

ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL DISASTERS IN HAITI: THE IMPACTS OF  
FAILED POLICIES FROM 2004 TO 2010

A Thesis Presented

by

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## ABSTRACT

# ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL DISASTERS IN HAITI: THE IMPACTS OF FAILED POLICIES FROM 2004 TO 2010

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Haiti is a country prone to environmental and natural disasters, and is vulnerable to climatic changes in the region and the world. Haiti's environmental vulnerability is the result of over-exploitation of natural resources and failures of policies and other reforms.

Haiti is located in what can be considered as the corridor for hurricanes and tropical depressions, and is placed between complex systems of fault lines. The incapacity, weakness, and – to certain extent, unwillingness of the Haitian government; the neglect of civil society; and the unwillingness of the international community to effectively respond and contain the exacerbating problem of environmental degradation and poorly enforced environmental policies have rendered the situation not only a grave concern for Haiti, but also a problem for adjoining nations in the region and beyond with severe implications. Changes in climatic conditions, coupled with other natural phenomena have

impelled people to migrate out of their natural habitats, in search of refuge and security in other parts of the country deemed less prone. In the post-1994 reforms, decentralization of government systems was embraced as a way to redress deficiencies, because by decentralizing government systems, power would no longer be centralized in “Republic of Port-au-Prince” – centralization which was done under the Duvalier regime as means of control and to secure the regime, but enforcement mechanisms would be available for regional and local governments to enforce environmental laws and policies.

Unfortunately, the post-1994 policy reforms were short-lived and did not bring any changes to this present situation.

In this analysis of the precarious nature of Haiti’s environment and infrastructure, governance structure and institutions and policies will be analyzed. The goals of my analysis are as follow: first, I will attempt at understanding, contextualizing and defining the problem as it is; secondly, I will analyze the policies and reforms, and look at their impacts; and thirdly, and I will present a framework in which sustainable actions and solutions can be undertaken and implemented, in an attempt at redressing the problem and I will provide recommendations.

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## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to the survivors and those affected by the January 12 of 2010 Earthquake that has left Port-au-Prince and other regional centers under the rubbles and a country devastated, and to those who suffered or who have lost loved ones. I extend my sympathy and love to all of my fellow countrymen.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	vii
DEDICATION .....	viii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	xii
<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Overview of Study .....	3
Modifications of Study .....	4
Limitations of Study .....	6
Methodology .....	6
2. BACKGROUND .....	9
Difference between Natural and Environmental Disasters .....	9
Haiti and Global Climate Change .....	10
History of Environmental and Natural Disasters in Haiti .....	12
The January 12 <sup>th</sup> Earthquake: “the Day the Earth Shakes” .....	15
3. FORCED MIGRATION: TWO FORMS OF DISPLACEMENT IN HAITI.....	19
4. POLICIES AND POST-1994 REFORMS.....	24
Policy Implementation and Governance Structure .....	24
Failed Policies .....	26
5. NEW UNDERSTANDING OF IDP AND REFUGEE PROBLEM IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN.....	37
6. FINDINGS .....	46
7. RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH, AND CONCLUSION.....	52
Suggestions for future research.....	57
Conclusion .....	58

APPENDIX

A. SYSTÈME NATIONAL DE GESTION DES RISQUES ET DES DÉSASTRES (SNGRD) / DIRECTION DE LA PROTECTION CIVILE – LIVRE Plan National de Gestion de Risques et des Desastres (PNGRD) .....	66
B. CENAREF VISION STRATÉGIQUE POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT NATIONAL – MANIFESTE POUR UNE NOUVELLE HAITI Présentation du Coordonateur Général Jacques-Edouard Alexis .....	67
C. CENAREF VISION STRATÉGIQUE POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT NATIONAL – MANIFESTE POUR UNE NOUVELLE HAITI Présentation du Coordonateur Général Jacques-Edouard Alexis .....	68
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	69

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Haiti – Political Map.....	64
2. The Magnitude of a Disaster.....	65

