

Governance and Security in Haiti: Can the International Community Make a Difference?

By Elizabeth Bryan with Cynthia J. Arnson, José Raúl Perales, and Johanna Mendelson Forman

INTRODUCTION

José Raúl Perales and Cynthia J. Arnson

In February 2004, Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced from office following widespread protests against his government and amidst spiraling violence and insurgency throughout the country. An interim transitional government was quickly established, with the goal of working to overcome the country's sharp political divisions and prepare for new presidential elections. But violence continued unabated, product of the deep polarization between Aristide supporters, opposition parties, civil society groups, and armed militias and gangs. At the request of the interim Haitian government and the United Nations, troops from the United States, Canada, France, and Chile landed in Haiti to help restore order pending the establishment of a formal peacekeeping mission under UN auspices. The UN Security Council authorized the creation of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in April 2004, with a broad mandate to assist the transitional government in ensuring "a secure and stable environment," restructuring and reforming the Haitian National Police, demobilizing armed groups, and fostering institutional development as well as a process of national dialogue and reconciliation.¹

MINUSTAH is but the latest manifestation of a prolonged effort by the international community to assist the Haitian government overcome chronic problems of instability, political violence, and weak democratic governance. Beginning with a UN effort in 1990 to monitor presidential elections, a veritable alphabet soup of 18 missions sponsored by the United Nations and the Organization of American

States has attempted to protect and monitor human rights, oversee police, military, and judicial reform, provide security, and support the establishment of functioning government institutions.² The nations of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have been deeply involved in diplomatic efforts to overcome Haiti's deep political divisions, and international financial institutions such as the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, along with individual government donors, have provided billions of dollars in foreign assistance.

Such efforts have unfolded—at times, critics say, with a lack of coordination and insufficient consultation with a broad range of actors in Haitian society—against the backdrop of what many have labeled a failed or failing state in Haiti. The country is the poorest in the Western hemisphere: according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), more than eighty percent of Haiti's population lives in poverty, and a combination of quality of life indicators places Haiti 177th out of 192 countries assessed for the UNDP's *Human Development Report*. Following the collapse in 1986 of the dictatorship of François Duvalier (1957–71) and his son, "President for Life" Jean-Claude Duvalier, a succession of short-lived governments were incapable of establishing political stability. In internationally-monitored presidential elections in 1990, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected president with broad popular support, only to be ousted in a military coup one year later. Over the next three years, the UN and OAS appointed special envoys to work diplomatically for the



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restoration of democratic rule, as did a U.S. delegation led by former President Jimmy Carter. Ultimately, in September 1994, on the eve of an intervention by a U.S.-led multilateral military force acting under a Security Council resolution, a U.S. delegation led by Carter successfully negotiated an exit for the coup leaders. The UN peace operation mandated that Aristide be restored to power. Since Aristide's return, successive UN and OAS missions have had only limited success in helping Haiti establish the security and stability necessary for tackling the country's grave economic and political problems. After Aristide was forced from power for the second time, the United Nations observed in 2004 that:

...there were a number of positive developments, including the restoration of some measure of democracy, with the first peaceful handover of power between two democratically elected presidents; the growth of a multifaceted civil society; and its increasing involvement in the development of a political culture based on democratic values. There were, however, also setbacks. Owing to the continuing political crisis and concomitant lack of stability, serious reforms never took hold. The consolidation of a genuine democratic system did not occur; self-sustaining and effective institutions at all levels, particularly in the area of public security and the rule of law, did not take firm root and were unable to deliver public services, a gap which non-governmental

organizations (NGOs) sought to fill outside the institutional framework; progress in the professionalization of the Haitian National Police (HNP) was slow and uneven; drug trafficking increased; human rights abuses and corruption continued; and real economic growth did not materialize. Lack of progress over time and lack of accountability resulted in renewed threats of sanctions and the suspension of much of the international assistance.³

On January 9, 2007, the Wilson Center's Latin American Program convened a group of regional leaders, diplomats, and practitioners from multilateral organizations to discuss the role of the international community in addressing Haiti's governance, security, and development challenges. Participants in the conference painted a markedly more positive and optimistic portrait of Haitian achievements under the government of President René Prével, who took office in 2006, noting progress in overcoming the intense factionalism of Haitian politics. This progress has continued as successful local and municipal elections took place in December 2006, the first in a decade. Virtually all panelists called for greater coordination among international donors, and for greater collaboration with Haitian institutions. For tenuous gains to be consolidated, panelists argued, the international community needs to remain engaged over the long-term, while at the same time developing an exit strategy that leaves principal responsibility for the country's welfare in

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Haitian hands. The consensus was that Haiti would need some international presence over the long haul if stability and capable governance were to be consolidated. Moreover, it was also evident that an island-wide approach to environmental and other issues would help improve relations with Haiti's neighbor, the Dominican Republic. As with all efforts to rebuild fragile states, members of the international community increasingly recognize that goals must be achieved and reinforced not only with resources, but also with engagement of the citizens of Haiti to ensure that gains are enduring.

Johanna Mendelson Forman

discussed the potential for international assistance to make a significant contribution to Haiti's development. She pointed to three factors that make Haiti's situation especially unique. One factor is Haiti's historical context. Haiti did not benefit from U.S. and Soviet competition during the Cold War, she noted. Rather, grinding poverty, repressive military regimes, and a centuries-old neglect of governance and justice gave way to a tidal wave of immigrants who sought a better life on U.S. shores. Thus, in the absence of international competition, Haiti became a U.S. security concern and a problem for international action, Mendelson Forman said. Although the country became deluged by foreign assistance, the results of such aid were limited. Corruption in government, poor development decisions, unchecked population growth, and disease thwarted the best intentions of donors, both bilateral and multilateral, to right the wrongs of Haitian leaders, she argued.

