

# HAITI CHERIE

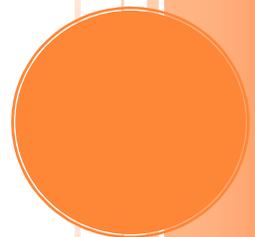
*My Dear Haiti*

A report of field missions to Haiti conducted February – June 2010.



TransAfrica Forum

7/12/2010



*...I wish I could say that these are the only conspirators against the peace of Haiti, but I cannot. They have allies in the United States... It so happens that we have men in this country who, to accomplish their personal and selfish ends, will fan the flame of passion between the factions in Haiti and will otherwise assist in setting revolutions afoot. To their shame be it spoken, men in high American quarters have boasted to me of their ability to start a revolution in Haiti at pleasure. They have only to raise sufficient money, they say, with which to arm and otherwise equip the malcontents, of either faction, to effect their object. Men who have old munitions of war or old ships to sell; ships that will go down in the first storm, have an interest in stirring up strife in Haiti. It gives them a market for their worthless wares. Others of a speculative turn of mind and who have money to lend at high rates of interest are glad to conspire... To them, the welfare of Haiti is nothing; the shedding of human blood is nothing; the success of free institutions is nothing, and the ruin of neighboring country is nothing. They are sharks, pirates and Shylocks, greedy for money, no matter at what cost of life and misery to mankind.*

*...Haiti still lives, after being boycotted by all the Christian world; in the face of the fact of her known progress within the last twenty years in the face of the fact that she has attached herself to the car of the world's civilization, I will not, I cannot believe that her star is to go out in darkness, but I will rather believe that whatever may happen of peace or war Haiti will remain in the firmament of nations, and, like the star of the north, will shine on and shine on forever.*

**Frederick Douglass**

**Chicago, Illinois; 1893**

# HAITI CHERIE

## *My Dear Haiti – Executive Summary*

Between February and June 2010, TransAfrica Forum conducted six field missions to Haiti. These included a civil society consultation, interviews with survivors of gender-based violence, and visits to camps in Port-au-Prince and secondary cities also affected by the January 12, 2010 earthquake. Each trip has revealed a startling absence of resources available to those affected by the earthquake, in stark contrast to the historic levels of funds raised by the American people and the international community.

Our research and field missions focused on the following:

- a) Civil society including grassroots activists, farmers and peasants, trade unionists and wage-laborers;
- b) Community structures and responses to the earthquake;
- c) Opportunities and challenges for Haitian leadership in the rebuilding process; and
- d) Camp conditions and gender-based violence.

It is TransAfrica Forum's assessment that, despite the high level of financial resources pledged and already available for the relief effort, the efficacy of that effort has been undermined by structural inefficiencies, bureaucratic inertia, the scope of the disaster, and vested interests trying to preserve privilege while giving the appearance of change.

Left uncorrected, the failures of the post-crisis period will set the stage for the reconstruction period: national and international corruption, continued human rights violations, wasted resources, and most importantly, continued suffering and loss for the people of Haiti. Our recommendations for immediate corrective actions include:

- **The U.S. Congress and the Administration:** increase accountability and transparency; ensure participation of local communities; and support the Government of Haiti's process of decentralization.
- **The Government of Haiti and the Reconstruction Commission:** ensure continued focus on the most affected populations, and greater inclusion of Haitian grassroots and civil society representatives in the rebuilding process; implement decentralization (establish the legal framework, train elected authorities, and enable local authority financing); require reconstruction contractors to hire Haitians in order to create jobs; ensure full adherence to international standards regarding shelter, Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) treatment and

relocation; maintain commitment to building the national economy; and prioritize Haitian sovereignty through fair, free, inclusive and representative elections that include the franchise and priorities of Haiti's IDP communities.

- **The international community:** fulfill donor pledges; ensure accountability and transparency in all reconstruction and development activities; and adhere to the United Nations' Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.<sup>1</sup>

In the U.S. we have a special and unique obligation, one rooted in our long history of war, occupation, and exploitation of Haiti. As Frederick Douglass noted in 1893, there are many in the U.S. for whom the 'welfare of Haiti is nothing.' Concomitant with that history, we are also home to the world's largest Haitian Diaspora and significant history of African American advocacy and solidarity with Haiti. As members of the Diaspora, we have a unique obligation to ensure Haiti's transformation reflects the visions put forth by Haitians. As the glare of the CNN lights dim, we have an obligation to ensure that we remain focused on holding our government, corporations and organizations accountable.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations OCHA Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement <http://www.idpguidingprinciples.org/>.

## THE QUAKE

On January 12, 2010 at approximately 4:56 pm, Haiti was struck by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake. The quake rocked the country for 35 seconds, hitting the capital Port-au-Prince and the towns of Leogane, Jacmel, and Petit Goave particularly hard. The “hypocenter of the earthquake was near the surface of the earth (10 km deep) and its epicenter was near the town of Leogane...”<sup>2</sup> Strong aftershocks continued through March<sup>3</sup> and, though less frequent by June, continue to cause safety concerns and fear.

The earthquake produced widespread damage throughout the country. Several cities, including Leogane, were effectively destroyed. Compounding the situation was the fact that “it affected the most populated area,” and the country’s “economic and administrative center,”<sup>4</sup> Port-au-Prince.

