

HAITI NEWS ROUNDUP: MAY 23 – JUNE 15, 2007

13 junior Haitian soccer players missing in New York USA Today.com June 13, 2007

NEW YORK (AP) — After years of dismal performances, Haitian soccer has been on a roll recently. The national youth soccer team qualified for the FIFA Under-17 World Cup earlier this year, for the first time in the Caribbean nation's history.

But the soccer resurgence was dealt a major blow when most of the youth team apparently deserted the squad during an airport stopover in New York, hours before a planned trip Wednesday to South Korea to prepare for the upcoming youth World Cup.

By Wednesday afternoon, five or six of the 13 missing players had returned to John F. Kennedy International Airport and turned themselves in to team officials, said Felix Augustin, the Haitian consul in New York. It was unclear where the youngsters had been and why they had left the team, he said.

Authorities were still looking for the others late Wednesday night, Augustin said by telephone.

Most of the team's 18 players, all under age 17, had gone missing from Kennedy between Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, Augustin said.

The players arrived from Haiti on Tuesday and were scheduled to leave early Wednesday for Seoul, to play in a friendly tournament ahead of the U17 World Cup in August.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the airport, said it was aware of the situation and had assigned police officers to investigate. A spokeswoman for the U.S. Embassy in Haiti, Shaila B. Manyam, said embassy officials were looking into the matter.

Augustin said authorities believed adults not traveling with the team may be involved in the players' desertion and warned they could face criminal charges unless they turn over the minors.

"It seems that some adults may have been involved. If so, they are going to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," said Augustin, who declined to give further details. Earlier, he had said that officials were making calls to members of the Haitian community to try to get the children back.

Speaking to a Haitian Creole-language radio station in New York, the president of the Haitian Football Federation, Yves Jean-Bart, warned the youngsters that they were hurting their futures and threatened to involve U.S. authorities "unless these players reinstate themselves as soon as possible."

Jean-Bart gave no indication why the players would abandon the team. But Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and thousands of Haitians leave the country each year to escape miserable living conditions, violence and political instability.

A spokeswoman for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Lucille Cirillo, said the agency would help investigators in any way possible. But, she said, immigration officials would not typically become involved in such cases until the players had overstayed the time for which they were admitted, which could be up to six months.

Associated Press writer Stevenson Jacobs contributed to this report from Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

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Haiti Soccer Teens Missing in NYC
Thursday, Jun. 14, 2007
By AP/SAMANTHA GROSS
Time Magazine

(NEW YORK) — Most of a Haitian national youth soccer team apparently deserted the squad during an airport stopover hours before a planned Wednesday trip to South Korea to prepare for the upcoming FIFA Under-17 World Cup.

By Wednesday afternoon, five or six of the 13 missing players had returned to the airport and turned themselves in to team officials, said Felix Augustin, the Haitian consul in New York. It was unclear where the youngsters had been and why they had left the team, he said. Authorities were still looking for the others late Wednesday night, Augustin said by telephone.

Most of the team's 18 players, all under age 17, had gone missing from John F. Kennedy International Airport between Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, Augustin said. Earlier, Augustin had said that officials were making calls to members of the Haitian community to try to get the children back.

The players arrived from Haiti on Tuesday and were scheduled to leave early Wednesday for Seoul, South Korea, to play in an exhibition tournament ahead of the World Cup, which takes place in South Korea from Aug. 18 to Sept. 9.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the airport, said it was aware of the situation and had assigned police officers to investigate. A spokeswoman for the U.S. Embassy in Haiti, Shaila B. Manyam, said embassy officials were looking into the matter.

Augustin said authorities believed adults not traveling with the team may be involved in the players' desertion and warned they could face criminal charges unless they turn over the minors. "It seems that some adults may have been involved. If so, they are going to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," said Augustin, who declined to give further details.

Speaking to a Haitian Creole-language radio station in New York, the president of the Haitian Football Federation, Yves Jean-Bart, warned the youngsters that they were hurting their futures and threatened to involve U.S. authorities "unless these players reinstate themselves as soon as possible."

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The apparent desertions dealt a major blow to Haitian soccer, which has been experiencing a resurgence of late after years of dismal performances. The U17s qualified for the biennial World Cup

for the first time in the Caribbean nation's history earlier this year, while the men's team won the Caribbean Cup for the first time in January.

Associated Press writer Stevenson Jacobs contributed to this report from Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Haitian team ensnared by meddling relatives

By VERENA DOBNIK

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Thursday, June 14th 2007

The New York Daily News

Thirteen young Haitian soccer players who disappeared briefly after landing in New York were whisked away in a scheme engineered by U.S. friends and relatives, the Haitian consul general said Thursday.

Authorities have accounted for all of the players who went missing after arriving Tuesday night at Kennedy International Airport. Two had gone to Boston and the rest were in New York City, according to Felix Augustin, the consul general.

"These children were manipulated," Augustin said at a news conference in his Madison Avenue office. "It was organized. Absolutely."

He said no charges have been filed.

After arriving at JFK, 18 players and their coaches went to a McDonald's near the airport. Thirteen of them vanished there - taken away in one van, said Augustin.

While the players got into the van voluntarily, he called the incident "almost kidnapping."

"I don't think these kids knew what they were getting involved in," said Augustin, adding that they probably thought they were just sightseeing.

The youths, all under 17, had stopped in New York on their way to the youth World Cup in South Korea.

The president of the Haitian Football Federation, Yves Jean-Bart, had appealed to the players to "reinstate themselves as soon as possible." Speaking on a Haitian Creole-language radio station in New York, he warned them that otherwise, they would risk hurting their future in sports.

Haiti's national youth soccer team qualified for the FIFA Under-17 World Cup earlier this year, for the first time in the history of the Caribbean nation - the poorest in the Western Hemisphere.

Thousands of Haitians leave the country each year to escape miserable living conditions, violence and political instability.

Augustin said the team has been reunited at a hotel near Kennedy Airport.

He said he thought the players should continue to South Korea, but no plans have been made yet.

Associated Press Writers Samantha Gross in New York and Stevenson Jacobs in Port-au-Prince, Haiti contributed to this report.

Haitian Soccer Players Who Fled During NYC Trip Are Reunited
1010 WIns, NY
June 15, 2007

NEW YORK (AP) -- Just as they were aiming for soccer glory, most of a Haitian youth soccer team went for broke, by deserting the squad from the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

After arriving at John F. Kennedy International Airport on an American Airlines flight, 18 players and their coaches went to a McDonald's near the airport. It was there that 13 of them vanished, according to Felix Augustin, the Haitian consul general in New York.

They scattered around New York's five boroughs and Boston.

But by Thursday morning, all of the 13 missing players were accounted for, with two on their way back from Boston, Augustin said.

The details of their desertion were murky. The players could not be reached for comment, and the coach did not return phone messages seeking details about the case.

But Augustin said the players were whisked away in a scheme engineered by U.S. friends and relatives.

"These children were manipulated," Augustin said at a news conference in his Madison Avenue office. "It was organized. Absolutely."

Augustin said no charges had been filed. He said the team was reunited at a hotel at Kennedy airport.

The youths, all under 17, had stopped overnight in New York on their way to South Korea to play in an exhibition tournament ahead of the FIFA Under-17 World Cup, which takes place from Aug. 18 to Sept. 9.

The president of the Haitian Football Federation, Yves Jean-Bart, had appealed to the players to "reinstate themselves as soon as possible." Speaking on a Haitian Creole-language radio station in New York, he warned them that otherwise, they would risk hurting their future in sports.

Augustin said he thought the players should continue to South Korea. On Thursday night, members of the team boarded an airport shuttle bus and left their hotel.

Haiti's national youth soccer team qualified for the FIFA Under-17 World Cup earlier this year, for the first time in the history of the Caribbean nation. Thousands of Haitians leave the country each year to escape poverty, political instability, crushing unemployment and bloody street clashes.

Haiti's one unifying joy is its national soccer program, with streets and vacant lots serving as soccer fields.

This year, the older national team won the Caribbean Cup for the first time ever, qualifying Haiti's team for the CONCACAF Gold Cup (Haiti was eliminated in Miami this week).

Soccer was eclipsing news of poverty, crime and Haitian refugees fleeing to Florida, until the youth team hit the news.

Whether they'll be part of soccer news from South Korea remained in doubt on Thursday.

Haiti: Pig Eradication, Pro and Contra
The Dominion, News from the grassroots
June 15, 2007

For the good summary of the general case of the critics of the pig eradication program in Haiti, see the excerpt below from Free speech, neo-colonialism and micro-powered broadcasting in Haiti.

For a criticism of the critics see: Whether Pigs Have Wings by Philip Gaertner. This summary of his report claims, among other things, that 1) not all the imported pigs replacing the native pigs were white, 2) critics underplayed the threat of the African Swine Fever to the livelihood of the Haitian peasant 3) the imported pigs were just as hearty (in terms of vulnerability to disease and other environmental conditions) as the kreyol pigs, and 4) the imported pigs were just as economical to raise as the kreyol pigs.

1978 brought African swine fever to Haiti's then one-million strong black pig population. In Haitian Kreyol, the word for pig and bank are the same. And the rural peasants, who comprise over seventy percent of the Haitian population, treated their pigs as banks. Pigs brought down farming costs by aerating the soil; they kept sanitation levels high by eating household waste; they produced nitrogen-rich fertilizer. In times of crisis they could be sold for a hundred bucks - as much as a peasant might make in a year - to pay for medical bills, a funeral, or maybe a wedding. In times of crisis, they could be eaten.

By 1981, the disease had ravaged hundreds of thousands of pigs - a natural disaster attributable to poor customs practices, or the will of the Vodou spirits. A feeling just as natural - fear - and one less natural - the taste for profit - aroused a concerned response from the American pork industry. Soon after, the Haitian Pig Eradication Program was underway. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (an agency of the Organization of American States), the Inter-American Development Bank and various segments of governments in the Dominican Republic, Canada, the United States and Haiti combined forces - with the U.S. weighing in heavily. According to Robert Lawless, author of Haiti's Bad Press, "over fifteen million dollars of the total project price of twenty-three million dollars came from the United States, and the Agency for International Development [USAID] took a leading role in the project." As peasants in the Haitian countryside explained the procedure to Govinda Dalton, Duvalier's henchman approached pig owners with a choice to the effect of kill your pig or we'll machete you. "The program lasted from 1981 to 1983. By August 1984, Haiti was declared free of swine fever, and," Lawless writes, "of pigs."

Chosen for high feed conversion rates rather than adaptability, an American breed of fat white Iowa pig was brought in to repopulate. They could not take the Haitian heat. Special concrete houses were built to keep them cool at the central breeding site in Port-au-Prince. Recipients of the new imported pigs had to pay to build such houses on their own property. Pere Miso, a parish priest from Les Cayes, spoke to Dalton about the new pigs. "Those pigs are not adapted to our country. Those pigs need a lot of food. A lot of food. The native pig we had, they ate anything. From the tree. From the kitchen. But the American pigs won't eat just anything. Special American feed has to be imported." At the cost of about \$100 per-year-per-pig these animals require more in spending than most peasants make. A bad agronomic joke, the pig fiasco holds a fun-house mirror up to race and class relations. The black pigs

are eradicated and white ones are bred in their place. The price of feeding the white pig comes at the expense of the black peasant's stomach.

No education efforts were undertaken to teach pig owners how to prevent African swine fever. No peasants were told that the meat of their sick pigs was still edible. USAID made promises to repay pig owners for their losses, but few farmers saw any money. Some analysts credit the pig fiasco with mass migration to Haiti's cities, which has left Port-au-Prince, for one, bursting at the seams. Some credit the Pig Eradication Program with Operation Dechoukay - the 1986 overthrow of Jean-Claude Baby Doc Duvalier's regime.

As Dalton understands the situation, rural folk are left with empty hands. "The only way for them to make quick cash is to chop down the trees. These can be sold for charbon, charcoal, which is used as cooking fuel. The long term result is mass deforestation - now at 95%. The climate gets hotter. Erosion, which affects a quarter of Haiti's soil, is aggravated. Soil and sediment fill the streams. The fresh water supply is destroyed. You get this incredible cycle," the soft-talking Dalton says, "that all comes back to the American taxpayer."

The cycle may not be as mechanical as all that. But American farmers looking to maintain export markets and multinational corporations hungry for wage-fodder have interests in keeping the Third World agriculturally, hence economically, dependent. That dependence is fostered by International Monetary Fund and World Bank requirements that tariffs on imports be low. When it is cheaper to import rice from the U.S. than to grow it at home, dependence is guaranteed.

Nik Barry-Shaw's blog [Login or register to post comments](#)

Haiti-Switzerland-Duvalier : NGOs demand the freezing of funds of “former dictators” as long as necessary

AlterPresse

June 15, 2007

Translated from French by Menno Ernst

Thursday 14th June 2007

P-au-P, June 14 th 2007 [AlterPresse] --- Some twenty organizations and Swiss and international solidarity networks demand from the Swiss authorities the blocking of "the money of former potentates", of whom the Haitian ex dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier, "as long as necessary to allow the legal authorities of the countries concerned to take action".

This request is stated in a letter addressed to the President of the Confederation, Micheline Calmy-Rey, and to the federal Adviser Christoph Blocher, indicates a note transmitted to AlterPresse.

