

NOREF Report

Putting the pieces together: Haiti's path to a working state

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Executive summary

The earthquake of 2010 brutally exposed the vulnerabilities of Haiti's people, as well as confronting an already weakly governed country with massive humanitarian and logistical dilemmas. While progress has been made towards reconstruction, the underlying fragility of the country remains. Even as certain donors reconsider their aid to the country, Haiti continues to suffer from economic dependence, environmental risk, an institutional vacuum, a heavily fragmented political landscape, and a continuing cycle of poverty and violence.

effects of an all-out war nor the levels of criminal violence witnessed elsewhere in Central America and the Caribbean. Recent glimmers of political compromise and some progress in reforming the police force indicate that improvements are possible. Looking forward to the coming decade, the report signals the key areas in which progress is both essential and feasible, but warns that much will depend on the way in which the international community and the United Nations mission in the country interact with the Haitian state and the country's principal social forces.

However, this report emphasises that not all is lost in the country, which is suffering neither the after-

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Introduction

Haiti has been subject to recurrent crises for more than a century. Political instability, a state that has multiple institutional failings, historically rooted social divisions and pervasive poverty are the country's dominant traits. The depletion of economic resources due to misguided policies and corruption has severely weakened Haiti's economy, and increased dependency on flows of goods and resources from outside the country. Vulnerability to natural hazards is high, as shown by the 2010 earthquake. Insecurity is also an important part of the picture: while Haiti is experiencing neither the aftershocks of an all-out war nor the level of violent crime that is threatening parts of more stable countries in the Caribbean and neighbouring Central America, social grievances and the absence of the state have turned the country into fertile territory for transnational crime. The lack of credible channels to resolve disputes has time and again led to politically motivated violence. Although unlikely to materialise, the threat of a coup d'état cannot be dismissed entirely.

On various occasions in Haiti's history, visionary leaders and popular aspirations seemed to coalesce around a common national goal, only for this to succumb later to authoritarian and corrupt rulers operating at the behest of vested interest groups (Manigat, 2009). An era of renewed hope began in the late 1980s after decades of ruthless dictatorship under François and Jean-Claude Duvalier and then a slew of short-lived military or de facto governments finally gave way to participatory elections and a process of democratisation. Fraught with difficulties and contradictions, this process nevertheless put an end to the worst abuses and offered new avenues for free expression and political representation, albeit without guaranteeing either reliable governance or the prospect of a dignified livelihood to all Haitians.

Internal discord is coupled with resentment at the role of foreign powers. Two interventions have left a legacy that weighs heavily on Haiti's sense of nationhood: French colonial rule, which was responsible for a plantation economy and a rigid system based on slavery; and a U.S. military occupation that, while acting with the

acquiescence of weak national governments, enabled U.S. interests in sugar and other commodities to make full use of the cheap and abundant Haitian workforce. The alienation of most Haitians from the political elites that acted as intermediaries for foreign occupiers has roots in both interventions.

Successive United Nations (UN) missions in Haiti – including the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), deployed in 2004 and currently still in place – have been unable to alter this perception of foreign influence substantially, despite their legal standing and their formal recognition of Haitian sovereignty. Misgivings vis-à-vis the international presence reawakened in the 1990s due to fluctuating policies over intervention, heavily conditioned financial aid and the ruinous impact of a UN-sanctioned embargo. Currently the U.S., the main host country for the Haitian diaspora, continues to exert a strong influence and is a key donor together with Canada and some European countries, while many Latin American states have assumed a role that adds a significant regional dimension to the multilateral intervention. Looking forward, the main challenge in the future will be to ensure full ownership of the country's political and economic development by its own people and government, while not backing away entirely from responsible international engagement.

Haiti's immediate challenges

Politics

At the very core of Haiti's ills lies a problem of legitimacy connected with the country's prevalent social beliefs and values. In the years that followed independence in 1804, two political doctrines emerged – Liberal and National – that reflected the polarisation between the mulatto and black elites, and offered outward- or inward-looking approaches, respectively, towards the country's future development. In either case, the reins of power usually ended up in the hands of representatives of the status quo, often from among the military. Arbitrary rule came to be considered the norm rather than the exception.