The destruction was massive and the financial cost has been estimated between US\$8 – 11 billion, including:

- Over 105,000 homes, representing 40 percent of the earthquake’s damage
- 1,300 educational institutions
- More than 50 hospitals and health centers
- The main port, presidential palaces, parliament, court-house and the majority of ministry buildings

The earthquake displaced almost two million people and initially sent over 600,000 people out of Port-au-Prince for the rural countryside and smaller towns<sup>5</sup>. Due to a lack of regional infrastructure and limited aid flow, those who initially fled Port-au-Prince may find no option but to return.

Since February, TransAfrica Forum has conducted six field missions to Haiti, including a civil society consultation, interviews with the victims of gender-based violence, and visits to camps in Port-au-Prince and secondary cities also affected by the earthquake. Each trip has revealed a startling absence of resources available to the displaced, in stark contrast to the historic levels of funds raised by the American people and the international community.

Our research and field missions focused on:

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<sup>2</sup> Plan D’action Pour Le Relevement et le Developement National, Government of Haiti. Port-au-Prince, Haiti. March 2010.

<sup>3</sup> USGS Aftershock Mapping (Updated March 4, 2010)  
<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/aftershocks/?event=2010rja6>.

<sup>4</sup> Plan D’action Pour Le Relevement et le Developement National.

<sup>5</sup> “Haitians who fled capital strain impoverished towns in countryside,” by William Booth, *The Washington Post*, March 15, 2010,  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2010/03/14/AR2010031402625.html>.

- a) Civil society, including grassroots activists, farmers and peasants, trade unionists and wage-laborers;
- b) Community leadership and responses to the earthquake;
- c) Opportunities and challenges for Haitian leadership in the rebuilding process; and
- d) Camp conditions and gender-based violence.

Six months after the devastating earthquake in Haiti, it is TransAfrica Forum's assessment that despite the high level of financial resources pledged and available for the relief and reconstruction effort that the efficacy of the effort have been undermined by the scope of the disaster, structural inefficiencies, bureaucratic inertia and vested interests trying to preserve privilege while giving the appearance of change.



## CAMP CONDITIONS

Today in Haiti, an estimated 1.5 million people are internally displaced in recorded settlement sites<sup>6</sup>. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement outline the internationally recognized and protected rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), who are people who have been forced from their homes within their own country. These rights include the right to food, water, shelter, and security. The Principles also provide protection both during internal displacement, and from further displacement, and include assistance with return, re-integration, or re-settlement. While the Principles are non-binding, they were unanimously approved by the member nations of the 2005 UN General Assembly, including the United States, France, Canada and Haiti.<sup>7</sup> The vast majority of camps in Haiti today violate the rights outlined in the UN Guiding Principles.<sup>8</sup> The exclusion of Haitian camp leadership in planning and distribution, land tenure and ownership issues, poor coordination by international governments and NGOs, and a nearly non-existent preventative security presence have all compounded the crisis facing Haiti's IDP communities.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations OCHA Humanitarian Bulletin Report Issue #6, July 1, 2010

[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/EKIM-87343H/\\$File/full\\_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/EKIM-87343H/$File/full_report.pdf).

<sup>7</sup>United Nations OCHA Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement; <http://www.idpguidingprinciples.org/> While the Guiding Principles are non-binding, the 2005 UN World Summit unanimously approved the guidelines for the treatment of IDPs.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Conditions in IDP camps remain atrocious. TransAfrica Forum staff has met with camp leadership from spontaneous communities in Port-au-Prince, Leogane and Jacmel. The problems faced by people living in these camps follow consistent themes:

- infrequent food and potable water distribution;
- insufficient washing and sanitation facilities;
- inadequate security, particularly for vulnerable populations;
- minimal job and educational opportunities; and
- inadequate and unsafe temporary housing structures .

Six months after the earthquake, many are living with the same limited security and access to basic goods they found on January 13<sup>th</sup>. There are a small number of camps that do follow these UN Guiding Principles. TransAfrica Forum staff have been able to visit one such camp, the Simon Bolivar Camp in Leogane, twice since the earthquake. The Simon Bolivar Camp in Leogane represents a unique partnership where Haitian leadership is a priority: the camp is run by Haitian leadership and resourced by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and CITGO.

The number of housing options remains extremely limited for the majority of Haiti's IDPs. With warnings of a record-breaking hurricane season underway<sup>9</sup>, efforts to get people into more safe, long-term housing must be stepped up. The number of buildings being assessed for damage from the earthquake has increased, but viable, long-term, sustainable housing remains an outstanding need for hundreds of thousands of Haitians. Buildings are being assessed by the Ministry of Public Works (MTPTC) and graded on a green (safe: immediate occupation is ok), yellow (structural damage intact: limited entrance) and red (severe damage: entrance forbidden) scale.<sup>10</sup>

MTPTC's rushed assessments have led organizations, including Habitat for Humanity, to conclude that many homes being marked with safety certifications are indeed unsafe. For example, in Port-au-Prince's Fort National neighborhood, 5,000 homes were surveyed, and while twelve percent of homes were marked green, certification often came without consideration for a buildings' surroundings. If a green house is surrounded by red houses or located in an unstable environment, its' grade may be misleading. While the green certification means these homes are "ok" for now, there is no guarantee of their safety in the next earthquake.

