



The  
**Haiti**  
**Gender**  
**Shadow**  
**Report**

Ensuring Haitian Women's Participation  
and Leadership in All Stages of  
National Relief and Reconstruction

**A Coalition Gender Shadow Report  
of the 2010 Haiti PDNA**

# The **Haiti** **Gender** **Shadow Report**

Ensuring Haitian Women's Participation and Leadership in All Stages of National Relief and Reconstruction

## **A Coalition Gender Shadow Report of the 2010 Haiti Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)**

Presented by:

**Equality Now** | <http://www.equalitynow.org/>

**Gender Action** | <http://www.genderaction.org/>

**Gender and Disaster Network** | <http://www.gdnonline.org/>

**Groots International** | <http://www.groots.org/>

**Huairou Commission** | <http://www.huairou.org/>

**Lambi Fund of Haiti** | <http://www.lambifund.org/>

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**Full Acknowledgements appear on Page iii.**

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"Woman in Camp 2," Haiti, February 2010  
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## Preamble

*Recognizing* the devastation that the 12 January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, and its aftermath, has caused on the country and its people, in particular women and girls who are disproportionately affected due to the gender-based violence and discrimination they face,

*Recalling* that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Rights of the Child form, respectively, the basis of the international legal framework for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls,

*Recalling* that the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (“Convention of Belém do Pará”), provides a regional legal framework for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls,

*Recognizing* that violence against women and girls is a human rights violation that hinders and prevents individual, community and national development,

*Recalling* the commitment of governments to the Millennium Development Goals, in particular Goal 3, to promote gender equality and to empower women and girls,

*Recalling* that Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), whose 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary is upon us, “urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict,”

*Recalling* Security Council Resolution 1892 (2009) on Haiti, which emphasizes “the need for increased efforts to support the participation of women in the political process,” and “[s]trongly condemns the grave violations against children affected by armed violence, as well as widespread rape and other sexual abuse of women and girls,” and “[r]equests the Secretary-General to continue to take the necessary measures to ensure full compliance of all MINUSTAH personnel with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse,”

*Recalling* Security Council Resolution 1820, which “[r]equests the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations agencies, *inter alia*, through consultation with women and women-led organizations as appropriate, to develop effective mechanisms for providing protection from violence, including in particular sexual violence, to women and girls in and around UN managed refugee and internally displaced persons camps...”

*Recalling* the commitment of governments to the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action on Aid Effectiveness,

*Recognizing* the important work already undertaken by the United Nations Gender in Humanitarian Response Working Group in their February 2010 paper on “Gender Mainstreaming in the Humanitarian Response in the Aftermath of the Earthquake in Haiti,”

*Concerned* that qualified Haitian women and Haitian women’s organizations are not given the opportunity or are being excluded from deliberations and decision-making processes related to the reconstruction and economic and political recovery of Haiti,

*Welcoming* the statement made by former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet during her visit to Haiti in February 2010 that, "Haiti's reconstruction will be faster if women are an intrinsic part of the process." (UNIFEM News 20 February 2010),

*Underlining* the 18 March 2010 Statement issued by 26 Haitian groups, including the women's groups, Enfofam and SOFA, decrying the quasi total exclusion of Haitian civil society in the deliberations during the donors' conference in Santo Domingo that addressed the "Plan for Reconstruction of Haiti",

*Underlining* the 22 March 2010 Statement issued by CONAP, refusing to support the PDNA process and urging that all steps aiming at the construction of Haiti, cannot occur without the genuine participation of the populations,

*Underlining* the 17 March 2010 *Plateforme Femmes Citoyennes Haiti Solidaire* that aims at ensuring equality between women and men in the vision and plan of action for a new Haiti,

*Urges* the immediate inclusion of Haitian women's voices and their equal participation in all sectors related to the reconstruction of their country, and

*Exhorts* the International Donors, the Government of Haiti, and the United Nations to fulfill their commitments and obligations set forth in the above-mentioned laws, declarations, resolutions, and statements, as the case may be, without further delay.

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- Women's International Network of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)
- Equality Now
- Gender and Disaster Network
- Groots International
- Huairou Commission
- Lambi Fund of Haiti
- MADRE
- ORÉGAND (Observatoire sur le développement régional et l'analyse différenciée selon les sexes)
- PotoFanm + Fi: Rebuilding Haiti Initiative
- .g+dsr

We would first like to thank all who worked on parallel platforms, statements and declarations, locally, nationally, regionally and internationally with the aim to ensure women's participation and leadership in all phases of reconstruction of Haiti. We would also want to acknowledge the considerable work undertaken by the team who drafted the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA).

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**Main Editors:** Elise Young, Gender Action Consultant; Elaine Zuckerman, Gender Action President; Lisa Vitale, Gender Action Executive and Communications Assistant; Sonia Lowman, Gender Action Program Associate.

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## **Executive Summary**

Following the devastating January 12, 2010 earthquake, Haiti's government, supported by the World Bank, led an ambitious Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)—an operative blueprint for reconstruction. Astonishingly, the PDNA failed to address gender issues. This Gender Shadow report (GSR) provides the missing gender content for PDNA policymakers, donors, civil society groups and all stakeholders involved in Haiti's reconstruction. It follows a parallel outline to the PDNA by presenting issues related to governance and accountability, environment and disaster risk reduction, social sectors, infrastructure, the economy and cross-cutting themes.

Written by women from diverse backgrounds working both in grassroots communities in Haiti and in the international arena, the GSR offers stakeholders a set of human rights-based gender interventions to round out current redevelopment efforts and achieve greater inclusion and success.

The motivation of this GSR is the imperative for women's full participation and leadership in all phases of the reconstruction of Haiti, as mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and other internationally recognized standards that were reprioritized at a recent Millennium Development Goal summit.<sup>1</sup> These standards require that a gender perspective be integrated into ongoing post-disaster and reconstruction planning at every stage: assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Overcoming gender discrimination requires implementing the legal policy architecture that upholds the full range of Haitian women's human rights, including social and economic rights. Women's political and community leadership and care-giving work must be recognized and supported by policy and program mandates, as well as by resource commitments, that enable women to play meaningful, sustained and formal roles in the recovery process. Ultimately, this is the only way to rebuild Haiti on a more equitable and disaster-resilient foundation.

The remainder of this Executive Summary presents key recommendations to address gender issues in Haiti's reconstruction.

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<sup>1</sup> The United Nations High-Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), 20-22 September 2010 in New York.



***Key recommendations for policymakers, donors, civil society groups and all PDNA stakeholders:***

- I. Methodically require consultation with women and women's groups in every post-disaster reconstruction project and all disaster preparedness planning.
- II. Immediately strengthen IDP camp security, shelters and services by targeting gender-based violence, malnutrition and disease.
- III. Implement and enforce gender equity and anti-discrimination laws, in particularly against sexual violence, sexual harassment and human trafficking.
- IV. Create a National Redevelopment Gender Advisory Task Force comprised of government officials from disparate ministries, civil society members and grassroots groups.
  - Standardize gender mainstreaming across all public planning through system-wide gender disaggregated data.
  - Require that every new financial pledge integrate gender equity indicators.
  - Commit to transparency through the public dissemination of materials.
- V. Clarify women's unique post-disaster vulnerabilities and integrate them into infrastructure reconstruction, environmental strategies and national economic planning.
  - Target the security, economic and social needs of women as heads of households, income generators and caretakers when designing projects aimed at rebuilding national infrastructure.
  - Identify, quantify and compensate economic losses where women are especially vulnerable in all housing, land use and construction planning.
  - Develop a road grid and transportation sector that prioritizes the security, livelihood and household responsibility needs of women and girls.
  - Monitor and support women-owned businesses.
- VI. Create a health system that prioritizes the sexual and reproductive needs of women and their roles as care-takers for children, the elderly and disabled people.
  - Support the establishment of community-based family wellness centers and include men in family planning discussions.
  - Strengthen linkages that address the vulnerabilities of women and children to sexual trafficking, sexual violence and the contraction of sexual transmitted diseases.
  - Increase investment in HIV/ AIDS prevention and awareness.
  - Prioritize mental health services and services to disabled people.
- VII. Transition to a national education system that provides free primary education and protects children from domestic servitude and illegal labor practices.
  - Isolate and address factors preventing females from equitable education, such as poverty, forced or voluntary prostitution, violence and sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, household responsibilities, and inadequate hygiene supplies.
  - Prioritize the educational needs of street children by providing mobile libraries, health and sexual education, recreational events and parent trainings.

## Introduction

On January 12, 2010, an earthquake of unprecedented scale struck the small Caribbean nation of Haiti, causing catastrophic destruction in the Western hemisphere's poorest country. With an epicenter approximately 25 kilometers west of Port-au-Prince, this magnitude 7.0M quake hit the over-populated and poorly constructed capital with overwhelming shock. It killed over 230,000 Haitian women, men and children,<sup>1</sup> injured over 300,000, displaced over 1.3 million, and left more than \$7.8 billion in damages—an amount even higher than country's GDP.<sup>2</sup>

While post-disaster reconstruction is complex in any society, fragile and impoverished states with systemic weaknesses face even more daunting challenges. Haiti was devastated even before the earthquake struck. Nearly 80 percent of Haitians live in extreme poverty and more than half suffer from malnutrition.<sup>3</sup> Poverty and hunger rates rise even higher in cities, especially Port-au-Prince, where as much as 90% of people live in poverty. Unemployment is at a staggering 70 percent, while tens of thousands of people die each year from preventable illnesses related to a lack of clean water.<sup>4</sup> The average life expectancy in Haiti is only 50 years, and 1 in 16 women face the risk of dying during childbirth.<sup>5</sup>

These grim indicators stem from policies—many implemented at the insistence of donor countries and institutions—that have created a self-perpetuating cycle of extreme poverty caused by and contributing to the rapid deterioration of Haiti's natural environment. More than half of all Haitians depend on agriculture for their livelihood, with women providing most of the labor for subsistence agriculture. Yet, the challenges of agricultural production in key sectors, including livestock, fisheries and food, are vast.<sup>6</sup> Poor policies have enabled the richest one percent of the population to control nearly half of the country's wealth and over the last couple of decades have rendered the agricultural nation of Haiti dependent on importing half of all its food—the highest percentage in the hemisphere.

Compounding these insecurities, the earthquake further devastated Haiti's frail infrastructure, including housing, public buildings, main roads, and the port and airport of Port-au-Prince. It worsened already inadequate and inequitable access to basic social services throughout Haiti. And it created a severe lack of safety and security, especially for women and girls living in camps, worsening the already grave problem of sexual violence.

Additionally, and perhaps most crucially, the earthquake served to exacerbate existing inequalities, rendering it not just a natural disaster, but also an example of massive injustice. Years of systemic gender discrimination have exposed the women of Haiti to higher rates of poverty and violence—and the disaster, too, has proved anything but neutral. Both over-

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<sup>1</sup> "Haiti's Death Toll Raised to 230,000." Huffington Post, Feb. 9, 2010. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/02/09/haiti-earthquake-death-to\\_0\\_n\\_455841.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/02/09/haiti-earthquake-death-to_0_n_455841.html)

<sup>2</sup> Haiti Earthquake Post-Disaster Needs Assessment: Assessment of damage, losses, general and sectoral needs (PDNA), p. 6

<sup>3</sup> MADRE, <http://www.madre.org/index/meet-madre-1/where-we-work-53/haiti-168.html>

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/countries/hti/en/>

<sup>6</sup> Newsweek, *Devastation in Haiti: The Looming Threat*, (Jan 25, 2010), <http://www.newsweek.com/id/232425>

represented among the poor and responsible for meeting the basic needs of the vast majority of the population—including infants, children, the elderly and the thousands of newly disabled people—women have consequently suffered disproportionately in the post-earthquake environment.

Following Haiti's' devastating earthquake, Haiti's government, supported by the World Bank, led an ambitious Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)—an operative blueprint for reconstruction. It exposes the significant cracks in Haiti's economy, infrastructure, governance system, environment and social services, and offers detailed, helpful recommendations on how to rebuild and even improve such systems. Still, critical voices have been noticeably absent from this assessment and its resulting reconstruction framework: those of Haitian civil society, and especially those of women. Comprised of eight themes in total, the PDNA only addresses gender explicitly in one theme—that of "Cross-Cutting Issues."

