after the earthquake.

Rural residents in the Central Plateau report that household sizes have doubled and food prices have spiked 150 per cent. Many of the displaced live a nomadic existence, shuttling back and forth between town and country due to the concentration of aid in the capital. Rural residents cite the absence of government officials and international NGOs who have joined the



Photo: Jenny Petrow

A farmer shows off a yam from MP3K's experimental plot in Camp-Perrin in October 2009.

relief effort in Port-au-Prince, leaving them to care for the displaced with their meager resources.

Donors will need to rethink their work in Haiti, beginning with a firmer commitment to the rural poor. Although more than half of all Haitians engage in agriculture, statistics show that between 1990 and 2006, foreign aid directed toward small farmers did not surpass 7 per cent. Simply shifting aid from urban to rural projects or sectors is insufficient. Donors need to promote a model of engagement in which they take cues from the grassroots to determine how the country will rebuild. Haitian farmer movements, women's associations and local NGOs that support them already have decades of

experience dealing with food and water scarcity, deforestation, and lack of educational and health facilities. These groups embody the types of existing social networks that disaster-recovery experts recommend aid agencies tap into to reach those most in need. They understand context, they are trusted in their communities and can mobilize people quickly. Well-versed in self-help, they are ideally positioned to partner with donors and the Haitian government as they set to rebuild.

The Inter-American Foundation (IAF), an independent foreign-assistance agency of the U.S. government, has been financing such self-help efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean since

the early 1970s. In the Sud region, the IAF grantee *Mouvement Paysan 3ème Section Camp-Perrin* (MP3K) has begun integrating displaced people into the local economy. MP3K leaders estimate that at least 1,000 refugees have settled in the third *section communale* of Camp-Perrin, expanding households by at least three inhabitants per home. Before the earthquake, the association had been experimenting with a new technique for growing yams, which resulted in more seedlings and larger yields than ever before. A month after the earthquake, with the rainy season upon them, the farmers are ready to plant again, despite overwhelming grief. This time, MP3K has brought displaced families into planting activities and plans to make seedlings, agricultural training and credit available to them in the future. Although incorporating more farmers means stretching thin resources and slowing the pace of expansion to neighbouring *sections communales*, MP3K hopes to produce a lasting food supply and give a source of income to these families in need.

Large, organized farmer groups such as MP3K—which has also received funding from Canada and the European Union—are able to reserve seeds for future planting seasons through seed banks and communal plots. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, however, many rural families hosting earthquake victims have employed what they refer to as “unsustainable coping strategies,” spending their savings to feed displaced relatives, and consuming or selling seeds that were meant for the upcoming planting season. Given

the proper resources and a voice, farmer associations such as MP3K can help fend off the impending food crisis by integrating new residents into rural livelihoods.

Donors should engage rural groups to build an equitable society.

Rezo Fanm Frontyè Ba Plato (Rezo Fanm), also an IAF grantee, is a network of women’s groups in the lower Central Plateau near the Dominican border, uniting women dealing with issues such as education, income generation and women’s rights. The earthquake has no doubt increased the burden on rural women since, as a Rezo Fanm member from the border town of Boucan Carré notes, “we have more responsibilities on our shoulders, because every day we have to think about how we are going to feed everyone.” While men may often provide the income, Haitian women are traditionally responsible for stretching that income to feed the family. In addition to the reported increase in food prices and larger households, many families no longer have income from relatives in the capital on which they had previously depended.

In the border town of Belladère, Rezo Fanm has been working with the International Committee of the Red Cross to survey residents and the displaced. According to Delmond Enaëlle of Rezo Fanm, “dozens of pregnant women are trying to cross to the Dominican Republic every day to get medical care.” The

health infrastructure is thus taxed by scores of pregnant women and new mothers. Rezo Fanm is trying to connect these mothers with midwives who can provide care. The number of young children living in the area has also multiplied and as many cannot attend school, they are more vulnerable to traffickers. Thus, Rezo Fanm is looking to raise awareness about child trafficking and engage displaced children in educational activities.

However, due to limited budgets and geographic isolation, many of these community organizations simply do not have the means to implement their ideas. Engaging the rural grassroots is not a silver bullet, but it is a necessary component of Haiti’s development. Yet, working with grassroots groups as equal partners involves significant investments in time and energy. Local NGOs and community-based organizations in Haiti suffer from many of the same weaknesses as the government; they may require training, financial resources and technical assistance. Nonetheless, only when donors, international NGOs and the Haitian government respect these groups for their knowledge and engage them as decision-makers, and not merely as recipients, will Haitians be able to (re)build a more equitable society. 🌍

Jenny Petrow is the Inter-American Foundation’s Representative for Haiti, Dominican Republic and the English-Speaking Caribbean.

Haiti's other side: The diaspora's solidarity and realism



Manuel Orozco

Haitian migrants' financial and philanthropic contributions could be funnelled more efficiently.

Haiti's earthquake has dramatically impacted not only the island nation, but also its migrant communities. As many now highlight the importance of involving the diaspora in reconstruction efforts, it is crucial to measure the willingness and capacity of Haitian migrants to support their country —which may be more limited than what is commonly assumed.

According to the author's estimates, in 2008 roughly one million Haitians worldwide sent a total of US\$1.2 billion to Haiti, mostly from the United States, followed by the Dominican Republic and Canada. However, their efforts to remit were affected by the recession, reducing the volume of remittances sent in 2009 by 12 per cent. Even with this drop in transfers, remittances to Haiti were more than double the value of Haiti's exports and almost as important as the income from imports of goods. There is no source of foreign income as important to Haiti's economy as remittances.