Despite the desire to return home, the lack of access to work since the earthquake and the cost of rent, coupled with sluggish rubble removal, has forced many people to remain in camps. The fragile and unsafe housing conditions for people living in camps means that securing better long-term

<sup>9</sup> "2010 hurricane season may be worst on record" *AFP* May 27, 2010  
[http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jWOpI9ZLo4Kvn5\\_k3\\_Een73afCFg](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jWOpI9ZLo4Kvn5_k3_Een73afCFg).

<sup>10</sup> UNOPS Safe Shelter Strategy, April 14, 2010  
<https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/haiti/Crisis%20Documents/Cross%20Cutting%20Issues/Communications/Option%201%20-%20green%20houses%20-%20UNOPS%20ENGLISH.pdf>.

housing options must be a priority. It is imperative that people be given options to move and that their basic human rights are respected.

### *Relocation Efforts*

Spontaneous camps have been created throughout Port-au-Prince and are frequently based in the neighborhoods that people occupied before the earthquake. Formerly open spaces are now crowded with sheets, tarps, and tents. Environmental concerns and private property rights have prompted various relocations since the earthquake. In late March, the Government of Haiti invoked eminent-domain in an attempt to secure additional land for these communities. IDP camps are precariously situated due to land degradation (created by deforestation, urban sprawl and land pollution) and safety issues, as well as private property and land tenure rights.<sup>11</sup> Despite an attempt to empower IDPs to choose from multiple housing options, forced evictions have been recorded following the earthquake.

In April, International Action Ties (IAT) reported multiple threats of forced evictions including efforts to remove hundreds of households against their will and with the threat of force, without providing any alternative.<sup>12</sup> Additional forced relocations, at times with the assistance of private security forces, have been recorded by IAT at the time of this printing. In addition to such blatant relocation efforts, many camps reportedly stopped food, water and sanitation services in an attempt to compel people's departure from private property. The Government of Haiti and UN agreed on a three week moratorium on forced evictions in April. Given the intense pressure generated by the land and safety issues, selective relocation efforts sponsored by the Government of Haiti resumed in Port-au-Prince in May.

One of the most notable examples of relocation is the community of Corail. Fears of soil erosion and mudslides caused the relocation of at least 5,000 people from Port-au-Prince's Petionville Golf Club to Corail, which is being heralded by the Government of Haiti and various international governments and NGOs as a model to address immediate concerns and provide relocation. During interviews with members of the Petionville Golf Club and Corail, TransAfrica Forum staff were alerted that access to basic resources as well as work and school were challenging in both locations.

In mid-May, residents of the Petionville Golf Club told TransAfrica Forum staff of the continuing challenges in accessing even basic supplies following the earthquake. Women spoke about receiving grain and rice donations only two or three times between January 12<sup>th</sup> and mid-May. Without additional cooking supplies, including oil, pots and water, cooking even basic meals is nearly impossible. The near-daily heavy rains present additional challenges to camp residents. With tarps as the standard shelter on the Petionville Golf Club's muddy hills, residents have no respite from the

<sup>11</sup> "Haiti's Misery", Editorial Board *The New York Times* March 25, 2010 <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/26/opinion/26fri1.html>.

<sup>12</sup> "Towards a More Just Response: Rights of the Internally Displaced in Haiti," *International Action Ties* April 17, 2010 <http://www.haitiresponsecoalition.org/towards-a-more-just-response-rights-of-internally-displaced-people-in-haiti/>.

rain, often flooding their floors and pouring in from their ceilings. One member remarked “these tarps are terrible; whenever it rains it fills you from above and below. When it rains, people stand up and then lay down in the mud.”

The government-sponsored relocation efforts to move people from Petionville Golf Club to Corail were unable to accommodate all the people who initially wanted to leave the Golf Club. Community members reported that people were “really only accepted if you knew someone” and that in some cases “a connection was needed to even obtain an application”. However, once people arrived in Corail, they found the same barriers: little food or water distribution, insecure housing, few job opportunities, and insufficient educational options. Corail is located in a barren, excruciating desert. There is no protection from the sun. With no available shade, and a lack of access to cold water, people are getting sick from heat and exposure-related illnesses. Camp members leaving Petionville Golf Club were given fifteen (15) days of meals ready to eat (MREs) when they first arrived, however Corail provides few local options for food purchase, with a ride back to the capital taking about an hour in public transportation. Though promised \$50 for relocation, multiple camp members reported not receiving their compensation, to be distributed via text message on the phone numbers registered during relocation.

TransAfrica Forum staff met two families who, because of the costly commute (40 Gourdes (about USD \$1.00)) to get from Corail back to Port-Au-Prince for work and school, compounded by infrequent transportation options, were forced to return to the Petionville Golf Club. TransAfrica Forum’s visit confirms that Corail as it exists today can not be a long-term option. In June, the *New York Times* reported that “Corail is nobody’s idea of a long-term solution. And it is only one example among many of disastrously poor planning.”<sup>13</sup> Successful relocation must include investment in safe and sustainable long-term housing as well as education and job opportunities.