A post-disaster strategy that ignores the gendered effects of disaster will inevitably fail to secure the majority of its population. As the international community promises recovery for Haiti today, the country stands at a crossroads. Haiti could recreate the status quo of widespread poverty, including gender inequalities, by trying to fix what was already broken through methods that have proved unsuccessful, or it could use this "reconstruction" opportunity to find innovative solutions to both endemic and new challenges through a more gender equitable process. Realizing this vision requires that Haitian women's groups and other grassroots organizations participate effectively and play leadership roles in reconstruction. The PDNA, in its current form, does not provide this crucial opportunity. This GSR therefore provides the missing gender content for PDNA policymakers, donors, civil society groups and all stakeholders involved in Haiti's reconstruction.

## Governance and Accountability

### **Governance**

Governance has been a consistent, ongoing challenge for Haiti, with a long history of ministerial mismanagement, questionable elections, foreign interference and aid corruption. Yet, the January 12 earthquake has launched the country into an even more egregious situation, with as many as 25% of government staff members having perished and over a third of government infrastructure suffering severe damage.<sup>7</sup> Although the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) does address the complexity of post-earthquake government challenges in Haiti and recognizes the dire security situation of families, women seem to be left out of the equation when it comes to rebuilding the country's judicial, administrative, legislative and democratic systems.

The PDNA does recognize the problems related to gender-based violence rising up in IDP camps that are in part due to insufficient police presence and emphasizes the importance of protecting vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied children and women, against sexual violence.<sup>8</sup> The PDNA also goes one step further by recognizing that much of the political and social unrest and distrust of current governance systems correlates with the government's inability to meet the needs of women and children in the camps. Despite attention to these gendered security needs, root cause analysis and comprehensive gender-focused governance needs remain absent from the report. This holds especially true for issues of representation and the rebuilding of the administrative, legislative, electoral and judicial systems.

#### *Judiciary*

According to the PDNA, 80% of the justice sector in Port-au-Prince was significantly affected by the earthquake, with 49 justice-related buildings badly damaged, several archives destroyed and judicial activity greatly stalled.<sup>9</sup> This has led to a major increase in civil law disputes around a lack of land tenure and marriage and birth records. It has also made it very difficult to convict and process violent crime offenders both in and outside of IDP camps, a fact that correlates to a steady increase in gender-based violence.

Clearly, high levels of violence negatively impact a woman's ability to freely participate in and contribute to public life and governance structures, both in Port-au-Prince and the outside rural provinces that have absorbed displaced survivors. Due to the damaged security, legal and judiciary structures, few gender-based violence cases are reported, investigated or prosecuted. Hence, new measures are urgently needed to address violence and discrimination against women and girls in Haiti, including rape, sexual violence, domestic violence, labor and sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, elder abuse and other gender-based human rights violations. These measures should include mechanisms that allow victims to safely report on cases of violence without fear of retaliation. Without these improvements, the GBV cycle will perpetuate

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<sup>7</sup> PDNA.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> PDNA, p. 39.

itself, leaving women powerless to speak out and human rights organizations feeling confused as to how to proceed.

Currently, multiple unofficial reports exist across Haitian IDP camps showing members of the National Haitian Police (PNH) and MINUSTAH perpetuating human rights abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and children. Therefore, gender equality policies must work to reform these departments to prevent such abuse, protect women and girls, and punish the perpetrators of violent crimes.

Haitian women generally have lower access to legal aid and justice systems due to systemic barriers such as low literacy and education rates, a lack of disposable income and poor access to public transportation. Implementation of gender-sensitive systems and policies must be put into place to remedy denial of justice to women and girls. For example, the crime of rape was only integrated into the Penal Code of Haiti in 2005, due to the efforts of the late Magalie Marcelin, a Haitian women's rights lawyer who perished in the earthquake. Despite the courageous efforts of certain human rights lawyers, activists and women's groups, strong gender rights policies are still not present in mainstream Haitian society.

It is also critical that legislative and judiciary bodies in Haiti take into account the realities and concerns that Haitian women face. The drafting, enactment, and implementation of laws and policies must integrate gender equality principles, without which women will risk a lack of protection under the law or no recourse to justice at all. Hence, mainstreaming gender equality must be an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes in the political, economic, cultural, and social spheres. These systems must also be in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in order to also meet international standards.

In addition to creating judiciary structures that are gender sensitive, a great increase in actual number of women lawyers, clerks, judges and magistrates is necessary. A clear need exists to support and encourage women to study law, and become lawyers and judges. Long-term scholarship and affirmative action programs that aim at encouraging and supporting Haitian women in the judiciary should accompany more short-term gender equity development.

### *Public Administration*

The public service sector was especially devastated due to deaths caused by the earthquake. News sources estimate that as much as 25% of the public sector was wiped out.<sup>10</sup> Hence, a new cohort of public servants will need to be recruited and trained if the Haitian government is to move forward in an effective manner.

Although women have indeed attained some of the highest levels of government in Haiti, they have traditionally been significantly under-represented both at home and abroad, making up

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<sup>10</sup> Haiti: Since Months Since the Earthquake. Talk of the Nation, NPR Radio. July 8, 2010. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=128387100>

less than 20% of the Haitian public sector, 7% of diplomatic service and only 5% of parliament.<sup>11</sup> This new period of Haitian government reconstruction offers a critical opportunity to remedy past inequities and increase women's equal participation in government.

Inclusion and involvement of women in the governance of displacement camps must be another established priority of post-earthquake planning. Gender mainstreaming needs to be instituted in all aspects of camp life, including matters related to aid disbursement, security, healthcare, food and housing. Governance committees should be gender-balanced, and if that is not possible in certain situations, strong mechanisms should be put into place so that women's voices can be heard.

Pre-earthquake, almost half of the households in Haiti were headed by women. This figure has most likely increased, considering the number of male spouses and partners who perished during the earthquake. The safety and security of these women need to be assured and they need jobs in order to provide food, housing, healthcare, and childcare. Women earn less than half of what men earn, and most women are employed in the informal sector, making it harder for them to be providers and to improve the well-being of their families and communities. Women must be viewed as key players in the process of rebuilding Haiti, and in all aspects of national life thereafter, not solely as beneficiaries or victims. Discriminatory laws and practices that limit the ability of women in all fields of public life, from employment to government service, must be reviewed and amended to ensure equality and gender mainstreaming.

### *Democratic Processes*

The Ministry of Women's Affairs, established in 1994 to promote "national equality policies and the advancement of women,"<sup>12</sup> offers established mechanisms for integrating gender equality measures into new post-earthquake governance structures. Previous measures undertaken by the Ministry of Women's Affairs include economic incentives for political parties to encourage women's participation in elections and temporary quotas for women in elected office, national policy and political appointments.<sup>13</sup> Although these previous techniques were not sufficient enough to completely redress the gender imbalances, they do offer good policy precedents and should be reconsidered in the next several waves of elections.

Whether through the Ministry of Women's Affairs, political debates, media attention or international elections monitoring, a strong need exists to support and encourage women as political candidates. Currently, only 2 out of 18 Ministers serving in the Haitian government are women. How can key gender issues such as sexual violence, women's rights and women's democratic participation be affectively addressed if this imbalanced representation continues? Affirmative action programs that aim to have a minimal percentage of seats reserved for women in Parliament would ensure a move toward equal representation and leadership in Haiti's legislative and political bodies. More representation at this level would make

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<sup>11</sup> CEDAW Report. April, 2009. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/265/45/PDF/N0926545.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>12</sup> CEDAW Report on Haiti. April, 2009. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/265/45/PDF/N0926545.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>13</sup> CEDAW Report. April, 2009. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/265/45/PDF/N0926545.pdf?OpenElement>

women's needs more visible and improve their ability to be seen as powerful national and community leaders.

Women also face considerable hurdles in accessing their voting rights. Women have a lower turnout rate than men do for electoral voting, due to their lower literacy and education rates, lower amounts of disposable income for needed travel expenses and increased time demands for child rearing, agricultural production and overall household responsibilities. To fully participate in democratic processes, these crucial and gender-specific needs must be addressed, with special attention to the geographical locations in which women live.

## **Accountability**

The United Nations Secretary-General has stated that "accountability includes achievement of objectives and results in response to mandates, fair and accurate reporting on performance results, stewardship of funds, and all aspects of performance."<sup>14</sup> Similarly, humanitarian response in Haiti is widely recognized to be most effective when it is accountable to the people it aims to help. This means instituting responsible use of power,<sup>15</sup> such as listening to local people, involving them in decision-making processes, addressing their needs in implementation and reporting back to them.<sup>16</sup> In the context of the January 12 earthquake, it means ensuring that affected women, men and children are involved in planning, implementing, and judging the response to their emergency.<sup>17</sup> This requires commitment from the Haitian Government, international donors, the United Nations, the private sector and Haitian civil society to fulfill their stated obligations. This includes establishing fair and transparent systems to fulfill national and international gender equality commitments. It also requires prioritizing the inclusion of women at all levels of decision-making, even through quotas, in a manner that is transparent, objective, independently verifiable and in accordance with principles of equality, fairness and human rights.

The CEDAW Committee concluded in its observations during the Committee's 43<sup>rd</sup> Session<sup>18</sup> that the Government of Haiti, including Parliament, the Judiciary and all of its ministries, enact and enforce strict laws and develop comprehensive policies and programs to protect the rights of Haitian women and children.

The equal participation of women and men in national and local government decision-making is critical to ensuring that allocated budgets and decision-making processes are relevant to the living conditions and needs of women, men and communities, both urban and rural. Haitian women and women's organizations are crucial actors in the rebuilding of Haiti, and only their meaningful participation and leadership at all levels of governance will help to ensure this. Civil

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<sup>14</sup> "Towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat", Report of the Secretary-General, General Assembly, 29 January 2010, page 1.

<sup>15</sup> HAP International definition of accountability

<sup>16</sup> Listen First Project – Accountability to beneficiaries : A practical checklist.

<sup>17</sup> See definition of accountability from the Good Enough Guide.

<sup>18</sup> Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Haiti, CEDAW Committee, Forty-third session, 19 January-6 February 2009, C/HTI/CO/7, 10 February 2009

society, and women's groups in particular, must be included in damage and needs assessments, redevelopment planning, policy formulation, and programming undertaken by the Haitian government as part of the rebuilding process. Strong consideration should be given to supporting and helping to finance this type of gender balanced participation so that women can receive the needed opportunities and tools to act as leaders within the government, civil society and the private sector.

### **Grassroots and Accountability Recommendations:**

- 1. Methodically require consultation with women and women's groups in every post-disaster reconstruction project.**
- 2. Create a National Redevelopment Gender Advisory Task Force that includes government officials from disparate ministries and civil society members, including women.**
  - a. Standardize gender mainstreaming across all public planning through system-wide gender disaggregated data in order to identify gaps, new opportunities and strategies to improve and monitor women's participation.
  - b. Develop and implement gender-sensitive assessments, budgeting and program evaluation at both the local and national level.
  - c. Track gender responsiveness in all public institutions through gender equality indicators and indexes.
- 3. Equally uphold all legal and human rights for Haitian men and women.**
  - a. Implement and enforce gender equity and anti-discrimination laws, including those against sexual violence, sexual harassment and human trafficking.
  - b. Uphold provisions and international conventions that mandate the promotion of women's and girls' rights, such as the Haitian-ratified Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
  - c. Increase funding and access to affordable legal aid, counsel, and recourse for women and vulnerable groups in both urban and rural zones.
- 4. Create an accessible and inclusive security sector that consults with and addresses the needs of women, men and children.**
  - a. Immediately strengthen IDP camp security, shelters and services by targeting gender-based violence, malnutrition and disease.
  - b. Place gender-sensitive UN peacekeepers, national Haitian police and/or private security guards, including females, at latrines, washing stations and community wells where women and girls are often targeted for rape and sexual violence.
  - c. Systematically document incidences of violence, rape and trafficking against women and girls in IDP camps and prioritize corresponding legal, medical and counseling services for survivors.
  - d. Create special protection units for women and children within each police station throughout the country, with special attention to vulnerable IDP camp areas.
  - e. Strengthen protection for girls, especially orphans, at high risk of sexual trafficking. Link camps, women/orphan groups and UN Clusters to reduce threat.



- f. Implement sexual and gender-based violence training for all Haitian police and UNPOL personnel. Ally with men and boys to safeguard against all forms of GBV.
- g. Guarantee a critical percentage of women in both the PNH and MINUSTAH.
- h. Mitigate GBV risks through addressing unsafe working conditions, travel to work sites and domestic abuse backlash due to women-focused relief assistance.