"Without these measurements, Switzerland could be considered again by the world opinion as a ' safe haven' for the capital flight", fear the authors of the letter.

The latter is based on the recent release of frozen assets belonging to the former Malagasy Prime Minister, Tantely Andrianarivo, and the announcement of the freeing of funds of Jean-Claude Duvalier.

The NGOs “are pleased to have taken note of the decision of the Federal Council to prolong the blocking of the assets of the former Haitian dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier for three months”.

“Last May, we understood that the Confederation had foreseen to free, at the beginning of June, approximately 7,6 million franks of Duvalier, as a result of a Swiss legislative gap”.

"The current legal gaps must be filled as soon as possible", declare the NGOs.

They estimate that "it is not beneficial for Switzerland to appear as being the country that finds the guarantee of private property more important than violators of human rights and in doing this contribute to the impunity of former dictators".

They propose, inter alia, that the duration of the freezing of funds should be determined, "even prolonged, until the State concerned is able to carry out a legal procedure of mutual aid".

The NGOs claim, if necessary, "the technical aid" of Switzerland or the World Bank in favour of the countries concerned.

Among the organizations supporting this standpoint, there are : Action Place Financière Suisse, Alliance Sud, Pain pour le prochain, Caritas Suisse, Plate-Forme Haïti de Suisse, Transparency International Swiss Chapter, Broederlijk Delen, Dutch Haïti Platform, Entraide et Fraternité, Haïti Advocacy Platform Ireland-UK, Jubileo Sur, Jubilee USA, Plate Forme française Paradis Fiscaux et Judiciaires and Tiako-i-Madagasikara. [gp apr 14/06/2007 10:40]

Haiti: Swiss govt extends freeze on \ 'Baby Doc\ ' accounts
The Voice, UK
June 15, 2007

Following legal moves by a Miami-based law firm representing two victims of the Duvalier dictatorship, and a spirited lobbying campaign by Haitian, Latin American and European NGOs over recent weeks.

The Swiss government announced last week that it had extended a freeze on Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier's Swiss bank accounts for a further three months.

**Haiti: Wanted gang member dies after opening fire during attempted arrest – UN
UN News Centre
June 13, 2007**

An alleged leading gang member wanted by both the Haitian National Police and the French authorities for serious crimes died this morning after he opened fire on forces trying to detain him, according to the UN Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which participated in the operation.

Charles Junior, also known as “Yoyo Piman,” who was wanted on national and international warrants for murder, kidnapping and criminal conspiracy, resisted arrest during the early morning operation in the notorious Cité Soleil neighborhood of the capital, Port au Prince, the mission said in a news release.

The suspect, alleged to be the second-in-command of the Amaral gang, opened fire on UN soldiers as UN police sought to detain him. The UN force called on him to cease firing and then fired in the air when he ignored their demand, before responding in legitimate self-defence.

“Any loss of life is regrettable,” said MINUSTAH Deputy Force Commander Raul Gloodtdofsky. “It is still our hope that while we continue our efforts towards stability and preventing gangs from regrouping, this process can be done peacefully.”

Soldiers transported Charles Junior to medical authorities where he was pronounced dead, the mission said. His body is being handed over to Haitian authorities.

U.N. troops kill suspected gang leader

By STEVENSON JACOBS

Associated Press

Kansas City Star

June 12, 2007

U.N. peacekeepers and Haitian police on Tuesday killed a suspected gang leader wanted in the kidnap-slaying of a French businessman.

Charles Junior Acdelhy was shot to death after he opened fire on Brazilian peacekeepers and police as they tried to arrest him during an early morning raid in Port-au-Prince's notorious Cite Soleil slum, U.N. spokeswoman Sophie Boutaud de la Combe said. No peacekeepers or police were injured.

Acdelhy, known as Yoyo Piman, was accused of helping lead a Cite Soleil gang blamed for a wave of kidnappings and killings that engulfed the impoverished Caribbean nation after the bloody 2004 uprising of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Acdelhy was wanted on international warrants for homicide, kidnapping and criminal conspiracy, Boutaud said, including the January 2004 abduction and killing of Claude-Bernard Lauture, a French businessman of Haitian descent.

Boutaud said peacekeepers had surrounded a section of Cite Soleil when Acdelhy ran out and began shooting. She said peacekeepers warned Acdelhy to put down his gun before they shot him "in legitimate self defense."

The 8,800-strong, Brazil-led U.N. peacekeeping force once waged daily gunbattles with armed gangs in Cite Soleil, Haiti's largest and poorest slum, but has seen the number of confrontations fall sharply since a U.N. gang offensive earlier this year that left several top gang leaders dead or in jail.

UN Forces Kill Haitian Gang Leader
By VOA News
13 June 2007

U.N. peacekeepers and Haitian police have shot and killed a gang leader after he resisted arrest early Wednesday.

Authorities said the man known as Charles Junior opened fire on U.N. security officers as they tried to detain him in the Cite Soleil neighborhood of Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince. Junior was wanted on national and international warrants for murder, kidnapping, and criminal conspiracy.

A U.N. press release said the officers ordered Junior to stop firing before they responded in self-defense.

A spokesman for the U.N. mission in Haiti later said any loss of life is regrettable. He said he hopes U.N. efforts toward stability and preventing gang violence can be done peacefully.

Some information for this report was provided by AP.

Haiti : Alternative Means to Improve Peasant Production Methods
Wednesday 13th June 2007
By Menno Ernst
Alterpresse

Gressier (Haiti), June 13 th 2007 [AlterPresse] --- At Ti Boukan, a locality of Gressier (at about 30 kilometers south of Port-au-Prince), on an undulating terrain with a surface of more than 8 Ha, is at the end of the 1970's an experimental farm established, under the auspices of the non governmental organization named Institute of Technology and Animation (Iteca) (1), notices the online agency AlterPresse during a visit to the site.

The objectif of the production at the experimental farm of Ti Boukan is not, in the first place, animalizing the production or the earnings. It aims, on the contrary, to explore the possibilities for small farmers to improve their production methods in an ecological way by utilizing alternative means.

« The Institute hopes as well to stimulate the national production and to reduce the import of products, of which the country is dependant upon at present”, entrusts a staff member to AlterPresse.

Nowadays (May 2007), some 600 layer chickens lay eggs daily in two large adapted aviaries.

« Three times a day, we make a tour to gather the laid eggs. Meanwhile, we try to find the optimal conditions to obtain the highest possible productivity. In doing this, it is important to use only those means and methods that are also accessible to the average peasant, for example, and that don't require electricity, nor too expensive aliments”, specifies the staff member interviewed by AlterPresse.

Until present the production is, with a percentage of 85 %, very satisfying, as it means that the daily mean egg-laying of the chickens is a little less than one egg.

The eggs are sold at the experimental farm of Ti Boukan, at prices almost equal to those of the market, which corresponds to the philosophy of the farm to satisfy as far as possible its own needs, without having to depend on external aid.

Searching Alternative Solutions

Though the project results are quite satisfying at the moment, there remain some problems that have to be sold.

The stocking of eggs presents some difficulties, since it is not evident to install cold chambers. Moreover, the price of poultry food is currently still too high to make the production of eggs profitable. So, there is need to find other solutions. Cultivating maize oneself to feed the poultry could possibly be one option.

Opportunities of the Farm in Ti Boukan for Peasants

Apart from the layer chickens, the experimental farm of Ti Boukan also owns breeding pigs. The piglets are offered for sale to peasants of the neighbourhood at reasonable prices.

On the site of the farm of Iteca at Ti Boukan, there is also a training centre equipped with offices, an audio recording studio, a library and rooms that can lodge about a hundred people. (2) Aside from specific hiring demands of other organizations, Iteca also organizes training sessions on the farm, or by itself, or in collaboration with other organisms.

The accent is explicitly put on concrete training sessions, accessible to anyone, insisting on the collaboration with peasants on the ground and centred on technology and information. Where the animation division tries to stimulate a new dynamic among the peasant groups, the technique division aims to promote the diffusion of new adapted agricultural techniques to develop local survival strategies.

Eligibility conditions for training sessions

Seen the difficulties to offer all peasants a formation directly, Iteca realizes prospectings by region, selecting persons who they think are capable and interested to participate. The training sessions are offered for free, including housing and meals at the farm.

Nevertheless, participation is submissive to strict conditions : at one hand, for practical reasons, people who want to participate have to be able to read and write ; at the other hand, they have to be motivated and commit themselves to transmit the acquired knowledge to others. This way, the institute hopes to widen the range of their forming sessions.

Those who followed the sessions are sometimes invited by local radio stations to come to talk about their experiences and to communicate their newly acquired knowledge, which makes it possible to reach a larger audience.

It should be noted that the selection of the candidates to the training courses is mainly made by the peasant partner organizations. To date, it remains very difficult to mobilize people who are not members of these organizations.

Growing perspectives of the experimental farm of Ti Boukan Important extension works of the farm are in progress in June 2007, among which the construction of a bakery, a water purification tank and a workshop for the manufacturing of kerosene stoves. This last initiative should offer an ecological alternative to wood as an energy source for the preparation of meals.

In spite of efforts to obtain their own revenues by different means, Iteca continues to depend on donor assistance, mainly from European contributors.

Broederlijk Delen has placed a Belgian co-operator at the disposal of the institute. Dirk Wils, an agricultural engineer, manages the farm and is also present at the spot a few days a week to give technical support and to assist in the daily labour tasks. However, Iteca hopes to find in the long term a Haitian engineer-agronomist who could reside permanently on the farm and take care of the daily management.

The staff of the experimental farm of Ti Boukan at Gressier consists of guards, cooks and someone in charge of the daily care of the animals.

The farm generates employment in the surroundings by regularly hiring daily workmen for the small jobs on the site and in the neighbourhood. This for a wage of 150 gourds a day, equal to 3 euros.

Local institutional partnerships

Apart from the donor assistance, Iteca also collaborates with some Haitian organisations operative in more or less the same field.

Iteca, Sosyete animasyon kominikasyon sosyal (Saks), the Cultural Institute Karl Lévêque (Ickl) and the Platform of Integrated Development (PDI) form together a cupola, the "Four Institutes", which cooperate on the implementation of certain activities.

From the outside, it is not very easy to find information on the functioning of Iteca, since the organization does not have a proper internet site. Its target group - Haitian peasants - almost doesn't use these media sources, so creating a site is not felt like a priority.

For the diffusion of information among peasants, the institute often calls upon the informal information network which they developed during the years. The distribution of mail, in particular for the advertisement of the training courses, generally passes via contact people, who personally deliver them to the recipients.

Every year, Iteca publishes a calendar that shows the important data for the peasant organizations as well as the data on which Iteca organizes special activities.

These calendars, 6000 in total, are distributed for free among the peasants and have an unquestionable success, especially because they're one of the rare calendars to be published in Haitian Creole. [me rc apr 13/06/2007 8:00]

(1) Created in 1978 by Haitian monks and professionals, the Institute of technology and animation (Iteca) evolved to become an independent organization in 2007, devoting itself to the improvement of the living conditions and the production possibilities of the Haitian peasants.

On the one hand, Iteca is specialised in technological improvement and agricultural techniques. On the other hand, the institute intends to reinforce its organisational structure by animation and training. In the field of technology, the interest is mainly related the natural resources and the environment, agriculture the livestock production, as well as the storage and the transformation the agricultural products.

The animation and formation section focuses on the organisational capacities and the structural reinforcement of the peasant groups and the animation techniques.

Iteca is active in 16 zones throughout the country, where it collaborates with groupings of local peasants. The aim is to collaborate in the reinforcement and the socioeconomic development of the peasant organizations, by taking into account the reality of their communities.

(2) At the end of 1970, not long after their foundation, the central administration of ITECA had its seat at Ti Boukan, but, particularly because of the explosive growth of Port-au-Prince and the problems of circulation which result from it, most of the administrative work is currently done at the head office in the centre of the city.

Commentary: The IDB and Haiti: Deliver us from debt

Wednesday, June 13, 2007

By Tom Ricker

Caribbean Net News

The Inter-American Development Bank board of governors announced on March 16, 2007 that it would cancel the debts of Nicaragua, Bolivia, Honduras, Guyana, and Haiti. The debt cancellation is to cover all debts accrued prior to December of 2004, and is retroactive to January 1, 2007 (meaning interest accrued since the beginning of the year on this debt will not need to be paid.) This is a total of \$3.5 billion in debt cancellation for all five countries, \$4.2 billion if one tabulates the interest that would have been paid as well. This was great news for all the countries involved...except Haiti. Haiti, by far the most impoverished of the five countries, must wait at least three years before it realizes this cancellation.

Why? The Inter-American Development Bank has conditioned its debt relief for Haiti on the country's successful completion of the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC). Haiti has been in HIPC for 10 months, but just reached the first marker (or "decision point") in November. Completion of HIPC is a minimum of three years away. The other four countries involved have completed the HIPC process, and should see debt cancellation immediately. It is important to note that the HIPC process was established by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; the IDB is under no obligation to tie its debt cancellation to HIPC.