### *Gender Based Violence*

Since the January 12, 2010 earthquake, issues around Gender Based Violence have increased in both number and severity. The lack of security in housing, food, medical care, and sanitation has placed those who are already displaced at even further risk. During interviews conducted in the months following the earthquake, TransAfrica Forum staff listened to numerous women recount their experiences of being raped in and around the camps. Their individual stories are heartbreaking in their reality, but they also indicate wide-scale problems that are being ignored or disregarded by the international community at large.

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is not unique to post-earthquake Haiti. During periods of previous political unrest, rape was used as a tool of political intimidation against supporters of the opposition.<sup>14</sup> Although these atrocities were recognized on an international level, rape was only

<sup>13</sup> “Still No Shelter” *The New York Times*, June 8, 2010  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/09/opinion/09wed3.html>

<sup>14</sup> Observations of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights Upon Conclusion of Its April 2007 Visit to Haiti <http://www.cidh.org/pdf%20files/April%202007%20Haiti%20Observations%20ENG.pdf>

legally recognized as a crime against women in Haiti, as opposed to simply a crime against the woman's honor, in 2005.<sup>15</sup> This puts GBV in a unique space, because while rape is not overtly condoned, the precedent for prosecuting the attackers, even if they are caught, is not as well established as it is in places like the United States. Most women feel that reporting the attack to the police is futile because the police will not do anything about it. One woman told TransAfrica Forum staff that when she reported being raped to the officer at the police station, she was told to keep the man in the tent next time he came in, and then to come and alert the police who would then pick him up. In an attack involving a 5 year old girl, the rapist was detained by witnesses and arrested by police, but then released after only 24 hours.

One woman stumbled upon a police car with at least four officers less than an hour after being raped. She was on her way to get food outside Champ de Mars, near the Presidential Palace. She had been pulled into a makeshift shelter and raped at gunpoint by three men. When she begged the officers for help, they told her that they could not help her because there was no furniture inside the structure, so it was not considered a "house" and they would not pursue it. Many, if not most, women in Port-au-Prince do not feel like the government and the police care that they have been attacked, and do not feel protected from future attacks. TransAfrica Forum has heard first hand that women are afraid to report the rapes because they have nowhere else to live and they are concerned about both possible retribution and stigma.

The current IDP situation in Port-au-Prince cannot be separated from the increased occurrences of rape and other GBV. In fact, the failure of the Haitian government and the international community to adhere to the Guiding Principles for Internally Displaced Persons with respect to shelter, food security, sanitation, and other basic needs is putting these women at greater risk. Many of the women TransAfrica Forum staff talked to were raped en route to places, or while doing things, that became part of their routine only after the earthquake. Several women reported that they had been attacked on the way to the showers or latrines. Before the quake, bathing facilities and sanitation would have been inside the home. Now, women are forced to leave their tents and walk what could be thousands of feet from their tents to latrines. In one area of the Champ de Mars camp, TransAfrica Forum staff saw two showers being used by over 4,000 displaced persons, with the showers located a significant distance from most people's tents. This unacceptable sanitation situation is merely one facet of the instability faced by hundreds of thousands of women and children in Haiti.

While many in the U.S. Government and international community praise the "comprehensive shelter" that has been provided, even a cursory visit to the camps in Port-au-Prince will show the majority of people living in makeshift structures composed of some tarps and blankets, and assembled with rubble from the earthquake. Even women sleeping in tents remain vulnerable, since it is impossible to 'lock' a tent to prevent an intruder from entering the space.

Additionally, claims that food security is well in hand in Haiti are very misleading. Much of the food distribution has been halted, but some organizations continue to distribute targeted food aid through

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<sup>15</sup> "United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children Questionnaire to Governments" *Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, Government of Haiti* March 9, 2005 <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/CRC/docs/study/responses/Haiti.pdf>.

ticket systems to individuals and to camp management organizations. During our trips to Haiti, TransAfrica's staff heard numerous stories, some first hand, of food tickets being distributed by men in exchange for sexual favors from the women and children who desperately need the food. Even in camps where organized women's groups, such as KOFIVIV and FAVILEK, are represented, there has been no acknowledgement of their ability to distribute food in a safe, efficient and respectful way. Many camp management governance groups, elected by the people within IDP camps, are not recognized by IOM, USAID, or other international agencies.

All of the issues that face IDPs disproportionately affect women and children. By continuation, GBV is not simply a matter of men's attitude toward women in any given society. TransAfrica Forum's conversations with women's groups brought home the historical connection to oppression and violence and its relevance to addressing gender based violence in their current work. Haitian rape survivors will talk about arresting a perpetrator, but they also talk of self-determination and of having their minimum material needs met. An increase in rape and other GBV in Haiti following the quake cannot be explained by labeling Haitian men as perpetrators of sexual violence against Haitian women, and it cannot be extrapolated as a condemnation of Haitian men as a whole. To analyze increases in GBV in Haiti without addressing issues of inadequate food, housing, sanitation, and security is to fail to understand the multiple facets of the issue.