The democratic opening of the 1990s led to the emergence of dozens of new political parties. However, having been created in the wake of a long period of repression, they did not play the role expected of them by Western donors as intermediaries between society and the state. While generally devoid of distinctive ideological identities, most have proceeded to act as electoral vehicles for individual leaders and, as such, have been subject to frequent changes and fragmentation. Campaign promises focus on immediate results rather than long-term aims. Since there is little accountability, these promises bear little relation to the real capacity of the state.

Once parties are in power, individual or group interests prevail over serving the public interest. Active citizen participation is not encouraged except at the polls and most political leaders are keen on preserving their distance from the populace. Negotiations usually consist of quid pro quo deals between individual politicians rather than broader programmatic compromises; switching loyalties in exchange for favours is not uncommon and opacity is the norm.

Hope and paralysis under President Martelly

Political and institutional challenges have seriously undermined Haiti's governance during the first year of Michel Martelly's presidency, whose accession to the government in May 2011, at the end of René Prével's term of office, seemed to represent a real alternation of power between contending forces. Despite a low turnout and many complaints, the vote took place without major violence, raising hopes that the country was on the path to democratic stability.

But these expectations were dampened by the ensuing power struggle: infighting within the president's circle caused the resignation of Prime Minister Garry Conille in February 2012, four months into his tenure. Conille's appointment only came after a protracted standoff with the Senate that delayed for several months the establishment of a functioning cabinet. Exposing the tensions between politicians and government officials, these events practically paralysed the state at a time of pressing needs within the country. Only in May 2012 would Martelly's new nominee for the

post, Laurent Lamothe, obtain the necessary vote of approval.

A certain amount of progress, however, can be detected in efforts to reform Haiti's political system. One positive development was the promulgation of reforms to the 1987 Constitution, approved under Prével's government and subsequently locked in controversy for over a year. The old Constitution placed strong parliamentary limits on executive power, which in Haiti's competitive political landscape often resulted in gridlock. The approval of these reforms, resulting from an agreement among the three branches of government, could help to overcome institutional bottlenecks through the creation of a constitutional court, which would in principle serve to resolve conflicts between parliament and the executive.

The electoral process, on the other hand, remains dependent on the appointment of a credible electoral council, which has itself suffered from the fractious political climate. The old Provisional Council was dissolved, but a new, non-provisional council has yet to be selected on the basis of the reforms that have been introduced. Polls to replace ten senators upon completion of their terms of office in May 2012 and a series of other elections to various offices have had to be postponed until November. The machinery and funds required for a complex array of polls have caused some Haitians to suggest that the system be simplified (Fatton, 2011: 51), but there is no agreement on how to do so.

Social discontents: crime and inequality

A sense of alienation pervades Haitians' attitudes towards the public sector. The credibility of institutions is compromised by a lack of resources and well-trained personnel. In the absence of effective fiscal policies that might give the state the means to carry out its functions and implement sorely needed social programmes, institutions are generally deemed to have an indifferent approach and to be unable to deliver. This is largely the effect of a low tax burden, which in turn reflects the unwillingness of richer parts of society to contribute to state coffers, as well as tax evasion and corruption by public servants. Smuggling across Haiti's poorly protected sea

and land borders also deprives the state of a key source of revenue. Although it has increased moderately of late, the tax burden of Haiti, at 9.6% of gross domestic product (GDP), is among the lowest in Latin America (Gómez Sabaini, 2010).

Insecurity is another major challenge, compounded by the country's vulnerability to transnational crime due to its pervasive poverty, institutional weakness and the absence of credible channels to resolve political disputes. Even so, Haiti has comparatively low rates of homicide when compared with the rest of the region: according to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Haiti's murder rate for 2010 was 6.9 per 100,000 members of the population, in comparison with 24.9, 52.1 and 66.0 for the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and El Salvador, respectively (UNODC, 2011).