Besides these family transfers, the Haitian community, particularly individuals living in the United States and Canada, is actively organized into hometown associations that contribute to small projects with the homeland. There are at least 300 such organizations in Canada and the U.S. donating US\$10,000 each to their communities for social projects. They also actively consume goods from their home country, significantly contributing to the local productive base in Haiti.

With talks of Haiti's reconstruction, many people consider the role of the Haitian diaspora as a development player. The reality is that Haitian migrants are familiar with the continual socio-political turmoil and natural disasters that affect their nation, and they always move swiftly to provide help within their means. Many ideas have been proposed to involve the diaspora through investment ventures, stock markets, philanthropic partnerships with development agents and more.

Indeed, thinking creatively is essential during these times of

uncertainty for Haiti and perhaps these ideas can provide maximum benefit with a more informed understanding of the willingness and capacity of Haitian migrants to support their country. Normatively, expecting Haitians to be involved in their homeland's development is a complex value judgment that understates the oppression or neglect that pushed them to migrate. Haitian migrants have mixed feelings: they routinely express resentment toward Haiti's politicians, yet largely demonstrate a desire to help. There are also significant divisions among the diaspora itself.

Materially, the capacity of the diaspora to help its homeland beyond current levels is quite limited. Seven out of 10 Haitian migrants send remittances home, two out of 10 migrants take up philanthropic work and many bring back goods from their home country; thus, they are already providing substantial support. Yet, Haitians are among the poorest migrant communities in the Americas. The average annual income of Haitians in the United States is less than

Country	Migrants (a)	(%)	US\$ Avg sent by migrant (b)	Annual frequency sending (c)	% distribution	US\$ Volume of remittances
U.S.	450,000	40	120	14	63	756,000,000
Dom. Republic	450,000	40	70	6	16	189,000,000
Canada	54,142	5	200	12	11	129,940,800
France	30,611	3	200	12	6	73,466,400
Other	15,000	12	250	12	4	45,000,000
Total	999,753	100	100	1,193,407,200

Source: (a) Migrants: Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty. "Global Migrant Origin Database." Version iv, March 2007. ; (b) Data refers to monthly average and was collected by the author (2008); (c) Data collected by the author (2008)

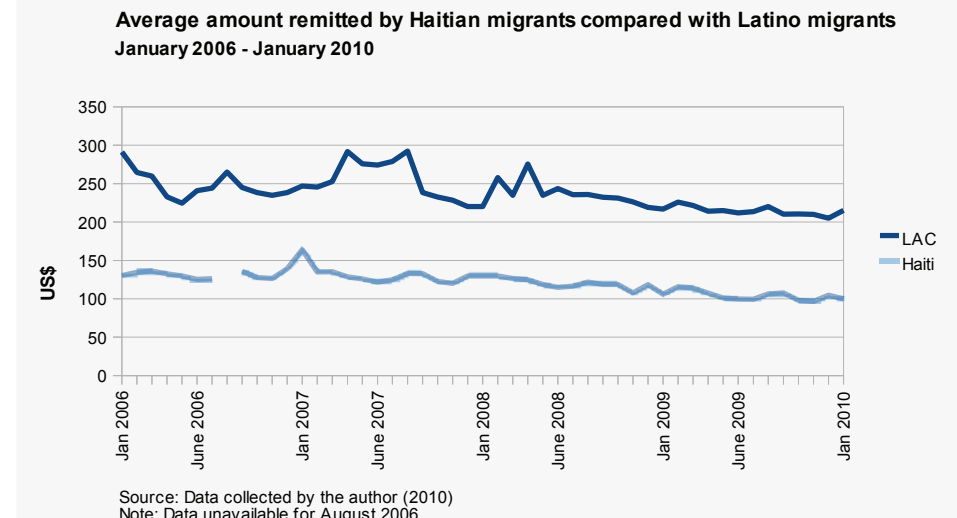
US\$28,000 and their remittance transfers represent one-third of the average sent by other Latin American migrants. Moreover, their philanthropic work, albeit important, is often disconnected from development strategies because they lack the assessment needed to measure impact.

Operationally, envisioning reconstruction projects that involve the Haitian diaspora is an exercise that has to carefully consider the correspondence between the strategic goals and the capacities of and potential benefits to migrants. Efforts to involve the diaspora in the reconstruction of Haiti without a corresponding impact will yield limited results and increase disappointment among the Haitian migrant community.

Perhaps the best way to involve the diaspora in reconstruction is to facilitate and leverage their ongoing activities in ways that effectively promote development. Three important steps include building migrants' confidence toward Haiti, improving the effectiveness of money transfers and maximizing their financial benefits, and strengthening the prevailing transnational links through capacity-building and technical assistance in Haiti.

First, the distrust between the Haitian diaspora and government can be mitigated by increasing understanding of the realities Haiti faces on a day-to-day basis, promoting field trips by Haitian leaders to visit the diaspora and vice versa. The Ministry of the Diaspora could also be strengthened with new resources and legitimate diaspora representation.

Second, given the importance



of remittances, it is important to modernize the payment networks and expand financial access for remittance senders and recipients. Prior to the earthquake, Haiti had only close to 400 remittance transfer points, a relatively small, insufficient number given the volume of monthly transfers that enter the country. Only half of those points were held by financial institutions and few had branches in rural Haiti. Modernizing the networks and promoting access will contribute to development: half a million of remittance recipient households have a stock of savings between US\$200 and US\$1,000, the majority kept informally. Funnelling those savings through banks and microfinance institutions could increase the country's meager credit portfolio available for small businesses, which currently represents only five per cent of all credit. Moreover, the revamped payment networks should incorporate the money sent from the Dominican Republic where a majority of the more than 300,000 migrants remit informally because

it is expensive and difficult to do so through formal means.