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CENAREF	Centre National de Recherche et de Formation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
GOH	Government of Haiti
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organization
MDE	Ministère de l'Environnement
MARNDR	Ministère de l'Agriculture et des Ressources Naturelles
MTPTC	Ministère des Travaux Public, Transport et Communications
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Environmental and natural disasters are the grim reality of the Republic of Haiti; although an unbearable one, it is a reality that the country is not well equipped to address or confront, due to their complexities and poor infrastructure caused by lack of enforcement of environmental policies. Environmental and natural disasters are not new phenomena to Haiti, however, many observe that the rate at which disasters strike the island and its effects are felt deeper and heavier. Aside from conditions on the ground which facilitate environmental disasters to happen and natural disasters to be felt heavier, one has to position what is happening in Haiti within the global context of changes – climatic or otherwise, in order to understand the ramifications and implications of these events outside of the national boundaries. Many have observed increases in the rate and scale of environmental disasters around the globe. Since the Industrial Revolution in England, in securing human survival, we have engaged in practices with disastrous consequences such as massive and irregular commercial logging and clearing out forests

so that we can practice agriculture on a massive scale. Even though, now nations possess new and efficient technologies capable of reducing the pressures of our footprint on the earth, we continue to ignore warning signs, if such measures would counter economic calculations of stakeholders with high-stakes. It would be fair to say that countries with a colonial past have it the worst. In that case, Haiti is a prime example.

The colonies called *colonies of exploitation* as opposed to *colonies of settlement* –

United States is one such instance— their *raison d'être* were to provide specific resources needed by the *métropoles* in ensuring their progress and maintaining their economic preponderance. While degradation in developed regions was started with pollution because of heavy industrial developments, in the developing regions it was started with exploitation of natural resources chief among them being the extensive logging and clearing out of fertile lands for agricultural expansion. Long after these colonies became states, the process of over-exploitation of natural resources continues as a source of maintenance of ways of living. Climate change is resulting from decades, even centuries, of over-exploitation and pollution of our support systems of living.

Without policies aiming at protecting irregular utilization of natural resources or policies aiming at redressing the problem, the environment continues to degrade and create favorable conditions for environmental disasters to occur.

Recently, attention has been given to environmental disasters, not only on the international scene but also in Haiti. Although, many have considered factors that have contributed to Haiti's environmental and natural disasters, very few people consider existing environmental policies and laws of Haiti – in their formulation and

implementation, as a major cause of these disasters. In the last two decades, Haiti has seen the formulation and implementation of many environmental laws and policies, and constitutional laws amended to accommodate these policies. However, the outcome of these policies has been poor and inefficient. The impact of these policies has been grossly overlooked, although their consequences are deep-rooted on the ground. As demonstrated by the January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake that hit Haiti, the security of and the livelihoods of the people can be threatened and disrupted by disaster. If anything else, the January 12<sup>th</sup> Earthquake just highlighted and put forth the failures of environmental policies and reforms such as zoning laws and so forth.

In this study, the questions raised are: 1) why these policies failed? 2) What are the impacts of policy failures? In the case that it is not evident that policy failures contribute to environmentally-related problems in Haiti, what can and should be accounted for these impacts?

### **Overview of Study**

This study aims to examine environmental and natural disasters in Haiti, and the impacts of the failed policies and reforms. Chapter 2 begins with examining the difference between natural and environmental disasters, and points out the nuances that exist when one creates the necessary conditions for the other to happen. The second part of chapter 2 looks at the relationship between Haiti and global climate change. The third part of chapter 2 looks at the history of environmental and natural disasters in Haiti from the 20<sup>th</sup>

century until now. The fourth part of chapter 2 looks at the January 12<sup>th</sup> Earthquake as a case of natural disaster, and analyzes what its consequences mean for environmental policy-making and planning. Chapter 3 analyzes forced migration in the context of Haiti. It looks at the two forms of forced migration: environmentally-induced which is a rural-urban process and naturally-induced which is a sudden, chaotic, and disorganized, and is the reverse of the former caused by natural disasters. Chapter 4 analyzes post-1994 reforms and policy changes. In chapter 4 I identify the failures of these policies and their impact on Haiti.