A second problem, she said, was that Haiti was not an example of a post-conflict state, like so many other cases that confronted the world community in the wake of the Cold War. While there was conflict, violence, and the disruption of democratic rule—demonstrated by the coup that overthrew the freely-elected government of Jean Bertrand Aristide in 1991—Haiti appeared more appropriate as a case for the Organization of American States to consider; in 1991 the OAS declared disruptions of the democratic process as cause for regional intervention. The continued deterioration of human rights conditions in Haiti, the ongoing actions of death squads, and an OAS-imposed embargo became sources of great human suffering and sent out an alarm that a strong

international response to illegitimate rule was needed, Mendelson Forman asserted.

In 1994, a U.S.-led multi-national force, agreed to by the UN Security Council, entered Haiti to protect its citizens and to restore legitimate government. The arrival of more than 25,000 troops, mostly U.S., but also those of other participating UN states, marked a shift in the way the international community would manage situations in countries now deemed "failed states." The extent to which the international community has the legitimacy under international law to engage in Haiti is often questioned, she noted, given that Haiti is not a post-conflict state, but a "failed state in recovery mode." However, she stressed that the international community does have a role to play in promoting stability, sound governance, and economic prosperity.

A third problem is that Haiti has been locked in a long and confrontational relationship with the Dominican Republic, with which it shares the island of Hispaniola. The tensions have produced cross-border skirmishes and, in 1937, violence that ended in a massacre of some 20,000 Haitians by the Dominican army. This violence against Haitians and the policy of President Rafael Trujillo (1930-1961) of "Dominicanization" of the border only added to the tensions between the two countries. In 1994, relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic were still tense during the first UN intervention. Conditions for an island-wide solution to the ongoing Haitian disorder were not ripe.

Mendelson Forman argued that finding real and enduring solutions to Haiti's problems will require a new set of ideas, diplomacy that engages an island-wide approach to solving the economic problems that Haiti faces, and a strong long-term economic involvement of the multinational finance institutions that hold the key to resources that are needed to help build a local and decentralized economic system. However, she noted, in the vacuum created by the war in Iraq, the United States has been more disengaged than ever in working out solutions to this long-standing problem of development. She noted the important role that nations of this hemisphere were playing to support the restoration of security and development to Haiti. Brazil's lead in the peace operations, coupled with the strong support of many of the region's larger governments, has marked a very different and positive engagement by



regional actors in Haiti's future.

Fortunately, she said, the growth of democratic governance and improved civil-military relations in Latin America have enabled many governments to take strong stands in support of peace operations. Nine Latin American countries have troops participating in the security of Haiti through UN peace-keeping operations while hemispheric defense ministers continue to work together in helping to establish a safe and secure environment. Concerned with the ongoing role of Haiti as a narcotics transfer point in the Caribbean, and recognizing the potential for failed states to provide an opening for terrorists, U.S. policymakers are now becoming more engaged in the country.

Mendelson Forman highlighted several broad questions that need to be considered in evaluating the role of the international community in Haiti:

- Are international organizations the new villains of dependency or are they playing an important role in jump-starting failed regimes?
- Are the types of threats that poor countries like Haiti face best managed through multilateral organizations? For example, are the transnational threats that now plague so many weak states possible to solve only through a partnership between the emerging governments and multilateral institutions?
- What role can diplomacy play in fostering the awareness that Haiti and the Dominican Republic have a shared fate, and that the island as a whole is not sustainable without some alternative form of energy development? Is it possible to build peace through shared collaboration on energy security?
- What can be done now to further build security in Haiti? Insecurity is a symptom of a larger problem, and the only way to rebuild it is to provide young men and women with hope for a future. Now, with the economic opportunities limited, insecurity will remain a constant threat to governance. Can the international community assist in building a rural Haiti that is decentralized and self-sufficient through alternative forms of technology?
- Will the democracies of Latin America continue to provide support for Haiti? What capacity

will they have to sustain what is clearly a long-term mission in the region?

She concluded that Haiti's future and the way that it is viewed by Latin American countries may signal a new era of regional relations that could subordinate U.S. interests to those of other regional actors. It is important that Haiti and its future development become a central part of a wider effort of all countries interested in peace and security at the third U.S. border, the Caribbean.

Assistant Secretary-General Albert Ramdin

of the Organization of American States (OAS) noted that the political landscape in the Western hemisphere has changed tremendously over the past 12 to 15 months. Many countries held elections in 2006; almost two-thirds of the population of the Americas now has a new government or has renewed the mandate for the sitting government. Ensuring free and fair elections and democracy have been key focal points of OAS involvement in the region during this time. While the OAS has been pleased with the quality of the elections and the strength of democracy in the region, Ramdin added that new or sitting governments, including Haiti's, face many economic, social, and political challenges, as well as issues concerning indigenous peoples.

One positive development, Ramdin said, is there is greater political support in the Western hemisphere for cooperation and engagement in Haiti. The formation of the UN Stabilization Mission (MINUSTAH), which involves a number of South American countries, is an example of this political momentum. Ramdin urged countries to sustain the political momentum aimed at addressing Haiti's needs.

In discussing Haiti, Ramdin argued that it is important to avoid using labels like failed state, non-failed state, or fledgling democracy. Such labels are difficult to define, he said, particularly since so-called developed states also face many challenges. Furthermore, Ramdin argued both the Haitian government and the international community should focus on Haiti's particular needs with respect to resources, assistance, and technical support. Ramdin noted that Haitian President René Prével is committed to this approach—during a visit to the

OAS in March of 2006, Préval made clear that his policies would be based on Haiti's interests.