Third, Haitian philanthropy can benefit from substantive technical advice about what needs are more pressing in the recipient communities and what they can achieve with their current investments. Moreover, strengthening the trade capacity of small producers who cater to the demand of Haitian migrants for homeland goods is a sound approach since over 80 per cent of Haitian migrants spend at least US\$500 per year on these. The prevailing networks between traders and distributors will benefit greatly from such development assistance.

The future of Haiti is uncertain and development mantras aside, the best solution lies in the realism of the possible, which will motivate the Haitian community living abroad to further engage with Haiti. 🌐

Manuel Orozco is the Director of remittances and development at the Inter-American Dialogue.

Building big in Haiti

Yves Savain

A sustainable plan for economic growth and job creation is a current critical requirement.

Over more than two decades, Haiti's economy has relied heavily on remittances —US\$1.8 billion in 2008 according to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). As a result, before the earthquake two million literate young people already wandered the streets of Port-au-Prince, Cap, Gonaïves, Jacmel and Les Cayes looking for work. Transfers will continue to be allocated mainly to immediate consumption rather than long term investments; thus, what is needed now is a sustainable plan for infrastructure construction, economic growth and job creation that the Haitian state, the people of Haiti and its diaspora can validate.

With much of Port-au-Prince destroyed, a million or more homeless, plus a large backlog of unattended infrastructures, we could be looking at US\$50 billion of fresh capital needed over the next eight to 10 years for new construction. So how should Haiti attract the necessary foreign direct investments and create half to one million export-based living wage jobs that will expand the economy for all?

A basic requirement is to limit the role of aid missions in long term development. Even with the best of intentions they distort Haitian reality and waste much time and resources trying to comprehend a society that mystifies them.

Then, it is high time to consider the long standing proposal to entrust the co-ordination and execution of Haiti's economic development to an independent authority. This body that would focus exclusively on infrastructure construction, economic growth and job creation could be called the Building Haiti Authority (BHA).

An independent authority could tackle the failings of Haiti's economy.

Unlike current efforts, it would be led by professionals of Haitian descent whose credentials would include recent global experience in financing, building and managing billion dollar projects. Activities would preferably include the creation of or improvements to airports, manufacturing facilities, commercial space, multi-family housing, ports, utilities, hydroelectric dams, profitable agricultural ventures and world-class free trade zones.

The BHA would work in tandem with the Haitian government while enjoying irreversible autonomy along with the authority to raise money from capital markets. Repayment of loans would be guaranteed by a documented regime of fees, tolls and revenue from leases.

And to ensure the success of these ventures, the government would enact comprehensive legal and regulatory reforms protecting investments, private property and rationalizing corporate law to promote entrepreneurship.

Precedents for the proposed BHA can be found in recent American history when independent super agencies were organized to remedy major economic and structural deficiencies. The institutions Robert Moses created with the autonomy granted by the State of New York first come to mind. Beginning in 1924 through 1960, he used this permission to finance and build the highways, tunnels, bridges, Jones Beach and more, giving rise to a state-wide park and highway system and today's compelling greater New York City area.

Another case in point is the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) created in the midst of the Great Depression. Exercising broad federal prerogatives, the TVA quickly built a dozen hydroelectric dams through the Second World War. Today, it still oversees a vast network of energy producing facilities, as well as irrigation and transportation canals that continue to fuel the prosperity and growth of agriculture and manufacturing in Tennessee and five neighbouring states.

Finally, the Municipal Assistance Corporation (MAC) es-

tablished jointly by the City and State of New York, which faced impending bankruptcy in 1975 is another good example. Under the leadership of financier Felix Rohatyn, the MAC restored New York to fiscal health.

These three examples show how crucial the introduction of rigorous fiscal and economic discipline to the planning and implementation of programs impacting public interests has been in securing their success. Unlike aid projects that rarely meet basic viability criteria, private-public authority ventures must pay for themselves.

With these and other precedents in mind, the BHA could be structured quickly and set immediately to tackle long-standing failings of Haiti's economy. The mission that would govern its operations would include the priorities that follow.


First, the BHA would work promptly to secure between US\$3 to US\$5 billion in credit and equity yearly. These sums would complete strategic projects that BHA would optimize by undertaking joint ventures with qualified private sector partners.

Second, priorities should include basic infrastructure development and the creation of industrial zones that will attract manufacturers mainly from Asia to lease millions of square feet of new facilities with easy access to fully equipped ports and airports, and a regulatory and trade climate that supports the gainful employment of 150,000 to 250,000 people. The productivity of Haitian workers in apparel and electronic assembly has been demonstrated for over 30

years and is a guarantee for growth in foreign exchange revenue.

Third, targeting Port-au-Prince and nearby towns impacted by the earthquake, the BHA would devise suitable financing instruments. Loans would be made available to individuals and institutions interested in building residences, schools and commercial establishments in accordance with revised national building codes and design standards.

Fourth, to serve five million residents in rural areas, the BHA would manage a development strategy also predicated on profitability and growth. Emphasis would be on fresh food production to meet increased demand from employed workers in towns. The BHA would also provide the necessary incentives to generate electricity, build and manage water resources, improve land usage, involve local contractors in feeder road construction and maintenance, and move ahead with reforestation.

This is not a proposal to be considered in an undetermined future; the matters at hand are critically urgent. The free trade zones needed outside Port-au-Prince to put people to work should have been completed soon after the U.S. Congress granted unprecedented trade access to Haiti. It is year two of the amended Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act (HOPE II), which aims to provide the country with 10 years of tariff exemptions, and still nothing meaningful has been undertaken. Weeks after the earthquake, the call for action is deafening and the need to act palpable. 

Yves Savain, originally from Haiti, is the President of Key-Bridge International, a Maryland trade, marketing and consulting company that operates in the Caribbean, Central America, the United States and Canada.