*To the IHRC, UN, INGO's and International Donors*

- 1. Establish clear and transparent accountability systems with the active engagement of all sectors of Haitian government and civil society, including women's groups, to measure gender equality and GBV safety.**
  - a. Require every new financial pledge towards Haiti recovery and reconstruction to integrate both accountability measures and gender equality indicators.
  
- 2. Integrate comprehensive gender equality principles into all deliberations of the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission (IHRC), the Haiti Reconstruction Fund, the UN, INGO's and International donor meetings.**
  - a. Ensure the equitable and full participation of Haitian women and gender experts in all decision-making, implementation and evaluation processes.
  - b. Institute accessible technologies, including websites, to help monitor international funds and the overall reconstruction progress, including gender benchmarks. Use clear indicators, publicize plans, report consistently, disclose barriers and allow civil society opportunities to give feedback.
  - c. Require the private sector, including small business and agricultural industries, to abide by principles of non-discrimination and require a minimum percentage of Haitians, especially Haitian women, on both staff and management.
  - d. Enforce laws that protect women in the private sector against sexual harassment, pregnancy-related discrimination, age and racial discrimination.
  - e. Form national, regional and sector-specific private sector associations that will frame and guide principles of good business practices, corporate responsibility and gender equality.

## Grassroots

Given the catastrophic impact of the earthquake, it is not surprising that Haitians have had to rely on their survival skills and creatively adapt to dire conditions. The response of ordinary Haitians has been amazing, and the ability of local officials and local non-profit and community groups, including women's groups, has provided the critical bridge for ordinary Haitians to work together to find solutions to their problems.

Haitian women's and grassroots groups have been active in coordinating with newly formed IDP and tent communities and helping to identify and recruit camp residents to help protect women and girls from violence. Women have also been instrumental in pushing for collective cooking and feeding strategies and advocating for relief providers to buy local food from Haitian market women vendors in order to help deliver more nutritious food to residents.

Over 500,000 earthquake survivors have fled Port-au-Prince to the countryside, where grassroots organizations often make decisions that impact the entire community. However, as in many countries, women continue to be under-represented as grassroots leaders in Haiti. At the grassroots level, women often do not know their rights or understand that they have a role to play in shaping the policies that affect their lives.

In Haiti, women's involvement in agriculture is high, as they are crucial to selling the products. They work in the informal sector as vendors and domestic workers, thus contributing greatly to community economic development. But their lack of access to information, along with their marginalized social standing, places them in a highly vulnerable position in the post-disaster phase. Peasant women face particularly large obstacles. These include disproportionately high rates of illiteracy, lack of knowledge of backward and forward linkages, social constraints and an imbalanced amount of familial responsibility.

Despite noble intentions, a perceivable gap exists between large recovery, relief and rescue operations and the grassroots needs of communities. Women, in particular, have not been effectively engaged in the reconstruction process. International aid agencies and humanitarian organizations must focus on supporting grassroots women's organizations devastated by the earthquake through strengthening their structural and functional capacities. Doing so will create better community outreach, improved facilitation of humanitarian and early recovery efforts, prevention of gender-based violence and increased economic security for women and their families in the post-disaster context.

### Grassroots Recommendations

- 1. Carefully and consistently consult with and engage grassroots groups throughout the country so that they are able to help lead rebuilding and decentralization efforts.**

- 2. Greatly improve communication between Haitian grassroots groups that are poised to deliver social services and the UN Cluster system, IHRC, Haiti Reconstruction Fund, INGO's and International Donors.**
  - a. Fund and include Creole translation and resources in all UN Cluster meetings, news reports, assessments and communications.
  - b. Integrate regular decentralized UN cluster radio bulletin reports in Creole that are produced in collaboration with Haitian community radio journalists.
  - c. Create decentralized satellite UN cluster meetings in districts and rural regions around the country in order to better engage grassroots members.
  - d. Create formalized, inclusive forums for grassroots feedback within the IHRC, Haiti Reconstruction Fund, INGO platforms and International donor meetings.
  
- 3. Engage Haitian women as equal partners in the process of democratic redevelopment in Haiti, to build a stronger, more equitable society.**
  - a. Ensure that grassroots women's groups across all sectors play a central role in post-disaster reconstruction and relief efforts.
  - b. Recognize and advocate for the needs of women and girls in all recovery and reconstruction processes, including access to essential services and information.
  - c. Ensure a minimum quota of grassroots women leaders in all stages of multi-donor funded projects, including those with backgrounds in micro-finance, peasant movements and community organizing.
  - d. Hire women's cooperatives as sub-contractors in rebuilding projects.
  - e. Create regional women's centers for economic development, education, health care and social services that can help with decentralization planning and practice.
  
- 4. Help rebuild and strengthen earthquake-affected grassroots women's organizations through structural support and capacity building.**
  - a. Convene women-only conferences to train women to develop their community leadership skills, advocacy skills and organizational skills and encourage them to leverage those strengths in order to create change in their community.
  - b. Create literacy, social awareness, self-defence and community vigilance programs accessible to and appropriate for grassroots women.
  - c. Convene gender equality roundtables for men and women so to teach and support gender equality in the family, workplace and community.
  - d. Provide networking opportunities between small community-level organizations and larger INGO's and government institutions to help facilitate effective funding and implementation of women-focused post-disaster development.

## **Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction**

In Haiti, severe environmental degradation, coupled with the havoc wrought by the earthquake and previous natural disasters, is causing conflict over scarce resources. Conflicts may also arise with the population shift back to rural areas from the capital and other hard-hit cities. It is therefore imperative to develop a disaster-response system that includes preparedness, prevention, mitigation services and risk reduction to address the needs of Haitians and restore the environment. Gender is a cross-cutting issue linked to both; without the direct involvement of women, neither sustainable development nor a disaster-response program will be successful.

### *PDNA Insights*

The January 12 2010 earthquake further exacerbated environmental conditions in Haiti that were already at the brink of catastrophe. The World Bank's first post-earthquake environmental impact assessment estimated that the country suffered \$18.7 million in environmental damages and \$511.2 million in environmental losses, with a \$1.4 billion energy recovery and reconstruction need.<sup>19</sup> The PDNA's environmental risk and disaster management plan focuses on debris, watershed, coastal, sanitation and hazardous waste management, and protecting vulnerable and biodiverse areas.<sup>20</sup> While these risk management techniques integrate best scientific practices, they do not reflect the need for more sustainable environmental policies and practices. Thankfully, the PDNA also concentrates on the need for reformed environmental governance.<sup>21</sup> It is here, however, that the PDNA fails to incorporate a greatly needed gender assessment.

One of the key PDNA environmental governance objectives is as follows:

Strengthening the NEMS consensual framework. In the short term, the objective is to be actively involved alongside civil society in coordination and planning bodies for the recovery and reconstruction process. In the medium/long term the objective is to pursue, adjust and make permanent the consultation and participation mechanisms set out in the Decree.<sup>22</sup>

Herein lays the gender trap. The PDNA emphasizes the importance of civil society consultation, yet gives no structural framework for how this can be carried out, much less how women can be involved in the process. Later, the PDNA does emphasize the importance of making national stakeholders environmentally responsible through legal reinforcement of the National Disaster Risk Management System (NDRMS). It states that a legal framework can "clarify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders (public, private, civil society) so that each stakeholder can play their part and the decision-making process can take into account the different factors of vulnerability."<sup>23</sup> Yet, this again represents a missed opportunity for women. With limited

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<sup>19</sup> Post Disaster Needs Assessment, p. 51.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 53-54.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 59.

gendered conditionalities and no clear metrics for the inclusion of women or quantifiable assessment for the gender impacts of environmental degradation, such attempts to highlight civil society fall short of their mark.

### *Understanding Post-Disaster Gender Needs*

Women and girls, children, people with disabilities, and other socially disadvantaged or marginalized groups have been especially hard hit by the disaster. This reflects the same experience and evidence worldwide: the International Federation of the Red Cross, for example, has concluded that, in addition to people who are impoverished, “women, the handicapped and elderly, ethnic and religious minorities, and habitual victims of discrimination” are always the ones who suffer most in such situations. Gender has been recognized as an essential component of environmental management, restoration, stewardship and especially evaluation. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) explains that there has been such an accumulation of evidence on these issues that by now it is almost ‘conventional wisdom’ to say that gender differences and inequalities influence the extent and nature of almost every form of environmental encounter, use and impact.<sup>24</sup>

The impact and destructiveness of natural disasters is frequently the result of unsustainable development practices. Thus development policies, decisions and activities have a direct effect on the “disaster profile” of a country. Policies and practices related to water, housing, environmental management, energy, education and a host of other development issues will either mitigate or exacerbate the effects of natural disasters. Furthermore, a gender assessment of how such environmental policies affect women, girls, men and boys gives great insight into how the effects of the Haiti earthquake impacts each demographic group and their power relationships in different ways.

Women and men experience and react to disasters in unique ways. Hence, their post-disaster needs and concerns are equally unique. Disaster responses should reflect those differences. Gender equality is viewed in many quarters as an essential goal and component of disaster reduction policies and practices, without which risks and responses cannot be effectively addressed. For example, women’s post-disaster security needs far exceed those of men. Natural disasters create increased pockets of vulnerability for women and girls, as evidenced by their higher rates of sexual assault, battery and theft. In addition, disasters and the resulting post-traumatic stress can often launch communities into processes of regression including falling back into old power dynamics and patterns of hierarchy that favour the decisions of men over women. Therefore, the abilities and capacities of women to prevent and/or mitigate disasters need to be thoroughly explored and incorporated into Haiti’s disaster response policies and planning.

Social, economic and political vulnerabilities are highly related to natural disaster vulnerability. Reduction of risks related to natural disasters will come about with a reduction in human risks

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<sup>24</sup> Mainstreaming Gender in Environmental Assessment and Early Warning, p. 13-14. UNEP. 2005. [http://www.unep.org/dewa/products/publications/2005/Mainstreaming\\_Gender.pdf](http://www.unep.org/dewa/products/publications/2005/Mainstreaming_Gender.pdf)

and vulnerabilities. Human health and environmental health are intimately related. Improvements in human health should translate into better health for the natural environment and a greater ability for sustainable development practices to take root, thereby increasing the chances for more effective disaster prevention and/or mitigation.

### *Disaster Risk Reduction*

Globalization, especially in its impact on trade, economic policies and political decision-making, can place strains on local environments and exacerbate social inequalities. The environment in Haiti has become so degraded over the years that it can no longer serve a protective function, mitigating the effects of natural disasters, which has progressively increased human vulnerability. The high costs of addressing complex emergencies and natural disasters divert funds sorely needed for development. In addition, those with access to capital are better able to cope with natural disasters and environmental challenges, thus increasing social tensions and divides. Women generally tend to have less access to capital and less ability to acquire it, leaving them in more environmentally vulnerable positions.

Risk reduction should include activities that take into account not only different kinds of vulnerable conditions, but also the sources of hazards, which include environmental factors as well as political and socio-economic ones. Slow on-set and small disasters or losses—such as land degradation and flooding or drought—can have cumulative effects over time that cause equal or even greater suffering than the major ones. The social impacts of these smaller losses also reflect a cumulative weakening of gender equality. For example, with women having little access to land tenure and the majority of land owned by women being of inferior quality, small natural losses affect them disproportionately. If a small women's cooperative in the north cannot procure a sufficient bank loan to buy needed land and can only afford more vulnerable land near marshlands or flooding zones, then women have a disproportionately higher net environmental loss after a disaster.

Women and girls are the first to suffer in Haiti from environmentally induced conflicts and disasters. Post-disaster camps for internally-displaced persons are causing environmental, health and safety issues as well, with higher risk rates for women and children. The earthquake has created a range of environmental issues and risks within these camps, complicating relief and recovery efforts. Solid and medical waste, hazardous substances, sanitation and hygiene, water use and availability, energy, transportation, shelter and housing, biodiversity, earthquake debris, human remains, flooding and mudslides are but a few of the challenges. These issues are in desperate need of a gender analysis. For example, the issue of women, girls and boys' security and gender-based violence is intricately connected to environmental and disaster risk mitigation. Increased security issues in camps have been correlated with lack of food, water, electricity, shelter and adequate bathrooms and showers. Women and young girls in particular are facing abuse, discrimination, harassment and rape in camps and temporary shelters where basic needs are not met and conditions are becoming desperate. Therefore, assessments and planning around issues of clean water, sanitation and waste management must inevitably include their effects on women and vulnerable populations.