In theory HIPC is supposed to commit governments to reform measures ensuring that debt savings are targeted to poverty reduction, transparency and good governance. Yet, the lending practices of these institutions have not historically aligned with these goals and are actually biased against Haiti's popularly elected governments. Of the roughly \$600 million that Haiti supposedly owes the IDB, only 43% was actually disbursed to an elected government.

The IDB and Haiti's democratic governments

Roughly half of Haiti's current debt burden - from all sources - was accrued before 1990 elections ushered in the first democratically elected leader in Haiti. President Jean Bertrand Aristide took office on February 7, 1991 only to be ousted in a coup on September 30th of that year.

Multilateral donors in general were not favorable to Aristide. The World Bank approved \$37 million in new loans to the Aristide government; \$30 million of this was approved 6 days before the coup. The same World Bank had distributed \$256 million in loans to the government of Jean Claude Duvalier, and another \$158 million to the series of military rulers that governed Haiti between Duvalier's departure in February of 1986, and Aristide's election.

The IDB did little better, approving a paltry \$12 million in loans to the new democracy in Haiti during its short-lived 7 months, after approving \$110 million in loans to the military junta that ruled Haiti prior to the elections, including \$55 million in 1990 alone.

When Aristide re-took his presidential office in 1994, the response of lenders was initially generous – but with strings. The World Bank issued \$153 million in 1995 and 1996 combined. The IDB approved

nearly \$190 million in loans during 1995, and an additional \$82 million in 1996. There the well ran dry. When Aristide and his successor Rene Preval (1996-2001) balked at some of the conditions attached to new loans, particularly those involving privatization of some state industries, lenders, led by the U.S. government's Agency for International Development, simply stopped providing assistance.

The World Bank would not issue a new loan to Haiti until 2005, and then to an "interim" government appointed by the Bush administration following a second coup d'etat against Aristide. The IDB, though it would approve new loans in 1997 and 1998, disbursed little between 1998 and the February 2004 coup –and then, only late in 2003 after Aristide had drained the foreign reserves of the country the previous July to pay arrears to Haiti's creditors.

This de facto aid embargo is often portrayed as a response to an election "controversy" in 2000 concerning the distribution of seats in seven senate races. It is important to note that this happened five months before the presidential election in November that year, and thus well before Aristide was sworn into office for a second term. In reality, under pressure from the U.S. government, the international donor community was simply deepening a policy that had been in place since 1996 – namely, not to broker any compromise with popularly elected governments in Haiti that blocked neo-liberal reform efforts. The policy was a clear violation of IDB rules –whose charter requires that disbursement decisions not be made for political purposes.

After withholding millions in assistance to an elected government, the IDB approved \$200 million in new loans in November of 2003 – most of which would not be disbursed until after the coup in February in 2004. The IDB then approved an additional \$215 million during 2005 alone to an un-elected interim authority. Comparatively, since Rene Preval took office in May of 2006 following an overwhelming electoral victory, the IDB has promised only \$85 million in new loans, and has yet to disburse any of it.

Given the lukewarm affection the IDB has demonstrated for Haiti's democracy, it seems seriously wrong to now demand that Haiti wait an additional three years for debt cancellation under the guise of promoting good governance.

What does waiting three more years for debt cancellation mean?

Haiti will pay \$270 million more in total debt service between now and the fiscal year ending in 2010; \$120 million of this will go to the IDB. Ironically, because Haiti borrows from the IDB "fund for special operations" – the concessional lending arm of the IDB that grants ten-year waivers on payments of principal – most of these payments will be to service the outstanding debts of Duvalier and the generals that ruled Haiti until 1990.

In the meantime, the most recent World Health Report (2006) estimated that Haiti's government spends \$10 per capita on health – or \$83 million a year. (The U.S. government spends \$2,500 per capita on health.) With this budget, Haiti has 25 doctors, 11 nurses, and 1 dentist per 100,000 people. Only 24% of women are accompanied by a trained health provider during childbirth and only 18% of births happen in a health facility. Haiti has the highest HIV/AIDs infection rate and the lowest coverage of potable water in the Western Hemisphere. The low levels of public expenditures on health also means

that services nearly always require a fee – which puts even the most basic healthcare out of reach of the majority of Haitians.

As a result, between now and the end of fiscal year 2010 in Haiti 90-100,000 children will die before reaching the age of 11 months and another 30-40,000 will die before reaching the age of 5 years. Haiti's under-five mortality rate is 1500% higher than the United States.' Based on the number of live births in the United States each year a comparable under-five mortality rate would translate into 1.5-1.8 million children dying over the same period of time. Would we sit by and watch that happen?

Approximately 6,000 women will die during childbirth in Haiti between now and October 2010. In the United States, with 35 times the population, the total number of deaths will likely be less than 2,000. At the same maternal mortality rate as Haiti, nearly 100,000 women would die in the United States during childbirth over a comparable period. Could we sit by and watch that happen?

Only 6 percent of Haiti's population is over 60, compared to 16 percent in the United States. Haiti's life expectancy is 53 years and falling.

Would \$120 million change all of this? Probably not. But an increase in public expenditures on health service of \$30-40 million a year would make a huge difference NOW. Haiti could almost double the number of doctors in the public sector, reduce or even eliminate fees on basic services, expand vaccination programs or other priorities. If the World Bank and bi-lateral creditors were to follow suit, and cancel Haiti's debts immediately, this could be done while also increasing expenditures on education and extending credits to small farmers to begin to address the collapse of Haiti's rural economy.

Making Haiti wait three to four years literally means thousands of more people will die from preventable health problems and/or lack of access to services. How could this possibly be regarded as a "good governance" outcome? It is time for the IDB to finally stand with Haiti's democratically elected government. It would simply be criminal to make Haiti wait another day for debt cancellation.

Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA) introduced House Resolution 241 in March this year. This resolution would direct the President to use the influence of the U.S. government in the IDB and World Bank to insure that Haiti's debt is cancelled immediately – not three years from now. While this may be a small step, it is an important one and all should be encouraged to touch base with their members of Congress to ask them to co-sponsor this resolution.

For more see www.HaitiAnalysis.com

Haiti : Strike of Public Transport against price increase of petrol products

June 13, 2007

Translated from French by Menno Ernst

Alterpresse

Tuesday 12th June 2007

P-au-P, June 12th, 2007 [AlterPresse] --- Hundreds of people, students, young girls and young boys, women and men, are walking around by foot or are waiting, at different crossroads in the metropolitan area of the capital, to find some kind of transport vehicle together during the first ours of this Tuesday 12th of June, notifies the online agency AlterPresse.

Taxis, vans and other tap tap (name given to public transport vehicles) are very rare in various streets of Port-au-Prince, in the north and in the south, from the east to the west. Only motorcycle taxis, bicycles and private cars are driving around in the streets with passengers on board.

This strike of the public transport sector, pulled by the drivers for Tuesday 12th and Wednesday 13th June 2007, risks affecting the students of the 6th year fondamentale (old certificate of primary studies) who have to undergo official state tests during these two days. The pupils from other classes, who are also in their exam period, are equally held back to go to school.

The state vehicles, promised by the minister of education for the transport of students facing the announced strike, aren't noticeable at the beginning of the morning on the 12th of June. Meanwhile, here and there, several national policemen, of who traffic policemen and policewomen, are visible at different street intersections.

Several wage-workers, living far away from their work places, could also experience difficulties to move and thus to fulfill their professional obligations because of the paralysis of activities that are standing out.

The public transport drivers are protesting against a recent price increase of fuel that has been creating disagreements between tap tap drivers and passengers since next week.

The government of Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis hasn't taken a single arrangement concerning the prices of multiple tours, arbitrarily set by the public transport drivers since the price increase of petrol products at the pump on Saturday 2nd June 2007.

In spite of the credit granted to Haiti by Venezuela since Mai 2006 to buy petrol products at preferential conditions, the national authorities argue that a price rising of gasoline on the national market, which is of great strategic importance for the Haitian population, is due to augmentations on the world market price.

Numerous sectors fear the multiple effects of the price augmentation of petrol products on those of primary consumption goods.

In the first weekend of June 2007 the petrol products (91- and 95-octane gasoline) have undergone a new considerable price raise on the Haitian national market, worrying the Haitian population who's already facing all kinds of socioeconomic problems.

Gasoline 95 which was sold at the pump stations at 173 gourds (36,7553 gourds=1 American dollar) has now raised to 209 gourds. Gasoline 91 experienced a new increase at the pump, where it is vended at 209 gourds compared to 171 gourds before.

These new prices, displayed at the fuel pumps since the morning of Saturday 2nd of June 2007, continue to create frictions between drivers and passengers who don't agree on the exact price of a trip ; while governmental authorities act as if they're not aware of the demands of the transporters' syndicates for a price reduction of petrol products. [rc apr 12/06/2007 7 :00]

Bush to meet Caribbean leaders
Friday, June 15, 2007
Caribbean Net News

WASHINGTON, USA (AFP): US President George W. Bush will meet with leaders from the 15-nation Caribbean Community (CARICOM) during a conference on the region at the US State Department June 18-21, his spokesman said Thursday.

"The Conference on the Caribbean continues an important dialogue between the United States and CARICOM, and it forms an integral part of the president's Western Hemisphere Initiative," Tony Snow said in a statement.

"Discussions will focus on economic growth, investing in people, and security issues," he said. Caricom, created in 1958, groups 12 former British colonies, one existing British colony, as well as Haiti and Suriname.

Ambassador in Haiti says France has no part in Dominican batey row
Dominican Today
June 12, 2007

PORT-AU-PRINCE.- The French ambassador in Haiti, Christian Connan, recently distanced his government from the alleged campaign begun in Paris to defame Dominican Republic's sugar industry, though noted that in any it'll case not limit the European nation's freedom of expression.

Connan's statement is in response to a letter of protest received May 18 from the Association of Dominican Residents in Haiti (ADDREH), motivated by the pictorial exhibits and conferences held in France last month, under auspices of the Paris City Council.

The priests Christopher Hartley and Pedro Ruquoy led the denunciations of mistreatment of Haitian workers in the bateyes of the sugar producer Vicini Group, in the country's eastern region. The activities included the presentation of the documentary "The Price of Sugar" and the photo exhibit "Enslaved in Paradise."

"I must assure you that, as all the friends of both countries that share this island, France is very united to the harmony the relations between the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic," Connan in his statement, in which he promised to forward to his government the protest from ADDREH, whose members number some 4,000.

Another journalist murdered
Latin America Press
Noticias Aliadas.
Jun 13, 2007

A popular actor and radio personality was kidnapped and killed in the capital Port-au-Prince in late May, making him the second journalist killed in a week, press freedom organization Reporters without Borders said.

François Latour, 60, who worked for the Caraïbes FM and Métropole radio stations, was found dead May 23 with a bullet in his stomach a day after he was abducted. His kidnappers demanded a ransom of US\$100,000, but they abandoned his dead body on a street in the capital shortly afterward.

Latour's murder came just days after Alix Joseph, another radio journalist who ran a cultural program on Télé-Provinciale radio station, was killed in the northern city of Gonaïves May 16.

The murder "shows that lawlessness is growing in Haiti," said Reporters without Borders on its Web site. "We call on the authorities to thoroughly investigate and find and punish the killers of both men."

According to the local press, politically-motivated violence has declined since President René Préval took office last year. But poverty, unemployment and drug-trafficking continue to generate violence in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

Verner's Plan for CIDA: Apply Afghanistan strategy to Haiti & others
The Dominion
June 8, 2007

International Co-operation Minister Josée Verner Outlines her Foreign Aid Agenda in today's Embassy Magazine:

The government plans to increase CIDA's field presence and create comprehensive websites to update Canadians about progress, something the minister says has already been done in Afghanistan, and which [Verner] would like to see in all of Canada's development partners, though she's not sure when or how.

"This is because we feel this is the best way to follow the projects, and this is better for aid," she said.

"I will find a way. We'll find a way. We are working. My vision is to apply that to Haiti, for example."

European aid for Dominican Republic, Haiti border area

Thursday, June 7, 2007

By Beata Lockwood

Caribbean Net News Dominican Republic Correspondent

Email: beata@caribbeannetnews.com

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic: As a result of intense efforts by the respective Environmental Ministers of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, funding of almost US\$3 million has been allocated by the European Union to assist the border areas of Jimini, which has the largest lakes of both countries.

This area was devastated in 2004, resulting in death and destruction from flooding and mudslides caused by much deforestation over the years by the inhabitants.

The Frontier Environmental Project is aimed at replanting forests, improving forest management, studying the possibility of wind energy and providing education for the residents on both sides of the border.

Both Ministers were on hand for the inauguration ceremony and said they are committed to furthering the goodwill of the two countries in environmental issues, especially in the border areas.

Haiti, We're Sorry
By Deniece Alleyne LL.B
05 June, 2007
The Democrat

Not that long ago I had the opportunity of speaking with some Haitian migrants who had been dropped off at various points around the island. I am fairly fluent in the French language and I wanted to interview them about their experiences as migrants generally and about their treatment in St. Kitts in particular.