Aid initiatives

Mexico's effort in Haiti

Mexico's President Felipe Calderón met with Haiti's President René Prével on Feb. 21, 2010 to discuss Haiti's future post-quake. They stressed the importance of achieving long term economic growth in Haiti.

Calderón pledged continued aid to Haiti and extended his support in making the reconstruction of Haiti one of the top priorities of the new Latin American and Caribbean bloc, founded in Mexico the following week.

When the earthquake hit, Mexico's response was immediate: rescue workers, food, medicine and doctors were all sent to Haiti.

Some Mexican analysts say that Haiti could greatly benefit from its experience of post-disaster reconstruction gained after Mexico City was rocked by a devastating 8.1 magnitude earthquake in 1985, which caused extensive infrastructure damage.

Aide et reconstruction durables en Haïti

Melina Schoenborn et Myriam Fehmiu

(English translation follows)

Le CECI a déployé un effort humanitaire efficace en réponse au séisme, mais tout reste à faire.

Dans les heures qui ont suivi le violent séisme qui a fait trembler le sol de la capitale haïtienne, Port-au-Prince, les migrations ont commencé, la population ayant faim et soif et cherchant des abris dans la capitale et à l'extérieur de la ville. Plus d'un mois après la catastrophe, le Centre d'étude et de coopération internationale (CECI), organisation canadienne travaillant en Haïti depuis 40 ans, dresse un bilan de ses actions humanitaires : l'assistance a été déployée rapidement grâce à un solide réseau local, mais elle a été ponctuée d'embûches.

Le directeur du CECI en Haïti, Guypsy Michel, croit que somme toute, l'aide a été efficace : « Dans un pays fragile au plan institutionnel, environnemental et humain, il est difficile de croire à une distribution de l'aide parfaite. Cependant, des problèmes urgents ont été réglés : l'accès à l'eau et à la nourriture. »

Quelques jours après le séisme, du matériel de survie et des vivres étaient livrés sur le tarmac de l'aéroport de Port-au-Prince et les camions du CECI étaient chargés pour commencer la distribution. Moins d'une semaine plus tard, les 35 tonnes de médicaments, solutés, couvertures, antiseptiques, denrées non périssables et d'eau étaient distribuées. D'autres convois ont suivi. Puis, l'arrivée de la première équipe médicale de Canado-Haïtiens envoyée sur place a permis de répondre aux besoins les plus criants et de

fournir les soins immédiats.

L'équipe de 150 employés nationaux a tout de même dû pallier les pénuries d'essence, la circulation chaotique, les menaces d'épidémies sanitaires et modérer l'impatience des sinistrés. Avec des organisations d'aide venues des quatre coins de la planète, adoptant toutes des approches différentes, la coordination entre ONG a aussi été un défi de taille.

À ce jour, 170 000 Haïtiens ont bénéficié des actions du CECI. Mais par-delà l'effort humanitaire d'urgence, de nombreux défis se dessinent pour les mois à venir. Parmi ceux-ci, fournir assez d'abris aux millions de personnes sans toit est considérable. La saison pluvieuse

commence et, selon Guypsy Michel, il faudra des tentes qui résistent à la force des pluies tropicales.

Désengorger Port-au-Prince

Il faut de l'espace pour reconstruire. On veut désengorger Port-au-Prince, mais il faut offrir un service d'appui à ceux et celles qui évacuent la ville. Les hôpitaux, les centres sportifs, les églises et autres organisations de la société civile ont la confiance des Haïtiens, mais le CECI a identifié que leur accès aux ressources demeure un enjeu. Pour rendre leurs actions plus efficaces, les équipes locales se sont jointes à des partenaires internationaux et locaux qui connaissent bien leurs communautés.



Photo: Benoit Aquin/CECI

À ce camp où l'on compte 10 000 personnes, le CECI s'assure que des leaders communautaires soient partie prenante des actions d'assistance afin d'assurer que les plus démunis aient aussi accès à l'aide. Ces activités s'inscrivent dans le cadre du projet Assistance humanitaire aux victimes du tremblement de terre mené par le CECI à Port-au-Prince, Haïti en janvier 2010.



Photo: Benoit Aquin/CECI

Au Collège St-Pierre de Port-au-Prince, une femme reçoit un kit de cuisine et un seau pour stocker l'eau potable en janvier 2010.

Par exemple, la région de l'Artibonite a reçu beaucoup de déplacés. Dès le début, le CECI s'est efforcé d'aider les hôpitaux à faire face à ces nouvelles arrivées en collaboration avec un de ses partenaires, le Centre de coopération internationale en santé et développement (CCISD). Le CECI tente d'offrir assistance et conseils sur la meilleure façon de gérer les camps de déplacés, par exemple en formant des leaders communautaires responsables de sous-comités assurant l'assainissement de l'eau, la sécurité dans les camps et les distributions de vivres et de matériel.

« Si on veut fournir de la nourriture aux victimes, il faut d'abord se demander : quelles sont les denrées que l'on peut acheter sur place ? » croit Chantal-Sylvie Imbeault, directrice générale adjointe du CECI. L'organisation achète du riz, de la farine et des tubercules en sol haïtien afin de stimuler l'économie locale. Également, les stocks de

nourriture qui partent du Canada en vrac sont triés à leur arrivée par des équipes constituées de travailleurs haïtiens recrutés par les organismes sur place. « C'est une manière de créer de l'emploi », explique-t-elle.

Beaucoup de sinistrés sont hébergés par leur famille élargie quand c'est possible. Cela crée une énorme pression économique sur ces familles qui veulent aider, mais qui sont dépourvues de moyens. Il est donc primordial d'appuyer les familles d'accueil qui se retrouvent avec un seul salaire et des dizaines de bouches à nourrir.