### *Cross-cutting Environmental Themes*

Sanitation alone represents one of the most significant environmental themes in need of gender analysis. Organizations like the TransAfrica Forum have continually reported on the negative effects of poor sanitation facilities on women.<sup>25</sup> A great majority of displacement camps have only 1 bathroom for every 100 to 150 people.<sup>26</sup> As a result, women and girls have to travel long distances, sometimes late at night, to access facilities. A great number of assaults against women take place in and around bathrooms. Two key environmental conclusions can be drawn from this phenomenon. First, poor disaster and sanitation planning without sufficient consultation from women's groups has unintentionally led to an increase in gender-based violence. Second, the resulting behavioral responses have strong negative environmental repercussions. In light of the precarious security risks of utilizing public facilities, many women are opting to stay closer to home, even if facilities do not exist. This fact has strong health and environmental implications for overcrowded IDP camps in which disease can quickly spread.

Land use and land rights are other cross-cutting themes that have post-earthquake bearing on environmental risk factors. Due to extreme environmental damage, exacerbated by years of poor environmental policies that made Haiti extremely vulnerable to storms and disasters, land has become an even rarer and more hotly contested commodity. Land disputes have multiplied, with little legal recourse to contest claims after years of splitting up areas of land into small, sometimes unserviceable plots. Massive amounts of debris and infrastructure damage in Port-au-Prince, Léogâne and other surrounding communities, have created a shortage of available land, making it difficult to set up adequate shelter for those displaced.

Comprehensive environmental and territorial development planning must include a gender focus in terms of land rights. Land ownership is rarely granted to women, nor analyzed with a gender lens. Lack of access to credit and sustainable income as well as uneven power dynamics between men and women make it difficult for women to gain needed land ownership and the accompanying deeds to prove this ownership. As a result, decisions on land tenure policies, community development and overall environmental planning often exclude women's voices. Hence, departments, communes and communal sections, as well as decentralization planners, must incorporate women into their positions of power. This is the only way to assure more equal access to key territorial and environmental services for both women and men.

Human health and safety is another theme that has been seriously compromised due to poor pre- and post-earthquake planning. Heavy deforestation and soil erosion, for example, have made Haitians completely vulnerable to rains, flooding, hurricane winds and natural disasters. Experts in disaster risk reduction have warned that Haiti will continue to face an active season of tropical storms and hurricanes that are likely to cause significant destruction and possible loss of life in light of poor environmental protections. This is especially true now that so many Haitians are newly homeless and lack access to hurricane-resistant shelters, or even adequate shelter of any kind.

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<sup>25</sup> [www.transafricaforum.org](http://www.transafricaforum.org)

<sup>26</sup> Catholic Relief Services, <http://www.crs.org/countries/haiti>.

This fact dovetails into higher food insecurity and malnutrition rates. Food security, nutrition, fishing and coastal management, agriculture and animal husbandry have all been severely affected by the earthquake. This is in addition to the lingering effects of previous natural disasters, plus the more daily losses and challenges associated with a weakened environment. This in turn leads to higher migration rates, with post-disaster victims traveling from urban to rural areas to procure sufficient food, shelter and the hope of employment. Hence, migrants are compromising under-resourced rural communities, which do not have the agricultural, financial or environmental capacity to handle such an influx. The same phenomenon led to overcrowding, environmental ware and unsanitary living conditions in Port-au-Prince in the first case. In both scenarios, a lack of environmental investment and planning have stretched natural resources thin, increased human vulnerability to disaster and perpetuated a never-ending poverty cycle out of which women and girls emerge as the biggest losers.

### **Recommendations:**

- 1. Create gender-sensitive, participatory disaster risk reduction and preparedness plans to help mitigate the impact of natural disasters.**
  - a. Recruit and train Community Disaster Preparedness Committees (DPCs) with a quota of female representation. Train DPC leaders to prepare IDP camps and informal settlements, with special attention to the needs of women and girls.
  - b. Resource disaster-prone communities with food, clean water, medicine and other emergency relief supplies, including sanitary items and pre/post natal supplies.
  - c. Sponsor meetings of DPCs, local emergency providers, international grassroots organizations, and key UN Cluster representatives in Port-au-Prince and other major cities to review local coordination of Disaster Risk Reduction plans.
  - d. Provide local and women's grassroots organizations with advanced information and training on disaster risk reduction/response for their communities, as they can provide social services and serve as communication hubs in emergencies.
  - e. Work with local leaders and outside engineering experts to identify and inform communities on any buildings or structures that may provide emergency shelter.
  - f. Publicize, via women's and grassroots organizations, updated lists of disaster preparedness experts available to offer trainings at the local and regional levels.
  - g. Prioritize livelihood programs for women focused on disaster preparedness and target them in high-risk areas, including the low-plain Artibonite region.
  
- 2. Work directly with Haitian grassroots women's organizations to prioritize the needs of women, children and orphans in all disaster response efforts.**
  - a. Utilize national and community media, mobile phones, internet media and community meetings to quickly publicize key disaster relief information. Provide community leaders, including women's groups, with mobile phones to support community education and communication related to local disaster preparedness.
  - b. Prioritize the post-disaster security needs (lighting, housing, WASH, etc.) of women, orphans and vulnerable children, and work with women's groups, schools and churches to help prepare communities to address these needs.
  - c. Protect women's access to post-disaster healthcare, nutrition, housing, security and legal recourse through comprehensive policies, programs, and laws.



- 3. Establish collaborative processes with Haitian women's groups and grassroots community groups to design, implement and evaluate both national and regional environmental management programs.**
  - a. Equip community and local women's organizations with environmental protection trainings, resources and incentives.
  - b. Reform policies and laws on land ownership, agrarian development and urban planning in order to facilitate both gender equality and collective environmental stewardship.
  - c. Prioritize reforestation through collaboration with and incentive programs for women's groups, peasant movements and other Haitian civil-society groups.
  - d. Implement significant new funding and programming for alternative energy sources, such as solar, wind and propane, with attention to gender budgeting, planning, implementation and evaluation.

## Social Sectors

### Health and Hygiene

The 12 January 2010 earthquake crippled many governmental and administrative health services with heavy personnel and infrastructure losses. In light of the destruction to healthcare systems, the international NGO community has been able to help stave off the outbreak of pandemic illness in overcrowded IDP camps. Still, Haitians living in the poorest urban zones, populous outskirts neighbourhoods, and rural and mountainous settlements have very limited access to health care. Despite the fact that both local and foreign medical groups have provided some mobile medical teams to help in remote communities, a great majority of Haitian women, men and children have gone without much needed care.

Women and children bear the great brunt of this burden, with women often being the last in a family to access health care. Even before the earthquake, Haitian women had extreme health risks, with only 26% of births attended by skilled health personnel,<sup>27</sup> only half of women receiving antenatal care<sup>28</sup> and a maternal mortality rate of 670 deaths per 100,000 live births.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, women were at greater risk of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, with women constituting a higher percentage of HIV positive cases.<sup>30</sup> Only 15% of young women have correct knowledge of how to prevent sexual HIV transmission—versus 28% of young men—and women's condom usage is less than that of men, with only 6-10% of women using protection in many regions of Haiti.<sup>31</sup> The earthquake has only exacerbated these numbers and highlighted the great need for gender-focused health system planning.

#### *Creating a New Health Care System*

The Post Disaster Needs Assessment Report contends that any new health care systems must be based on 2 key principles: (i) a social contract that guarantees access to a set of services for all, based on the principle of primary health care, and (ii) the provision of high-quality health care services. It further explains that “eventually, the system will be designed to guarantee access to services for vulnerable groups, both existing (before the earthquake) and new.” Yet, this is the only distant mention of how this new reprioritization of health planning might affect women.

The United Nations Health Cluster system has posed a challenge for Haitian community groups and has limited their access and integration into the humanitarian health system to improve service delivery. International non-profit medical groups with long experience in Haiti have moved quickly to provide emergency care, and continue to draw upon community health advocates and local leaders to identify and respond to emerging health needs. However, local

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<sup>27</sup> World Health Organization Haiti Health Profile: <http://www.who.int/gho/countries/hti.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> “Milestones and Looking Forward at 6 Months” – UNICEF Haiti.

<sup>30</sup> UNAIDS/UNFPA/UNIFEM, 2005

<sup>31</sup> “Gender and HIV/Aids: Critical Perspectives from the Developing World.” By By Jelke Boesten, Nana K. Poku, 2009.

Haitian NGOs, including women's organizations, have found it difficult to integrate their resources and talents into the humanitarian cluster system. This model poses a problem, since it keeps the key groups closest to the affected communities outside of the decision-making and information sharing processes. Instead, many have chosen to establish ad hoc clinics, adding to the initial chaos and duplication of efforts that marked the initial post-earthquake response.

One major concern is the lack of adequate attention paid to women's and girls' specific needs in post-earthquake health planning. Circle of Health International (COHI) carried out a needs assessment study at the Fond Parisien IDP camp (see Annex I) that did include a certain degree of gender assessment.<sup>32</sup> Although some of the findings are unique to the Fond Parisien camp, the study did reflect some of the general conditions facing many women and girls living in other IDP camps, informal tent settlements or without any shelter. Common themes for these women included living without adequate access to secure, rain-proof shelters, safe and accessible latrines, water to wash, potable water to cook or drink, fuel for cooking, sufficient and nutritious food, and security and health risks from threats of violence and sexual assaults.

The emerging PDNA blueprint for national action in Haiti acknowledges the myriad health challenges facing homeless and unemployed Haitians in camp settings and the additional vulnerability of women and girls in overcrowded, dangerous camp settings. However, it shows a lack of details related to specific strategies to address women's and girls' access to needed services.

In order to advance a more inclusive, gender-sensitive health care system that meets the needs of all Haitians, all post-earthquake health planning must focus on the unique needs of women, men and children. This includes investing more in natal services, so that all Haitian women can afford to give birth with qualified medical assistance and sufficient health facilities. It includes investing in non-food pack items, such as sanitary pads and 'dignity supplies,' to help promote girls' and women's personal hygiene. It includes linking health care and sanitation planning to security systems, so that women may access needed services without the risk of sexual assault and the resulting physical and psychological ramifications.

In addition, it also requires increased attention to men's and boys' unique health needs. For example, greater support is needed to give visibility to Haitians living with HIV/AIDS and to work against the stigma that surrounds the disease, one that continues to be linked to men's homosexuality in this heavily Catholic nation. That includes public education and media programs targeted at men in high risk communities and funding for workplace programs, including in rural areas. Male prisoners are also a group known to be vulnerable to forced sex and sexual violence.<sup>33</sup> Looking ahead, healthcare planning requires a greater emphasis on including prison-based HIV/AIDS programs as a step towards addressing the gender-based

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<sup>32</sup> See <http://www.cohintl.org/>.

<sup>33</sup> Author interviews with AIDS physicians at GHESKIO, Partners In Health, 2003.

crime of male rape and overall HIV/AIDS awareness programs that help to counter the prevailing social stigma linked to homosexuality.<sup>34</sup>

Creating a gender-sensitive health care system targeted at the unique needs of women, men and children is a key component of successful Haiti reconstruction planning. The assurance of full health care services and safe living conditions will increase the likelihood of a more peaceful, productive and successful rebuilding process, let alone a more healthy overall society.

## **Education**

With a significant shortage of qualified teachers, limited educational supplies and a lack of infrastructure, the Haitian education system has traditionally held a myriad of challenges for both girls and boys. This is evidenced by an especially low adult literacy rate of 53%, with 55% for men and 51% for women.<sup>35</sup> Illiteracy rates run even higher in rural regions, where access to education is extremely limited.

Lack of free public education has created an educational divide and is one of the primary causes of the continual poverty gap that exists in Haiti. Nearly half of all Haitian children are not attending school and almost 90% of those who do attend are studying at private schools operated by Canada, France or the United States.<sup>36</sup> Due to stereotypical gender roles, the cost of a private school education and an unequal division of labor, low-income girls and women often have fewer opportunities to receive a quality education. This gender inequity in education is further exacerbated by the devastation caused by the January 12 earthquake as low income families now have even less resources to send their children to school.