Their story was painful in its ordinariness. None had intended to come to St. Kitts but had been deceived by unscrupulous human traffickers to whom they had paid substantial sums. They were seeking relief; from hunger, homelessness and lack of opportunity. They were seeking a better life. Theirs was a story common to us here in St. Kitts and throughout the Caribbean. All of us either know persons or are persons who have migrated to other Caribbean countries, the USA, Canada or the UK to better ourselves and our children. In fact it is ironic to me as a naturalized Kittitian born in Guyana that I have so often been told "you na from yah" by people who go to great lengths to have their children born in the US Virgin Islands or Puerto Rico if they cant make it to the US mainland.

Despite our history as a migrant people, from being kidnapped and enslaved and transported between continents, to traveling for work whether in Trinidad, immediately after emancipation in the 1840s to the Dominican Republic, Panama and Curacao in the early twentieth century we have been inflicted with a strange xenophobia. Strange because when taken to its natural conclusion it means that we are biting the hand that has fed us, and strange because this xenophobia is only directed towards black people like ourselves. On several occasions I have been abused for being born in Guyana by persons who practically worship what they call "coolie hair" and have gone to great lengths to have children with men of Indian descent from the same Guyana or Trinidad. I have always found it a tragic symptom of an internalized inferiority complex and felt sorry for such persons.

This brings me back to the story of the Haitians. I could not help wondering why they had to be held in prison when I spoke with them. The men complained of the over - crowding and the women, though relatively comfortable, did ask me; "Why the prison?"

During my time in England I was asked on several occasions by white students whether we live in houses where I come from. I was constantly amazed rather than offended by the question because the query came from abject ignorance. What has been astounding is the fact that I have heard similar nonsense asked about Haitians by persons here, whether about their religion or cultural practices or rate of infection with AIDS. I was horrified recently when I heard on the BBC Caribbean that coast guard officials in the Turks and Caicos Islands had deliberately collided with a boat carrying Haitian migrants causing it to capsize in shark infested waters. To add insult to injury the survivors were locked in a detention center and prevented from speaking to journalists in the immediate aftermath of this incident.

This shocking story immediately brought to my mind the haunting lyrics of poet and composer David Rudder from his melancholic requiem called 'Haiti I'm sorry.' He asked 'they say the middle passage is gone, so how come overcrowded boats still haunt our lives?' This brutally compelling question

brings in sharp relief the scandalous state of affairs that is CARICOM policy with regard to the Haitian Republic.

Haiti is a special case in the Caribbean. It represents the prevailing international opinion of independence, sovereignty and freedom for people of African descent whether on the continent itself or anywhere in the Diaspora. Haiti dared to violently throw off the yoke of bondage, colonialism, imperialism and all notions of racial inferiority in a relentless 10 year war of attrition that in the words of Prof. George Lamming proved that black men were men. For this daring audacity the Haitians have been made to suffer. Their country has been turned into a terrible cautionary tale to the rest of us that if we don't drink the swill from the swine trough of white supremacy we too will be imprisoned in a barren wasteland desperately seeking the means of escape.

Haiti is the oldest Black republic in the world and among the oldest republics in the world. Only the American and French republics are older. How awe inspiring it is to have as a fact of history that during that period in history known as the enlightenment while white men were patting themselves on the back for coming up with dissertations on the rights of man as proof of their supposed superiority, black men were asserting that freedom was inherent to humanity not an indulgence to be granted by a benevolent master. In virtually every other colonial territory black, brown and yellow men asked and pleaded and genuflected before the altars of the mother country, imbibing her language, institutions, culture but most importantly denying that we had any of those things to prove us worthy of being granted independence. Only in Haiti did black men take their freedom. Haiti disproved all the arguments and theories about the nature of man in general and the black man in particular. Haiti disproved Darwin and his theory that us Africans were savages requiring slavery for our own well being. Haiti disproved Hegel that Africans had no voice in history by indelibly infusing history with the most brutally eloquent free man's creed. Haiti disproved Paine that Africans were simpletons incapable of comprehending the nature and meaning of liberty expounding its true meaning. Haiti defied the largest and most sophisticated armies and navies of the time. On that glorious New Year's Day in 1804 Haiti declared for oppressed people everywhere that bondage was not the natural state of any man. Haiti became the threat of a good example.

For this Haiti had to pay.

The retribution exacted from the only successful rebellion of enslaved people has been catastrophic. The US enforced a century long absolute embargo from 1806 and no other country traded with Haiti effectively crippling the nascent nation. American, Spanish and British naval vessels blockaded Haitian ports for several years to ensure that no rogue trader could defy the siege. Worst of all however was the unconscionable demand for reparations from the French Republic for the loss of its colony! Imagine that! In 1825, on behalf of former slaveholders the French government imposed an indemnity on Haiti as payment for recognizing it as a free nation. It threatened to wage war to re - colonize and re - enslave Haiti if the country did not pay 90 million francs. In today's dollars it amounts to more than \$21 billion. Think about it carefully. The country continually derided as the a failed state, the poorest and most backward country in this hemisphere and chief among this benighted group worldwide has paid to France, one of the richest, more that \$21 billion during the 165 years up to 1990. What would this money have done if spent to develop Haiti?

The ignorant and self despising among us like to ask the eminently silly question, how can we know that slavery and colonialism caused any tangible benefit to accrue to the imperialist nations? Haiti answers that question in dollars and cents. The US did not recognize Haitian independence until 1863 in the midst of its own civil war which was primarily about slavery. In addition to this indignity, Haiti was constantly harassed and several times invaded and occupied by the US as part of its Monroe Doctrine always under that useful fiction that we black people cannot rule ourselves. The longest occupation persisted for 19 years from 1915 to 1934. The US installed and maintained the barbaric reign of terror of the Duvalier family and its fearsome ton ton macoutes. It ensured that the only industries that were allowed to flourish unhindered were prostitution and drug and gun trafficking.

Perhaps however, the worst retribution exacted from the Haitian people has been the hate of their brothers. By this I mean that instead of honoring and venerating those great men like L'OUVERTURE and DESSALINES as the heroes they are and reciting their deeds to our children and naming our sons after them like we would and have after great white men we have either despised their sacrifice or worse ignored it completely. Most of us have been so convinced that black skin is ugly and our natural hair is defective that we support a multi - billion dollar industry in skin bleaches and hair straighteners and weaves.

When we curse someone the first thing we can think of saying is how black the person is even when we are no different. It has been scientifically shown that we are far more likely to consider a person beautiful if his/her skin is light rather than dark and that we correlate dark skin with negative characteristics. In other words most of us have chosen not to be heirs of the Haitian revolution but rather to be what Walter Rodney called "white men in black skins". This is perverse and tragic, even sacrilegious. It denies the testimony that most of my readers claim to believe that we are made in the image of God.

Haiti is poor today because it was deliberately made so and kept so just like much of sub - Saharan Africa by wars either military or economic and cultural. To acknowledge this is not to have a slave mindset or to be stuck in the past or to have a "hand - out" mentality nor any of the tired pejoratives that are constantly bandied about. It is simply to state a fact that is very important to note because so many people think that the reason is that black people are somehow incapable of properly running a country. When black people can throw other black people to sharks for simply wanting a better life, when specifically Caribbean black people can do this to Haitians it shows how desperately we still need the Haitian Revolution. It shows how much we need to heed to the words of a son of this revolution and emancipate ourselves from mental slavery?

There are now several investigations underway in the Turks and Caicos Islands into this atrocity but whatever they find it is important that such action is denounced in the strongest terms. Migration defines Caribbean people and it simply beggars belief that movement within this region should attract such hostility on the part of the teapot tyrants that run these countries. With an almost comical regularity Caribbean politicians pontificate on sovereignty and protecting the jobs of locals from foreigners as an election gimmick mainly when their administration is bad to generate hostility towards Caribbean people. They certainly are not referring to the whites who they bend over backwards and race to the bottom against each other to see how low they can go to accommodate.

The competition between Antigua and St. Kitts for the Caribbean Star HQ is a recent example; remember the billionaire owner who bought prime airport real estate for 69c per square foot. I can only imagine how Antigua sweetened that deal. You see, teachers from other islands are not investing in our country. How tragic - comic it is to see how precious we hold these various ports on the routes of the slave ships when we are not desperately trying to get away and sneak into the US or Canada that is.

This state of affairs is not permanent, despite how bleak it seems. The modern age presents the opportunity to forge for ourselves a new identity founded on the principle defended with blood in the Haitian revolution. A first step would be for CARICOM leaders to end discriminatory policies against Haiti and instead concentrate on finding ways to be of assistance to our brothers across this Caribbean Sea. They can start by vocally supporting the Haitian demand for France to repay the unconscionable indemnity began by former President Aristide. They can continue by enacting immigration policies that recognize the contribution made by our own people migrating among these islands. When Toussaint L'OUVERTURE was kidnapped by the French, his last words to them were 'in overthrowing me you have cut down only the trunk of the tree of liberty, it will spring up again from the roots for they are many and they are deep.'

We, as Caribbean people, need to draw our strength from those roots.

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Haiti police seize 920kg of cocaine
People's Daily Online, China
June 7, 2007

Haiti's National Police seized 920 kg of cocaine in a raid on Tuesday, the largest haul in a single operation in 10 years, according to news reports reaching Havana on Wednesday.

A total of 1.34 tons of cocaine was seized in the week-long operation against cocaine smugglers.

Police also arrested 10 suspects in Tuesday's raid, including four police officers and two Colombians.

Source: Xinhua

Haiti to target secret airstrips in drug-trafficking fight

The Associated Press

International Herald Tribune

June 4, 2007

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Haitian authorities are trying to root out a network of secret airstrips used to smuggle in South American cocaine bound for the United States, a top security official said Monday.

The effort comes days after Haitian police and U.N. peacekeepers intercepted 420 kilograms (925 pounds) of cocaine in a coastal town in the Caribbean country's biggest drug seizure in more than a decade.

Much of the cocaine entering Haiti arrives by plane, usually small, single-engine aircraft that land on remote airstrips hidden throughout Haiti's poorly guarded countryside.

"We want to identify these airstrips, find out who owns them and who they're associated with," Luc Eucher Joseph, Haiti's secretary of state for public safety, told broadcaster Radio Metropole.

Following last Thursday's cocaine seizure, police raided a suspected traffickers' hideout in an upscale Port-au-Prince area and found several high-powered weapons and a global positioning device believed to be used to help guide incoming drug planes, Joseph said. Two Colombian nationals, five Haitian policemen and three civilians were arrested for alleged trafficking.

Haiti is a major transshipment point for cocaine destined for the United States. According to a recent U.S. State Department report, the number of flights carrying drugs to Hispaniola, the island shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic, increased by 167 percent in 2006.

U.S. authorities say those flights, largely from Venezuela, have nearly halted since the launch of an anti-drug operation in March.

Rapid Syphilis Test for Pregnant Women Could Save Lives in Haiti

By Rose Hoban

VOA

04 June 2007

In many countries, syphilis remains a major public health problem for pregnant women. A mother infected with the sexually-transmitted disease can pass it on to her baby in utero. This greatly increases the chance of stillbirth and neonatal death. And many of the babies born with syphilis who survive have congenital birth defects and developmental disabilities.

According to Doctor Bruce Schackman from the Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City, in the past, it's been difficult to treat syphilis in pregnant women, in part because testing involves drawing blood and sending it off to a lab. Results can take days to come back and the mothers often don't return to the clinic for follow up treatment.

Schackman and his Haitian colleagues wanted to find a way to identify and treat more syphilis cases using a new rapid test for the disease. "Our primary goal was to look at what the cost benefit was of adding this new [syphilis] test to the protocols that are being used in Haiti, when pregnant women are tested for HIV," he says, explaining that it is more expensive than the laboratory test.

About 4 percent of pregnant women in Haiti routinely test positive for syphilis. Patients there readily accept HIV testing and were glad to add a quick syphilis test to their prenatal screening, because Schackman says, "if a woman tests positive she could be treated with a shot of penicillin immediately and that shot of penicillin would be very effective in preventing the child from getting sick."

Scaling up this rapid testing to include the whole country could have profound effects. "There would be about 1000 deaths and about 1000 cases of congenital syphilis that would be avoided each year and the cost would be quite low," Schackman estimates. And he says testing women throughout the country would cost only an additional \$500,000 per year. That's a small percentage of the international donor money Haiti receives to do HIV testing and treatment.

Schackman says his team is advocating a more integrated approach to prevention of mother-child transmission of HIV. "This should be done in the context of providing better services to pregnant women overall to their health and the health of their children. And including the syphilis test is one component of that and one that was very easy to add and not expensive to add."

Schackman's research is published in the open access online journal Public Library of Science: Medicine.

Haiti – Dominican Republic : Santo Domingo in state of alarm attempts to find the support of the OAS

June 6, 2007

Translated from French by Menno Ernst

Tuesday 5th June 2007

By Karole Gizolme and Anne Lescot

Revived by AlterPresse

With the kind permission of www.gensdelacaraibe.org

On the XXXVIIth summit of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Panama, the Dominican minister of foreign affairs, Carlos Morales Troncoso, will lay down, this Tuesday 5th June, a resolution condemning what he defines as a "slander campaign" against his country, the event Slaves in Paradise, which will be held in Paris as from 15th June.

A photo exhibition, a symposium and the projection of documentaries denounce, indeed and once again, the inhuman exploitation of Haitian sugar-cane cutters in the Dominican Republic for over almost a century. The major topic of this summit of the OAS approaches energies for a durable development.