Violence against women and children must also be specifically identified as an unacceptable result of the trauma of the earthquake. The international community is quick to come to the aid of victims of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in war time situations, but there has been virtually no acknowledgement of the mental trauma experienced by survivors of the January 12, 2010 earthquake. Many Haitians lost not only their belongings, but members of their immediate and extended family. The widespread devastation of the earthquake has caused some Haitians to lose multiple family members who were in different areas of the city. TransAfrica Forum has spoken personally to women who lost everyone -- their husbands, parents, and children. PTSD manifests in many different behaviors, and while no one condones violence as an acceptable response, the actions of these rapists in Haiti must be viewed through a lens that acknowledges the traumatic event that the entire population has experienced. It is vital that we identify the men responsible for these violent attacks as perpetrators, but also as victims.

Gender Based Violence is frequently framed as an isolated aspect of any humanitarian situation. Rape of women and children are discussed as individual occurrences, as opposed to symptoms of the greater problem. This cannot be further from the truth. As long as there is insecurity around housing, sanitation, food, and employment, women will always be at a greater risk of violence against themselves and their children. The few basic needs women in Haiti had before the earthquake are being removed by forcing them to live for months, or possibly years in IDP camps with inadequate shelter, food, water, and other basic needs. These women are being told that their lives, and the lives of their children are not valued or respected.

## HAITIANS IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT?

Early in the crisis, Haitians all over the world, as well as members of the international community, were unanimous in recognizing the need for the Haitian government and people to be the drivers of the reconstruction process. However, what has emerged in the six month period since the quake is a confusing mix of good intentions gone awry. The international effort to help Haitians address the impact of this devastating event has been laudable. However, several factors have undermined the effectiveness of the effort as well as the goal of Haitian leadership, including the scope of the disaster, structural inefficiencies, bureaucratic inertia and vested interests trying to preserve privilege while giving the appearance of change.

To be fair, the Haitian government, weak and inefficient before the quake, was unprepared and simply unable to rise to the task of providing leadership for the country and the international community. Additionally, reports indicate that, along with the loss of most government buildings, as many as 40 percent of the government's civil service was killed in the quake. However, where leadership did emerge, it has been undermined by the international community. The humanitarian industrial complex, with its systems, processes, and procedures designed to facilitate relations amongst themselves with little coordination with affected populations, has sidelined Haitians. Each delegation by TransAfrica Forum staff since the earthquake has found this disconnect quite striking. The stories are many:

- Self-organized Haitian leadership camp structures have been marginalized and ignored. Saint Place San Rose (SPSR) camp in Leogane is located at the earthquake's epicenter; a city that sustained estimated building destruction up to 90%. SPSR camp leadership created, and frequently updated, an electronic database based on an exhaustive internal census of the camp. Led by a co-ed camp management, the census included the names and numbers of people in each family, their primary concerns and immediate needs, the state of their home and whether they were renters or owners, and outstanding medical or personal issues. These leaders took their internal census to UN/USAID leadership to illustrate the specific needs of their community, but their requests for assistance were denied. Two months after the earthquake, SPSR leadership was told that the backlog, compounded by the need for an assessment by an official agency, meant their needs would most likely not be dealt with for at least six to eight weeks.
- Meetings to coordinate all aspects of the relief and recovery effort, so-called cluster meetings, are mostly held on the UN logistics base compound and have largely excluded Haitians and grassroots Haitian groups. Even when Haitians are admitted, the meetings are conducted in French and English, and translation to Haitian Kreyol is not provided. In March, a Refugees International report pointed to the fact that many Haitian civil society organizations (CSOs) are not made aware of the meetings, do not have the appropriate photo

- I.D. for entry, or have limited staff capacity to spend many hours at the LOG base.<sup>16</sup> Despite attempts to move meetings off of the UN base, CSOs continue to face barriers to their full participation.
- Many international organizations, including USAID, have such strenuous and lengthy accounting and auditing requirements that many local groups simply do not have the capacity to compete or process the proposal paperwork. Because of this, local Haitian NGOs have received limited funds from international organizations and governments, effectively excluding Haitian organizations. With many Haitian NGOs having lost all formal and legal documents in the earthquake, it is impossible to expect these organizations to have the capacity to compete for such grants.

### *Inertia and Bureaucracy over Haitian Needs*

Private NGOs including the American Red Cross, World Vision and Doctors without Borders have raised record-breaking amounts of money; it is estimated that over 50 percent of U.S. households donated to Haiti relief efforts. CBS Evening News estimated enough money has been raised for Haiti to distribute \$37,000 USD to every family affected. Yet, we have seen little evidence that the private charities that have benefited from this generosity are responding to the call to put Haitians first.

If these organizations were committed to putting Haitians first, funds would have been expended in order to provide adequate access to clean water, regular food supplies, and appropriate shelter to the displaced and affected. Instead, groups have withheld funding in order to ‘plan for the reconstruction,’ according to news reports.

Within weeks of the quake, it became clear that most donors were either unable or unwilling to identify and partner with small and medium Haitian NGOs, particularly those with strong neighborhood and community ties. These local groups had and continue to have the capacity to distribute aid and supplies to hundreds of small and medium camps, and do provide regular service where and whenever possible. Haitian and expatriate groups have the relationships and the resources to distribute emergency goods and

#### **“Maryse”: a Textile Worker**

“Maryse” and her team are expected to produce 1,200 t-shirts a day. The threat of dismissal looms over factory workers if they do not reach their piece quota. If they do not make this nearly impossible quota, the workers are paid just 125 Gourdes, Haiti’s national minimum wage for textile work. 125 Gourdes is just over \$3.08 USD. While a national campaign last year led to an overall increase in the minimum wage (up to 200 Gourdes (about \$5.00 USD)), following pressure by textile manufacturers, President Preval included an exception for garment workers. Factory leadership treat Haitian workers as expendable, so “Maryse” reported there is little incentive to organize for better wages. With such nominal salaries, those who work at least 8 to 12 hour days in Haiti’s factories continue to live on the edge of extreme poverty. These wages mean after transportation and food, many workers have no income.