The Post Disaster Needs Assessment emphasizes the need for restructuring the public education system, strengthening its capacity and introducing an effective regulation system.<sup>37</sup> The PDNA emphasizes the need to create a free primary school education system and introduces a plan for short-term training programs for youth outside of the education system. The PDNA promotes greater state investment and social protection measures to help struggling families send their children to school.<sup>38</sup> Despite these important recommendations and commitments to accessible education, further socio-economic and gender analysis is lacking within the PDNA report. Any restructuring of the national education system must dig further to identify the specific needs of low-income families, rural families, boys, girls and single mothers.

### *Socio-Economic and Gender Education Needs*

Current post-earthquake conditions have greatly impeded Haitian girls' and boys' ability to attend school. Crippled infrastructure and dangerous rubble and waste make it difficult for children to navigate to the limited educational opportunities available in Port-au-Prince. Poor

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<sup>34</sup> Author interview with PLWHIV advocates in Haiti, February 2010

<sup>35</sup> "At a glance: Haiti." - UNICEF

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Library of Congress, Haiti Country Profile, 2006.

<sup>37</sup> PDNA, p. 64.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

IDP camp conditions, including insufficient temporary housing, lack of food, little or no lighting and flash flooding make it hard for current students to sufficiently study or consistently attend classes. Rural areas receiving an influx of earthquake survivors are burdened with overflowing classrooms and even further stretched resources.

Current conditions have increased the existing risk of enforced child labor. According to a pre-earthquake study by the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights, almost all Haitian girls between the ages of 5 and 9 work in the informal market.<sup>39</sup> With few options for income generation, many Haitian families find it difficult to enroll any of their children, but especially girls, into a structured school environment. Instead, children must support meagre family incomes by working in the fields in rural locations and/or helping to sell items through informal markets.

Another increased post-earthquake concern for vulnerable low-income girls with little access to public education is the risk of becoming a “Restavec,” the equivalent of a modern day slave child who belongs to a well-to-do family.<sup>40</sup> Affluent Haitian families or perhaps distant family members might offer poor, malnourished families the promise of a better life for some of their children. Once acquired, these children, the majority of whom are girls, receive terrible work requirements, inferior food, poor sleeping conditions and often no or limited education.<sup>41</sup> A 2002 UNICEF study contended that Haiti has 173,000 Restavecs with a majority of them being girls, which constitute more than 8% of all children aged 5-17.<sup>42</sup> Women’s rights organizations like SOFA contend that that number may be as high as 300,000 today. Dire post-earthquake conditions further increase such a risk.

An additional threat for girls not enrolled in school is early marriage. Early marriages are common for Haitian girls, as the legal age for a woman to get married is 15, compared to 18 for men.<sup>43</sup> As a result, the Haiti fertility rate stands at over 4 children per woman, a sizeable reduction from 20 years ago, but still a significant challenge for low-income, under-resourced women and families.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, early marriage also negatively impacts males. Increased familial responsibilities and a new position as breadwinner often equates to having little time or money for Haitian young men to complete schooling.

Pre-earthquake Haiti already faced a high rate of domestic abuse towards women and girls. In addition, 46% of all Haitian girls between the ages of 5 and 17 faced sexual abuse.<sup>45</sup> In the current post-earthquake environment, girls are at even greater risk of domestic and gender-based violence, due to poor IDP camp security, a frustrating lack of vocational options for male

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<sup>39</sup> <http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2010/march/women-struggle-for-rights-as-haiti-recovers.en>

<sup>40</sup> “Haiti ‘restavek’ tradition called child slavery.” Reuters, Feb. 18, 2010.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N18184393.htm>

<sup>41</sup> Pan American Development Foundation, 2009.

<sup>42</sup> Study on Haitian Restavecs by UNICEF and Norway’s Fafo Institute for Applied Social Science, 2002.

<sup>43</sup> UNDP, <http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2010/march/women-struggle-for-rights-as-haiti-recovers.en>

<sup>44</sup> CIA, World Fact Book.

<sup>45</sup> “Factors Impacting Youth Development in Haiti.” Michael Justesen and Dorte Verner, World Bank. Jan., 2007.

<http://leehaiti.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/Factors-Impacting-Youth-Development-in-Haiti.pdf>

family members and a higher rate of vulnerable orphans. This reality greatly impedes girls' ability to attend and successfully complete school. Hence, gender-based violence awareness and prevention must be integrated into any type of temporary or longer-term educational planning.

Another area of needed focus for all educational restructuring includes school retention, as opposed to enrollment rates alone. Teenage pregnancy, for example, must be incorporated into any planning on improving post-earthquake retention rates. Teenage mothers account for more than 8% of all births in Haiti and contribute to the country's high fertility rate.<sup>46</sup> This fact, coupled with higher rates of gender-based violence, a younger age of entering into marriage, a depletion of household income and a larger proportion of post-earthquake household responsibilities, helps to explain why females are statistically significantly more likely to drop out of school than their male peers.<sup>47</sup> Hence, post-earthquake education reconstruction must pay special attention to these key socio-economic and gender concerns, if the sector is to be built up better, stronger and more inclusive of girls.

## **Food Security**

Food security is a complex development challenge that taps into a vast network of different policy decisions, trade negotiations and development initiatives. With nearly 80% of the country living in extreme poverty and over half the population suffering from malnutrition, food security has quickly become one of the main post-disaster recovery priorities. Yet, reconstruction stakeholders remain divided on how to best implement food security planning. Food aid from UN and foreign country donors like the United States have helped to lessen immediate hunger risks for displaced persons. Yet, the international development community agrees that this is not a sustainable solution. With Haiti importing as much as 60% of all its food and having suffered the brunt of the global economic and food crisis, food security remains one of the most perplexing and important components of reconstruction planning.

The promotion of sustainable, Haitian-owned agriculture is the critical link between Haiti's post-earthquake recovery and goal of future food security. The agriculture sector employs the great majority of Haiti's population and offers one of the few sources of food security and income generation for both women and men. Women operate mostly within local staple crop markets and use these earnings to feed their families and meet some of their most basic needs. Men have more access to export crops such as mango and cacao and value chain design structures that can help generate more income in country. Yet, a premature concentration and over-investment in export crops and export markets have the potential to derail Haiti's food security goals and further widen the economic gap between men and women.

Investing in ecologically sound agriculture must be paired with policies that promote local products designed for local and regional markets. Investing in local markets can help Haitian

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

women farmers and vendors build on the expertise they have in agriculture and marketing and secure a more reliable nutrition base for their communities. Such projects would help create food and livelihood security for rural families and help set the stage for future export aspirations.

### **Water and Sanitation, Hygiene (WASH)**

WASH activities have proven to be a challenging post-earthquake recovery issue that carries strong gender implications. Limited access to clean water, hygiene supplies, bathing facilities, sanitation facilities and clean housing conditions have equated with increased health risks for over 1.8 billion displaced Haitians. Furthermore, women face higher security risks due to lack of access to sufficient WASH resources. In IDP camps where only 1 bathroom exists for every 130 people, a significant lack of facilities' lighting and few or bathing facilities, women suffer higher rates of gender-based violence. Rapes often take place around sanitation facilities at night. Women who are forced to bathe out in the public completely exposed become high targets for sexual violence. In addition, a lack of clean conditions and hygiene products lead to higher infection rates in women, an easily avoidable reality if sufficient resources are incorporated into all WASH planning.

### **Health Recommendations**

- 1. Develop and prioritize social health care services to help assure the health, safety and well-being of women, men and children.**
  - a. Prioritize the sexual and reproductive needs of women in the reconstruction and reprogramming of all hospitals and community health centers.
  - b. Incentivize the participation of men in family-based health programs, as they play a critical role in making financial decisions on family health investments.
  - c. Establish community-based family wellness centers staffed by doctors and relief teams that work with local residents as part of medical response teams.
  - d. Train health service providers to treat GBV survivors and equip them with appropriate post-rape treatment and short and long-term psychosocial support.
  - e. Prioritize the health needs of orphan girls as a high risk group for sexual violence and resulting sexually contracted diseases.
  - f. Support the creation of women's centers and other safe spaces, children's support services, and IDP camp support services.
  - g. Create gender-sensitive prevention and treatment centers to help address the threat of cholera and tuberculosis in IDP camps.
  
- 2. Invest in high quality, gender-sensitive maternal health programs and services with the participation of Haitian women's organizations.**
  - a. Provide basic prenatal and post-natal care to all Haitian women and girls, including medical check-ups, nutrition counselling, food packages, baby health monitoring and lactation counselling.
  - b. Assure qualified medical personnel and birthing facilities for all women, despite their social or economic status.

3. **Create a gender-sensitive plan to deliver national, regional and local mental health services, including grief and post-trauma counselling.**
  - a. Recruit local Haitians to facilitate community-based counselling and support groups for women, men and children, that operate in and outside of camps.
  
4. **Create a national plan to prioritize the needs and rights of populations with disabilities, with special attention for women and girls.**
  - a. Require adequate access for people with disabilities into the design and implementation of all new public and private buildings, health care vehicles, parks, educational institutions, transportation mechanisms and general spaces.
  - b. Provide appropriate medical care, including physical therapy and access to medical services, through consultations with local organizations.
  - c. Address the urgent need for prosthetics by supporting public-private local manufacturing of prosthetics, and hiring within the disabled community.
  - d. Address the economic vulnerability of post-earthquake disabled women, men and girls in through special livelihood creation programs.
  - e. Create incentive programs to help businesses and NGO's hire disabled Haitians.
  - f. Create programs to address the security needs of newly disabled post-earthquake individuals, with special attention to disabled women and girls.
  
5. **Review, update and reinvest in the existing national HIV/AIDS plan, ncluding PEPFAR funding, to better address post-earthquake needs.**
  - a. Partner with both local and international emergency teams to help identify local HIV/AIDS health needs. Recruit local community providers for delivery of both HIV/AIDS education programs and health care services.
  - b. Include free condom distributions, health screenings, testing and prevention awareness, especially for transactual sex workers and women and men at high risk, as a key component of a comprehensive prevention program.
  - c. Integrate gender-sensitive PEPFAR programs into existing emergency health care and link them to the national system for reporting and monitoring HIV/AIDS.
  - d. Increase support and livelihood creation for groups at high risk for HIV/AIDS, including women in the women and men in the sex trade and prisoners.
  - e. Prioritize the health needs of women in cases of rape who have limited access to Post-Exposure Prophylaxis both in Port-au-Prince and around the country.
  - f. Provide free health initiatives to prevent mother-to-children transmission of HIV.
  
6. **Create gender-equal Cholera, TB and Malaria prevention and treatment programs, with special attention to IDP camps and rural areas.**
  - a. Establish isolated, secure sections of camps or clinics to treat Cholera or TB patients and resource them with appropriate equipment for screenings.
  - b. Support community-wide programs for disseminating mosquito nets and repellents, with special attention during rainy seasons and/or in high-risk areas.
  - c. Provide free malaria prophylaxis and cholera vaccinations, screenings and treatment, especially in high-risk IDP camps and low-income or rural areas.



## **Education Recommendations**

- 1. Address the educational needs of children directly affected by the earthquake, with special attention to the specific needs of girls.**
- 2. Make primary and secondary public education more accessible and affordable, and ensure that gender mainstreaming becomes an integral part of all educational processes at each level.**
  - a. Transition to a national education system where primary education is free of charge.
  - b. Make vocational schools and other forms of business-related training gender inclusive and accessible to low-income families.
  - c. Make low-interest educational scholarships, grants, low-interest loans and other forms of credit equally accessible to both women and men in low-income households.
  - d. Prioritize gender-based violence awareness, prevention and treatment programs into educational budgets and planning.
  - e. Address high risk factors for school drop-outs in all educational planning. Prioritize the educational needs of homeless, poor and vulnerable children, orphans, teen mothers, teen sex workers, Restaveks.
- 3. Establish clear national laws that protect children in domestic servitude from illegal labor practices and require that they attend both primary and secondary education.**
  - a. Create and strengthen social service programs that help vulnerable, low-income parents at risk of giving their children away.
- 4. Incorporate alternative vocational, technical and literacy training for women, men and youth with significant financial or household restraints.**
  - a. Increase investments in adult literacy programs geared towards women.
  - b. Offer loans and scholarships for low-income women and men to access trainings.
- 5. Prioritize the needs of female and male youth in educational budgeting, planning, implementation and evaluation.**
  - a. Provide post-earthquake PTSD and general counseling programs to youth affected by the earthquake in all educational settings.
  - b. Create and support youth centers, community groups and classes that provide life skills and leadership training, job referrals, health services, stress management, tutoring support, sex education, sports and cultural activities.
  - c. Create and support mentoring programs to pair at-risk youth with responsible older peers as a way to increase school retention and performance.
  - d. Prioritize the educational needs of street youth with mobile libraries, health and sex education, recreational events and parent trainings.
  - e. Create and support female youth programs that address school dropout risks specific to girls, such as forced or voluntary prostitution, violence and sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy, early marriage and household responsibilities.