Whereas ethanol, distracted from the cane sugar, represents a new source of revenues for the Dominican Republic, the question of human rights of which the "braceros", Haitians in this country who work on the cane plantations, are deprived of cannot be ignored. The situation of Haitian immigrants has already been brought under the attention of the members of the OAS last year by the annual regional seminary of the people of African prosperity.

The request for resolution of condemnation by the OAS, that Manuel Morales Troncoso wishes to be adopted, will follow the complaint deposited at the French embassy in Santo Domingo last May 17th by the chamber of deputies.

But, what can the French authorities really do against an initiative of the civil society that will know how to mobilize media and partners around a denunciation in several forms and reviving facts already known.

We are no longer in the year 1938, when Jacques Roumain was arrested in Paris on demand of the Dominican authorities for having condemned the complicity and the responsibilities of Haitian and Dominican heads of state in the massacre of 15.000 Haitians during the Dominican campaign (1)...

We are in the year 2007 now and on May 9th of this year the French president Jacques Chirac recalled again that France has to "mobilize itself against this [trafficking in human beings] infamous deed." A trafficking that implies as well the services of migration and of Dominican personalities, sugar-refinery owners, Haitian diplomats and smugglers of human beings. It's a traffic of laborers transported clandestinely in tourist busses with tinted windows, according to Espacinsular of 26th May 2006.

Numerous articles, international news agencies (Libération, Alternatives économiques, Courier international, Marie Claire, Cosmopolitan, Mademoiselle Figaro, Elle Magazine, Nova, La Croix,

VSD, Marianne, Le Pèlerin magazine, RFO radio and tv ...) and documentaries (the most recent ones have been transmitted by France 2 and RFO relays the event) denounce the horrible and inhumane living conditions of thousands of laborers. And these days the picture of an Haitian sugar-cane cutter, recently arrived in the Dominican Republic, bare chest, forms part of a billposting campaign in the corridors of the Parisian subway.

On the local level the Dominican press (Listin diario, El Diario, Clave Digital, Diario Dominicano, El Viajero Digital, Dominicanos Hoy...) act in response and produce an amount of articles that condemn an “attempt to damage the tourist image” of this part of the island. Though it wasn't the purpose or the objective of the organizers, it probably will be the consequence anyway.

Several reports of international organizations, of which the most recent is the one of Amnesty International (March 2007), preceding by those of UNDP, Human Rights Watch and also of Christian Aid, Catholic Institute for International Relations (CICR)/IPSOS (2) and of the US Department for Human Rights (3) are feeding the actions of the Haitian and Dominican civil societies.

Dominicans living in Paris, and others who specially made the trip, have come to “defend” their country because they think it has become a victim of “slander” and they point, during the debate which was organized after the projection of documentaries that “the Dominicans equally live in poverty”.

With the difference that « the Dominicans are unemployed and that the cane cutters work almost 12 hours a day, for a miserable salary, suffering from starvation”, specifies Amy Serrano, the director of The Sugar Babies.

The organizers of Slaves in Paradise have received letters of the law firm Patton Boggs, informing them of the prosecutions that would be undertaken against the producers of The Price of Sugar in case of projection of the film. The responsible of the MK2 cinemas has received an appeal himself from a French advocate employed by the government of Leonel Fernandez approached as spokesperson of an federation of associations (not identified to date) threatening him with a lawsuit.

What matters is that the event Slaves in Paradise is encircled by partners insensitive to intimidation. Among them the city of Paris, Amnesty International, le Collectif 2004 Images, Libération and the chain of MK2 cinemas of which we know we can count on their engagement to sensible subjects.

At the summit of the OAS, with these reports, documentaries, pictures, witnesses, commitments of international organisms available, what are the counter arguments of Carlos Morales Troncoso, minister of foreign affairs and additionally for a long time shareholder of offending sugar refineries of the Central Romana, in the east of the Dominican Republic ?

The position of the Dominican Republic is totally different to the one of Brazil, that faces the same problem of slavery on its sugar fields. In the meantime, in stead of denying these circumstances, Brazil undertakes action against the forced labor and has, in March 2006 in the state of Ramanhao, sentenced ranch owners to pay compensation to the salaries and to the state. (5) The government has established a national commission for the eradication of slavery work (CONATRAE) in 2003 and has launched a national action plan against forced labor.

« By examining the Brazilian design, specifies Roger Plant, expert of the International Labor Office, we notice now projections in other Latin American countries who intensify their action against forced labor.»

Peru, Paraguay and Brazil enlist against forced labor. Not the Dominican Republic. Or at least not yet. The summit of the OAS should allow these four countries to meet and to clearly talk about this subject.

Karole Gizolme and Anne Lescot

The photo exhibition stands until 15th June 2007 at Passage Piver, number 5, Paris 11th – see www.gensdelacaraibe.org Report of Amnesty international : "République dominicaine. Une vie en transit – La situation tragique des migrants haïtiens et des Dominicains d'origine haïtienne" – Public Document of 21st March 2007- <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/fraamr270012007>

See also the internet site Espacinsular <http://espacinsular.org/> specialized on Dominican-Haitian relations and the best documented articles on the illegal trafficking of Haitian labourers.

(1) " Mid-April, on demand of the Quai d'Orsay, on complaint of the legation of the Dominican Republic, Jacques Roumain and Pierre Saint-Dizier, manager of the journal Regards, are arrested and accused of flagrant insults to a foreign head of state. The cause was an article of Roumain, "La Tragédie haïtienne", being published in the edition of November 18th 1937 of the journal (i.e. 5 months earlier), who accused the Dominican dictator of genocide and the president Sténio Vincent of complicity. It was the last time that a French journal had been prosecuted for "flagrant insult to a foreign head of state".

From the biography of J. Roumain by L F Hoffmann, put online by the site Ile en Ile.

(2) The Catholic Institute for International Relations(CICR)/IPSOS – www.ciir.org/shared_asp_files/uploadedfiles/5DFF5ABC-320D-4062-AB02-78030B906D4C_Neededbutunwanted_French.pdf -

(3) The US Department for Human Rights – <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78889.html>

(4) <http://www.ipsnews.net>

(5) http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Press_releases/lang—fr/WCMS_069169

Haiti Bids to Halt Return of Baby Doc's Millions
The Guardian
June 2, 2007

The Haitian government is making frantic efforts to stop millions of pounds held in Swiss bank accounts being handed over this weekend to the former dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier.

The Haitian government is making frantic efforts to stop millions of pounds held in Swiss bank accounts being handed over this weekend to the former dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier. They claim that "Baby Doc" looted the money from Haiti when he fled to exile in France in 1986.

The money, 7.6m Swiss francs (£3.1m), has been frozen for the past five years as the Haitian government has argued for its release but it is due to be surrendered to Duvalier tomorrow. He is believed to have other hidden bank accounts elsewhere.

"We are going to do our best to get the money back," said the Haitian foreign minister Jean-Réналd Clérismé. "It's important to us because we need the money to develop the country."

A spokesman for the Swiss foreign ministry said that there had already been two extensions to the freezing of the funds. "Unfortunately, we cannot block the funds for an unlimited time," he said. "Now there is a deadline - that is the law." The money cannot be returned to Haiti without proof that it has been illegally obtained.

A number of NGOs and human rights organizations have called for the Swiss government to intervene to stop the payment.

"This is a scandal," said a joint statement signed by Christian Aid, the Haiti Support Group and others. "Two years ago, the Swiss government signed an agreement for the repatriation of US\$458m to Nigeria in assets stolen by the late head of state, General Sani Abacha. When the agreement was signed, the Swiss government stated that 'Switzerland is open and committed ... to making the return of these funds established international practice'. This new development shows that Switzerland is not able to fulfil such a commitment."

Mr Duvalier's lawyer in Switzerland, Alain Macaluso, said: "Mr Duvalier is happy that after five years the Swiss government, which had made a political decision to freeze his funds, has now finally conformed with the law." But he added that it was unlikely Mr Duvalier would be able to access the funds in the immediate future.

Duvalier became president for life at the age of 19 in 1971 after the death of his notorious father, Francois, or "Papa Doc", as he was known. He fled into exile in 1986, taking with him, according to the current Haitian government, tens of millions of dollars looted from the national treasury. Initially, he lived with his then wife and family in a villa in Mougins, near Cannes, driving a Ferrari Testarossa and indulging in playboy prodigality in Paris hotels and jewelry stores. An expensive divorce and his own extravagance are believed to have already used up many millions.

He has denied stealing the money and organizing the murder of opponents. "If I were dictator, I would have done everything in my power to stay in power," he told the Wall Street Journal in 2003. "I laugh

when I hear the amounts: \$400m, \$800m. It's a lot of blah, blah, blah ... There were the children to care for, school expenses, other bills." He added: "We were not perfect - perhaps I was too tolerant."

Duvalier is thought to be living in an apartment in Paris with his French fiancée, Veronique Roy, who traveled to Haiti this year to attend a meeting of a handful of die-hard supporters on the island who campaign for the dictator's return.

Haiti is one of the world's poorest countries, with 78% of the population living on less than £1 a day.

By Guardian Unlimited © Copyright Guardian Newspapers 2006

Published: 6/2/2007

Flooding in Haiti forces evacuation
Press TV, Iran
Sun, 03 Jun 2007

Flooding triggered by days of heavy rain has damaged scores of homes in Haiti killing at least two people and wounding three others.

Emergency officials said floodwaters knocked out several bridges, damaged crops and forced thousands of people to seek shelter along Haiti's northern coast and in several villages along the Haitian-Dominican border, AP reported.

A woman and her infant daughter also died when a wall in their house collapsed during a storm in northwestern Port-de-Paix, town mayor Guillet Salvador told Haitian broadcaster Radio Kiskeya.

Three other relatives were injured. In the northern town of St. Louis Du Nord, flooding damaged or destroyed 2,500 homes along the coast, town mayor Gaston Estima said.

In the neighboring Dominican Republic, heavy rains have killed at least nine people and forced 16,000 into shelters in the past week, according to Carlos Paulino, a national emergency official.

Among those killed was a 3-year-old boy swept away by floodwaters.

Defending labor rights in Haiti

By Ben Terrall

Caribbean Net News

May 31, 2007

New legislation in Washington D.C., under the acronym HOPE—short for “the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act”—has the goal of promoting the garment industry in Haiti. But the legislation falls noticeably short in protecting labor rights or promoting long-term sustainable economic development that will benefit the poor as well as the rich.

The Washington Post editorialized about the bill: “After 15 years of political turmoil, violent unrest and economic mismanagement, this looks like a rare opportunity to consolidate tentative progress in Haiti. Congress shouldn’t miss it.” But Tom Ricker, Latin America specialist with the Washington, D.C.-based Quixote Center, disagreed: “Right now Congress has many opportunities to make a sustainable contribution to progress in Haiti, but the HOPE act is not one of them. The bill may create a few low-paying and precarious sweatshop jobs, but it will also reinforce a flawed model of development that has been failing Haitians for two decades.”

As Mr. Ricker elaborated, keeping Haiti competitive would mean sacrificing labor rights for jobs that have no guarantee of staying in the country: “A temporary expansion of tariff-free access for third country fabric does not solve the underlying problem. Indeed, by placing so much emphasis on apparel, HOPE actually deepens economic insecurity in Haiti, instead of alleviating it.” While the high unemployment in Haiti has led to the destitution of many, Haitian labor organizers told this author that what they really need is a sustained period of peace and stability.

Mr. Ricker and others point to the need to revitalize Haiti’s rural economy, while protecting and ensuring labor rights. According to Brian Concannon, Director of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, “HOPE has some worker protection provisions, but they are toothless, and if past is prologue, they will do nothing to address the widespread exploitation of Haitian workers. It may be true that some workers make US \$4 per day, but more make closer to the minimum wage of \$2. That minimum wage is far below the minimum wage of the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the country hosted many times more manufacturing jobs. It does not support even two people at the average level of subsistence in Haiti (US \$1 or below), which is itself brutal. Even \$4 per day does not, after paying for a family’s food, lodging and transportation to work, leave much left over to pay school fees and otherwise break the cycle of poverty.”

Mr. Concannon added, “All the HOPE proponents justify the Act by the benefits it provides Haitian workers; but I have yet to hear of any workers who were consulted about the bill, or who are themselves promoting it ... Haiti’s only real edge is the exploitability of its work force, which is not a foundation for long-term growth.”

Officials of the Confederation des Travailleurs Haïtiens (CTH) say that they were not consulted by the Préval government. Prior to the election of the Préval government, the interim government brought about a neo-liberal economic framework, the Cadre de Coopération Intérimaire (CCI), in which workers and popular organizations were also not consulted. Thousands lost their jobs in the International Monetary Fund (IMF)-backed austerity measures.

Dan Beeton, International Communications Coordinator for the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) in Washington D.C., argues, “HOPE is part of the same old ‘free trade’ model of development. What Haiti needs is a real development strategy that it can pursue unimpeded by the U.S. or anyone else, with a diversification of the economy and mechanisms to help ensure that more revenue stays in the country.”