<sup>16</sup> Refugees International *Field Report* March 2, 2010  
[http://www.refugeesinternational.org/sites/default/files/030210\\_haiti\\_groundup.pdf](http://www.refugeesinternational.org/sites/default/files/030210_haiti_groundup.pdf).

supplies to communities. However, a variety of barriers worked to impede the regular distribution of supplies to small and medium NGOs. Barriers include the:

- Historic mistrust between national and international NGOs and local civil society organizations
- Bureaucratic requirements and guidelines of large organizations, and
- Limited knowledge of Haitian civil society by international relief organizations.

The exclusion of Haitian CSO continues to obstruct sustainability and the accountability of long-term development.

### *Building the National Economy – The Haitian Vision (Labor and Jobs)*

Even before the earthquake, limited job opportunities existed for most Haitians. The degradation of Haiti's rural countryside, the result of mono-cropping and de-forestation has been one 'push factor' in the migration to the country's urban areas. International trade policy, most notably the removal of tariffs, has allowed international food imports to flood Haiti's markets. These imports have undercut opportunities for Haitian farmers and local producers, and forced farmers and peasants out of rural areas and into the cities. Port-au-Prince has been the primary destination for people throughout the country to seek additional education and work opportunities. Because of acute centralization of government, academic and medical services, people in Haiti's rural areas had few other options.

Port-au-Prince's infrastructure and roads were built to support an estimated 300,000<sup>17</sup> people; on January 12<sup>th</sup> an estimated 2.5-3 million people lived in the city. With potentially large labor forces at their disposal, Haitian and multi-national corporations have made Haiti a haven for low-paid, low-skilled jobs.

TransAfrica Forum delegations met with trade unionists and factory workers, including a shift-leader in a t-shirt factory. The textile industry has been placed at the forefront of post-earthquake development plans. On May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010, President Obama signed into law the Haiti Economic Lift Program (HELP) Act to extend current trading benefits on Haitian manufactured textiles. The Act is the follow up to Congress' trade bills with Haiti, dubiously named Hope I and Hope II, legislation that made opening and investing in sweatshop-style factories in Haiti even easier. New free-trade zones have been established since the earthquake in an attempt to encourage further investment. While economic development is essential for Haiti, none of these attempts will reform the broken system. We have seen the impact of this style of development in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and know it will only further impoverish the working class.

Haitian trade unions have repeatedly argued that development plans in Haiti must be coupled with increased wage and labor standards. Access to jobs and job training programs has been the most widespread priority for Haitians since the earthquake. A March 2010 survey funded by Oxfam

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<sup>17</sup> "Tired of capital's crumbs, rural Haiti wants place at the table," by Trenton Daniel *The Miami Herald* March 6, 2010, <http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/03/06/1516862/tired-of-capitals-crumbs-rural.html>

concluded that jobs (26 percent) and education (22 percent) were the priorities in rebuilding of those surveyed.<sup>18</sup> Such results only further confirm that trade and development must include jobs that pay living wages and offer safety, security, advancement possibilities and skills development.

## HAITIANS ORGANIZE

### *Leadership Exists*

With a government in shambles and some 40 percent of civil servants killed by the quake, the country quickly moved from shock and fear to action. Minutes after the quake, Haitians began to organize by removing rubble with bare hands in order to rescue loved ones and, where possible to remove the bodies of the dead. Immediately makeshift camps emerged in front yards and in every vacant park or open space in the affected areas as people sought to create shelter and re-create some semblance of normalcy. Within days local and community markets emerged. Wherever businesses were left standing, workers returned, even when their own homes or neighborhoods were destroyed. Workers returned to work because of the desperate need for money to purchase needed goods and the psychological need to re-establish routines.

Within the hundreds of informal camps that sprung up throughout the affected areas, which now stands at over 1,300<sup>19</sup>, governance structures emerged. As one community organizer trained by MPP (Mouvman Peyizan Papay) explained, 'within the camps there may not be elected authority, but there are people who have influence, who community members respect, natural leaders. It is those individuals that we look for and help to organize and mobilize the camp.'

While many leaders of formal CSOs and networks were killed during the earthquake, those that remained quickly organized to identify the main strategies for immediate relief, as well as long-term reconstruction and development. In the United States, Haitian Americans mobilized to create national and regional consultations. These events, spurred by Haitian elected officials, religious leaders, NGOs and community radio stations, organized rallies and conferences as well as fund drives and material aid campaigns. Prior to the March 31, 2010 UN Donors Conference for Haiti, there were several preparatory meetings of Haitian Americans, advocacy and other organizations that met throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Haitian NGOs also met in Port-au-Prince to collaborate and to develop priorities and principles for the reconstruction effort. The outcomes of several of these meetings were compiled and distributed to governments, donors, and others in the document:

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<sup>18</sup> "Haitians Say Jobs Key to Recovery," Oxfam, March 30, 2010  
<http://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressrelease/2010-03-30/haitians-say-jobs-key-recovery>.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations OCHA Humanitarian Bulletin Report Issue #6, July 1, 2010.