The use of coercive violence was not uncommon under former dictators or charismatic leaders. Indeed, armed groups were used systematically to intimidate the population and stoke violence under what former president Leslie Manigat termed the Duvaliers' "fascistic populism". Incidents of political violence were also experienced under what Manigat describes as Aristide's "anarco-populism" (Manigat, 2009: 254-259). Nowadays a lack of opportunities for young people and poorly monitored borders have opened the door to the rising influence of organised crime. Often acting through local urban gangs, criminal organisations are responsible for kidnappings, murders, robberies and armed holdups, occasionally in complicity with political spoilers. After a peak of 266 kidnappings in 2008, the uncovering of criminal networks by the Haitian National Police (HNP) led to a drastic reduction of cases in 2009. Figures were again on the rise in 2010 after convicted felons broke out of prison in the wake of the earthquake, reaching 109 for that year and 97 in the first half of 2011 (ICG, 2011a).

More recently, the Haitian National Network for the Protection of Human Rights reported an increase in violent crime, with 140 violent deaths, mostly from gunshot wounds, in the period from January 1st to March 14th 2012. The network drew attention to the frequent use and display of weapons by groups claiming to be made up of former army officers, considering them a serious threat to the country's security (*Haiti en*

Marche, 2012). The emergence of these groups appears to have been a response to Martelly's campaign promise to re-establish the army, which was disbanded in 1995. Given the army's record of usurping power, the well-proven links of some of its senior officers to organised crime, as well as corruption and abuse both during and after the Duvaliers' dictatorships, the growing visibility of these unofficial groups has become a cause for concern. The announcement by Prime Minister Lamothe in May 2012 that the authorities would seek to dismantle them was a welcome development.

At the social level, the gap between the few haves and the vast majority of have-nots is huge, even by Latin American standards. Statistics give a striking picture of Haiti's huge unmet social needs. The UN Development Programme Human Development Index for 2011 positions Haiti 158th out of 187 countries and territories, one step ahead of its ranking in 2010, if the same assessment methods are used. The same agency's Multidimensional Poverty Index for 2011, meanwhile, shows Haiti having 32.3% of its population in severe poverty, compared to Guatemala with 14.5% and Honduras with 11.3%. Haiti continues to be the poorest country in Latin America and ranks among the most unequal. Both poverty and inequality deteriorated markedly in the aftermath of the earthquake: lack of access to food, shelter, clean water and medical services, for instance, placed many more children at risk of malnutrition (Basset, 2010).

The obstacles to any sort of nationwide dialogue and shared national project are not unrelated to the situation just described: in a context of acute need and inequality, it appears difficult to conceive of common interests that could form the basis for a broad understanding of the country's problems. In a zero-sum scenario, differences are resolved by superior force, be it physical, political or economic, rather than through negotiation. Some observers have tried to explain the lack of cross-cutting national dialogue by drawing attention to a culturally ingrained reticence on the part of Haiti's poor to express their wishes openly, as a way of protecting themselves from outsiders. But it would be misleading to see the great majority of Haitians, who happen to be poor, as passive spectators of their country's fate: their resilience,

engagement and hope in the face of misfortune have in fact been lauded by many foreigners. A poll conducted in 2011 shows them having a more positive view of their own well-being one year after the earthquake than at any time since 2006 (Lyons, 2012).

The vulnerabilities of land and people

In addition to income levels, Haitians are also divided by the colour of their skin, their rural or urban origin, or whether they speak French or only Creole. The chasm between rural and urban inhabitants is particularly significant. With independence, former slaves sought release from the bondage of the plantation system by taking possession of small agricultural holdings as a primary source of revenue and a means to affirm egalitarianism. A rich communal life with its own customs, language and values, and with little connection to the central state, was established around these land plots. Although productivity rose immediately after the revolutionary wars (1791-1804), it would steadily erode due to growing demographic pressure and a policy of neglect from government elites, who favoured a small merchant class to the detriment of the rural majority. François "Papa Doc" Duvalier would later promote disorderly urbanisation in his attempt to use the new urban masses as political leverage and a readily available tool for street mobilisation.