Le CECI envisage aussi de mettre en place un système d'argent contre travail (*cash for work*) pour injecter rapidement de l'argent dans l'économie locale. Ainsi, les habitants pourraient effectuer des travaux de prévention ou de reconstruction ponctuels en échange d'une somme d'argent comptant à la fin de la journée.

La société civile au cœur de la reconstruction

Les dons recueillis au Canada servent exclusivement aux besoins urgents : nourriture, eau, soins médicaux, abris. Mais les estimations portent à 10 ans la période de reconstruction des infrastructures. Le CECI poursuit donc également ses projets de développement qui étaient déjà en cours avant que le tremblement de terre ne survienne et toutes les équipes qui y travaillaient sont revenues à leurs postes. Ces projets durables à caractère économique et social sont nécessaires pour contribuer à assurer une certaine reprise économique et la sécurité alimentaire des communautés locales. Des projets déjà en cours, tels que l'intensification de la production rizicole, la valorisation de la main d'œuvre féminine ou encore la formation de jeunes entrepreneurs devront être adaptés à la nouvelle réalité.

Il est impératif que les autorités haïtiennes, les partis politiques et la société civile soient au centre des discussions afin d'élaborer le plan qui guidera la reconstruction. Dans l'immédiat, il est difficile de mobiliser ces gens qui sont aussi sinistrés, blessés ou déplacés. Il n'en demeure pas moins que pour être durable, la reconstruction devra être menée par les Haïtiens eux-mêmes. 🌍

Melina Schoenborn est collaboratrice pour le Centre d'étude et de coopération internationale (CECI). Myriam Fehmiu est Conseillère en communication au CECI. Pour plus d'information, veuillez visiter le: www.ceci.ca.

Aid and sustainable reconstruction in Haiti

Melina Schoenborn and Myriam Fehmiu

CECI offered timely humanitarian assistance to the population, but there is still much to be done.

In the hours following the violent earthquake that rocked Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, the migration began: the hungry and thirsty population started its search for food, water and shelter in the capital and outside the city. More than one month after the disaster, the Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI), a Canadian organization working in Haiti for the past 40 years, assessed the results of its humanitarian actions: aid operations were carried out rapidly due to a solid local network, but it did experience some setbacks.

The director of CECI in Haiti, Guypsy Michel, believes that the aid was effective overall: "In a country that is so fragile at the institutional, environmental and human level, it's hard to believe in perfect distribution of aid. However, the most urgent problems have been taken care of: access to water and food."

A few days after the quake, emergency supplies and provisions were delivered to the tarmac at the Port-au-Prince airport and CECI's trucks were loaded up to begin distribution. Less than a week later, 35 tons of medicine, solutions, blankets, antiseptics, non-perishable goods and water were given out, followed by further deliveries. Then, the first medical team of Haitian-Canadians arrived and was sent out to respond to the most

urgent needs and provide immediate care.

A team of 150 national employees also had to deal with a critical lack of fuel, chaotic traffic, the threat of health epidemics and the impatience of the earthquake victims. With aid organizations from all parts of the globe adopting different approaches, co-ordination among NGOs was also a sizeable challenge.

To date, 170,000 Haitians have benefited from CECI's operations. But beyond emergency humanitarian efforts, numerous challenges are taking shape for the months to come. Among them, providing enough shelter for the millions of

homeless people is a considerable challenge. The rainy season will be starting soon and according to Guypsy Michel, this will require tents strong enough to last in tropical rainstorms.

Taking the pressure off Port-au-Prince

If there is to be reconstruction, then space is required. We want to take the pressure off Port-au-Prince, but we must be able to offer support services to those evacuating the city. Hospitals, sports facilities, churches and other civil society organizations have the confidence of Haitians, but CECI has identified that access to re-



Photo: Benoit Aquin/CECI

At this camp of 10,000 people, CECI ensures that community leaders are involved in assistance measures to make sure that the poor also have access to aid. These activities are part of a humanitarian assistance project led by CECI for victims of the earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti in January 2010.



Photo: Benoit Aquin/CECI

A woman receives a kitchen kit and a bucket to store drinking water at Collège St-Pierre in Port-au-Prince in January 2010.

sources remains an issue. To make sure that the operations are more efficient, local teams have joined international and local partners, who are already familiar with their communities.

For example, the Artibonite region has taken on many of the displaced. At the beginning, CECI helped hospitals cope with new arrivals in conjunction with the Center for International Cooperation in Health and Development (CCISD). CECI has attempted to offer assistance and advice on the best way to manage the camps of displaced people, for example, by training community leaders in charge of sub-committees taking care of water treatment, security in the camps, and distribution of supplies and provisions.

“If we want to provide food to the victims, we must first ask: what provisions can we buy right here in Haiti?” asks Chantal-Sylvie Imbeault, deputy executive director

of CECI. The organization buys rice, flour and root vegetables grown on Haitian soil in order to stimulate the local economy. As well, food stocks departing from Canada in bulk are sorted once they arrive by teams of Haitian workers recruited by local organizations on site. “It’s a way of creating jobs,” she explains.

Many disaster victims have been taken in by their extended family whenever possible. This has created an enormous amount of economic pressure on those families who want to help, as they don’t have sufficient means. It is essential to provide support to host families who are trying to feed a dozen mouths on a single salary.

CECI also plans to set up a ‘cash for work’ system to inject some much needed money into the local economy. As well, local residents can carry out periodic prevention and reconstruction work in exchange for cash at the end of the day.

Civil society at the heart of the reconstruction efforts

Donations collected in Canada are used exclusively for urgent needs: food, water, medical care and shelter. But it has been estimated that it may take up to 10 years following the quake to rebuild the infrastructure. CECI has resumed work on other development projects already in progress before the quake and all the teams have returned to their posts. These projects, addressing sustainable economic and social development, are necessary to help ensure economic recovery and food security of local communities. The projects that are already underway, such as increasing rice production, promoting the value of the female workforce or training young entrepreneurs, will have to be adapted to face Haiti’s new reality.