Emphasizing positive developments, Ramdin noted that Haiti has succeeded in establishing a truly representative government, with all parties represented in parliament and the cabinet. Establishing an inclusive, unified government that has a positive outlook and is committed to improving the country is a great achievement and is the starting point for any engagement with the international community, Ramdin said.

Ramdin stressed, however, that expectations regarding what can be achieved should be lowered in order to avoid disappointment and ensure steady progress, particularly given the vast number of challenges Haiti faces. These include weak institutional capacity, a history of political instability, a disengaged civil society, and massive unemployment and poverty. Such challenges require an incremental approach through which each problem is addressed step by step, he said.

Noting that the Haitian people have suffered far too long, Ramdin said that the Haitian government should focus on demonstrating short-term results in order to establish and maintain confidence in the political process. He warned that without short-term results, social unrest is likely to mount, which could lead to further political instability and damage the governmental unity that has been achieved. Some of the main challenges in the short-term, he said, are maintaining a peaceful environment and providing opportunities for income generation. One example of a short-term project is the Pan-American Development Foundation's initiative to create 1,500 jobs for street cleaners. Ramdin cautioned that while focusing on creating short-term opportunities should be a priority, the government and the international community should not lose sight of long-term strategic plans and goals, including the structural improvement of the economy and government institutions and the strengthening of the social system.

A major challenge is security, Ramdin stated. Confronting this challenge involves protecting human rights, ensuring fair judicial processes, and strengthening the Haitian National Police. It also involves international cooperation and assistance. One instance where international cooperation would be useful is in the training of Haitian police officers. He suggested that the training of police

officers take place outside Haiti; an exchange program with CARICOM nations could train Haitian police officers in a calmer environment before returning them to work in Haiti.

While security is a key concern, Ramdin said that more attention should be paid to the problem of poverty, as it is closely linked to the security challenge. Noting that it will take many years to strengthen the Haitian National Police, he argued that focusing on poverty alleviation and other development challenges will lessen security concerns indirectly in the short term. Given the length of time needed to strengthen the police force and the need for immediate development assistance, he argued that MINUSTAH should remain in the country for an extended period of time while slowly changing its mandate to focus more on development issues and institutional support other than security.

Given the many challenges Haiti faces, in 2006 the OAS expanded its mandate to include the promotion of economic and social development alongside its original focus on strengthening democratic governance. In connection with this broadened mandate, the manner in which the OAS operates is also evolving. OAS Secretary-General José Miguel Insulza established a Haiti Task Force aimed at coordinating all OAS activities in Haiti. As chair of the Haiti Task Force, Ramdin said that he is responsible for streamlining OAS operations in Haiti in order to strengthen their effectiveness and better serve Haitian authorities. Thus, the activities of the three basic OAS entities in Haiti—the OAS country office, the Electoral Technical Assistance Program (ETAP), and the OAS Special Mission—will all be managed under the heading of the OAS country office.

Ramdin added that better coordination within the international community, particularly at the technical and political levels, is needed, as is greater cooperation between donor aid organizations working within Haiti. This involves 1) making sure that donor aid for technical support takes account of the political environment; 2) expanding membership in the extended framework for cooperation on Haiti; and 3) holding regular meetings on political developments. Such coordination among international entities is likely to increase program effectiveness and reduce the risk that if one element of the strategy collapses, everything falls apart. Moreover, he said, the Haitian government needs to professionalize



donor aid coordination within Haiti. The OAS is supporting institutional strengthening within the Ministry of Planning, the institution officially designated to deal with donor aid.

Within each of the three main areas of focus under the extended mandate—democratic governance, development, and security—the OAS has designed a specific set of activities. In the area of democracy and governance, Ramdin explained, the OAS intends to continue the civil registry and National ID Card project, which has successfully registered 3.5 million Haitians. Support for the Haitian Electoral Council will also be continued as this body is transformed into a permanent electoral council. One challenge, he highlighted, is the frequency of elections in the country. In the coming five years, 15 elections will be held in Haiti, costing between 15 and 20 million dollars each. Given the great cost of holding such frequent elections—150 million dollars over the next five years—and the limited amount of funding available, Ramdin suggested that Haitian authorities revisit the electoral process and consider making constitutional changes to address this problem.

Other issues in the area of democracy and governance which require attention are judicial reform, capacity building, and supporting the Parliament, he stated. Recognizing that the OAS cannot take on the entirety of judicial reform, he noted that the OAS can be of assistance in certain areas such as the training of judges. In order to promote institutional strengthening and capacity building in the past, the OAS has provided technical assistance. However, he argued that capacity building should be more permanent. Rather than simply sending experts to Haiti, these experts should be tied to a Haitian counterpart in order to train individuals for an extended period of time. For example, he said, Caribbean countries can be especially useful in providing support for the Haitian Parliament.

With its expanded mandate, the OAS is also assisting the Haitian government in the area of development. As part of a program which will continue throughout 2007, the OAS has sent two technical missions to assess conditions for expanded work. The mission has also provided strategic planning and training in tourism, including agri-tourism, in collaboration with the Inter-American Institute for Agriculture. Ramdin argued that

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through tourism, many short-term job opportunities could be established, particularly with the involvement of the private sector and international institutions like the Caribbean Hotel Association and the Caribbean Tourism Organization. The OAS is already providing technical assistance in developing the tourism potential of several areas including La Gonâve and Cap Haïtien, he said.