## **Food Security Recommendations**

### **1. Support local production and food purchase at local and regional markets.**

- a. Invest in and prioritize agricultural development programs, including capacity building, training and infrastructure support, for smallholder farmers, especially women, and staple crops.
- b. Employ local women and women's organizations to cook and deliver locally purchased food to IDP camps and displaced communities.
- c. Work towards eliminating commodity-based food aid programs that interfere with local markets and disrupt national food sovereignty.

## **Water and Sanitation, Hygiene (WASH) Recommendations**

### **1. Provide safe, clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene access for all women, men, girls and boys.**

- a. Meet international standards of safe, clean water and sanitation access per 100 people in IDP camps, urban planning and decentralization planning.
- b. Consult and engage community and women's groups before constructing, adjusting or removing any water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and resources.
- c. Assure security protection for women and girls in and near sanitation and water facilities, where they are at greatest risk of gender-based violence.
- d. Assure reliable, close access to water and sanitation services, as long distances often reduce girls' available time for studies and school attendance and women's allotted time for income generation.
- e. Provide adequate hygiene supplies and safe sanitation facilities for older girls who are menstruating, to allow them to fully participate in educational opportunities.

## Infrastructure

The rebuilding of Haiti's infrastructure and extensive job creation are two key goals of the post-earthquake national reconstruction plan. Infrastructure prioritization is crucial, due to the severe earthquake-related damage of ports, major roads and the international airport—all central components to the efficient transport of goods in and outside of Haiti. In addition, key energy, telecommunications, economic and business infrastructure was destroyed, damaging the income generation capacity of both women and men.

Overall unemployment is estimated at 35%,<sup>48</sup> with as much as 70-80% unemployment in the formal sector.<sup>49</sup> Formal sector unemployment runs even higher for women, with men holding a 60% of jobs in the formal sector and women having low-paying, highly vulnerable jobs.<sup>50</sup> Before the earthquake, many individuals survived by doing odd jobs within the informal market. Certain estimates suggest that Port-au-Prince alone had 70-80% of its over-population generating its limited income from the informal sector.<sup>51</sup> The earthquake has propelled Port-au-Prince into an "informal sector explosion,"<sup>52</sup> with impromptu markets filling the gap among some limited goods and services. Another large part of the population around the country relied in part on Haiti Diaspora remittances, which make up roughly 25% of Haiti's \$ 7 billion gross domestic product.<sup>53</sup>

The reconstruction plan envisions immediate large public works projects to help remove rubble and waste from congested cities, rivers and ports, and then rebuild transportation, business, housing, government, energy, agriculture and communication infrastructures. The plan also proposes the establishment of new national and regional economic development centers and free trade zone areas to boost economic recovery, create new jobs, and relocate production and employment to cities across the country. This strategy of decentralization aims to depopulate the overcrowded capital and support an estimated 1 million newly displaced and homeless citizens within less populated areas. PDNA architects point to three key components of their reconstruction strategy in order to support these goals: agriculture and fisheries; industry and trade; and tourism.

Agriculture remains the largest employment generating sector in Haiti and an essential axis of its development. Before the earthquake, agriculture constituted 25% of the National GDP,<sup>54</sup> with 40%<sup>55</sup>-67%<sup>56</sup> of all Haitians employed in this sector. Yet, the majority of this agricultural production focused on subsistence farming and did not generate enough income to meet household needs, much less dietary needs. Women worked mostly on staple crops that earned

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<sup>48</sup> PDNA, p. 97.

<sup>49</sup> USAID, [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin\\_america\\_caribbean/country/haiti/](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean/country/haiti/).

<sup>50</sup> USAID, Haiti Country Profile.

<sup>51</sup> Miami Herald, <http://www.globalenvision.org/2010/02/04/taking-matters-their-own-hands>.

<sup>52</sup> "In Haiti, are informal markets a hope or a hindrance?" Nathaniel Whittemore, Social Entrepreneurship. Feb. 5, 2010.

[http://socialentrepreneurship.change.org/blog/view/in\\_haiti\\_are\\_informal\\_markets\\_a\\_hope\\_or\\_hindrance](http://socialentrepreneurship.change.org/blog/view/in_haiti_are_informal_markets_a_hope_or_hindrance)

<sup>53</sup> CIA Factbook.

<sup>54</sup> PDNA, p.95.

<sup>55</sup> PDNA, p.97.

<sup>56</sup> CIA Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>.

little income and received even less attention from agricultural development planners. Textiles and export markets make up a large part of the country's economy and present a challenging paradox for poverty alleviation. On one hand, this sector provides much needed jobs. On the other hand, it creates low wage factories with sub-par working conditions, no benefits and small, unpredictable wages.

Tourism has traditionally been a small, struggling sector for Haiti, yet one with great potential if sufficiently accessed. If Haiti improves its human development indicators, security issues, transportation infrastructure and gender inequalities, tourism could create much-needed income generation for both rural and urban citizens. Global and regional markets exist for Haiti's rich cultural traditions, handicrafts, music, and environmental sites.

Natural disasters and the absence of adequate public policies have collectively led to a damaged and deteriorated infrastructure network. A series of four strong hurricanes in 2008 considerably weakened existing infrastructure. However, the January 12 earthquake destroyed nearly 3/4 of key economic infrastructure, including markets, canals, irrigation, ports, airports, primary and secondary roads, and more. The IHRC and reconstruction planners have laid out a vision for how to rebuild this infrastructure, including the installation of major roads, urban planning, energy infrastructure and a revitalization of the harbour and Port-au-Prince.

While certainly helpful, these initiatives have not successfully integrated the voices and participation of women into the planning and implementation. Haiti infrastructure investments have traditionally ignored the specific needs of women and widened the economic gap between women and men. Training, jobs and income generation created from infrastructure projects have most often gone to men. Furthermore, projects have proceeded without strong consultations from women's groups. At times, this has resulted in indirect negative consequences for women and girls, including insecure means of transport, unsafe drinking sources, waste systems and sanitary resources and even impediments to education, training or income generation. In order for both men and women to equally benefit from new post-earthquake infrastructure investments, women's voices must be heard, and women's organizations must play a crucial role.

## **Housing**

Housing represents the sector most affected by the earthquake, with \$2.3 billion in damages, compromising approximately 40% of the post-disaster effects.<sup>57</sup> Nearly 1 million Haitians lost their homes and have become dependent on temporary shelters, camps and, in some cases, insufficient rentals. Following the spike in rental prices, women are obliged to occupy dangerous housing in high-risk environmental zones. Housing costs have greatly limited women's disposable income and savings, made them more dependent on male providers and heightened their vulnerability to domestic violence.

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<sup>57</sup> PDNA, p. 27.

Less advantaged Haitians are confined to IDP camps, where shelter options are precarious and gender-based violence cases are on the rise. Those who venture to more rural areas are faced with equally difficult housing options. Rural housing options are often sparse and place much control into the hands of absent landlords who may charge exorbitant rental fees or evict tenants without warning. Land rights are complex, often favoring men's rights over women's.

## **Recovery and Reconstruction Requirements**

A long history of international and domestic policies and aid conditionalities have enabled the richest one percent of the population to control nearly half of the country's wealth and have rendered the agricultural nation of Haiti dependent on importing half of all its food—the highest percentage in the hemisphere. The women of Haiti, who are both over-represented among the poor and responsible for meeting the basic needs of the vast majority of the population, have suffered disproportionately in this policy environment.

Today, as the international community pursues recovery for Haiti, the country is at a crossroads. The IHRC could recreate the status quo policies that have perpetuated the cycle of poverty and discrimination against women, or it could rebuild in ways that promote human rights and sustainable development, including much-needed structural resiliency to disaster. Realizing this vision requires, above all, that Haitian women's and grassroots organizations participate effectively and play leadership roles in ongoing relief and reconstruction processes. These organizations represent the majority of the population, those most deeply impacted by the disaster.

These processes include multi-years projects in clearing rubble, dredging ravines, canals and drainage systems, and stabilizing ravine banks. They also include large rural work projects, such as restoring irrigation systems and agricultural tracks, developing catchment areas through reforestation and correcting gully erosion, and investing in fruit arboriculture. Rebuilding local community infrastructure works include building roads, tracks, plots, shops and community centers, small water reservoirs, laying small conduit pipe, and cleaning and recycling salvaged metal and other debris from collapsed buildings.

As the plan notes, "The potential for job creation is considerable. Thus MARNDR's program alone has a potential to generate jobs for about 40 million men/day." While this is good news for men, and may indirectly help women if their husbands or relatives are employed, it does little to directly bolster women's income or help them secure new job opportunities.

Many women are heads of households and engage in agricultural work or as small-scale entrepreneurs and market vendors. They are viewed as the "poto mitan" – or pillars of Haiti's economy and state. While the urgent focus on rebuilding roads and infrastructure will benefit these women by helping to support their ability to store and transport goods for markets, it is likely to disproportionately favor employment for men who do heavy labor, construction, demolition or big debris removal. Considerable wage increases for men without comparable

income generation for women has the potential to drive an even larger wedge into the already tenuous gender balance within Haiti.

## **Telecommunications**

The pre-earthquake, male-dominated boom in Haiti's telecommunications held few comparable economic benefits for women. Haitian women, with lower literacy and education levels, had less access to such communications technology. Yet, Haitian women's organizations have long contended that mobile and internet technologies could serve as a solid base for social and economic emancipation and empowerment, as evidenced in growing mobile banking and micro credit initiatives throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia. Unfortunately, the Haitian telecommunications sector continues to objectify women by conveying sexualized, demeaning images. This male-focused advertising strategy coupled with lack of sufficient disposable income and telecommunications job training for women have isolated them from this growing sector.

## **Production**

Civil society movements in Haiti have long contended that food production and agricultural sovereignty must play a central role in the development of Haiti. Peasants' coalitions like the Quat Je and PAPDA argue that a post-earthquake redevelopment plan must reprioritize these sectors if recovery is to be sustainable. "It's not houses which will rebuild Haiti, it's investing in the agriculture sector," says Rosnel Jean-Baptiste of Tèt Kole Ti Peyizan Ayisyen (Heads Together Small Peasant Farmers of Haiti).<sup>58</sup>

Despite this strong movement from within Haiti, the PDNA and international donors continue to emphasize the necessity of developing agro-business, including coffee plantations and mango initiatives. Already, the Haiti Hope Mango project, a \$7.5 million public-private partnership to develop mango value chains for export, has emerged as one of the leading agricultural production initiatives.<sup>59</sup> The PDNA equally highlights the need to develop new organic agricultural products as a potential "niche" market for Haiti. Despite these bold new production objectives, traditional or subsistence agriculture, which serves as an important source of income for women and rural families, is hardly mentioned. The concept of food sovereignty, though a central theme to most Haitian civil society platforms and agricultural producer movements, is not once referenced. New investments in massive agro-businesses risk undermine traditional producer cooperatives, which have significant economic and social benefits for women and allow for a more equitable structure of production and commerce.

Similarly, new industrial trade proposals shift focus away from traditional production structures without offering comparable job creation vehicles for women and for women. A key cornerstone of Haiti's new PDNA plan calls for major expansion and investment in the textile or garment

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<sup>58</sup> "A future for agriculture, a future for Haiti." Beverly Bell, March 2, 2010. <http://upsidedownworld.org/main/haiti-archives-51/2383-a-future-for-agriculture-a-future-for-haiti>

<sup>59</sup> See [www.idb.org](http://www.idb.org) for more information.

industry, often negatively known as the 'maquiladora' industry in Latin America. The focus on expanding the textile industry is based in part on a 19-page economic growth plan commissioned by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon last year, written by a non-Haitian, Oxford University economics professor, Paul Collier, and championed by former US President Bill Clinton, who is the US Special Envoy to Haiti. The plan is based on two factors said to be in Haiti's favor: an existing preferential trade deal and very cheap Haitian labor.<sup>60</sup>

In 2008, the US Congress passed the existing Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act, or "Hope II," a trade agreement that allows Haiti to export textiles duty-free. Under HOPE II, several U.S. and Dominican companies have transferred their factories to Haiti, in the hope of finding cheap Haitian labor to take up factory jobs. Companies like Hanes and New Balance have been able to profit from such arrangements, boasting annual profit increases as a result.