It is imperative that Haitian authorities, political parties and civil society be at the centre of discussions in order to work out a plan to guide reconstruction efforts. For the time being, it is difficult to mobilize people who are also injured, displaced or affected by the disaster. Yet, in order to ensure that reconstruction is sustainable, Haitians should be leading efforts to rebuild their country. 🌍

Melina Schoenborn works with the Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI). Myriam Fehmiu is the Communications Advisor at CECI. For more information, please visit www.ceci.ca.

La diaspora haïtienne : conscience et moteur économique

Kerlande Mibel

(English translation follows)

Le futur d'Haïti repose dans les mains de son peuple et de sa diaspora.

Actuellement, Haïti est un canevas de possibilités, d'opportunités et tous les spécialistes y sont allés de leurs recommandations respectives quant à la reconstruction depuis le 12 janvier dernier. Plusieurs se bousculent au chevet d'Haïti, mais il semble que ce pays n'ait pas encore su tirer profit de sa plus grande richesse, à savoir les ressources humaines issues de son sol. Le peuple haïtien incluant la diaspora doit prendre en main son destin.

Environ 80 pourcent des Haïtiens formés et éduqués vivent maintenant en dehors d'Haïti. Ceci constitue en soi un défi. Comment Haïti doit-elle se prévaloir de cette force et quel peut être le rôle de sa diaspora? Les expatriés haïtiens sont aux quatre coins du monde et contribuent à l'essor économique et social des territoires sur lesquels ils ont élus domicile; pensons seulement à ces professionnels qui ont fortement contribué à la société québécoise. Mais comment une telle diaspora si mouvante et hétérogène peut-elle contribuer efficacement à l'essor d'Haïti?

Une voix qui porte

Il est acquis que les Haïtiens et la diaspora doivent participer pleinement à la reconstruction. Dans un premier temps, la diaspora devra jouer un rôle de chien de garde ou plus précisément, de conscience

pour veiller aux intérêts d'Haïti et de ceux qui y habitent.

La diaspora devra être la conscience d'Haïti.

Il serait faux de croire et quelque peu illusoire d'espérer que les pays amis auront la volonté de jouer ce rôle. Bien qu'ils compatissent sincèrement avec les victimes haïtiennes et leurs proches, leurs engagements sont d'abord et avant tout envers leurs pays, leurs électeurs, leurs intérêts. Il sera tout aussi important de s'assurer que les différents plans des institutions financières mondiales ne soient pas élaborés selon une logique inadaptée ou calquée sur un modèle inadéquat pour être ensuite imposés au peuple haïtien.

Qui pourra s'en inquiéter et oser critiquer en toute liberté? Le gouvernement haïtien, malgré ses velléités de souveraineté, semble avoir un lien de dépendance trop fort envers ces institutions pour critiquer le modèle imposé. La société civile aussi est trop occupée à panser les plaies pour consacrer beaucoup de temps à ces questions. De là toute l'importance d'avoir une diaspora vigilante qui veille aux intérêts d'Haïti.

Puis, il est à se demander qui

questionnera les multitudes d'ONG qui opèrent en Haïti. Des millions viennent d'être attribués à ces organismes pour qu'ils fournissent une aide humanitaire suite à la catastrophe du 12 janvier. Quelles sont les garanties en ce qui concerne la bonne gestion de ces sommes colossales? Enfin, pour l'investisseur aguerri, Haïti représente une occasion en or; la question est de savoir s'il profitera de la vulnérabilité du gouvernement haïtien pour exploiter et spolier les ressources du pays. Il revient donc aussi à cette diaspora éduquée de porter un regard critique sur ce qui se passe en Haïti. Il est souhaitable qu'elle communique constamment et adroitement cette critique. Arriver à faire cela de manière constante et efficace serait déjà une prouesse.

Dans un second temps, la diaspora devra jouer un rôle économique non négligeable. Or, si la diaspora se vante et répète qu'elle injecte des milliards dans le PIB haïtien, force est de constater que le fait de transférer de l'argent à la famille ne contribue pas au développement macroéconomique et durable du pays.

Face aux différents enjeux et défis qui se présentent pour le pays, la création d'institutions et d'outils économiques permettrait à Haïti de se positionner sur la voie de la prospérité, selon une logique de rentabilité financière et de dé-

veloppement économique. L'État pourrait se doter de sociétés lui permettant d'investir dans des secteurs industriels porteurs tels que les énergies renouvelables, le tourisme et l'agriculture pour ne citer que ceux-là.

Les capitaux pour mettre en place ces institutions pourraient provenir en partie de la diaspora haïtienne. L'avantage est que ceux-ci n'étant pas accompagnés des contraintes des institutions financières mondiales, ils pourront permettre un développement économique stratégique. Les capitaux de la diaspora pourraient aussi soutenir la construction d'infrastructures et de projets structurants pour le pays.

La diaspora devra jouer un rôle économique non négligeable.

De plus, la création d'incubateurs adaptés aux secteurs stratégiques serait aussi avantageuse pour la relance économique. Une fois mis en place, ils serviraient à la création d'entreprises, donc à la création d'emplois et à la valorisation de la main d'œuvre locale. Pour cela, il faudra des investissements massifs. La diaspora et le monde des affaires pourraient jouer un rôle considérable dans cet effort.

Par ailleurs, dans le moyen et long terme, la stimulation de l'entrepreneuriat local est la voie à privilégier pour la création d'emplois. C'est notamment l'occasion d'in-

clure l'éducation entrepreneuriale dans le curriculum scolaire.