Promoting greater trade with and investment in Haiti will also contribute to the country's development. What is needed, Ramdin said, is a positive attitude that demonstrates the potential for specific economic and investment opportunities in areas such as in water resource management, reforestation, natural disaster mitigation, port security, and trade facilitation. To accomplish this, the OAS is organizing a trade mission and a business forum in Haiti in October 2007. He ended by pointing out other OAS programs that can assist in Haiti, including those designed to combat illegal arms, narcotics, and human trafficking.

Ambassador Raymond Joseph, Haitian ambassador to the United States, argued that Haiti's current situation should be considered in light of the historical legacy of colonialism and occupation. Many of Haiti's problems, he said, stem from the fact that it was the second country in the Western hemisphere after the United States to achieve independence. Given the reluctance of the international community—and the United States in particular—to recognize a state established by former slaves who had defeated a “civilized” country, France, Haiti was not welcomed into the international community. This was despite the fact that Haiti's independence benefited the United States tremendously: France's fear of

losing its richest colony, he asserted, sparked its decision to sell the Louisiana Territory for \$15 million, perhaps the greatest real estate bargain in history. Thus, the United States doubled its landmass, gaining the vast domain west of the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains, from the Gulf of Mexico all the way to the border of Canada.

Despite the United States' gain from Haiti's struggle for independence, the United States joined France in imposing an embargo on Haiti that remained in place for 60 years, with devastating consequences for the country. Moreover, in return for recognition, France demanded payment from Haiti as compensation for its losses. Haiti was thus further saddled by the debt of paying for its independence, Joseph said.

When the United States did become involved in Haiti—it occupied the country between 1915 and 1934—it reinforced the old social structure imposed by the French, perpetuating social divisions between mulattos on top and black masses on the bottom. Thus, despite some investment in infrastructure including roads, schools and buildings during the U.S. occupation, the U.S. Marines allied themselves with the bourgeoisie, leaving the social structure unchanged.

Haiti did not benefit from the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, when those countries were fighting for allies and offering assistance to newly independent countries. The Cold War did, however, keep brutal dictator François Duvalier (1957-71) in power, because he was viewed as a bulwark against communism.⁴ While Haiti was the second major tourist destination in the Caribbean behind Cuba from the 1940s to the 1960s, after coming to power in 1957, Duvalier drove all the professionals from the country, greatly damaging Haiti's economic standing.

Turning to the role of the international community in recent years, Joseph stated that assistance from the international community is important and effective when properly directed. International observers sent by the OAS made the first democratic elections possible in 1990, he said. Although the Haitian people are very accepting of foreign assistance, he warned that the presence of foreign troops for an extended period of time could spark Haitian nationalism and a rejection of international involvement in the country. To prevent this from happen-

ing, he said, international assistance should be well coordinated and aim to achieve sustainable solutions. Rather than claiming credit for their individual contributions, international organizations should work in cooperation with Haitians on development initiatives to strengthen the country's human capital and capacity. He highlighted the Inter-American Development Bank's fund to bring Haitian professionals living abroad back to the country as a successful example of this approach.

Joseph added that development initiatives should not try to reinvent the wheel, but rather build on previous efforts. The dissolution of the Haitian armed forces after the reestablishment of democracy had devastating consequences, he said. Destroying the armed forces without a substitute in place created a huge vacuum and made gaining control over the security situation much more challenging. This lesson should be learned with reference to other countries, he concluded.

Ambassador Roberto Álvarez,

Mission of the Dominican Republic to the OAS, discussed three principal areas of concern about Haiti from the Dominican perspective: drug and arms trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and migration.

Quoting the 2006 State Department International Narcotics Control Strategy Report on the Dominican Republic, Álvarez noted that the Dominican Republic has been identified as “a major drug transit country for illegal substances flowing from South America,” and that during 2005, the State Department credited the Dominican Republic with increasing the seizures of large quantities of drugs, raising the number of extraditions of suspects to the United States, and improving domestic law enforcement capacity. Referring to Haiti, the same report notes, “Haiti is a key conduit for drug traffickers.” Álvarez maintained that the international community made a terrible decision by dismantling Haitian armed forces before a new, non-politicized, effective security force was in place, saying that this decision has had a significant impact on drug and arms interdiction between the Dominican Republic and Haiti: the Dominican armed forces now bear the burden of patrolling the Haitian border. The Dominican armed forces now lack an interlocutor on the Haitian side, he added.



The flow of drugs through the Dominican Republic has had serious consequences for Dominican society, as not all drugs that pass through the country leave, he said.

Turning to health issues and focusing in particular on the problem of HIV/AIDS, Álvarez noted that the Caribbean region is the second most affected area in the world after sub-Saharan Africa, with AIDS a leading cause of death in people aged 15 to 44. According to a report by the United Nations program on HIV/AIDS, of the Caribbean's 1.6 percent prevalence rate, Haiti is the biggest cause of concern, with an adult prevalence rate of 3.8 percent, compared to 1.7 percent in the Dominican Republic. The report also points out that Hispaniola is the most affected island in the Caribbean, with 77.5 percent of the cases of 330,000 adults in region. Haiti alone has 57.5 percent of regional cases, or 190,000 cases, while the Dominican Republic has 20 percent, or 66,000 cases.