Chapter 5 looks at Haiti within the broader geographical limitations and examines what Haiti's position means for the security of the region and beyond. It prescribes a new framework with consideration for security and stability in the region. Chapter 6 presents the findings from formal and informal interviews and fieldwork observations. The interviews focused on the formulation and implementation of environmental policies, and what are the causes of their failures. The findings highlight the views of participants with regard to what contributed to the failure of the environmental policies. Chapter 7 concludes this study by providing recommendations to influence environmental policy-making in Haiti, and provides suggestions for future research.

### **Modifications of Study**

As a note, this thesis came out of an Independent Study made on the topic of environmentally-induced migration. The Independent Study was attempting at defining,

conceptualizing, defining, and problematizing the problem of environmentally-induced migration due to environmental and natural disasters from 2004 to 2008 in Haiti, in particular the regions of Artibonite and Plateau Central. The materials of this Independent Study have been used in this Thesis.

The disastrous event that occurred on January 12 of 2010 by the 7.0 magnitudes earthquake, aside from other factors such the size of Haiti and the intensity of such an earthquake, more than anything else, highlighted the precarious conditions in which the people of Haiti are living in. The death toll is estimated to be more than 200,000 and the physical damages are estimated in millions. It is, indeed, true that, given the size of Haiti, the earthquake was intense, however, the physical damages are simply the results of poor infrastructure which is, in and of itself, the result of poorly implemented or failed environmental laws and policies.

I have to address the limitations of this paper. Two limitations are of importance to address: 1) limited access or lack of critical information needed on these regions in Haiti, and even the country itself, in regards to environmental and natural disasters, climate change, and so forth, are limited – to some extent they are non-existent. The other limitations of this case study have to do with data and statistics within the context of forced migration caused by environmental disasters that are not yet available to academics and the public; 2) the earthquake of January 12<sup>th</sup> has impacted my research, in the sense that, I could not complete my fieldwork entirely due to a number of reasons: a) post-earthquake conditions were not appropriate to conduct any further research given that it was a period of *État d'urgence nationale* (national emergency crisis); b) it was a

chaotic and traumatic period for many participants, and pursuing collection of data through interviews is proven to be inaccurate, since participants' state of mind might have influenced their answers; and c) given the fact that many of the participants were current government officials, they were called and given newly added tasks and duties, and they were no longer available to give me an interview; and unfortunately, few of the participants were affected by the earthquake, either themselves or members of their family.

This research has been modified from its original conception to address emerging issues while doing fieldwork on environmental disasters. The January 12<sup>th</sup> Earthquake in Haiti of 7.0 magnitude happened while I was researching my subject research of environmental and natural disasters and the impact of failed policies. In the aftermath of the earthquake, I conducted a small-scale post-earthquake damage assessment through thorough observations, talks with opinion leaders, and analysis of damage assessment maps and aerial photographs; post-earthquake damage assessment from which I was able to observe the consequences of failed policies or lack of enforcement on existing ones.

### **Limitations of Study**

As stated in the beginning, this study is far from being complete. The intention is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and to provide a policy analysis that will be important in identifying fundamental policy failures. The scope of this study covers the period extended from 2004 to the first quarter of 2010. However, it is to be noted that

most policies that will be analyzed were enacted in the late 1990s. The selection of these policies to be analyzed has to do with the fact that the results should have been seen over a decade or so. Finally, developing countries have, not only a lack of relevant information, but also such information may be inconsistent. It is of importance to not that Haiti is a classic example of this condition.