Enfin, la diaspora peut également mettre à profit ses connaissances, son professionnalisme, son expertise et les différents réseaux créés à travers le monde pour que le secteur privé Haïtien prospère.

Une fierté à reconstruire

Le 12 janvier a marqué plus que jamais l'occasion de reconstruire la société haïtienne, de revoir les valeurs qui la gouvernent et de redéfinir son rapport à elle-même et aux autres. C'est l'occasion d'incarner l'héritage que les pionniers, les pères fondateurs tel que Louverture ou Christophe ont légué. C'est également l'occasion de se redéfinir en tant que peuple. La diaspora peut proposer une image positive d'Haïti et des Haïtiens.

Il est important que la fierté haïtienne se traduise dans les discours et les actions. Il y a toute une jeunesse, une génération qui a besoin de repères et de racines. Tous les membres de la diaspora ne pourront poser des gestes ostentatoires, mais chacun à sa manière doit changer le discours et les façons de faire. Nous avons vu ce changement dans le discours prendre son envol lorsque des auteurs comme Dany Lafferrière au Canada ou Edwidge Danticat aux États-Unis ont pris la parole pour mettre Haïti sous une lumière plus favorable. Des représentants gouvernementaux tel que Patrice Gaspard, conseiller du président Barack Obama, ou Michaëlle Jean, la Gouverneure générale du Canada, inspirent tous les membres de la diaspora et incarnent des modèles positifs vivants à la hauteur du legs des fondateurs

haïtiens.

C'est le moment pour la diaspora et les Haïtiens de se libérer collectivement d'une certaine mentalité qui les maintient captifs d'une logique d'échec. Un proverbe dit que lorsqu'il n'y a plus de vision d'avenir, un peuple vit dans le désordre. Quelle sera notre vision? C'est aux Haïtiens et à la diaspora haïtienne d'en décider. 

Kerlande Mibel est présidente de la Jeune Chambre de commerce haïtienne de Montréal. Conseillère politique à la Ville de Montréal, elle possède plus de sept ans d'expérience en développement économique local, principalement en entrepreneuriat.

Official visits

The Governor General visits Haiti

Governor General of Canada Michaëlle Jean visited the Republic of Haiti, her homeland, from March 8 to 10. Jean's visit to Haiti was meant to reinforce the Canada-Haiti relationship, in relation to Haiti's reconstruction as a result of the Jan. 12 crisis.

Jean met with Haitian President René Préval, Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive and civil society members. She highlighted the magnitude of the involvement of women and youth in Haiti's reconstruction and development, telling the women that they represented hope in Haiti, and adding that they deserve to be treated with respect.

Jean stated in a news conference that people around the world, particularly Canada, would continue to help and care for the country.

The Haitian diaspora: Conscience and economic engine

Kerlande Mibel

The future of Haiti is now in the hands of its people and its diaspora.

Haiti is currently a blank canvas, full of possibilities and opportunity. Since the earthquake on Jan. 12, experts have submitted their recommendations for reconstruction. But even as they, and others, jostle by Haiti's bedside, it becomes clear that the country has been slow to take advantage of its greatest asset: its people. Haiti's people along with its diaspora must now take control of their destiny.

Roughly 80 per cent of trained and educated Haitians currently live abroad. This is, in and of itself, a major challenge. How might Haiti avail itself of its diaspora, and moreover, what should its role be? Just as Haitian professionals contribute to Quebec society, Haitian expatriates from around the world are currently contributing on economic and social levels to the communities in which they have settled. But what might we expect this scattered, heterogeneous diaspora to proffer for the rebirth of Haiti?

A voice that carries

It is a foregone conclusion that the diaspora has been summoned to be a full participant in the nation's reconstruction. Initially, it should do what it can to ensure that the interests of the country and its citizens are fully respected by becoming its watchdog. It would be wrong to believe, and fanciful to hope, that friendly nations might embrace such a role. Even though

their sympathy for Haitian victims and their relatives is sincere, their commitments remain first and foremost focused on their own countries and toward their own constituents. It will be important to ensure that the designs of global financial institutions are not imposed upon the people of Haiti, nor copied from failed models in other countries.

Haiti's diaspora
could be the
country's watchdog.

Who else might raise such questions and dare to criticize the massive processes now underway? Despite its ambitions of sovereignty, the Haitian government seems too dependent on foreign institutions to properly question the models they propose. Further, civil society is too busy working to heal the nation's wounds. Thus, if Haiti's interests are to be defended during this reconstruction and after, it will require a vigilant diaspora to help during this trying time.

One may also wonder who can question the increasing number of NGOs operating in Haiti. Millions will be allocated for humanitarian aid to these agencies in response

to the Jan. 12 disaster, but what guarantees exist regarding the judicious management of these funds? By the same token, Haiti currently represents a golden opportunity for seasoned investors; whether they take advantage of the Haitian government's current vulnerability to plunder the country's resources is a worrisome unknown. It is therefore in the hands of Haiti's diaspora to deploy its critical expertise and examine the processes at work, so as to convey its meaningful opposition whenever required. If done consistently and effectively, this alone would represent a significant accomplishment.

Secondly, the diaspora will be called upon to play an important economic role. However, boasting about the billions it will inject into the economy will not be enough, as it becomes clear that money transfers alone will not spur sustainable macroeconomic growth in Haiti.

Creating institutions that provide economic tools which can put Haiti on a path to prosperity will therefore be important. The state could assist in the rebirth of Haiti by acquiring companies in key industrial sectors such as renewable energy, tourism and agriculture, and the funding required to build such institutions could come in part from the Haitian diaspora. In comparison to the capital lent by global financial institutions, the funds raised by the diaspora would be free of constraints, and as such would al-

low for a more strategic economic development. Funding from the diaspora could also support construction and infrastructure projects within Haiti.