With regard to immigration, Álvarez argued that the strict U.S. immigration policy and increased vigilance by the U.S. Coast Guard have resulted in more migration across the Haitian-Dominican border since the early 1990s, placing a great strain on the Dominican Republic. While President Bush recently signed a law authorizing the construction of a wall between the United States and Mexico, what Álvarez called a "virtual wall" has existed between the island of Hispaniola and the United States since the mid 1990s. The number of interdictions of Haitians by the U.S. Coast Guard greatly increased in the early 1990s. As a point of reference, in 1987, the U.S. Coast Guard interdicted 3,541 Haitians on the high seas. After the 1991 coup in Haiti, the number of interdictions jumped to 10,087, spiking to 25,069 in 1994. Using a term coined by Bernardo Vega, former Dominican ambassador to the United States, Álvarez commented that increased vigilance by the U.S. Coast Guard in the Windward Passage and the Mona Channel between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico placed the island of Hispaniola "in brackets."

Given the difficulty of migrating to the United States, the absence of a Haitian security force, and the lack of identity cards, Haitians migrated to the Dominican Republic in dramatically increased numbers in the 1990s. Acknowledging the impetus

Le Chevallier identified three simultaneous transitions taking place in Haiti—from armed conflict to reconciliation and peace, from a non-democratic culture to a democratic society, and from a failed state to a nation-state. Trying to address one of these transitions while ignoring the other two is what explains the past failures of international assistance.

for migration from Haiti, Álvarez noted that the embargo imposed on Haiti in the 1990s had deleterious effects on the Haitian economy and exacerbated poverty. However, according to a recent needs assessment and cost analysis, the Dominican Republic itself needs between \$29 and \$30 billion to meet the Millennium Development Goals. (The country's GDP is \$21 billion.) Thus, Álvarez stressed that in trying to meet the Dominican Republic's own development goals, including reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, the Dominican government should not be expected to be able to meet the needs of Haitians living within Dominican borders.

Álvarez agreed with Johanna Mendelson Forman that the international community should consider island-wide solutions or approaches. Taking issue with the comments of OAS Assistant Secretary-General Ramdin, Álvarez argued that such solutions should not be slow and incremental but dramatic. Unfortunately, he said, initiatives for dramatic, island-wide solutions are not being proposed by the international community; it has not viewed the immigration burden placed on the Dominican Republic as a shared responsibility and thus has failed to address the problem.

Álvarez concluded by indicating that polls show public opinion in the Dominican Republic shifting towards less acceptance of Haitian immigrants. In 1990, when asked whether Haitians who illegally immigrated to the Dominican Republic should be returned to Haiti, 44 percent of Dominican respondents said they should be allowed to stay. Ten years later, only 17 percent responded that way. He warned that unless the situation is viewed in an island-wide context and dramatic measures—such as widespread job creation in Haiti—are adopted,

the international community can expect very serious conflicts in the future.

Gerardo Le Chevallier, UN Stabilization Mission (MINUSTAH), agreed with Assistant Secretary-General Ramdin regarding the need to maintain a positive outlook, noting progress on a number of fronts. On January 7, 2006, he said, MINUSTAH lost Brazilian General Urano Bacellar, Force Commander of MINUSTAH.⁵ On January 9, a general strike organized by the private sector shut down the whole of Port-au-Prince, in a protest over the security situation and a demand to postpone the presidential elections. Despite these setbacks, on February 7, 2006, Haiti held the best elections in its history.

The transition to democracy has yet to succeed, however. The results of the February 2007 elections were not accepted by all of the participants. The international community has been going in and out of Haiti for several years. MINUSTAH is on its seventh mission and many other international actors, including the United States, France, Canada, and the OAS, have left without much success. The image of the international community and of MINUSTAH has not improved in the eyes of Haitians due to the small number of lasting results.

Le Chevallier identified three simultaneous transitions taking place in Haiti—from armed conflict to reconciliation and peace, from a non-democratic culture to a democratic society, and from a failed state to a nation-state. Trying to address one of these transitions while ignoring the other two is what explains the past failures of international assistance, he argued.

With regard to the political transformations in Haiti, Le Chevallier argued the key player in this process is President Préval. For the first time, a popular president was re-elected. The six major political parties participated and agreed to a one-year political truce. However, he said, President Préval's health is a matter of concern. Even though President Préval has informed the nation that his cancer has not returned, the psychological implications of the fact that he may be ill are extremely important. Private investors, as well as Haitian politicians who are thinking of replacing the President, might not necessarily wait for the end of this term, he said. He added, however,

that there are no obvious choices for a successor. The continuity of the transition process will become an issue as his term approaches its end.

The political transformation underway faces three more challenges: the inefficiency of government itself, the burden and cost of holding frequent elections, and the lack of strong political parties. State institutions are weak, slow, often corrupt, and complex, yet a strong state is needed in order to address extreme poverty and maintain stability, he said. There are many levels of authority in the Haitian government, he noted, and Haiti has more elected officials than Peru, a much richer country with more than double the population. Although the electoral cycle just ended, it will restart again in November 2007 with senatorial elections to renew one-third of the Senate. This involves investing \$30–\$32 million in order to elect ten senators during two electoral rounds in November. Approximately \$105 million will be needed to finance seven elections in the next four years. The structure of the government and political processes are written into the Constitution, he said, and the existing mechanism for constitutional reform takes five years. Political party building is also needed to anchor the whole political system and reduce corruption, he argued.

Le Chevallier underscored the fact that Haiti has not recovered from the economic embargo of the 1990s and the government lacks revenues to advance the development agenda. Local taxes only partly cover government salaries, leaving the international community to finance all investments. Moreover, the cooperation framework agreed to by international donors has not delivered all the results expected by the government. Donors are criticized for a lack of coordination and for being slow to disburse pledges, but the Haitian government's absorptive capacity is low. Agreeing with Haitian Ambassador Joseph, Le Chevallier stated that the international community should help build the capacity of the Haitian government to spend the resources that have been pledged. He noted that the UN country system has launched a transitional appeal for \$98 million in order to consolidate and facilitate the transfer of investment funds over the short term.