The Obama administration is backing the push to increase garment factories, extend the terms of HOPE II, and create other free trade zones that take advantage of Haiti's competitive edge and low wage employees. Currently, only 25,000 clothing assembly jobs exist in Haiti, which are based in a single industrial park in Port-au-Prince that experienced significant damages after the earthquake. Redevelopment plans, however, call for expanding to two new sites, and creating new factories and jobs in other parts of the country.

Despite the potential benefits of creating these new jobs, the working wages in Haitian "sweatshops" are too low to be considered a decent living. For example, before the earthquake, the 1,200 employees at the South Korean-owned DKDR Haiti SA were making a new "outsourcing" minimum wage of 125 gourdes per day, the equivalent of \$3.09, roughly the same as the minimum wage in 1990, and worth half the purchasing power as in 1984.<sup>61</sup> In addition, overall working conditions are often terrible, drawing significant criticism from human rights watch groups.

Women make up many of the employees in these factories, and complain of extremely long work hours, poor and often dangerous working conditions and a lack of services needed to help working mothers, such as employee child care, maternity leave or other standard practices given to employees in the US and other countries. Hence, Haitian women's and labor groups have long denounced the horrible conditions at Haiti's baseball manufacturing companies and clothing assembly plants.

While various tax incentives and low-wage labor pools make profits quite high for foreign investors from the Dominican Republic, U.S., South Korea and Japan, it is unclear how much benefit Haiti derives from these foreign-owned companies. Haitian civil society and trade groups argue that a far greater investment in domestic agriculture, alternative energy sources, tourism,

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<sup>60</sup> "Can low-paying garment industry save Haiti," Associated Press, February 21, 2010.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

cultural products and innovative technologies will yield more long-term benefits for Haitians and help them to develop a more modern, independent state.

## **Tourism**

Many years ago, tourism made up a significant part of Haiti's economy, but a history of economic and political crises has nearly destroyed Haiti's tourist industry. Yet Haiti remains a culturally rich, vibrant country; one with a beautiful and still very undeveloped coastline, and cities that retained a crumbling but considerable post-colonial charm, from Jacmel to Cap Haitien.<sup>62</sup> Haiti's tropical weather and status as a relatively 'unspoiled' island are assets that could be developed in the future. But the impact of the earthquake and the major damage sustained by so many sectors makes this kind of tourism less realistic for major economic activity now.

Haiti's current instability, including urban crime linked in part to Haiti's high unemployment, makes tourism investments challenging. In recent years, Haiti had made strides to reduce crime, but post-earthquake, a large number of jailed inmates escaped from the National Penitentiary and are behind some of the recent attacks and killings of Haitians and suspected rival gang members in the capital. Until Haiti can provide more security, tourists are likely to continue to stay away.

Future redevelopment planning, however, can greatly benefit from Haiti's unique history and culture. In a post-earthquake, post-disaster Haiti, proper tourism investments and planning can help draw new visitors, including the many global citizens who have turned their attention to Haiti's plight. Capitalizing on their interest is an opportunity that should be seized.

Any future focus on Haiti's artistic and cultural heritage, however, must prioritize the needs, voices and contributions of women. Hence, future tourism planning could greatly benefit women artists, historians, writers and musicians, if this expertise and participation is properly utilized.

As the PDNA plan notes, cultural centers like downtown Jacmel that have been magnets for tourism were badly affected by the earthquake. While the PDNA plan calls for promoting the cultural heritage of such cities, it does not focus enough on the critical task of educating the nation about the challenges of preservation of culture and patrimony. Restoring and recalling Haiti's culture and traditions requires paying careful attention to what should not be destroyed, including Jacmel's fragile gingerbread houses. It means focusing on what can be preserved or rebuilt to honor architectural styles, and what must be memorialized to help build Haitian investment in its own patrimony.

Here too, ample opportunities exist for women and local groups to be involved in the important task of preservation, and helping to rebuild towns and cities in order to honor their unique

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<sup>62</sup> "Funky beach town of Jacmel could be key to Haiti's economic recovery," by William Booth, *Washington Post*, March 16, 2010.



heritage. Multiple roles exist for women cultural producers—those of writers, artists, dancers, sculptors, internet designers—in order to share new visions of Haiti. Partnerships with outside investors and cultural groups, such as museums, libraries and academic groups, can help Haiti to preserve and celebrate its cultural legacy and share it with a broader global audience.

## **Energy**

The reconstruction of Haiti's energy sector offers new opportunities for training and employment of women in this non-traditional field. Haiti's national plan should consider programs and approaches to support women's increased participation in this area.

An important issue for Haitian citizens in the reconstruction of the energy and electricity sector is the need to rebuild houses and commercial buildings that are designed to withstand earthquakes, flooding and hurricanes. As heads of households, women need to be informed about how to build safer and more energy-efficient buildings and how to build to reduce the risk of fires, electricity- and energy-related accidents.

Amid reports that new offshore reserves of oil and natural gas have been found in the sea around Haiti, the Haitian government is signing accords for foreign companies to begin offshore exploratory drilling. Greater transparency and public discussion of these critical issues is absolutely necessary in order to build a national development plan that includes the valuable contributions of Haitian women.

## **Transportation and Roads**

Haitian women have less ownership and access to private transportation and rely heavily on public transport. In post-earthquake Haiti, poor transportation greatly affects women's ability to provide care giving, generate income and access health and social services. Those without access to public transportation must often navigate unsafe back roads late at night. Lack of sufficient lighting on both roads and bus stops present an increased threat to women and girls' personal security. Long walking distances to clean water sources and social services also reduce women's time available for generating income for their families.

## **Infrastructure Recommendations**

- 1. Prioritize the equitable participation of women and women's organizations in the infrastructure redevelopment planning and implementation.**
  - a. Consult with women's work associations and professional networks in the assessments, planning and evaluation of all large-works infrastructure projects.
  - b. Ensure women's participation by identifying and reserving a quota of jobs for them in administration and management. Monitor and ensure fair wages and equal opportunities in these jobs.
  - c. Create and support local training centers aimed at recruiting and training women for jobs, including emerging sectors such as energy, technology, transportation, industrial manufacturing, green technologies and construction.

- d. Address all security and childcare needs for women in the creation and implementation of jobs.
  - e. Require gender-sensitivity training for all infrastructure sector employees, especially managers and supervisors.
  - f. Include gender assessments in the economic evaluation of all infrastructure development planning.
  - g. Monitor and support female owned businesses involved in post earthquake infrastructure redevelopment.
  - h. Strengthen the capacity of communes, districts, local administrations and territorial collectives to use gender integration in decentralization planning
- 2. Incorporate local expertise and recommendations into all decentralization and infrastructure planning, including that of women’s organizations.**
- a. Prioritize local production and procurement of Haitian materials, goods, services and labor within all infrastructure development projects.

### **Housing Recommendations**

- 1. Identify, quantify and compensate economic losses where women are especially vulnerable in all housing and construction planning.**
- a. Perform gender needs assessments and compensations for housing projects that include the destruction of residences, loss of equipment and supplies, decreased garden space, deceased livestock, broken marketplaces and limited labor access.
- 2. Engage women and women’s organizations in all post-earthquake relocation and housing construction planning.**
- a. Include gender trainings in all construction projects.
  - b. Address the needs of women and girls in housing and community development planning, including security and access to clean water, proper sanitation, sufficient cooking facilities, educational facilities and community resources.
  - c. Train women and community groups on how to build safer, more energy-efficient buildings and how to reduce the risk of fires, and energy-related accidents.
  - d. Condition housing assistance on the mandated joint titling of both spouses for all new land and residential acquisitions by married couples.
- 3. Implement job training to enable women to broaden their skills and increase earning potential in the housing and construction industries.**
- a. Research existing models in Turkey, India and Indonesia, for example, for training women in seismically sound house construction.
  - b. Support affordable, accessible child care services to increase the capacity of women to participate in these trainings.
- 4. Prioritize the equal representation of men and women in new proposed bodies in charge of territorial development and land use planning.**
- a. Adopt and integrate a gender-sensitive approach into all training, planning, implementation and evaluation work at the national and international levels, including systems of accountability and transparency.

5. **Consult with and engage local women architects, developers and women's groups in all urban, community and habitat zone planning.**
  - a. Perform gender needs assessments to help inform all planning.
  - b. Prioritize equal representation of men and women in all hiring processes.

### **Industry and Trade Recommendations**

1. **Address the needs of women in all textile manufacturing planning, with special attention to the garment industry and factory production.**
  - a. Assure equal rights for both female and male workers, including fair wages, safe and humane working conditions and access to childcare.
2. **Increase funding, reduce tariffs, and provide advocacy and capacity building support for local artist cooperatives and cultural and handicrafts producers.**
  - a. Provide sales, marketing, shipping models so that Haitians can market their cultural wares to regional and global markets.

### **Energy Recommendations**

1. **Prioritize the equitable participation of both women and men in utilizing alternative energy sources and methods, including solar, wind and water.**
  - a. Train women's organizations in how to access, utilize and maintain alternative solar cooking resources.
  - b. Target women as the local energy suppliers in incentivizing programs that help communities move away from charcoal use and resulting deforestation.
  - c. Temporarily compensate women for loss of charcoal income and help them to find equally lucrative alternative income generation sources.
2. **Create greater transparency and accountability measures concerning the environmental, economic and social impact of utilizing fuel in Haiti.**
  - a. Support public forums between communities, local and federal government employees, international donors and international NGO's on both old and new oil and gas reserves and their impact on women, men and children.
  - b. Consult with women and women's organizations on the impact of new gas pipelines, reserves, taxes and sources. Utilize consultations for all planning,

### **Transportation and Roads Recommendations**

1. **Engage grassroots women's organizations in the planning and reconstruction of transportation services, including public transportation and road building.**
  - a. Make public transportation affordable and accessible to both men and women and all socio-economic groups both in and outside of Port-au-Prince.
  - b. Prioritize the hiring of women and gender equality training and planning in the Department of Transportation and all transportation planning structures.
  - c. Develop a road grid that prioritizes the security, livelihood and household responsibility needs of women and girls.

## **Economy**

Nearly 50 percent of Haitian women are economically active, the highest percentage in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>63</sup> The majority of women are employed in the informal sector, and income disparities are striking: women earn less than half of men's wages.<sup>64</sup> Despite these important contributions, the PDNA only includes financial estimates taken from the formal economic sector. This greatly excludes the informal economic contributions of Haitian women and limits the integration of this economic sector into the recovery efforts proposed by the PDNA.

The PDNA analysis of the spatial organization in Haiti omits the historical causes and dimensions of the territorial challenges as well as their impacts on different socio-economic groups, women in particular. For example, the notion of "demographic explosion" refers to the maternal and reproductive functions of women with a certain negative undertone. The same applies to the notion of "social imbalance," since it is often the women's responsibility at the community and family levels to manage and equalize social relations in the home and community. In general, the analysis of space in Haiti is traditional with regards to its parameters and paradigms and would greatly benefit from opening these in terms of new social and gendered parameters and paradigms. Finally, the descriptive statistics used should be divided by gender to better reflect the specific challenges faced by males and females. A systematic analysis of the gender specific division of the social and economic spaces, as well as the roles and responsibilities of women within family and society shall be conducted before providing any possible solutions. These solutions should particularly integrate the specific problems faced by women, most especially poor women.

An inevitable effect of the earthquake is an increased amount of time women must devote to daily tasks such as procuring food, cooking, seeking water and caring for children. In turn, this limits their ability to engage in income generating activities. Regardless, income generation options are scarce, especially for women, increasing their levels of social, economic and physical insecurity.

### **Economy Recommendations**

- 1. Engage women, local women's groups and women-dominated professional networks to help rehabilitate the economic sector.**
  - a. Support and prioritize female-owned businesses that may benefit from increased knowledge of business best practices.
  - b. Organize professional training workshops for women to support the development of economic initiatives.
  - c. Partner with women's home-based workers' associations in order to mobilize their local knowledge, informal communication networks, and technical expertise.

