

Governance: Democratic Process and Public Administration Reform

UNDP is working with the NGO GOAL in a cash-for-work scheme to remove small debris from the Canape Vert's communities.



Photo: UNDP Haiti

The importance of building back better Haiti's governance

It is an understatement to state that the tragic events of 12 January 2010 have had a devastating effect on the Government of Haiti. The earthquake destroyed almost all the Government's infrastructures (buildings, archives, technical and IT systems) and severely affected its capacity to deliver the basic public and administrative services in Port-au-Prince and the regions. The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment found that almost all government buildings and institutions, with the exception of the Ministry of Agriculture and Sports, have been partly or completely destroyed. According to the Government of Haiti's Office of Human Resources (*Office de Management et des ressources Humaines* (OMRH)) some 40 percent of the senior government cadre were either killed or have left the country.

Governance lies at the root of Haiti's multiple crises. Decades of dictatorship and military coups with only short democratic interludes, have hindered the emergence of a coherent and nationally owned governance system. Haiti remains the Western Hemisphere's poorest country, which continues to be mired in instability. Historically, international engagement in Haiti has not



been sufficiently coherent in addressing the need to establish a governance system owned by the Haitian people. Weak coordination and coherence amongst donors has been reinforced by a lack of clarity concerning the definition of governance itself and the entry points which might help to address it. External engagement has alternated between efforts to strengthen public institutions and channelling 'governance' towards civil society to the detriment of broader public and civic institutions. Although improvements are underway in certain aspects of public administration, governance remains weak and the Government of Haiti is now attempting to take 'ownership' over its strategy in this regard.

In his speech on 18 February 2010 to launch the post-disaster needs assessment process, the Prime Minister Jean Max Bellerive, expressed the country's vision and underlined the need for an overhaul of the political and public administrative system. He stressed that for Haiti to become a full and active member of the global community the country must reconsider its democratic governance challenges and adapt its strategic policies and institutions accordingly. The Prime Minister stated the importance of adapting the fundamental principle of good governance through 'voice and participation'. Therefore, while constituting a challenge of unprecedented dimensions, the post-earthquake recovery constitutes an opportunity to build back better Haiti's governance system. This can be achieved if recovery efforts are effectively coordinated between the Government of Haiti and the international community.

UNDP's Approach

Governance is a central priority for the Government of Haiti and is a thematic area in which UNDP has always been perceived as a neutral partner. In keeping with the Government's Strategic Plan for the Reconstruction and Development of Haiti, which is derived from the outcomes of the post-disaster needs assessment process, UNDP will strengthen its existing support to the Government of Haiti at both the central, district and municipal levels (please refer to the separate Programme Outline on Local Governance, Decentralization and Territorial Development). UNDP will focus on those areas in which it either has a strong track record in Haiti, such as support for democratic processes, or where, by the nature of its neutral positioning and expertise, it has a comparative advantage, such as in the case of public administration reform.

Programme Components

Support to the Democratic Process

UNDP recognizes that the public dialogue on the democratic process is both led and belongs to the people of Haiti. The international community has already pledged that it will provide the necessary support to ensure that Haiti becomes a full democratic country and to this end, the United Nations and specifically UNDP, is mandated to support the democratic aspirations of the Haitian people. In this regard, the four components of the Support to the Democratic Process will help build the foundations of a democratic country:

- **Electoral Support and Parliamentary Development:**
In accordance with the constitutional requirements, Haiti will hold presidential and parliamentary elections in 2010 and 2011. There is much debate as to whether the country is ready for an election and whether the necessary technical requirements can be put in place in time for credible national elections to take place. Based on discussions with the Government of Haiti, UNDP, working with MINUSTAH and EAD will establish an Elections Support Programme for the period. This will include:
 - the operational support to the organization of elections; and
 - a capacity development programme for the Elections' body.A specific sub-programme will be initiated to support women's groups and women parliamentarians.
- **Political dialogue and public participation:**
The earthquake has focused the minds of the Haitian people on broader political debate and participation. There is general agreement that there is now an opportunity to build the foundations of a new democratic state, with institutions that are based on 'good governance' principles and which promote participatory democracy through citizen's engagement. Within the framework of socio-economic and political development, UNDP will support national dialogue and public participation programmes to help create an environment for policy option debates and discussions.
- **Constitutional Review and Political Party Reforms:**
There is a general perception that constitutional reforms and distribution of powers and fiscal and administrative authorities to the territorial departments will solve a number of the political challenges faced by Haiti. It is evident that full public