Turning to the transition to peace with which MINUSTAH is intimately involved, Le Chevallier described threats to security as emanating from a range of “partisans of chaos”: drug traffickers,



organized criminal rings (many of which include current police officers), criminal and politically-motivated gangs, some members of the oligarchy, some former members of the military and police, and radical supporters of former President Aristide.

Stressing that MINUSTAH is strictly a peace-keeping operation that is not involved in development, Le Chevallier stated the goal of MINUSTAH is to help stabilize the country by providing a secure and safe environment, supporting reforms to consolidate the rule of law, strengthening democratic governance and state institutions, and promoting human rights. He argued that MINUSTAH's mandate should be renewed and extended to at least one year beyond the February 15, 2007, expiration date, given the fact that many aspects of MINUSTAH's mandate require a longer commitment.⁶ Longer international involvement in a country is often needed to maintain peace and ensure that national forces are prepared to take over, he argued, pointing to the presence of the UN in El Salvador for almost ten years after the signing of the peace agreements. He stressed that the international community should make good on its promises of troops, specialists, and equipment. For example, of the 7,200 troops promised, only 6,662 are in Haiti, and police officers are short by about 200.

MINUSTAH also needs to begin formulating an exit strategy, he stated. This involves establishing benchmarks for success and deadlines to achieve them. He added that donors should improve cooperation with the government as well as MINUSTAH in order to avoid duplication and increase effectiveness.

Commenting on many of MINUSTAH's long-term concerns, Le Chevallier stated that while the government does have the political will to effect change, it lacks the resources required to do so. Donors and the UN system do have the political will and resources to engage in Haiti in the short term, Le Chevallier said. However, he questioned how long this commitment would last. He warned that leaving the country prematurely, as other missions have done in the past, could lead to later crises and the need for further international intervention.

Achilles Zaluar, Embassy of Brazil, shared ten lessons from his experience as a diplomat based at the Brazilian Embassy in Port-au-Prince. The first lesson, he said, is that national leadership must be taken seriously. The often-quoted principle of national ownership, to which many donors pay lip service, is not sufficient. National ownership suggests that recipient countries receive complete packages of projects in the form of a gift, of which the recipient countries become owners and for the outcome of which they are to be held responsible. He added that no development plan, no matter how well designed from the technical standpoint, will be relevant unless it is initiated and guided by the national state, national government and national society. The role of foreign actors, such as bilateral cooperation agencies and international development agencies, should be purely an advisory and consulting one.

Noting that the primary cause of Haiti's problems is the weakening of the Haitian state since the 1970s, Zaluar argued that the top priority for donors should be to strengthen the state of the recipient country. Without a strong and effective state, which provides the favorable climate for savings and investment, there can be no development, he stated.

The second lesson he offered is that cooperation for development should be demand-driven, not supply-driven. While this is formally recognized by many donors, he said, it is not always applied in practice. Often donors that have some capacity to offer, such as technical assistance services, agricultural inputs, medical supplies, and office supplies, will push this capacity on the recipient. Rather, recipients should define their real needs before the coordination mechanisms of the UN system seek to mobilize what is needed, he said.

Third, Zaluar argued that development cooperation must bring concrete benefits to the recipient country, such as infrastructure improvements (roads, ports, airports, electric power, and sanitation); social services such as universal education and free health care; direct income support for the poor to help jumpstart the economy; and agricultural improvements (fertilizer, seeds, pesticides, local roads, storage structures, and conservation protection). These

are all things that countries themselves choose to do once they have the resources and control over the development process, he said.

However, instead of doing concrete things, may donors spend fortunes sending consultants and organizing seminars on things like “good governance,” “capacity building,” “anti-corruption,” “judicial reform,” and human rights; whatever issue is fashionable at the time in the international “development community.” While these abstract goals are important, he said, their achievement depends almost exclusively on local dynamics, not on donor agencies. Often, the only people that benefit from these efforts are the consultants and perhaps the hotel, restaurant, and convention center industries of the recipient countries, he argued. Moreover, he said, in agriculture, what donors sometimes do is dump subsidized excess food on the local market either bilaterally or through the World Food Program, destroying local agriculture in the process and turning recipient countries into “international beggars.”

Lesson number four is that projects must be drawn on a national scale, not on a pilot scale, Zaluar asserted. The developing world is a vast cemetery of pilot projects, which worked as long as the extent of funding continued with no durable, positive effects, he stated. Such pilot projects divert scarce human resources away from the ministries in the recipient country for the purpose of “project implementation.” For small developing countries such as Haiti, one of the most important constraints for development is the availability of competent officials and technicians who are willing to work for the government at the low salaries that are offered in the local market. To divert those technicians to work on pilot projects is counterproductive, he argued. Thus, if it is impossible to achieve results on a national scale in all areas, it is better to define priorities and concentrate resources in a smaller number of areas.

The fifth lesson is: do no harm. International cooperation for development, if not well planned, may actually hurt development, Zaluar noted. For instance, he said, international cooperation has been known to stimulate the brain drain if the few competent technicians of the public sector are siphoned off to work for the local offices of bilateral coopera-

tion agencies, embassies, international development agencies, and, as it often happens, for NGOs that receive international monies for projects. The Haitian state was practically dismantled in the 1980s and 1990s in favor of NGOs, which executed the major share of international aid. Furthermore, the medical sector was destroyed with the massive emigration of doctors and nurses to developed countries. Today, most of the free medical assistance that is available to 8.5 million Haitians is provided by about 700 Cuban doctors who partially replaced the exported Haitians, he pointed out.