But in that process, Mr. Concannon notes, “one of the most important things international supporters of human rights in Haiti need to stay focused on is supporting workers’ rights.”

Haitian trade unionists

One Haitian labor group deserving of international solidarity is the CTH. In an earlier form, in 1959, the union was founded during the dictatorship of “Papa Doc” Duvalier and remains one of the most well known unions in Haiti.

While many unions in Haiti have become closely tied with foreign donor agencies, CTH has promoted a sovereign agenda, protesting against neo-liberal policies of privatization. It has widely promoted labor rights for jobs across the rural and urban sectors. Organizing on a progressive and collective model, its federations range from education, transportation, the ports, garment industry, artisan work and the informal sector. The Confederation is also involved in economic development programs, as well as literacy and health programs. It claims a total membership of 110,000 people.

A recent labor delegation to CTH offices in Port-au-Prince viewed hundreds of young people engaging in language courses. The Confederation, with two offices in Port-au-Prince, is present with offices in all of Haiti’s 10 departments. CTH is a member of the regional CLAT (La Central Latinamericana de Trabajadores), CTC (Consejo de Trabajadores del Caribe), and the ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation).

In an interview during the interim period, CTH General Secretary Paul “Loulou” Chéry explained, “It is a crisis without precedent. Our population has not known a situation this grave since the founding of the country... The majority of the population has been plunged into misery and exclusion. At the level of the workers, there is hopelessness, as there are practically no jobs. There is, maybe, 15 percent of the population who are truly employed [...] At this point; the de facto government is conducting a witch-hunt. They are creating a situation of terror, a situation of fear, of systematic repression. This repression has resulted in the killing of thousands of people since the execution of the coup.”

CTH organizers describe how labor conditions deteriorated rapidly following the 2004 coup d’état that overthrew President Aristide. Hundreds of their workers were persecuted, thrown in jail and thousands of public sector workers were fired from state jobs. Many workers within CTH’s federations had their vehicles and places of work targeted by arsonists from the ex-military and anti-government opposition. Shortly after the coup, Mr. Chéry had a death squad enter his home and threaten him with death.

Prior to the coup they explain the embargo on international aid against the elected government also created economic decline, as it pushed away investors and harmed the ability of the government to carry through on its promises. But the elected Aristide government, they observe, even under these

conditions, backed a raise in minimum wage and various programs benefiting poor urban laborers. Today, they maintain their independence from any political party, but describe respect for democracy as a necessity and how they refused to join the Group of 184 campaign, in which foreign donor backed labor groups cooperated in a wide destabilization campaign.

CTH workers want a functioning country, in which they can organize and improve their lives. Dan Beeton summed up why U.S. citizens should support the ongoing organizing efforts of Haitian trade unionists:

“Throughout Haiti’s history, the U.S. has usually been a bad neighbor, invading and occupying the country several times, propping up dictators, and at times blocking economic assistance to the country. A number of economically damaging policy prescriptions have originated in Washington as well, including privatization of state industries and the promotion of export processing zones that hamper the development of Haitian industry and generate little revenue...Considering the history of the United States’ relationship with Haiti, Americans owe it to the Haitian people to support their right to organize independent trade unions and advocate for policies that will foster real and lasting economic development.”

(Ginette Apollon, head of the women’s commission of the Confédération des travailleurs haitiens (CTH), Paul “Loulou” Chéry, General Secretary of the CTH, and Euvonie Georges-Auguste, a Haitian women’s rights leader and activist will be touring Canada in May and June of 2007. For more information see www.HaitiAnalysis.com.)

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Haiti makes biggest cocaine bust in over a decade

Saturday, June 2, 2007

By Joseph Guyler Delva, Reuters

Caribbean Net News

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (Reuters): Haiti has seized 925 pounds (420 kg) of cocaine in the impoverished country's biggest drug bust in more than a decade, authorities said on Friday.

Ten people, including four Haitian police officers and two Colombian nationals, were arrested, said Claudy Gassant, a top Haitian prosecutor.

The cocaine was discovered on Thursday near the town of Leogane, about 19 miles (30 km) south of the capital Port-au-Prince, Gassant said. It was stashed in three vehicles, including one with official license plates.

Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, has long been billed as an increasingly important trans-shipment point for South American cocaine making its way into the United States and other markets.

Police spokesman Frantz Lerebours said Thursday's cocaine haul was the biggest in Haiti, which shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, since 1996.

4 Police Arrested in Haiti Cocaine Bust

The Associated Press

The Washington Post

Thursday, May 31, 2007

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Authorities arrested 10 people, including four police officers, who were allegedly transporting 925 pounds of cocaine in two vehicles with government license plates.

Acting on a tip, police discovered the drugs Thursday after stopping the cars in the rural town of Leogane, just west of the capital of Port-au-Prince, police spokesman Frantz Lerebours told reporters. It was one of the largest drug seizures in Haiti in years.

Eight Haitians were arrested, including four active members of the National Police, Lerebours said. Two Colombian nationals were later arrested on suspicion of involvement.

Both vehicles had government license plates although one was a rental car, Lerebours said. Police also seized three automatic rifles, five pistols and a shotgun.

President Rene Preval has pledged to clean up Haiti's notoriously corrupt police force, which has only a few thousand poorly paid officers to patrol this impoverished nation of 8 million people.

Haiti is a major transshipment point for South American cocaine bound for the United States.

U.S. law helps mend Haiti's torn economy

By Gary Marx

Tribune foreign correspondent

Chicago Tribune

May 30, 2007

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Six months after closing his garment factory and laying off 800 workers, Georges Sassine is preparing to reopen the plant thanks to a recent U.S. law allowing more Haitian-made apparel into the American market duty-free.

The law, the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity Through Partnership Encouragement Act, or HOPE, could create 50,000 jobs in Haiti in the next few years and provide a boost to the hemisphere's most impoverished nation, diplomats and industry leaders say. The law went into effect in March.

It's great," said Sassine, owner of AG Textiles and vice president of the Haitian Manufacturers Association. "It's permitting us to move forward after 20 years of moving backwards."

One small step

The HOPE Act is one small step for a nation that has endured a legacy of coups, dictatorships and crushing poverty and still faces huge obstacles to recovery.

Dan Erikson, head of Caribbean programs at the Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington think tank, said Haiti's economy registered growth last year for the first time in years but it was largely due to foreign aid. Formal unemployment remains close to 70 percent.

While describing the HOPE Act as "a shot in the arm" for Haiti's sagging textile sector, Erikson said the country needs even broader tariff reductions for Haitian-produced garments like those recently granted by the U.S. to African nations.

Reforming Haiti's collapsed judicial system and creating laws that better protect private property also are needed to draw investment, according to diplomats and experts.

"Companies like stability and knowing the rules of the game," said Erikson.

Robert Fatton, a University of Virginia professor of government and foreign affairs and an expert on Haiti, said Haitian President Rene Preval's top priority should be agrarian reform and boosting investment in the countryside to increase food production and rural incomes and slow a devastating rural-to-urban migration.

Reasons for optimism

"I don't think that you can have lasting peace in Haiti without resolving the critical problem of rural development," said Fatton.

Still, there are reasons for optimism. Fatton credits Preval for easing political tensions that could have plunged Haiti into further bloodshed.

Security also has improved in Port-au-Prince after an offensive by United Nations forces destroyed the city's once-powerful gangs.

The U.S. and other major donors have taken advantage of the relative calm to begin paying for repairs to roads and other infrastructure.

Once employing some 100,000 workers, Haiti's light manufacturing sector prospered from the 1960s through the 1980s because of the island nation's proximity to the U.S., its abundance of cheap labor and Haitians' strong work ethic.

Among the well-known products made in Haiti were Rawlings baseballs, Haggard slacks, Wilson golf clubs, Sperry boat shoes and stuffed toys such as Care Bears, according to Sassine and other factory owners.

But the bottom fell out in 1991, when economic sanctions were imposed on Haiti after President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was ousted in a coup.

Maxim Conde, a textile manufacturer who closed his factory last November, said he was general manager of Wilson Sporting Goods' operations in Haiti when the company pulled out in 1991. Wilson employed 2,000.

"There were two reasons for it," Conde said. "The situation of the coup against Aristide and the bad publicity, and management was afraid that they were not going to get the goods on time."

The UN tightened sanctions against Haiti in 1994 but lifted them a year later after Aristide's return from exile.

Still, the garment industry never fully recovered because U.S. discounters turned to cheaper suppliers.

"It's very hard work," said Marie Elvius, 30, a textile employee who earns \$4.50 a day, more than twice Haiti's minimum wage. "I have no choice not to like it because I've never found any other job. Nothing is available."

Other factors hurting Haitian manufacturers were the country's violence and instability.

One day last month, Sassine toured his idle factory and pointed to a dozen bullet holes in the roof. Stray bullets fired by gang members hit three of Sassine's workers on the job.

Financing still an obstacle

"Every single one of these [incidents] cost me two days' work," said Sassine, holding up a jar full of shattered bullets.

Experts say the origin of the fabric used to assemble garments is crucial to success.

Before the HOPE Act, Haiti was mainly limited to exporting duty-free into the U.S. garments made of usually more expensive American fabric.

The HOPE Act allows duty-free entrance to Haitian-produced garments that use fabric only from countries with free-trade agreements with the United States.

"The best thing for Haiti is to be allowed to export garments duty-free into the U.S. from third countries' fabric without serious limitations," said Stephen Lande, president of Manchester Trade, a Washington firm specializing in trade. "The U.S. allows that for Africa."

Still, with the gangs cleared out and the HOPE Act in place, Sassine has hired workers to clean his factory in anticipation of reopening later this year.

The biggest obstacle now for Haitian textile owners is securing credit and financing for working capital and purchasing new equipment.

"If we don't have financing it's going to be very, very difficult to reap the benefits from HOPE," Conde said.

Dominican Republic and Haiti launch development plan
People's Daily Online
June 1, 2007

The Dominican Republic and Haiti on Thursday launched a development program financed by the European Union (EU) to fight poverty and protect biodiversity on the border between both countries.

The Trans-border Environment Project (PMT) seeks to reinforce the population's capability to manage and protect natural resources, especially in the region of Lagos Enriquillo in the Dominican Republic and Saumatre in Haiti.

The initiative will be carried out by the National Processing Office for European Development Funds (Onfed) with the Dominican Republic's State Environment and Natural Resources Ministry and Haiti's Agriculture Ministry.

The Spanish-speaking Dominican Republic and French-speaking Haiti share the Santo Domingo island in the Caribbean.

The 2.5-million-euro (3.2-million-dollar) three-year program aims to protect the environment and promote the island's tourism.

The project will aid local groups in developing wind energy plants, irrigation, reforestation, fish farming and cattle raising.

Source: Xinhua

Tra abilite du Cafe to Give Haiti's Coffee Cooperatives Internet Access from Their Plantations by Applying WiMAX and RFID Technologies
May 31, 2007

Paris - Alcatel-Lucent (Euronext Paris and NYSE: ALU) announces that it has signed a two-year cooperation agreement with Cafes Malongo, the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis and Haiti's mobile telephone operator ComCEL to offer broadband Internet access to the isolated rural areas of Cap Rouge in Haiti.

This pilot project called "Tra abilite du Cafe" (Coffee Traceability) will give Haiti's coffee cooperatives Internet access from their plantations by applying WiMAX and RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technologies. By having such access to the latest information technologies, they will be able to monitor the traceability of their fair trade labeled production and sell their coffee on optimum terms by reducing the number of intermediaries. Training in information technology for the staff and members of Haiti's cooperatives is also being planned. This project again demonstrates Alcatel-Lucent's commitment to narrowing the digital divide and combining economic development with social responsibility.

The coffee tracking project's main goals are to:

help Haiti's farming communities so that they can manage coffee production to meet demand and improve production techniques through appropriate remote learning in order to ensure that the cooperatives are more profitable,

help to develop expertise in two advanced technologies (universal WiMAX for broadband Internet and RFID labels for traceability) to support the development of agricultural telecenters in Haiti, pioneer a range of innovative services in agricultural telecenters to serve education, health, e-government and ecotourism.

The four partners have mutually supportive roles to ensure that this unprecedented cooperative venture in Haiti succeeds:

Alcatel-Lucent has undertaken to supply the telecommunication equipment free of charge (a WiMAX station and the associated terminals), and will help to set up and run the project, Cafes Malongo, operating in Haiti, is providing the financing and designing the software for the coffee traceability system, while maintaining its medium-term presence in the country in order to help finalize the Project's applications,

the University of Nice, which has had a presence in Haiti since 1998 when it created the MBDS (Interactive Multimedia, Database and Systems Integration) masters qualification and has initiated the project, is committed to providing project management, developing the necessary software applications and finding local partners to ensure that Haiti's agricultural cooperatives and an NGO get involved in the project,

ComCEL has undertaken to bear all the connection costs for two years for the three planned sites, from the time when the connection is first set up, and to operate the WiMAX station supplied by Alcatel-Lucent.

Thierry Albrand, director of Alcatel-Lucent's "Digital Bridge" initiative says: "We are particularly happy, through our partnership with Cafes Malongo, the University of Nice and ComCEL, to play an

active part in this project in Haiti. This action fits perfectly into Alcatel-Lucent's commitment to narrow the digital divide in regions that receive little or no service, since it will provide broadband Internet access to the isolated rural areas of Cap Rouge in Haiti, thereby promoting the economic and social development of the communities involved".