This explains why, although land ownership is not an issue, pervasive poverty throughout Haiti is particularly harsh in rural areas (Sletten & Egset, 2004). Agriculture absorbs around 60% of the labour force, most of which is self-employed. But the value-added of agriculture has decreased drastically as plots can no longer provide their owners with basic sustenance. International intervention has aggravated the problem. In an economy that has become heavily dependent, food security is supplied from abroad – as is a large portion of the state budget – and until recently has been channelled through non-governmental organisations rather than state institutions. Emergency food from the World Food Programme (WFP), the lead multilateral agency following the earthquake, was initially distributed through ten major international partners, mostly

humanitarian bodies linked to faith-based or philanthropic organisations.¹

The environment is a further urgent concern. In an island susceptible to tropical storms, hurricanes, flooding, landslides and seismic movements, deforestation caused by extreme poverty and a lack of sustainable environmental policies has damaged the country's ecosystem, making it more vulnerable to such catastrophes. An estimated 95% of the original forest cover has been lost, increasing the threat of floods.

The parts of the population that have attained a certain level of schooling, meanwhile, have been ravaged by migration. Their exodus increases the sense of alienation and drains Haiti of valuable human resources. In 2003 the World Bank revealed that close to 85% of Haiti's college-educated citizens were living abroad, a higher percentage than in any other country (*New York Times*, 2005). Remittances are estimated to reach up to a third of GDP and have not dwindled despite the onset of the global financial crisis. As an encouraging invitation to future engagement, the reformed Constitution allows Haitians who have adopted another nationality to retain their rights as citizens of Haiti. This provision should also protect the very poor who migrate to the Dominican Republic, Haiti's neighbour to the east, where questions about their legal status expose them to discrimination and abuse.

Medium-term prospects

In 2010 the then-prime minister, Jean-Max Bellerive, sketched a vision of Haiti in 2030 as a country having "a society of simplicity, equitable, just and unified, living in harmony with its environment, its culture and a controlled modernity"; a country where rule of law, freedom of assembly and expression, and development of the national territory would have been achieved (Sylvain, 2011: 85).

Over the medium term, a number of factors could help this vision to materialise. This report points

¹ WFP partner organisations were Action contre la Faim, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Agence de Coopération Technique et de Développement, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, GOAL, International Medical Corps, Samaritan's Purse, Save the Children, World Vision and Christian Relief.

to three broad areas in which progress should be achieved within the next five to ten years under a moderately optimistic scenario: political and social dialogue; sustainable economic development with reduced dependence on external sources, as well as poverty reduction through job creation; and the promotion of public confidence in state institutions by enhancing service delivery, particularly in terms of security and justice. While each objective should be pursued on its own merits, the three are closely linked and mutually reinforcing. State legitimacy will not be achieved overnight, but tangible progress in people's living conditions may gradually build confidence in the system.

Progress will be conditioned by several exogenous constraints. Predictions are, of course, difficult as regards future natural disasters, but better preparedness would limit damage considerably. Global economic trends and their consequences in terms of diminished aid, remittances, credit, trade and private investment flows would have a strong negative impact that could spark political turmoil, such as a recurrence of the crisis of 2008, when food riots forced the departure of Prime Minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis. Measures to protect Haiti from external shocks are therefore vital. Another potential difficulty stems from a change in the supply of subsidised fuel from Venezuela. Oil from Petrocaribe started to flow in March 2008. The deal reached in 2006 – which was reportedly opposed by the U.S. government – entails the provision of more than half of Haiti's oil consumption (initially 6,000 barrels out of a daily demand of 11,000) under favourable repayment conditions. It is estimated that this deal provides up to \$300 million a year for the state budget outside of any international supervision (Maxime, 2012). A report on the Haitian economy in 2010, prepared by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, indicates that an amount of \$163 million from the Petrocaribe Haitian fund was used for agriculture, education and health programmes (ECLAC, 2010: 119).