Sixth, Zaluar argued, the goal of the international community, the UN system, etc., should be to become more effective, not more efficient. If international cooperation is ineffective or counterproductive, efforts to render it more efficient are irrelevant and even harmful. Regardless of whether the donor spends less or better, he said, practical results on the ground will be nil. However, too much debate about international cooperation focuses on efficiency instead of effectiveness.

Lesson number seven is that “lack of absorptive capacity” is a false problem. Donors often use this claim to shift the blame to Haitians and evade responsibility for poor performance, he argued. A donor blaming a recipient country for lack of absorptive capacity is like a doctor blaming a patient for “lack of healing capacity.” If he could heal himself, he would not need a doctor. In contrast, Zaluar suggested that *donors* have a low capacity to plan and execute cooperation effectively, in a way that attends to the needs of the recipient country, while countries such as Haiti suffer from an *excess* of absorptive

In the area of development, dozens of independent agencies, the UNDP, international financial institutions, the European Union, bilateral cooperation agencies, humanitarian bodies, and major NGOs, all working on their own, make coordination impossible... If the international community tried to run peace-keeping operations in the same way that development is carried out... the result would be chaos.



capacity. Somehow, he said, these countries are able to manage hundreds of micro projects, with dozens of different bilateral, multilateral NGO donors, each with their own burdensome reporting requirements; even as their “development partners” steal their best technicians with salaries several times higher than those paid locally.

Lesson number eight, he said, is that any coordination effort must fully engage the Bretton Woods institutions and regional development banks, such as the Inter-American Development Bank, that have the resources to make a positive impact. However, he added, coordination between the UN system, Bretton Woods institutions, regional mechanisms, and bilateral donors is impossible unless the national government of the recipient country takes a leadership role.

Lesson number nine is that the United Nations, which already knows how to conduct peacekeeping operations, must learn to execute development operations, he argued. In the area of development, dozens of independent agencies, the UNDP, international financial institutions, the European Union, bilateral cooperation agencies, humanitarian bodies, and major NGOs, all working on their own, make coordination impossible, he said. If the international community tried to run peacekeeping operations in the same way that development is carried out, with dozens of autonomous armed forces, each with its own doctrine, capability, and priorities, the result would be chaos, he said.

Rather than simply improving coordination, what is needed is a more radical rethinking of international cooperation for development, he said. He suggested a model similar to the relationship between the Security Council, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and contributing countries, with unity of command. In development operations, a new United Nations Peacebuilding Commission is needed, he argued, which would play a role similar to that of the Security Council in peacekeeping operations. In countries like Haiti, such a development operation should start functioning years before the end of the peacekeeping operation, he added.

The last lesson, he said, is that all major actors, including donor countries, new donors, recipient countries, the United Nations, international financial institutions, humanitarian agencies, etc., should stop the blame-shifting game. The truth, he said, is

that all actors have been accomplices in developing the current system for development assistance. Unfortunately, he noted, there is little correlation between receiving development aid and making progress towards development. Nobody has figured out how to promote development in any particular case, he said, because development is a complex cultural and social process. He concluded that the first step is to create some political and institutional space where all actors can talk, work, and learn together.

In short, the ten lessons on peacebuilding and development cooperation are:

- 1) Be guided by national leadership, not “national ownership;”
- 2) Cooperation must be demand-driven, not supply-driven;
- 3) Bring concrete benefits;
- 4) Think on a national scale, not pilot scale;
- 5) Do no harm (don’t plunder the human resources of the country nor destroy the food-production capacity of the country you are trying to help);
- 6) Strive to become more effective, not more efficient;
- 7) Lack of absorptive capacity” is a false problem;
- 8) Engage the Bretton Woods institutions and regional development banks;
- 9) Learn to execute development operations like we learned to execute peacekeeping operations; and
- 10) Stop the blame-shifting game and create some political and institutional space where all actors can talk, work, and learn together.

Caroline Anstey, The World Bank, highlighted Haiti’s significant progress on the democratic and economic governance fronts over the last three years. In addition to having held successful elections at the national and local levels, economic management has also greatly improved. Haiti has qualified for the Heavily-Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) debt relief program and is on track to qualify for multilateral debt relief through a G7 initiative that will bring half a billion dollars of debt relief to the country. Haiti has also produced its first Interim Cooperation Framework—a coordinated, nationally-owned framework—and has prepared an Interim

There are grave misperceptions in the international community that Haiti as a nation is insecure. The vast majority of Haiti, roughly three-quarters of the country, is peaceful. In fact, a number of development projects are underway in rural areas of the country, including infrastructure programs to build roads, water and sanitation projects, school construction, and community-driven development programs.

Poverty Reduction Strategy. Haiti has submitted its budget on time over the past two years, has increased the transparency of and participation in the budget process, and has reduced the amount of discretionary accounts from about 60 percent of the budget to less than 10 percent. Furthermore, a civil society monitoring mechanism has been set up to track economic governance reforms, something beyond what many other governments in the Caribbean have achieved. Haiti has also introduced procurement reform, has conducted publicly-released audits of the five main public enterprises, and has agreed to implement annual asset declarations by public officials.

In addition to these management improvements, she said that economic performance has also shown signs of progress. In 2004, growth was approximately negative 3.5 percent. In 2005 it was a positive 1.5 percent. In 2006, she predicted, growth will probably be around 2.5 percent. Inflation is down and the macro-economic indicators are stable. In addition, Haiti now has a poverty reduction and growth facility from the IMF. These improvements send an important signal to the international community and are considerable feats for a government with such overwhelming capacity constraints, Anstey argued.