Cafes Malongo, which has been operating in Haiti for more than six years, is working closely with 40 cooperatives accounting for more than 10,000 farmers. Its aim is to set up training in the cooperatives and in schools, via WiMAX, so that small producers can gain access to training, information and communication. The University of Nice Sofia Antipolis and the University of the State of Port au Prince have created a Masters qualification in new technologies, "Multimedia, Database and Systems". As a result, two Haitian students and a French student have produced the traceability software that forms the basis of the project.

Swiss government extends freeze on funds of former Haiti dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier

By Bettina Bichsel

ASSOCIATED PRESS

San Diego Union Tribune

June 1, 2007

BERN, Switzerland – The Swiss government has extended a freeze on \$6.2 million in bank accounts linked to the former Haitian dictator Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier, an official said Friday. The money had been due to be released in two days, which would have given Duvalier's family access to it, but instead the accounts will remain blocked for three more months, government spokesman Oswald Sigg told The Associated Press.

A Swiss lawyer asked the government earlier this week to extend the freeze, which was first imposed in 2002.

Marc Henzelin, who acts on behalf of Haitians Etzer LaLanne and the Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, obtained an order from the Geneva state court Wednesday, blocking one of Duvalier's accounts in Switzerland.

But he said unless the government acted to block the others, any money held there would be lost and could be returned to Duvalier's family via a complicated chain of trusts and companies.

LaLanne and Jean-Juste filed suit in U.S. District Court in Miami and were awarded damages of \$750,000 and \$1 million respectively in 1988.

The court also ordered \$504 million to be paid to the Haitian people under the Alien Tort Claims Act, according to Miami attorney Ira J. Kurzban, who represented the claimants in the case.

Henzelin and his fellow lawyer, Patrice Le Houellier, welcomed Friday's decision, saying they hoped it would give time to other victims of the regime to make their case.

“Our goal is to find a good solution for the Haitian people,” Swiss Foreign Ministry spokesman Lars Knuchel said.

A Haitian government attempt to recover the funds after Duvalier was ousted in 1986 was halted by the chaos that engulfed the Caribbean country in the years that followed.

The Swiss government blocked the accounts in 2002 in the hope that the legal process could be restarted or a deal reached with the family which would avoid the embarrassment of handing over money that many in Haiti consider to have been stolen from public funds – allegations Duvalier has always denied.

The Haitian government has yet to prove the money was of criminal origin, a necessary step for Switzerland to confiscate it, officials said.

Switzerland's supreme court ruled last year that an indefinite freeze on privately owned funds was unconstitutional. The case involved \$6.5 million deposited in Swiss banks by the former Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko,

Even before the Swiss government acted, a Geneva court had already blocked an account at the Geneva branch of Swiss bank UBS AG, Henzelin said.

Duvalier had at least two other accounts, in Lausanne and Zurich, although the latter could have been closed, Henzelin said.

Haitian Foreign Minister Jean Renald Clerisme has said a Central Bank official is coming to Switzerland to make a final attempt at recovering some or all of the money.

Duvalier, known as "Baby Doc," was named president for life at age 19 following the death in 1971 of his father, Francois, known as "Papa Doc."

A popular uprising forced him into exile in February 1986. He is believed to live in France and reportedly supports himself with handouts from friends. Tens of thousands were killed during the 29-year Duvalier dynasty.

UN Says 10 Suspects Held Following Cocaine Seizure in Haiti
News Blaze, CA
June 1, 2007

Working with the Haitian National Police, officers from the United Nations mission in the country have helped to seize 420 kilogrammes of cocaine and take in 10 suspects.

Five Haitian policemen, three civilians and two Colombians were taken by UN military escort to a central judicial office in Port-au-Prince, the capital, during yesterday's operation, according to the UN Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

Fourteen packages holding 420 kilogrammes of cocaine were taken from three vehicles headed to the capital from Petit Goave, said MINUSTAH in a news release, adding that the substance will be sent to the United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

The operation was carried out in the framework of fighting the illicit drug trade in Haiti, which has become a significant transit point, the mission said.

Source: United Nations

GOLD EXPLORATION – Eurasian targets Haiti
Canadian Mining Journal
June 15, 2007

HAITI - EURASIAN MINERALS of Vancouver is working a gold prospect in Haiti, the first Canadian company to do so since the late 1990s. The La Miel project, in the northeast corner of the country, is a 35-km-long claim group of highly prospective ground said to be similar to and on trend with the Pueblo Viejo gold-silver deposit next door in the Dominican Republic.

Soil and trench sampling at La Miel is returning anomalous gold values. Assay results from the first three of six trenches include the following: 42.0 m at 0.65 g/t Au, 72.0 m at 1.90 g/t and 150.0 m at 1.03 g/t.

Eurasian believes its ground in Haiti is a Cretaceous formation that may host an epithermal gold-silver deposit or a copper-gold porphyry deposit. The company notes that the business climate of the country is improving and began its program in 2006. Maps and pictures are available at www.EurasianMinerals.com.

The poor, Caribbean nation is taking steps to improve the lives of its citizens. Its textile sector is growing thanks to a U.S. decision to allow more Haitian-made clothing imports. Haitian president Rene Preval has done a credible job of easing political tensions and defusing potential bloodshed. The United Nations troops in Port-au-Prince have removed the city's powerful gangs. As for natural resources, Haiti is known to have deposits of bauxite, copper and gold. Visit www.Haiti.org to learn more about investing in that country.

Security Council press statement on Haiti

SC/9032

United Nations Security Council

Date: 30 May 2007

The following Security Council press statement on Haiti was read out today by Council President Alejandro Wolff (United States):

The members of the Security Council were briefed this afternoon by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Edmond Mulet, on the recent developments in Haiti.

The members of the Security Council reiterated their strong support for the Government of Haiti in its efforts, together with MINUSTAH, to maintain stability and achieve progress in the country. They expressed appreciation for the ongoing efforts by MINUSTAH in supporting the Haitian National Police (HNP) in the fight against gang violence, as well as the efforts to implement the HNP reform plan, in particular the beginning of the vetting process, and encouraged further efforts to advance the reform of the justice system. They also reiterated appreciation for MINUSTAH's work in facilitating Haiti's successful 2006 election cycle and look forward to MINUSTAH providing security and logistics support for the senate elections in autumn 2007.

The members of the Security Council expressed their determination to continue to follow closely the situation in Haiti and to work collaboratively with its Government to consolidate the progress achieved and ensure a stable environment for democratic governance, economic growth and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

For information media • not an official record

Cocaine running jeopardizes what's left of Haiti

Tuesday, May 29, 2007

By Isabelle Ligner

Caribbean Net News

JEREMIE, Haiti (AFP): The mention of its name closes mouths and diverts eyes, but cocaine is everywhere in Haiti, an unstable society exploited by traffickers eager to move their illegal merchandise to the United States.

"It's best not to talk about drugs," said one resident of Jeremie, in southwestern Haiti.

"But everyone knows that it comes by speed boat or small plane from Colombia."

"The most frequent deliveries are made around the peninsula, near Dame-Marie or near the keys," said a policeman who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"You can follow the cocaine by tracing the money locally, even to the homes of some of my colleagues and sometimes the local population want a piece of it."

Sharing the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic makes Haiti one of the most convenient ports of call for cocaine leaving Colombia for Florida, the southernmost US state.

Convenience for traffickers is also measured in Haiti's weak legal system, easily bribed police and 1,500-kilometer (900-mile) coastline that is so unprotected that Haiti has allowed since 1997 US patrols into its waters and US planes into its airspace to chase smugglers.

Haiti remains a paradise for drug runners despite the presence of 9,200 UN troops, sent after president Jean Bertrand Aristide went into self-imposed exile in 2004 as the country slipped into renewed violence.

"Cocaine does not arrive only by boat but often by airplanes, which land in small, clandestine airstrips and even the Americans lack the means to protect Haiti's airspace," said UN human rights monitor for the UN troops, Thierry Faggart.

"Protection of the land, air and sea borders is a matter of money," he said.

"Haiti continues to be a transshipment point for Colombian cocaine headed for Europe and the United States.

"It is a long-term destabilization problem."

Haiti neither makes nor consumes cocaine, but the powder corrupts many sectors of one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere.

"Growth of drug trafficking in Haiti is one of the main reasons the national police, just a decade old, was so quickly corrupted," Faggart said.

During a recent trip to the United States, President Rene Preval asked for US aid, saying that his country did not have the means to combat the traffickers.

"So long as the demand exists, there will be production and Haiti will be used as a transshipment country," he said.

"Do not let the little countries alone," he said at an anti-drug summit in Santo Domingo.

This struggle is one is "between titans," he said.

Colombia produces 90 percent of US-bound cocaine, according to the US State Department.

The Dominican Republic is also a transshipment country, whose President Leonel Fernandez has accused the United States of reducing by more than 60 percent its surveillance of the Caribbean, with fewer ships and planes dedicated to the pursuit of traffickers.

A recent Government Accountability Office study warned that US fleets of planes and ships cannot patrol the Caribbean for much longer at the current pace without major overhauls and replacements.

A 2.5 million euro project
Dominican Today
May 31, 2007

Haiti, Dominican Republic to jointly protect island's largest lakes.

Jimaní, Dominican Republic.- Dominican Republic and Haiti yesterday inaugurated the Trans-frontier Environmental Project in this border municipality, which aims to protect, value and use the zone's biodiversity to benefit residents located around lakes Enriquillo and Azuei.

The 3 year, 2.5 million euro project, funded by the European Union will divide the investment into 1.36 million for the Haitian side and 1.14 for the Dominican side.

The project's main actions include the education of the inhabitants, improve the authorities' management capacity, develop wind energy systems adapted to the region, improve forest management and rebuilt a 2.5 kilometer linear anti-erosion structure.

The Environment ministers Max Puig, of Dominican Republic, and Haiti's Jean Marie Claude Germain, praised the project and reiterated their willingness to bolster cooperation between the two nations. They also signed the "Jimaní Declaration," which declares the period from June 5 to July 5 "Environment Month" on the entire island.

US\$10m for schools in Haiti
The Nation Newspaper
5/31/07.

CARACAS, Venezuela – The Barbados-based Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) has approved a grant of US\$10 million to Haiti to improve access to primary education for poor children in that Caribbean Community country.

The CDB said the funds were approved at the board of directors' meeting here on Monday.

It said that Haiti, the bank's newest member, had approximately 40 per cent of primary school-aged children not in school.

"Less than 20 per cent of those who enter the school system complete the five years of primary education.

"More than 20 per cent of children suffer from chronic malnutrition. The school system itself is weak and underprovided with financial and technical resources," the CDB said.

The bank said that the US\$10 million grant would be used for student subsidies, school feeding, pre-service teacher training, school textbooks, multigrade learning projects, and improvements of literacy skills.

The CDB also approved a grant of US\$5 million to the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility that has been established to allow Caribbean governments to economically purchase insurance coverage against hurricanes and earthquakes.

The scheme is designed to ensure immediate payout on claims thereby relieving fiscal difficulties normally experienced in the immediate aftermath of the events.

In Haiti, victims of ex-paramilitary look to U.S. for justice

AP

International Herald Tribune

May 24, 2007

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Malya Villard was laying in bed when masked killers from the hated FRAPH paramilitary group kicked down her door and gang-raped her. Fifteen years later, Villard is still looking for justice.

But on Tuesday, when a New York judge rejected a plea deal in a fraud case that would have deported former FRAPH leader Emmanuel "Toto" Constant to face murder and torture charges in Haiti, Villard was pleased. She and other victims of the group fear that if Constant is sent back to Haiti, he would escape from prison or simply walk free.

"There's no justice in Haiti, only impunity," said Villard, a widow and mother six from Port-au-Prince's rough Martissant slum. "At least in America, he might be punished."

In the gallery of Haitian human rights abusers, few are as feared as Constant, whose Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti, or FRAPH, waged a campaign of terror during the 1991-94 military regime that ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in a coup. Human rights groups claim FRAPH raped, tortured and killed Aristide supporters by the thousands.

"I would like him to pay for what he did, but if he comes back here, they'll put him in jail for a little while and then let him out," said Eramithe Delva, who was raped in 1992 by five FRAPH soldiers who also severely beat her husband.

The mortgage fraud charge against Constant carries a maximum penalty of five to 15 years in New York state prison, meaning he would not return to Haiti for some time. Even if he does, few believe the burly 50-year-old would receive punishment commensurate with his alleged crimes under Haiti's broken and corrupt court system.

"There's a little chance of the Haitian justice system being able to try Toto Constant," said Anne Sosin, director of Haiti Rights Vision, a local human rights group. She noted that past figures from Haiti's bloody coup period have walked free.

But others are urging President Rene Preval's government to speed Constant's return, arguing his case could benefit the judiciary. A successful prosecution of Constant, some say, could boost Haitians' confidence in a justice system burdened by bribe-taking judges and an enormous case backlog.

"Toto Constant should be tried in Haiti so that the Haitian people can regain trust in the judicial system," said Pierre Esperance, director of Haiti's National Human Rights Defense Network.