In addition, incubation initiatives focused on certain sectors of the economy might also be considered to enhance recovery by assisting in the creation of businesses that increase local employment. In summoning the massive investments required, the diaspora and its business leaders would be poised to play a critical role.

The diaspora could play an important economic role.

Moreover, in the medium and long term, stimulating local entrepreneurship can lead to a feasible path to job creation. This initiative may include the rearrangement of school curricula to include training in the creation and operation of small businesses. Finally, the diaspora may also use its knowledge, professionalism, expertise and networks around the world to ensure growth and prosperity of Haiti's private sector.

Rebuilding pride

Jan. 12 has more than ever underscored the opportunity to rebuild Haitian society, re-examine its values and redefine its internal and external relationships. This is an opportunity to summon the legacy that pioneers and founders, such as Louverture and Christophe, have bestowed. It is also an

opportunity for Haitians to redefine themselves collectively as a people. The diaspora can help by offering positive images of Haiti and Haitians.

In addition, for the new generation of young Haitians in need of role models, it is important that national pride finds itself expressed in words and actions, structure and strong roots.

While all members of the diaspora cannot be seen making ostentatious gestures, they must each help in their own way to change the discourse and practices that damage the nation. We have seen this change through authors such as Dany Lafferrière in Canada, or Edwidge Danticat in the United States, who have both recently taken a stand and placed Haiti in a favourable light.

Further, government representatives such as Patrice Gaspard, an advisor to President Barack Obama, and Michaëlle Jean, the Governor General of Canada, provide positive role models that inspire all members of the diaspora to live up to the legacy of the founders of Haiti.

It is time for the Haitian diaspora to collectively break free of an attitude that keeps it trapped in a mindset of failure. A proverb states that when hope and vision are lost, a people will live in disorder. What is our vision? It is up to Haitians and the Haitian diaspora to decide. 🌐

Kerlande Mibel is President of the Jeune Chambre de commerce haïtienne de Montréal. As Policy Advisor to the City of Montreal, she has over seven years of experience in local economic development, mainly in entrepreneurship.

Donors conference

Further plans for Haiti

To follow up on the Jan. 25 Montreal donors' conference organized in response to the Haitian earthquake, the U.S. will host a conference on Haiti at the United Nations (UN) in New York on March 31, 2010. This meeting will review the first full disaster assessment and the new national development plan being prepared by the UN and technical experts from other regional multilateral bodies in response to the earthquake. At the meeting, Haiti will present its vision for reconstruction and how international support can assist.

At the Montreal conference, 20 countries pledged to "stand with Haiti for the long term," saying an initial 10-year commitment was "essential." The Haitian government also asked the UN to more precisely assess the costs and time period.

As part of the ongoing international process to assist Haiti, a series of consultations will occur in the run up to the March 31 meeting: the Inter-American Development Bank will host a private sector consultation on March 15 in Port-au-Prince; the Dominican Republic will convene a high level technical meeting of donors from March 16 to 17 to evaluate the economic consequences of the quake; Canada will fund a consultation with the Haitian diaspora at Organization of American States (OAS) headquarters in Washington, D.C. from March 21 to 23; France will host an international gathering of local government authorities in the French West Indies; and the U.S. will host a civil society consultation.

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L'École internationale d'été sur les Amériques

Du 9 au 15 mai 2010 - Québec, Canada

Le Centre d'études interaméricaines (CEI) de l'Université Laval organise la 7^e édition de l'École internationale d'été sur les Amériques. La formation intensive offre plusieurs conférences sur les grands enjeux dans les Amériques, des tables-rondes, des discussions et des activités culturelles. Cette année, l'école d'été se penchera sur l'environnement, le développement et la sécurité. La plupart des activités ont lieu en français; certaines portions peuvent être en anglais. Les inscriptions ont commencé le 8 mars 2010. Pour plus de détails, visitez le www.cei.ulaval.ca

Summer School on the Americas at Université Laval

May 9 - 15, 2010 - Québec City, Canada

The Inter-American Studies Center (Université Laval) presents the 7th International Summer School on the Americas. The intensive course proposes a series of conferences about inter-American institutions and major challenges in the Hemisphere, as well as roundtables, discussions and cultural activities. This year, the program will focus on environmental, developmental and security issues. Most presentations will be in French, with a few in English. Registrations started March 8, 2010. For more details, please visit www.cei.ulaval.ca.

FOCAL Workshops with Temporary Foreign Workers

On Feb. 13 and 14, 2010, the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) in collaboration with Rural Development Institute (RDI) at Brandon University, held consultations with temporary foreign workers (TFWs) in Brandon, Manitoba. The sessions aimed to gain the perceptions of TFWs on their labour migration experiences in Canada. Themes that were covered included: the type and quality of information newcomers receive about their jobs and host communities; problems encountered; skills training; and personal and professional objectives of the workers regarding their employment and the remittances they send home. A summary report will be available on the FOCAL website shortly.

The Canadian Foundation for the Americas is an independent, non-partisan think tank dedicated to strengthening Canadian relations with Latin America and the Caribbean through policy dialogue and analysis. FOCALPoint helps us accomplish our mission as a monthly publication combining news and analysis that reaches decision-makers, civil society, private sector, academics and students with an interest in the region. Our goal is to bring together diverse perspectives to make FOCALPoint a dynamic analytical forum.

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Canadian Foundation for the Americas
Fondation canadienne pour les Amériques
Fundación Canadiense para las Américas
Fundação Canadense para as Américas

1, rue Nicholas Street
Suite/Bureau 720
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 7B7 Canada
Tel/Tél: 613.562.0005
Fax/Télé: 613.562.2525
Email/Courriel: focal@focal.ca
www.focal.ca