debate on this subject was not initiated before the earthquake. Although constitutional reforms may be required in the medium to long term, what is needed in the shorter term is the willpower on the part of political leaders, to commit and implement broad political and political party reforms. The political leaders also need to develop the space and supportive environment for broad-based civic participation so that the voices of the people are heard. In this regard, UNDP will provide support for a short-term programme that provides technical assistance through expertise, lessons learned, media and public outreach to the ongoing constitutional review process and longer term assistance in support of the improved functioning of political parties.

- **Support to Civil Society:** Haiti has a well-established and mature civil society organization and non-governmental organization (NGO) community. According to some community leaders, the earthquake has killed many civic activists and community leaders, in particular, women leaders. Working with national NGOs, UNDP will establish a programme that works with and complements the initiatives led by other organizations including the United Nations Women's Fund (UNIFEM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). In this way, UNDP will aim to provide support to re-strengthen a range of different groups so that they are able to rediscover their previous position in Haitian society. These include:
 - Community Based Organizations (CBO) through a small-grant programme with a focus on women, youth and vulnerable groups;
 - human rights organizations and entities, including to the Office of the Human Rights Commissions; and
 - professional organizations and associations, including labour unions. In all these initiatives, Gender equity will be a cross-cutting issue, which will require support from other UN agencies including UNIFEM, ILO and MINUSTAH.

Public administration reform and Public accountability

- **Public administration reform:** This dimension of UNDP's programme will focus on helping to build the institutional and organizational infrastructure and the human resource capacity of key central agencies and administrations in order to ensure that these institutions have the necessary capacity to deliver

basic public services in the short term. This will include the placement of experts in identified agencies and ministries in order to assist the Government of Haiti in overcoming its short-term capacity constraints. While Public Financial Management and Budget Reform are being addressed by the World Bank, UNDP will provide technical support to help establish institutional governance, organizational development and the development of human resource capacities. In addition, alternative budgeting-bottom-up budget development and execution at the local, municipal and territorial levels will be explored as part of the decentralization initiative.

Strengthening e-governance and improving service delivery to the citizens are key objectives of the Government of Haiti and UNDP will provide support in this regard at the national, territorial and municipal level. It will look for partnerships with the Haitian private sector for e-governance service delivery.

- **Public accountability:** Haiti ranks 169th out 180 countries on Transparency International's Corruption Index. Working with Haitian public institutions, UNDP will help promote public accountability and transparency programmes to ensure that at a minimum, Haiti adheres to international conventions on anti-corruption (UNCAC) and establishes appropriate checks and balances within institutions. Efforts will focus in particular, on the following key institutions:
 - Parliament and key parliamentary committees
 - Anti-Corruption Unit (*l'Unite de Lutte Contre la Corruption*);
 - Office of the Auditor-General (*Cour Superieure des Comptes et du Contentieux administrative*);
 - National Statistics Bureau (*Institut Haitien de Statistique et l'Information* (IHSI)); and
 - Office for Citizen Protection (*L'Office de la Protection du Citoyen*).

This is in order to ensure that these institutions have both the necessary capacities and independence to carry out their respective missions.

Budget

The overall budget for the Governance: Support to Democratic Process and Public Administration Reform component of UNDP's programme for the 2010–2012 period is US\$35.6 million. Of this, \$27.4 million is to be allocated to the Democratic Process dimension and \$8.2 million to Public Administration Reform.