Despite this progress, there is still room for improvement, Anstey argued. At an April 2004 workshop in Port-au-Prince following the departure of Aristide, a number of donor organizations and Haitian representatives pledged to learn from the past experience of donor involvement in Haiti and improve the aid process, she said. At this meeting, donors agreed that there had been far too many “feel-good projects draped in national flags” and

committed to better coordinate projects and make sure such projects were carried out under Haitian leadership. Donors also committed to engage in Haiti over the long run, and to channel funds directly through the Haitian budget rather than through NGOs. On the Haitian side, authorities committed to put in place coordination mechanisms, maintain sound economic governance, address issues of fraud and corruption, and work with donors as a united group, she said.

While a coordinated development strategy—the Interim Cooperation Framework—has been put into place and donors have committed to support a Haitian-led strategy, donors still do not channel enough money through the Haitian budget, Anstey asserted. Haiti’s budget for a population of eight million people is roughly the same size as the operating budget of a medium-sized U.S. university, and smaller than the operating budget of the humanitarian organization, CARE. To further promote economic growth in the country, the budget has to expand, she argued. Donors often cite Haiti’s low ranking on the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index as a reason for not channeling resources through the Haitian budget. But without bolstering Haitian institutions, Anstey emphasized, the viability of the state will not improve. Indeed, she said, donors are themselves culpable of contributing to the weakness of the Haitian state by refusing to work through the state, by setting up parallel organizations, and, all too often, by pulling out their resources.

In the future, she argued, it is important to raise the confidence of donors about how their money will be used so they are more willing to send funds directly through the Haitian budget. This can be achieved by obtaining a strong commitment from the Haitian government to deepen its program of economic governance reform. To reduce the administrative burden on the state, donors should consider pooling resources into a multi-donor trust fund, which would disburse funds according to one set of requirements, one set of conditionalities, and one reporting mechanism. This has been done and has been successful in places such as Iraq, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Kosovo, East Timor, Burundi, and Afghanistan. Even if some donors are not willing to put their money into a multi-donor trust fund, they can still better coordinate missions and



work through the government to bolster government capacity, she said.

Turning to the relationship between security and development, Anstey argued that security and development must go hand in hand. Insecurity has often prevented development workers from reaching certain areas of the country, including areas of Port-au-Prince such as Cité Soleil and Bel Air. She agreed with Le Chevallier that security problems stem in part from the fact that the number of UN peacekeeping forces, international police forces, SWAT team experts, anti-gang experts, etc., has not been sufficient.

At the same time, she insisted, there are grave misperceptions in the international community that Haiti as a nation is insecure. The vast majority of Haiti, roughly three-quarters of the country, is peaceful, she said. In fact, a number of development projects are underway in rural areas of the country, including infrastructure programs to build roads, water and sanitation projects, school construction, and community-driven development programs. Recent public opinion polls indicate that while 58 percent of residents in the metropolitan area feel

unsafe often or most of the time, only 15 percent in rural areas feel unsafe.

In order to improve the situation in urban areas, Anstey reiterated that security and development initiatives should go hand in hand; development agencies should work within political cycles, enabling political leaders to capitalize on development progress and push forward more substantial reforms. It was also imperative to be able to produce quick, visible results. She suggested establishing a better division of labor between those agencies that can deliver quick-impact programs of job creation and those that work on medium- to longer-term reform.

Anstey concluded by challenging the notion that the security situation in areas like Cité Soleil had to be addressed and settled before development could take place. Many countries in Latin America have insecure urban areas, including São Paulo, Brazil, and Kingston, Jamaica, yet the amount of money pouring into those countries from foreign investors is substantial. While it is important to work towards achieving security in problem areas, she said, it was wrong to make the rest of Haiti dependent on

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improvements in the urban areas. She argued that donors should be more creative in mobilizing investment from the Haitian Diaspora and channeling it for development.

Conclusion: Since taking office in May 2006, President Préval has managed to keep his coalition government together. Port au Prince is far more secure, in part because of aggressive efforts by MINUSTAH, in collaboration with the national government, to go after gangs that were terrorizing civilians. Improvements in security have attracted the attention of potential investors, especially in light of trade legislation passed by the U.S. Congress in late 2006 to expand the export of manufactured goods into the United States.

Like any fragile government, Haiti will need continued assistance to build capacity in its ministries, and to find a way to demonstrate to ordinary Haitians that progress is being made in their communities. This is the challenge that President Préval faces on a daily basis. It is a challenge that may well keep his coalition together. No one wants another international peace operation for Haiti. And yet it is clear that the current mission will be in Haiti for the long haul, something that will ensure that, with appropriate leadership and adequate resources, Haiti will be able to join the community of Caribbean states and contribute to the peace and well-being of the region.

NOTES

1. Text, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1542 of 30 April 2004, establishing the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

2. UN and OAS missions to and operations in Haiti since 1990 include the United Nations Observer Group for the Verification of the Elections in Haiti (ONUVEH); the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH); the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH); the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH); the United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti (UNTMH); and the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MINOPUH).

3. United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on Haiti," S/2004/300, 16 April 2004, p. 2.

4. François Duvalier was succeeded in power by his nineteen-year-old son Jean-Claude, who was ultimately forced into exile in 1986. [Ed.]

5. The Brazilian government and the UN deemed Urano Bacellar's death a suicide. [Ed.]

6. On February 15, 2007, the UN extended the mission until October 2007, less than the one year requested.



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