Political and social dialogue

Key to progress will be a favourable political environment. A minimum working agreement should be feasible under the pressure of popular demand and with discreet encouragement from

the international community. The agreement to accept Laurent Lamothe for the post of prime minister – reportedly the result of an undisclosed deal between the president and leading opposition senators at the end of their term – sets a favourable precedent. So does the approval of the reformed Constitution, which opens the door to establishing or recasting several key institutions. An acceptable *modus vivendi* would require a pact across the establishment, approval of the state budget, a legislative agenda based on certain essential items (as proposed by MINUSTAH), and the holding of elections to ensure democratic turnover, especially at the end of the current president's term of office in 2015. The alternative could entail continuing state paralysis, political turmoil, and an ensuing pattern of violence and repression, which could in turn lead to Haiti's 35th coup. It is to be hoped that the opposition of most Haitians to such a regression, as well as the influence of key international actors, will prevent this from occurring.

Dialogue at the top would help to address immediate governance problems and, if accompanied by a certain level of transparency to dispel suspicions of corruption, could improve the political climate for further agreements. Political leaders should be responsible for fostering an environment in which all sectors can find common ground on the most important issues for Haiti's future. Any proposal to re-establish the army should be the subject of an open, thorough and comprehensive debate that takes into account that body's past record, Haiti's most pressing current needs and effective alternative means to protect its borders.

Since mid-March 2012 the government has promoted a decentralisation initiative consisting of dialogue sessions between citizens and representatives of the public sector at the central and municipal levels. Their purpose is to identify problems and find viable solutions. Public attendance is reportedly large, revealing the interest of ordinary Haitians in participating in the discussion of questions that directly affect their lives. If conducted properly, with appropriate follow-up, the exercise could be a means of engaging citizens and promoting accountability in the use of public resources. If used merely for purposes of publicity, renewed disappointment would once again follow raised expectations.

Economic sustainability

Following the 2004 international intervention, Haiti's planned evolution from stabilisation to reform and consolidation was deemed to be well on its way when the 2010 earthquake struck, putting humanitarian assistance firmly at the top of the agenda. More than two years later the country is still reeling from the effects of the disaster, but has made some inroads into the task of reconstruction.

The rebuilding of essential public facilities is ongoing. With strong international support, Haiti has been able to rescue and provide basic services and shelter to around 1.3 million survivors. After a marked decrease in GDP in 2010, the economy rebounded in 2011. As of May 2012 slightly more than 400,000 people in the capital were still living in tents and receiving humanitarian aid (IOM, 2012). Their continued presence in the camps is a reflection of the country's pervasive poverty: most are thought to be destitute and would otherwise have no access to basic shelter, sanitation or food. However, humanitarian activities, which are exceptional and temporary by nature, should be integrated into sustainable programmes focusing on long- and medium-term social needs. A realistic assessment of the country's standing with regard to the Millennium Development Goals is a useful barometer to gauge access to essential services.

A fundamental objective for Haiti in the years to come should be to rebuild its economy in a sustainable manner. The emphasis should be on diversification (rather than concentrating on areas that rely solely on cheap Haitian labour as their primary resource), and on a gradual and regulated approach to opening the country to globalised markets, particularly in agricultural goods. Industrial parks, where the garment industry is granted duty-free access to the U.S. market, have given some relief to pervasive unemployment by providing jobs to a limited group of workers, but technical assistance and credit should also be granted to labour-intensive activities with a potential for growth, such as tourism.

Before the earthquake, Haiti imported three times more than it exported. The resulting trade deficit was driven mostly by food and fuel (Gauthier &

Moita, 2011: 30). Food security and energy self-sufficiency must thus be among the priorities of any medium- to long-term development plan. It is now recognised that the policy of thoroughgoing liberalisation applied at the insistence of international financial institutions increased Haiti's dependence on food imports and aid from abroad. Domestic production of rice was almost wiped out by U.S. competition when Haiti drastically reduced its tariffs. As the 2008 riots proved, this sacrifice did not prevent domestic prices of the – by then – imported staple from soaring beyond all expectations, becoming unaffordable to most Haitians. While foreign donations were forthcoming, they were merely short-term palliatives.

In light of this situation the government should seek to use incentives in order to encourage sustainable agriculture; employ the rural poor, who make up more than 60% of the population; increase food security; and reduce soil erosion (UNDESA, 2010). WFP, for example, has moved from emergency assistance to a longer-term food security strategy, which includes supporting agriculture and boosting food production.