Haitian Led Reconstruction and Development<sup>20</sup>. Haitians were clear. They want a new Haiti--re-invention not reconstruction.

From those civil society gatherings, several priorities emerged:

During the immediate short-term recovery period:

- Provide locally or regionally produced emergency food aid with coordinated and equitable distribution in both urban and rural areas of need;
- Prepare for the imminent planting season by the procuring and purchasing of tools and culturally appropriate seeds, as well as by providing agricultural training for displaced persons;
- Provide support for shelter and temporary housing for internally displaced people, and adequate food, clean water, appropriate shelter for the rain season, medical services and psycho-social support;
- Protect the human rights of especially vulnerable populations, such as women, children, displaced persons and people with disabilities, including implementing security strategies to prevent gender based violence.

During the long-term reconstruction and development period:

- Support agricultural infrastructure and development;
- Promote policies that foster food sovereignty;
- Provide leadership training, capacity building and support for civil society groups; and
- Strengthen investment in formal and informal education systems.

*(Excerpt from Haitian Led Reconstruction and Development, March 29, 2010)*

Civil society groups, including agricultural, women's rights, religious and local development organizations, highlighted several important strategies, including implementation of a transparent and accountable, reconstruction process, as well as the decentralization of infrastructure and resources in Haiti.

### *Decentralization is Essential*

Throughout TransAfrica Forum's trips decentralization emerged as an important proposal, not only as an important process, for the relief effort as well as the longer term reconstruction process.

*Decentralizing the triage* - The earthquake produced widespread damage throughout the country, destroying cities, killing over 225,000 people and leaving over 300,000 wounded. Within days, almost 600,000 people had left the major cities for the rural countryside and smaller towns. Ad-hoc

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<sup>20</sup> Haitian Led Reconstruction and Development, March 29, 2010, Haiti Advocacy Working Group, a Washington, D.C. based ad-hoc Haiti advocacy coalition.

camps were established throughout the country and homes were filled; in some areas 15 to 25 people filled homes built for families of 5 to 7.

Provincial integration offices, where the distribution of a combination of food aid and agricultural inputs could be coordinated at the local level, do not exist. And while some cash for work programs have been developed in rural areas, they have not achieved the necessary scale nor have they been organized to complement local economies.

Without a coordinated, well-financed job creation program to encourage the decentralization of resources, IDPs will return to Port-au-Prince. The city was made for a population of 200,000 and has become the home for over 3 million. This has simply overwhelmed the city's infrastructure. Moreover the U.S. Geological Survey predicts that Haiti will continue to experience aftershocks, some of 5.0 magnitude, for the next year. Strong aftershocks mean that the already weakened structures in Port-au-Prince pose a grave safety risk to the residents.

*Decentralization, A Political Necessity* – Decentralization of Haiti's economic, political and social infrastructure has been a long-held goal. The concept of decentralization is embedded in the 1987 constitution and is a central feature of the 2008 – 2010 Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, produced in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund.

Decentralization is the process of transferring power and resources from the central government to Haiti's regions, departments, municipalities, and communal sections.<sup>21</sup> Haiti's 1987 Constitution adopted a decentralized form of government. However, no President and Parliament has established the legal frameworks that define the roles and responsibilities of local governments. Empowerment of Haiti's local authorities and municipalities is essential, yet government ministries have been reluctant to share power with these local authorities and therefore pose a powerful block to the process.

Without functioning local authorities, all aspects of Haitian life – education, employment, trade, travel – are centered in Port-au-Prince. That concentration of social, economic, and political infrastructure in the capital city was a primary reason for the large loss of life during the earthquake.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The international effort to help Haitians address the impact of this devastating event has been laudable. However, the efficacy of the effort has been undermined by the scope of the disaster, coupled with structural inefficiencies, bureaucratic inertia and vested interests trying to preserve privilege while giving the appearance of change.

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<sup>21</sup> "Local Governance Decentralization Assessment in Haiti", Sustainable Urban Management IQC-Quick Response Task Order, Abt Associates, USAID Haiti Mission. July 2006.

Based on interviews and information obtained during research and assessment trips to Haiti, it is the opinion of TransAfrica Forum that multiple grave human rights violations are occurring. These violations are occurring through the affirmative actions of the Haitian government, the UN, donor nations, and NGO's, and through disregard for the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Haitian civil society is under-consulted on issues ranging from food distribution to forced relocation of IDPs. In many cases, the forced relocation is compounding the vulnerable conditions being faced by millions of Haitians.

In light of the findings, TransAfrica Forum recommends the following:

**1. That the U.S. Congress use its oversight authority to investigate issues including, but not limited to, the following:**

- Security within the current IDP camps, including the problems of unacceptable housing, inadequate sanitation, and insufficient lighting.
- Gender Based Violence (GBV), including reported rapes in at least 35 camps, transactional sex, and robberies directed at shelter used by women and children.
- Forced Relocation, including the lack of compliance with UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the camp placement in areas away from employment and sources of aid distribution.
- An overarching disconnect between the international players and the grassroots organizations and Haitian civil society.