Preval's government so far has shown little interest in trying Constant on Haitian soil.

"For us it's not one of the biggest priorities. We have so many things to do in this country that ... it's not a big preoccupation," Haitian Foreign Affairs Minister Jean Renald Clerisme told The Associated Press on Thursday.

Constant initially proclaimed he had no fear of coming back to Haiti but later told the judge he would likely be assassinated at the airport.

Asked why it's taken so long for Constant to be deported, Clerisme replied: "I don't know, maybe he's powerful."

The son of a military officer, Constant emerged as FRAPH's leader after Aristide was toppled in 1991. Constant says he worked for the CIA.

After U.S. forces restored Aristide to power in 1994, Constant fled to the United States and was allowed to live freely, despite Haitian efforts to have him face justice for leading FRAPH's terror campaign. Haitian officials suspected the United States did not deport Constant because he knew too much about CIA activities in Haiti, but the U.S. intelligence agency has publicly denied any role in antidemocratic actions in this country.

Villard said she is still haunted by her ordeal and wants to see Constant rot in prison — an American one.

"Every time I see his face I relive what happened to me," she said from a Port-au-Prince outreach center where she counsels other rape victims. "If he comes back to Haiti, he could rejoin his supporters and the repression will start all over again."

Haiti's child slaves suffer in the shadows

Monday, May 28, 2007

By Isabelle Ligner

Caribbean Net News

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AFP): When you ask six-year-old Sylvine what she likes to do for fun, she doesn't talk about playing with dolls. She says she prefers "sweeping."

Her mother, an impoverished peasant from the north of Haiti, gave her up to a better off family in the capital Port-au-Prince, where she labors as the household servant. Sylvine is one of Haiti's 200,000 children who are reduced to slavery, and a large majority of them are girls.

At 5:00 am, the frail little girl is the first to wake in the house, setting out to retrieve drinking water from a public fountain five kilometers (three miles) away.

Less than a quarter of the capital's population have running water and the children who fetch the water are often "restaveks," the Creole name for the country's child slaves.

In 1994, Haiti ratified the convention on the rights of children but the first independent black republic to be founded -- which paid a high price for its fight against slavery -- has proven unable to halt the enslavement of its poorest children.

Sylvine said she must look after her distant cousins and clean the house during her 16-hour work day.

In return, she receives no pay, not much food and has to sleep outside on a mattress of straw.

"I never have time to play, my favorite activity is sweeping," said Sylvine, who said she is not allowed to go to school despite earlier promises her masters made to her mother.

"The 'restaveks' are deprived of the most elementary rights, to play, to live free of physical violence and sexual abuse," said Njanja Fassu, an official with UNICEF in Haiti.

Grinding poverty is the main reason why some parents hand over their children to be servants, according to Wenes Jeanty of the Maurice Sixto foundation.

"Mainly economic factors force poor families in rural areas to 'give' one of their children to urban families for an offer of a little food and shelter, hoping the child will be assured of a decent life, including an education, even though they know the child will suffer," Jeanty said.

The families that take in the children make many promises but usually break them. No written document backs up the arrangement, as the majority of Haitians are illiterate.

In the end, ties between the children -- who often have no birth certificate -- and their biological families are weakened, especially given the difficulty in communicating with their families who live far away.

The foundation Maurice Sixto tries to provide education, psychological and emotional support to the "restaveks" while trying to sensitize the host families who impose exhausting duties on their child servants and sometimes abuse them.

"The opinion of the child servants doesn't count and for this reason they rarely express themselves.

Here, we try to change behavior to ensure that they can build self esteem," Jeanty said.

With help from the children's rights organization Terre des Hommes, the foundation also works to put children back in contact with their biological families.

Jean-Robert Cadet, a former "restavek," said that poverty alone cannot explain the cruel practice. He described it as a legacy of the country's history of slavery.

Amid a lack of national or international action, child slavery persists, sometimes across several generations.

Slave girls are often violated by the father or sons of their "host" families. If they become pregnant, they are thrown out to join the ranks of street children. But sometimes their offspring end up becoming slaves.

Swiss court blocks release of former Haiti dictator's funds, lawyer for victims says

AP

PR-Inside.com, Austria

2007-05-30

GENEVA (AP) - A Geneva court has blocked the release of some of the 7.6 million Swiss francs (US\$6.2 million; ₣4.6 million) stashed in Switzerland by former Haitian dictator Jean-Claude «Baby Doc» Duvalier, a lawyer for two Haitians said Wednesday.

The decision comes days before a freeze on all of the ex-president's Swiss accounts is due to expire, which would allow the money to be returned to the Duvalier family, Marc Henzelin said.

«We received the notice that the order has been issued, so that our request has been accepted,» he told The Associated Press.

It was not immediately possible to confirm the ruling with the court.

Henzelin's legal firm lodged a request with the cantonal (state) court of Geneva on behalf of two Haitians, a taxi driver and a priest, who were awarded damages against Duvalier worth US\$750,000 and US\$1 million respectively by a U.S. court in 1988.

The U.S. District Court in Miami also ordered US\$500 million to be paid to the Haitian people under the Alien Tort Claims Act, according to Miami attorney Ira J. Kurzban who represented the claimants in the case.

Last week, a senior Swiss Foreign Ministry official warned that the money in Duvalier's Swiss accounts would have to be released on June 3 because all legal means to retain it had been exhausted.

The head of the ministry's international law department, Paul Seger, said last week that the government in Haiti tried to recover the funds after Duvalier was ousted in 1986, but the judicial process ground to a halt in the chaos that engulfed the Caribbean country during the years that followed. A temporary block imposed by the Swiss government has been in force since, but that is due to expire.

The latest court decision affects only one account, with the Geneva branch of UBS AG, held in the name of a foundation based in the tiny principality of Liechtenstein, Henzelin said. Fondation Brouilly is owned by a Panama-based company, which in turn is owned by members of the Duvalier family.

Henzelin said it was not known at this point how much money was in the Geneva account. Duvalier had at least two further accounts in Lausanne and Zurich, though the latter could have been closed, he said.

To recover money on behalf of Duvalier's victims, a Swiss court would have to be convinced that the funds were of criminal origin.

On Thursday, Haitian Foreign Minister Jean Renald Clerisme said a Central Bank official would be sent to Switzerland to make a final attempt at recovering some or all of the money, which Duvalier allegedly stole from state coffers during his time in power.

Kidnappings in Haiti Down, Mission Aviation Fellowship Flights Up
News Blaze, CA
May 27, 2007

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) has increased its flight hours back to 115-120 hours a month after seeing its work load dramatically reduced as recently as last December because of Haitian gangs targeting missionaries with kidnappings for ransom.

The United Nations has made a number of arrests of gang members and their leaders with the result that kidnappings have decreased, said Mark Williams, MAF pilot and mechanic.

Improved security means more Christians are going to Haiti to work, he said.

"In order to meet growing flight requests, as well as enable and maximize the effectiveness of the ministries served in Haiti, MAF needed to expand its fleet with the purchase of an additional airplane, a Cessna 207," said Williams. "God provided the ideal aircraft. In the summer of 2007 the plane will be refurbished and sent to Haiti."

While transportation and information technology are MAF's main tasks, the organization also is reaching out with the "JESUS" film, he said.

"It has been an incredible tool. A pastor told me Haitians cheer when Christ is laid on the cross. They believe he has overpowered the spirits of the voodoo culture, and they are not afraid anymore," Williams said.

Williams, who has served in Haiti for 17 years, said many have responded to the film and other evangelistic endeavors. The Protestant Church has seen incredible growth since 1991, but the church needs help, he added.

"We are creating learning centers to develop lay and pastoral leadership, to be able to shepherd these new Christians," Williams said.

He asked Christians to pray for the safety of the MAF team as it makes 280 landings a month. Half of the landings are on short gravel or grass landing strips, where people and animals sometimes intrude.

Those interested in supporting MAF's work can do so by going to its website, www.maf.org.

Mission Aviation Fellowship provides access to the Gospel and to vital services, such as healthcare, education, leadership development, crisis relief and community development - services otherwise unavailable in remote and isolated locations. Each year MAF conducts thousands of medical emergency evacuations through its air ambulance service. More than 600 Christian and non-profit agencies, as well as thousands of isolated nationals, depend on MAF in 26 countries of Africa, Asia, Eurasia and Latin America.

In the past 12 months, MAF's fleet of 54 aircraft executed 37,490 flights, logged more than 3,014,031 miles, transported 116,459 passengers and delivered 10,240,209 pounds of cargo - all on 1,700 rough, unimproved dirt and grass airstrips or waterways.

AP Interview: Haiti making final effort to recover ex-dictator's funds from Swiss banks
The AP and International Herald Tribune
May 24, 2007

<http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2007/05/25/news/CB-GEN-Haiti-Switzerland-Dictators-Money.php>

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Haiti is making a last-ditch effort to recover millions of dollars (euros) held in Swiss bank accounts but set to be handed over to former dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier's family next month.

Haitian Foreign Minister Jean Renald Clerisme said Thursday that a Central Bank official will leave for Switzerland in the next few days in a bid to recover some or all of 7.6 million Swiss francs (US\$6.2 million; €4.6 million) frozen in Swiss bank accounts — money allegedly stolen from state coffers during Duvalier's rule.

"We are going to do our best to get the money back," Clerisme told The Associated Press in an interview. "It's important to us because we need the money to develop the country."

A Swiss Foreign Ministry official, Paul Seger, said Wednesday that all legal efforts to prevent the money from being released have been exhausted. He said Swiss authorities cannot confiscate the money because it was never proven to be illegally obtained.

The Swiss government's authority over the money expires June 3.

"We are really at the last run to see what we can do," Clerisme said, adding that Swiss officials are helping "so we can have the best outcome."

Haiti's government tried to recover the funds after Duvalier fled the country in 1986, but negotiations ground to a halt amid the chaos that engulfed the country in the years that followed.

"Unfortunately (we) didn't have success in trying to get back the money," Clerisme said. "Now a decision has to be made, and the Central Bank hopefully is going to find a solution before the deadline."

The Swiss government blocked the accounts in 2002 in the hope that the legal process could be restarted. It tried for years to reach an agreement with the family that would spare Switzerland the embarrassment of handing over money that Haiti claims was stolen. Duvalier has denied the allegations.

Clerisme said it was initially envisioned that the money would be divided equally between the Haitian government and Duvalier's family, but did not know whether that arrangement was still on the table.

Duvalier, known as "Baby Doc," was named president for life at age 19 following the death in 1971 of his father, Francois, known as "Papa Doc."

A popular uprising forced him into exile in February 1986. He is believed to live in France and reportedly supports himself with handouts from friends. Tens of thousands were killed during the 29-year Duvalier dynasty.

Haiti Overhauling Justice System
Prensa Latina
June 1, 2007

Puerto Principe, The Haitian Senate will vote for bills related to the judicial system reform this week, say legislative sources Friday.

Initiatives offered by the Justice Ministry are headed to prevent corruption and other abuse, indicated Senator Kelly Bastien.

The bills in question refer to the magistracy school, Judicial Power superior council and statute, and they represent a true reform that includes the creation of structures to end with irregularities.

According to Bastien, priorities within Parliament are 2006-2007 Budget rectification and the so-called Act on monetarism.

Gerard Gourge, one of the most long-standing and eminent lawyers of Puerto Principe Lawyers" Council proposed that the Judicial Power superior council be provided with resources and faculties that allow them to guarantee independence and good working.

"Salaries and work conditions of a judge are simply intolerable.

Magistracy places function with dreadful conditions, lacking indispensable materials for their job," he specified.

Floods, mudslides kill three in Haiti's capital

25 May 2007

Reuters

By Joseph Guyler Delva

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N25470286.htm>

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, May 25 (Reuters) - Torrential rains triggered flooding and mudslides that killed three people in Haiti's capital, officials said on Friday, raising fears of more destruction during the coming hurricane season.

"Three people were killed and 11 injured and several houses have been destroyed," Dieufort Deslorge, a spokesman for the civil protection office, told Reuters.

Hardest hit were the poor Carrefour-Feuille, Jacquet and Morne Lazarre neighborhoods. Deslorge urged residents living in flimsy huts on riverbeds and hillsides to take precautions.

"Those killed and injured were living in areas at risk," he said.

Torrential rains often turn deadly in impoverished and mountainous Haiti, especially in sprawling shantytowns.

Many Haitians are worried about the upcoming hurricane season. In 2004, spring flooding killed 2,000 people in the southern part of the country in May and flooding from Tropical Storm Jeanne killed 3,000 more in the port city of Gonaives in September.

"I've been living here for 10 years now in permanent fear of being one day taken away by floods," said Mariline Gustave, 27, who lives in the Port-au-Prince slum Cite Leternel. "But I have no where else to go, so I leave it up to God."

A senior advisor to the interior minister, who did not want to be named, said the government was contemplating measures to fight haphazard construction and to force residents to leave homes built in vulnerable areas.

Some said those steps were overdue.

"The government has to destroy those flimsy shacks built on riverbeds and on the hillsides," said a Port-au-Prince foreman, Joseph Lajoie. "Politicians just don't want to take unpopular actions."