## **Methodology**

Research for this study was conducted through literature review, key informant interviews with former and current government personnel in Haiti, and fieldwork investigation. This study is an introductory investigation of environmental policies of the Haitian government, as well as an analysis of such policies as to why they failed to produce the expected results which they were designed to produce. I chose to investigate environmental policies because they are the only instruments through which an understanding of needed solutions in mitigating environmental and natural disasters can come about. I intended to create a mix of key informants who could provide me with a more balanced and nuanced understanding of policy formulation and implementation, and policy choice of different administrations. The sample was representative of the policy-making body of the Haitian state. My sample was composed of key informants from past and current administrations, key opinion leaders from the academia, key opinion leaders from the private sector, and independent informants. I interviewed a total of 9 individuals, four of whom are current high-ranking government personnel, three are key opinion leaders in academia, and two are independent key opinion leaders on environmental policies and environmental and natural disasters. The make-up of my sample is based on the fact that these individuals not only work for either past or current administrations, but they are also familiar with policy-making and decision-making processes in Haiti. As a visiting researcher at the Centre National de Recherches et de Formation (CENAREF) and my familiarity with former government officials, I was able

to recruit those individuals who at some point took part in the policy-making and decision-making processes in Haiti.

As a year-long project and roughly three weeks of fieldwork, I was not adequately equipped to further explore many contacts I had recruited. The interviews were conducted both over the phone and in-person in private settings. Each interview lasted from 45 minutes to one and-a-half hours. I recorded notes for most interviews by hand in my notebooks and few of them were recorded on my computer. It is of importance to note that this study is qualitative and it is my hope that it will serve as a first step for more comprehensive environmental policy analysis of the Haitian government.

## CHAPTER 2

### BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

#### **Difference between Natural and Environmental Disasters**

Before we move forward, it is of importance to have an understanding between environmental disasters and natural disasters for the purpose of this case study. Although, these events are different, it has to be noted that, in the context of Haiti, both events occur. Natural disaster is defined as, “any event or force of nature that has catastrophic consequences, such as avalanche, earthquake, flood, forest fire, hurricane, lightning, tornado, tsunami, and volcanic eruption.” (Dictionary.com, 2009) As opposed to natural disaster, although there is no definition of the term, environmental disaster is understood to mean, any catastrophic event resulting as a consequence of human activity or pressures on their ecosystems capable of displacing, threatening human livelihoods and severely disrupting habitats with widespread and long-lasting consequences encompassing the realms of infrastructure, health, economy and biodiversity. In other words, environmental disaster is a man-made phenomenon. Its occurrence is not a result of forces of nature, and should not be considered as such.

Having established the difference, it is important to note that one can facilitate the occurrence or happening of the other. It is evident that natural disasters or the occurrence of natural phenomenon cannot be avoided because they are shaped by global climatic cycles whose effects are, in some cases necessary for the balance of the globe, and in others are reactions to something. For instance, considering the scenario in which the environment is degraded and watersheds are not properly management, a storm accompanied with heavy rains can be a natural disaster, but given the conditions on the ground, it will not take long for the scenario to become one of the environmental disasters. Such is the case of Haiti, definitions of what is natural or environmental disasters can be intertwined.

### **Haiti and Global Climate Change**

Having established a clear understanding between natural and environmental disasters, in order to understand how environmental protection of Haiti is important for the region at large – the Caribbean basin and beyond to include the United States – it is necessary to look at Haiti’s relationship to climate change, its impacts and effects, within the context of security – human and environmental, and what are the social, political and economic dimensions. What we now refer to as climatic changes, in the context of Haiti, in order to fully understand how Haiti comes to that point, it is of importance to consider its history and the process in which it interacts with the international community. Climatic changes that are being felt in Haiti are the result of long-term actions of people on the environment and ecological systems, and such practices can go back to colonial times. It

is fair to say that Haiti is suffering from a problem that it did not initiate yet it practices intensively thereafter.

Haiti, as a country, is not alienated to global climatic shift that is happening, therefore it is subject to its effects, but the way in which a response is provided is not so much global as it is national and even local. The rise in global temperatures is felt everywhere, but for countries, in this case Haiti, its geography is a liability, and effects due to rising temperature can be felt at uncommon rates. Haiti is located in the tropics where most hurricanes and storms take place; thus, Haiti, among other countries, will be the first to be hit. However, climate change is a man-made problem. It is the result of pressures, either demographic or otherwise, of humans on their natural habitats. In other words, climate change is a process initiated by human's demographic expansion with needs to satisfy and provide that creates unequal relations of dependence and power; dependence of major powers on countries endowed with national resources in maintaining their economic growth and power, mainly military, to force these countries into compliance.