**2. That the Government of Haiti (GOH):**

- Uphold the moratorium on forced evictions until safe alternative housing options are made available.
- Expedite housing assessment and assistance for those who are able and interested in returning home.
- (inserting here TG comment)

**3. That the International Community and the Interim Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti (IHRC):**

- Prioritize working with Haitian Civil Society Organizations.
- Ensure full funding of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) and other funding accountability mechanisms.
- Support and encourage decentralization efforts with consultation of Haitian CSOs and the Government of Haiti
- Hold MINUSTAH (UN) and PNH (Haitian Police Force) accountable for reports of the use of excessive force during protests.
- Strengthen efforts to prepare for hurricane season.
- Prioritize working with local Haitian NGOs.
- Apply and adhere to the UN Guiding Principles for Internal Displacement.
- Centralize data and information about the affected populations to ensure basic goods and services reach the most marginalized groups (women, children, the elderly, disabled).
- Increase efforts to meet basic needs that remain outstanding. Obtaining basic Goods and Services remains challenging for Haitians affected by the quake.

- Investment and commitment in agricultural development must grow but be complemented with a concerted effort to address hunger and starvation.
- Strengthen and expand Cash-for-Work Programs to include sufficient labor protections as well as compensation.

## ANNEX 1-REFERENCED ORGANIZATIONS

**American Red Cross** does domestic disaster relief as well as offering compassionate services in five other areas: community services that help the needy; support and comfort for military members and their families; the collection, processing and distribution of lifesaving blood and blood products; educational programs that promote health and safety; and international relief and development programs.

**Doctors without Borders /Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)** is an international medical humanitarian organization created by doctors and journalists in France in 1971. Today, MSF provides aid in nearly 60 countries to people whose survival is threatened by violence, neglect, or catastrophe, primarily due to armed conflict, epidemics, malnutrition, exclusion from health care, or natural disasters.

**IAT (International Action Ties)** is a grassroots community development organization aimed at addressing the root causes of poverty by working towards structural change and community mobilization. IAT works together with marginalized and underserved communities to design and implement minimal exterior-input community based infrastructure development programs. Through the provision of field mobilizers, who work directly alongside community members, IAT's efforts address the interdependent areas of Education, Environment, Public Health, Social Equities, and Livelihoods. IAT has been working in rural Haiti since 2007, primarily in the Nippes Region, Petite Riviere de Nippes.

**FAVILEK (Fanm Viktim Leve Kanpe/Women Victims Get Up Stand Up)** is an organization of over 80 women who were victim to political violence during the years of military dictatorship in Haiti that followed the coup d'etat of September 1991. Since 1993, FAVILEK has organized and mobilized for justice and reparations for crimes such as rape, torture, the loss of spouse, child, or parent or imprisonment suffered at the hands of the paramilitary and military. As a grassroots group of women from the poorest areas of Port au Prince, FAVILEK relies on limited resources and the medium of theater to inspire increased activism nationally and internationally to make justice a reality.

**Habitat for Humanity** is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian ministry founded on the conviction that every man, woman and child should have a decent, safe and affordable place to live. They build with people in need regardless of race or religion.

**KOFAVIV (Komisyon Fanm Viktim pou Viktim/The Commission of Women Victims for Victims)** is a Haitian women's group formed in late 2004 by a group of women from poor neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince who were raped during the 1991-94 military dictatorship. KOFAVIV creates and supports solidarity groups, providing informal social and psychological support for rape survivors. The groups are designed to provide mutual emotional support and to encourage members to begin undertaking collective action to fight gender-based violence.

**IOM (International Organization for Migration)** is the leading international organization for migration. IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM acts with its partners in the international community to assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management; advance understanding of migration

issues; encourage social and economic development through migration and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

**World Vision** is an international aid Christian humanitarian organization, World Vision works in nearly 100 countries around the globe, combating the root causes of poverty and responding quickly when disaster strikes. They partner with communities to find lasting ways of improving the lives of children and their families while providing international disaster relief.

## ANNEX 2 - TAF TRIP CALENDARS

### **February Trip**

Haiti Response Coalition  
Haitian NGO Consultation planning meeting

### **March Trips**

Haiti Response Coalition  
Petionville Golf Club camp coordinators (J/P Haitian Relief Organization and Catholic Relief Services)  
Members of Champ-de-Mars, Matthew 25, Site Place San Rose and Simon Bolivar Camps

### **May GBV Trip**

KOFAVIV  
FAVILEK  
Bureau de Avocats Internationaux  
Office of the Ombudsman  
United Nations Log-base: Protection and GBV Subcluster  
Haitian National Police Chief  
GENCAP Gender Standby Capacity

### **May Camp Conditions Trip**

Members of Solino, Corail, Carredeux, Petionville and Mixtes du Pinchinat camps  
United Nations Log-base: Camp Management and Protection clusters  
U.S. Embassy: USAID and OFDA Representatives  
Haiti Advocacy Group  
KOFAVIV  
KONPAY (Jacmel)

### **June GBV Trip**

KOFAVIV  
FAVILEK  
Bureau de Avocats Internationaux  
Haiti Response Coalition