Environmental protection and disaster prevention are also top priorities. Co-operation with the neighbouring Dominican Republic, essential after the earthquake, is required to preserve the habitat of the island that the two countries share. Environmental sustainability underwrites the Haitian economy, quality of life and public health, and could be fostered in various ways. Sustainable energy should be secured to prevent the continuing use of wood and charcoal, the main cause of deforestation. Further expansion of housing should always incorporate seismic design and avoid vulnerable areas. An integral medium-term environment policy should be devised in consultation with local communities in order to replenish natural resources, in particular forests and water, and to manage waste disposal. At the institutional level, the Directorate of Civil Protection should strengthen its capacity for rescue and assistance, including training specialised personnel, setting up locally based groups of volunteers and establishing a nationwide communication network in order to improve early warning capabilities.

Security and justice

Security is a primary concern and requires an integrated approach that encompasses the HNP, the judiciary and the penitentiary system. All three, especially the last two, suffer from a scarcity of resources and have not usually enjoyed much credibility among Haitians, although recent opinion polls reflect growing public confidence in the police.

One reason for this improvement is that the HNP has received considerable international support. Its performance has improved markedly since 2006, but there is still a long way to go before it is capable of providing security throughout the country. Delays in achieving the target of 14,000 uniformed officers by 2011 have led to a revision of projected numbers. According to security analysts, the police require 20,000 trained officers to safeguard the national territory and protect land and sea borders (ICG, 2011a). The principal tasks for the next few years will be to complete recruitment, including women; to install effective vetting procedures; and to strengthen specialised units, crime investigation, border patrols and community policing.

Meanwhile, Haitians still have limited access to justice, and questions over the independence and effectiveness of the judicial system abound. The country needs a functioning system with sound procedures for investigation and conviction, particularly with respect to serious crimes. This is an area where an understanding between the president and parliament will be needed to reform the Criminal Code, set standards for judges, and provide adequate resources to the judiciary. The Superior Judiciary Council should be made functional so that it can exercise its monitoring functions and provide a guarantee of judicial independence (ICG, 2011b). The dismissal of charges against former dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier for egregious human rights violations raises concerns over impunity that will need to be addressed if the country is to avoid relapsing into despotic rule and lawlessness.

The state and the international community

Local resistance to international intervention, even when it is mandated by the UN Security Council for humanitarian reasons or other benign purposes, is not infrequent (Pouligny, 2006: 171-175). This should not be surprising in the case of Haiti, given the deep scars left by past occupations. Stating this fact is not to plead for early withdrawal, however. Leaving Haiti to its own devices at a time of continuing need for reasons that may relate to the global financial crisis or donors' perception of shifting priorities would undermine prior efforts and do nothing to prove Haitians' mistrust wrong.

At the same time, it is essential that international policies and operational modalities applied to Haiti over the next few years be based on an accurate assessment of the country's challenges and needs. Although Haiti has some traits in common with post-conflict nations, it is not a country emerging from an all-out war: its priorities are to redress economic and environmental vulnerabilities, remedy the existing institutional vacuum, and break the cycle of poverty and violence that has impaired the country's development.

Despite frequent criticisms of MINUSTAH, it is generally recognised that the UN mission has played a stabilising role by insulating Haiti's political system "from implosion" at critical times (Fatton, 2011: 49). Most observers agree that the country continues to be in need of the mission's stabilising presence. In the 1990s the premature withdrawal of UN operations and the imposition of an international embargo gave way to instability and unrest. That experience should not be repeated. In particular, the drawdown of international military and police contingents should match the build-up of the country's capacity to take over security and border protection responsibilities.

Disengagement would be equally undesirable on the part of the country's international co-operation partners, and especially the major providers of aid – the U.S., Canada, European countries, multilateral agencies and development banks. The announcement by some donors that they will drastically slash co-operation flows raises the

concern that others may follow suit. Given Haiti's dependence on foreign funding, such a turn of events could deal a severe blow to the country.