In search of raw materials in far-away lands to satisfy their economic needs, Europeans engaged in a series of expeditions and explorations, and once settled, depending on the dynamics of their encounters with *native* populations, they traded or enslaved these populations so that they could extract resources needed to maintain their societies. In the context of Haiti, the enslavement of native populations was the best option, as European settlers transformed their societies into *colonies of exploitation*. Massive efforts were led to cut trees in order to facilitate construction of settlers' towns and to cultivate export-crops such as sugar cane, cocoa, and cotton to European *métropoles*. Many, however, will

argue that extraction and logging were the most devastating of all practices, because they endangered the natural habitats of the populations. Although, Haiti became independent by 1804, with a collapsing economy and international economic restraints and constraints imposed by world powers, including the United States at the time, in the form of economic quarantine, people continued to endanger their natural habitats by cutting trees. As Jacques Roumain, in his classic novel “Masters of the Dew,” warns of the problem and its effects on the country in 1944,

We’re all going to die, said the old woman. Plunging her hands in the dust,  
Délira Délivrance said, we’re all going to die. Animals, plants, every  
living soul! Oh, Jesus! Mary, Mother of God! (1978: 23)

In this context, it will not be fair to put the entire blame on former colonial powers for these wrongs, but it will be fair to say that Haiti has been a victim of a process initiated by these powers. From this perspective, it is also fair to question the responsibility of these former powers in providing assistance –technical assistance – to countries, like Haiti, in designing resilient and sustainable mechanisms in coping with the problem of climate change. Thus, addressing the effects of climate change, it is of importance to look at national, regional and international effects or consequences.

### **History of Environmental and Natural Disasters in Haiti**

Located in the Caribbean basin, aside from its own vulnerability to environmental disasters, Haiti is part of a region in which prevalence and occurrence of natural and environmental disasters are high. In such a case, geography is not an asset, but rather a liability. The Caribbean basin, given the fact that it is part of the tropical zone in which most of the storms and hurricanes take place, is subject to a lot of storms, tropical

depressions, and hurricanes. Due to precarious environment and poor – to certain extent non-existent – warning systems and lack of capability to withstand, when these storms or hurricanes hit the ground, they cause damages of proportional dimensions. It is of importance to look at the history of storms and hurricanes in Haiti, in order to put effects of climate change in perspective. “Geographic conditions make the island particularly prone to recurring natural hazards. As a small island bordering the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, it lies within the hurricane belt (UNDP, 2001). Its horseshoe shape gives the island a disproportionately long coastline that increases the country’s vulnerability to flooding. Haiti is situated on the mountainous half of the island of Hispaniola with slopes exceeding 20 % grade covering nearly two-thirds of the country. The likelihood of landslide occurrence is extremely high if natural resources are degraded (Federal Research Division, 2006: 2).” (Eichler, 2006:5) The occurrence of environmental and/or natural disasters in Haiti is due, not only to its geography but also its vulnerability. The earliest recorded disaster dated back to 1508, Haiti was called Saint Domingue –a French colony, because it was not yet independent. In modern day Haiti, the earliest recorded disaster struck the island in 1930. As Edwidge Danticat, in her historical novel “The Farming of Bones”, recalls, it was considered and, therefore, called “the great hurricane.” (Danticat, 1998: 25) Although, numbers are not provided in her historical novel, she remarks that many have perished and damages were inflicted on Haiti. To many in the Republic of Haiti, disasters such as earthquakes were not common, or even known, until the 1952 earthquake that struck the southern part of the country. In their book entitled, “Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People, 1492-1995”, Robert Debs Heinl and Nancy Gordon Heinl claim that the earthquake had caused damages to