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<sup>63</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (2010, March 08). Women struggle for rights as Haiti recovers. Retrieved October 22, 2010, from [www.undp.org: http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2010/march/women-struggle-for-rights-as-haiti-recovers.en](http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2010/march/women-struggle-for-rights-as-haiti-recovers.en)

<sup>64</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (2010, March 08). Women struggle for rights as Haiti recovers. Retrieved October 22, 2010, from [www.undp.org: http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2010/march/women-struggle-for-rights-as-haiti-recovers.en](http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2010/march/women-struggle-for-rights-as-haiti-recovers.en)

- d. Fund, train and resource women's grassroots networks in order for them to better track and advocate for economic recovery initiatives.
  - e. Reserve administrative and management jobs and training for women across all economic sectors taking into account social hurdles and childcare responsibilities.
- 2. Engage Haitians farmers, including women, in implementing innovative, cost-efficient, sustainable solutions to key economic challenges.**
    - a. Support Haitian initiatives to produce and promote goods in both local and regional markets.
  - 3. Prioritize comprehensive, gender assessments in the planning and evaluation of all short-term and long-term economic initiatives.**
    - a. Partner with Haitian women's organizations to ensure a participatory gender analysis process for economic recovery projects.
    - b. Collect and develop sex-disaggregated data for use throughout the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation all economic recovery project.
  - 4. Prioritize creation of development industrial zones rather than free trade areas, which disadvantage low-income Haitians, especially women, with poor working conditions and international labor standards.**
  - 5. In the creation of any free trade zones, carefully adopt, implement and evaluate strong international working standards that prioritize the rights of both women and men.**
    - a. Guarantee the equal rights of women through laws and labor practices that prioritize their rights to reproduction, health care, childcare, humane labor conditions, fair wages and trade union participation.

## Cross-Cutting Issues

Cross-cutting concerns in disaster risk assessments, including the PDNA, are typically marginalized or considered an “afterthought” in efforts relating to recovery and reconstruction, leading to missed opportunities for comprehensive post-disaster structural rebuilding.

Individuals are typically analyzed on a vulnerable or marginalized population basis, e.g. “youth, single headed households, women, persons with disabilities.” This limited approach analytically divides what is joined in real life and can be divisive in the wake of catastrophic events.

Moreover, cross-cutting concerns are often integrated into recovery planning in narrow spaces, e.g. “psychosocial effects”, rather than into the economic, infrastructure and political framework. They are often minimized in funding proposals and project design because they are understood as supplemental rather than central. In reality, issues such as health insurance or child care services are bedrock concerns for disaster-affected people.

Narrowly defined indicators are often employed to measure complex social interactions, e.g. between the needs of widows and widowers, girls and boys, professional women and women living in extreme poverty. Indicators for cross-cutting issues, such as the economic needs of women-headed households, are often confused with indicators for overall social vulnerability. Hence, the specific needs of women-headed households in different geographical areas, with unique health or housing conditions or among different socio-economic groups, are merged into one generalized vulnerable populations grouping.

Employment opportunities in post-disaster sites are often overlooked for disenfranchised populations due to intertwining conditions that could increase social vulnerability, such as status of disabilities, age and gender. Instead, “vulnerable” or “special needs” populations are examined in the context of social support neglecting their need and desire for post-disaster income generation.

Children’s rights, needs and interests in post-disaster situations are typically divorced from the rights, needs and interests of their primary caretakers, despite the inevitable linkages between the two groups, e.g. women’s economic security promotes food security among children or the intersection of mothers and children’s mental health. Women’s employment patterns outside of the formal labor structures typically lead to reduced levels of support through pensions or other workplace benefits, further complicating their long-term financial status.

Cultural diversity is often overlooked in recovery planning and reconstruction efforts in the interests of “the public,” though no such undifferentiated “public” exists in any meaningful way. The capacities of high-risk social groups (e.g. youth, elders and persons with disabilities) are often overlooked, but are as equally important to incorporate into all recovery planning as transportation barriers are, for instance.

Post-earthquake investments in rubble removal, road building and housing construction typically benefit male youth and able-bodied men, with the apparent assumption that assisting men in

this way benefits the entire household. This is not always the case due to gender and age-based discrimination and entitlement patterns in the household.

Women, youth, disabled persons and a host of other identified “vulnerable populations” in Haiti often play key, yet ‘invisible’ roles in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction. The Haitian government, foreign governments, international donors and INGO’s have difficulty in formally recognizing, analyzing, quantifying, differentiating or implementing the valuable contributions of such groups. Hence, key cross-cutting issues such as gender-based violence, gender inequality, age inequality and socio-economic disaggregated data are often placed on the back burner, without formal financial or planning support.

Top-down recovery interventions conducted without meaningful participation of differentiated beneficiary groups undermine people’s creative and self-directed recovery and can reinforce the interests of powerful ‘stakeholders’ rather than those whose health and well-being are most at stake. Lack of consultation with the community is disempowering, leads to missed opportunities for building both on technical expertise and on local knowledge, and short-circuits sustainable redevelopment efforts.

### **Cross-Cutting Issues Recommendations**

- 1. Integrate cross-cutting issues into the needs assessments, design and implementation of reconstruction initiative across all sectors.**
  - a. Resource Haitian grassroots and women’s organizations to conduct their own needs assessments for different socio-economic and geographic groups.
  - b. Consult with Haitian women’s and grassroots groups to collect both empirical evidence and participatory research on at-risk individuals, (e.g. street children, prostitutes, prisoners, persons with disabilities) for reconstruction planning
  
- 2. Develop both quantitative and qualitative monitoring and evaluation systems to measure cross-cutting issues such as gender in the distribution of funding and resources for long-term reconstruction.**
  - a. Create cross-tabulated population statistics, such as “percent male/female with low/high levels of literacy in xxx and xxx languages”) for high risk social groups instead of single level population statistics such as “percent female” or “percent illiterate.”
  - b. Partner with local community research centers, universities, and women’s groups, to procure essential disaggregated data and comprehensive gender assessments to measure the pace of recovery.
  - c. Support community-based, women-led and participatory action research that originates with Haitian women’s organizations.
  
- 3. Establish community consultations, using the Asset Based Community Development paradigm, to identify inroads for community participation as a key component of comprehensive recovery planning.**
  - a. Target hard-to-reach rural, low-income and marginalized populations through alternative modes of communications, including radio and community forums.

- b. Budget Creole translation into all projects and programming.
  - c. Hire and engage community representatives who understand needs related to gender, age, socio-economic status, disabilities and geographical limitations to liaise with redevelopment planners/implementers and international donors.
  - d. Promote participatory, inclusive, democratic consultations in each department that accommodate the physical, economic, communications and timing needs of women, youth, persons with disabilities, the illiterate and recent migrants.
  - e. Develop direct assessments with women across different age groups, economic groups and marital status to help ensure that governmental and nongovernmental recovery assistance equitably benefits women and girls.
- 4. Support and strengthen national gender offices and advisory bodies that work directly with grassroots women's groups to address gender gaps and advocate for increased funding and redevelopment opportunities for women.**



## **CONCLUSION**

International donors, governments, NGO's and philanthropists should be commended for their deep commitment to the Haitian people during the rescue, recovery and rebuilding phases of the post-earthquake response. This Gender Shadow Report offers a comprehensive set of principles and recommendations to help guide governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders in prioritizing men's, women's, children's and communities' rights, needs and participation in all reconstruction efforts. Because disasters amplify existing social inequalities, it is crucial to integrate a gender perspective into all redevelopment policies and planning. Otherwise, post-earthquake reconstruction risks repeating past injustices and further widening the gulf between men and women and the rich and poor. GSR recommendations seek to first and foremost ensure the equal consideration and participation of Haitian women in all planning, implementation and evaluation processes. Second, they seek to give a blueprint for addressing the unique needs and assets of Haitian men, women and children in the redevelopment of their country.

In order to ensure a more participatory, gender-sensitive approach to reconstruction, the Haitian government, international donors and INGO's must adopt policies that are non-discriminatory and respectful of the crucial voices of Haitian women, men and children. Next, they must ensure that policies and good intentions match actual funding and development outcomes. The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement call on governments to consult with Haitian women and vulnerable groups and ensure their participation in decisions that impact their lives. Effective consultations enable participants to actually influence outcomes and are anchored in formal partnerships with Haitian grassroots groups, especially women's groups, who are empowered and resourced to take public leadership in the process of reconstruction.

Haiti has a vibrant civil society, comprised of hundreds of not-for-profit and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which must play a critical role in this process. Many members of civil society are engaged in Haiti as political actors, capable of mobilizing the public and taking action for the common good of Haitian citizens. International NGOs also have a strong presence in Haiti and have greatly contributed to promoting and protecting the well-being of Haitian people in significant and generous ways. However, if reconstruction projects are to succeed, it is critical for national and international NGO's to gain the trust of the people and be held accountable to those they serve.

International donors also have a particular responsibility, given the history of Haiti, to establish and maintain clear systems of accountability and transparency in the reconstruction process. Haitian civil society and the international community must monitor and assess whether and how the generous aid offered toward the reconstruction of the country is actually contributing to the rebirth of vigorous Haitian democratic institutions, a socially responsible private sector, an independent and effective civil society and widespread civic engagement.

To achieve these goals, all future international donors' meetings and INGO planning must ensure Haitian women's effective participation and leadership in all stages of the National Relief and Reconstruction Plan by implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, including the following:

**Participation**: Haitian women are both disproportionately impacted by the crisis and the key to their country's recovery. Haitian women's organizations should therefore be consulted and included in needs and damage assessments, and the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all relief and reconstruction programs, particularly aid delivery. Grassroots women must be materially compensated for time spent working on relief and recovery efforts and offered childcare, transportation and other support to enable their full and equal participation.

**Non-discrimination**: Reproductive health services must be provided to women and measures to protect women from sexual violence must be implemented. These include safe access to storm-resistant temporary shelters, adequate street lighting and safe spaces where women and LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex) people can organize and access culturally appropriate psychological counseling and other needed services. Communities must be rebuilt in ways that are safe and inclusive of women and uphold women's property rights.

**Capacity Development**: Provide resources and facilitate technical assistance for women's organizations to rebuild and enhance their capacity. Such programs should meet needs identified by women's organizations themselves and be implemented by grassroots and other women's groups when feasible. Economic recovery programs must be geared towards women who work in the informal sector and who are single heads of households, offering them a full range of training, credit and business support services.

**Accountability**: In order to ensure accountability, it is critical to establish fair and transparent accountability systems with the active engagement of all sectors of Haitian government and civil society, including women's groups. Accountability is crucial to fulfilling national and international gender equality commitments made by Haiti at all levels of governance and reconstruction efforts. Reform aid mechanisms, consistent with Haitian sovereignty, are needed to strengthen democratic governance and build the national economy to reflect the rights and priorities of Haiti's poor majority.

**Transparency**: Every new reconstruction pledge to Haiti should require the integration of gender equality issues and the participation of women in decision-making processes related to international aid distribution. Governments and aid agencies should provide funding and training to enable women's organizations themselves to develop mechanisms to hold governments and non-state actors accountable to their commitments. Such aid must also require open and transparent systems of

accountability, so that the implementation gender equality commitments may be monitored.

The January 12, 2010 earthquake devastated the infrastructure of Haiti and stole the lives of a myriad of civil servants dedicated to the governance of their country. The strength and future of Haiti now lay in its vision and ability to create a government that upholds the principles of equality, justice and human rights. Recovery and reconstruction planning must therefore demonstrate high transparency, accountability, inclusiveness and gender equity in all phases of planning, implementation and assessment. While historically, Haitian women have suffered from institutionalized discrimination, exclusion from management in most sectors, physical violence and lack of access to justice, they have remained the central pillars of Haiti's economic, cultural and spiritual being. They now deserve to play a central and equal role in their country's redevelopment.

In February, 2010, just weeks after the devastating earthquake, scholars found an amazing testament to Haiti's long history of equality, resilience and sovereignty: its original declaration of independence. The 1804 proclamation of freedom from colonial tyranny enabled Haiti to become the world's first free black republic. The declaration, "liberte ou la mort," meaning, "give us liberty or give us death," speaks to the country's perseverance and love of independence.<sup>65</sup> Now is the time for Haitian women and men to join hands—with respectful support from international donors, governments and NGO's—to reaffirm this spirit of independence in order to redevelop a sustainable, equitable and sovereign nation.

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<sup>65</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/01/world/americas/01document.html>