Coherence and co-ordination among donors is important to achieve sustainability, and would pave the way to a future withdrawal of international forces while limiting the risk of a relapse in Haiti. Co-operation initiatives should also match the priorities laid down in the government's Action Plan for National Recovery and Development. But for real national ownership to be assured despite long-standing Haitian feelings of mistrust, donors must display deep knowledge of the country's reality, and establish a well-structured mechanism of participation at the various levels of state and recipient communities. Short-term stand-alone development projects that are not part of a wider national strategy may at most achieve some partial or temporary outcomes. For example, community-based initiatives undertaken to weaken the influence of armed gangs are deemed to have left no enduring results because they were disjointed and reflected different approaches to crime (ICG, 2011a).

Although an active and representative civil society is a mobilising factor that can extend the benefits of development co-operation to sectors that would otherwise be unreachable, the state should be the central partner for international co-operation. The proliferation of aid to NGOs without assigning a role to relevant state institutions runs counter to the purpose of strengthening the state as the impartial guarantor and provider of public goods.

Other social partners

However, emphasis on the state does not preclude phased contacts with other social sectors. Building a state that is a reliable guardian of the law should in fact be conceived as the final goal of a process that involves myriad social actors and forces. International co-operation should therefore gear itself to identifying the domestic constituencies that could become agents of reform and development. Several such constituencies stand out as potential partners.

The transformative potential of youth has yet to be tapped. While the country is undergoing a rapid

demographic transition (projections indicate a fall from a population growth rate of 1.7% in 2010 to 1.1% in 2030), the under-18 population is nearly half the total. In addition to promoting formal education at all levels, young people should be supported in efforts to organise and mobilise in terms of work, culture or other social activities.

Women often play an informal leadership role, seeking solutions to day-to-day problems that arise in their communities, and influencing perceptions and attitudes in their immediate surroundings. Incorporating women is thus an extremely effective way of reaching out to society at the grassroots level.

For their part, Haitian investors have been involved in several high-profile meetings to discuss future business opportunities. It is vital that the private sector leverage a change towards self-sustaining productive activities that are connected to diversified markets. In this regard, it may be advisable to organise technical meetings in which business representatives, government officials and experts can discuss fundamental economic policy issues, including the role of the state, the labour market and Haiti's prospects in the region. Business's social, fiscal and environmental responsibilities should also be addressed.

The academic community could contribute to the national strategy for development by engaging in research and analysis on issues of interest for the future of Haiti, identifying trends and assessing policy proposals. The media could play an important role in gathering relevant information and disseminating it to the public, making room for a plurality of views and promoting public debate.

Remittances from the diaspora are the most important source of revenues from abroad. As a result, the diaspora should be encouraged to engage more directly in Haiti's reconstruction. An important step has been recognition in the reformed Constitution that Haitians who have acquired a different nationality can retain their rights as citizens. The Ministry of Haitians Abroad could benefit from assistance and technical support in its efforts to promote engagement by the diaspora. It should also receive support in addressing the difficult situation of migrant workers

in the Dominican Republic, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The regional dimension

Enhanced co-operation from Latin America and the Caribbean has a mutually beneficial and stabilising impact. The majority of Latin American states have made significant progress in democratisation, institution-building, economic development, fighting poverty, protecting the environment and addressing questions of impunity for past human rights violations. These challenges are not dissimilar to those facing Haiti: the experience and knowledge acquired in pursuing these goals are well attuned to Haiti's needs. Triangular schemes involving providers and recipients from the global South and donors from the global North have proven to be an efficient way of tapping into the comparative advantages of partner countries.

Co-operation is also essential with the Dominican Republic, Haiti's only land neighbour in the island of Quisqueya, the recipient of hundreds of thousands of Haitian migrant workers, and the country's second-largest trading partner. International support for binational projects – including in the border area – comprising, among others, productive activities, environmental protection, disaster prevention, educational and other exchanges, should be and educational. The situation of Haitian citizens or their children living in the Dominican Republic requires an understanding between both governments at the highest levels that reflects international norms and principles. Such an understanding should be encouraged by other countries that co-operate with Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

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