the environment. (Heinl, 1996: 570) The momentum in disasters in Haiti, many will argue, started in 1954 with Hurricane Hazel. Hurricane Hazel was nation-wide; it destroyed several towns and inflicted damages on many others. If anything, Hurricane Hazel was a wake-up call to the people of Haiti of the vulnerability of the country, as this hurricane destroyed crops such as coffee and cocoa that are vital to local economies. Walter R. Davis, in his article "Hurricanes of 1954", comments, "considerable damage and loss of life resulted in Haiti, especially on the southwest peninsula. This area is very mountainous, with peaks up to almost 8,000 feet in the western portion. High winds and seas and torrential rains resulting in floods and landslides accounted for the loss of life, estimated between 400 and 1,000, including 200 or more buried in landslides." (1954: 373) To certain extent, Hurricane Hazel shifted public perceptions in regards to environmental problems and concerns, and it became both a historical-cultural marker and a reference point when talking about disasters in Haiti. After 1954, it is fair to say that other disasters happened but they lacked the intensity of Hurricane Hazel, thus, they received less attention. The years of 2004 to 2008 can be considered as critical and a defining moment in modern history of Haiti and disasters, for this period, not only reminds the Haitian public of the vulnerability of their environment but also demonstrates neighboring countries in the region and beyond that Haiti's environmental vulnerability can in the future become a problem with regional implications as environmental refugees will and *must* leave the country in ensuring their survival, if no regional *action plan* is not set in motion to deal with the emerging issue. From 2004 to 2008, hurricanes and other natural and/ or environmental disasters have occurred at unprecedented rates and severity. This situation has captured the attention of the international community and regional

organizations such as Organization of American States (OAS) and the United States to focus on addressing environmental problems in Haiti and designing sustainable solutions.

### **The January 12<sup>th</sup> Earthquake: “the Day the Earth Shakes”**

On January 12<sup>th</sup> of this year, the Metropolitan Region of Port-au-Prince and other cities such as Leogane, Petit Goave, and Jacmel, were hit by an earthquake of 7.0 magnitudes.

The devastation was enormous and Haitians were in disbelief. Haiti has never been subjected to catastrophe at such a scale for more than 150 years. However, the earthquake reveals something deeper than just devastation of the country. It was the manifestation of symptoms of a dysfunctional state, and to a certain extent, a country. As Alex Dupuy termed it, it was a “disaster waiting to happen” in reference to this dysfunctional state.

Alex Dupuy, in his article entitled “Beyond the Earthquake: a Wake up Call for Haiti” published in the Social Science Research Council’s series Haiti, Now and Next, writes,

Long before the powerful 7.0 magnitude earthquake (and several aftershocks) struck Haiti on January 12 and leveled the metropolitan capital city of Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas, that city was already a disaster waiting to happen. With a population of more than 2 million in a city whose infrastructure could at best sustain a population of 100,000, the local and national public administrations simply abandoned the city to itself. Neither provided meaningful services of any kind—schools, healthcare, electricity, potable water, sanitation, zoning and construction regulations—and what they did provide was poorly administered, or primarily served the needs of the wealthier or better off sectors of the population who could afford to pay for them... This, in turn, has led to an extreme laissez aller and the near total privatization of all basic services.

Except for a brief seven month attempt in 1991 that ended in a bloody coup d’état against the democratically elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the turn to democratic governance has not changed that basic reality. It is therefore no accident that while the earthquake caused death and destruction among all social classes, the high death toll—

estimates run from as low as 10,000 to a high of 200,000 so far, which means no one really knows—is also a direct consequence of the poor infrastructure, inferior housing construction, and the long-standing disregard for the basic needs and rights of the population.

It is certain, for what is known, that the Haitian government did know about the possibility of seismic eruption in the country, but as for all other catastrophic events, it [Haitian government] chose to ignore this fact, thus, failing to prepare for catastrophe.

The problem of seismic disaster is not only a geological problem; but also a political problem for it is about power – whether it is socio-economic or political – and means of distribution and production. The Haitian leadership is incapable of providing to its citizens, because it is serving the interests – narrow interests, of a very few group of individuals that are part of the political or economic elite. Therefore, this inadequacy results in lack of protective mechanisms for the people. This problem has a long economic history rooted in the past. By the past, I refer here to the very promise that was not fulfilled by the Haitian Revolution of 1791 which was the distribution of land to the masses.

It is ironic that it has to take Haiti a catastrophic event of this magnitude in which tears have been shade and sorrow spread in the hearts of many to create, yet, another opportunity for Haiti's renewal and the possibility of shifting the Haitian *problematique* – the sum of all cultural, social, economic and political problems. The January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake created an awareness in the Haitian conscience and thought of the vulnerability of not only the masses but also the very few, the elite, who control the majority of the country's resources. As many observe, it is another chance at creating a more equitable and democratic society; a society in which the mistakes of the past will

not be repeated. Robert Fatton Jr., in his article “Hope amidst Devastation: Towards a New Haitian State,” remarks,

This immense tragedy portends the danger of a Hobbesian war of all against all, but it may paradoxically be an opportunity to create a new and more democratic society in which all Haitians treat each other as equal citizens. In fact, the earthquake has become the cruelest equalizer; while it is clear that the small, well-off minority will extricate itself more easily from this crisis than the poor majority, death and devastation are affecting all irrespective of class or color. In the midst of this cataclysm, Haitians may well acquire a new sense of solidarity and citizenship to supplant the zero-sum game politics that have characterized the country’s history. Facing disaster, Haitians may finally understand that a better future requires the demise of the old ways of governing and producing. A more inclusive social pact between the privileged few and the poor majority may well rise from the ghastly dust of the earthquake. While the travail of past history does not bode well for such an outcome, the earthquake is compelling Haiti to enter uncharted territory.

It is without question that the horrific images that filled television screens in the aftermath of January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake was the result of failed policies. Geologists had for long warned the government of the eminence of the threat. However, the Haitian leadership did not respond appropriately by implementing necessary measures – better construction laws, zoning and construction regulations, and so on – in mitigating the risks associated with the threats nor were they prepared to respond to the emergency crisis that would be created in the eventuality of the disaster. Policies were poorly implemented and services to the people were poorly administered. Lack of policies and regulations have left the population in a situation of neglect and it engenders a culture of “laissez aller”, as Alex Dupuy has termed it. To the extent that the damages caused by the January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake, catastrophic as it is, failure of policies in implementing suitable infrastructure and mechanisms of mitigation of disasters have a lot to do in the capacity of Haiti to

withstand a disaster. A major marker for the January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake is the process of forced migration which I will address in the next section.

## CHAPTER 3

### FORCED MIGRATION: TWO FORMS OF DISPLACEMENT IN HAITI

Forced migration is a very complex issue to discuss, and in the case of Haiti, forced migration stems from different factors and it can be environmentally-induced or naturally-induced. Forced migration is also linked to the historical inequalities of Haiti. In my research, I focus on both forms of forced migration. Forced migration, whether is it environmental or natural, is the consequential result of failed policies. I make the distinction between environmentally- and naturally-induced migrations because of the context forced migration occurs.

Forced migration due to environmental disasters is a rural-urban migration and it is a slow process which results from great many differing factors – economic, social, and so on. Two main reasons for environmentally-induced migration, in the context of Haiti, is land tenure and degradation, and food security. Forced migration dates back from the 1970s; a period that is linked to the decrease of the agrarian sector and it coincides with IMF's structural adjustment programs. During the 1970s at the height of the Cold War,

the Caribbean Basin became the theater of superpowers with the United States fighting the emergence of communism in the region and USSR fighting to get a foothold.

International funding was accessible to the Duvalier Regime because they were fighting the emergence of communism at home. These loans were provided by the IMF or international banks with conditionalities restricting investments in the public sector such as agriculture, health and education.

Haiti became independent in 1804 through a slave rebellion that lasted 13 years. Many, however, contend that the revolution was not successful and complete since it did not fulfill its uppermost promise which was to create a more egalitarian society in which former slaves would have access to lands and the possibility of creating wealth. The agrarian problem goes back to early years of the Republic of Haiti. Soon after independence was proclaimed, the economic and political elites, many of whom their fathers were former colonists, took into possession their inheritance. The state, under pressure of mounting rebellions and possibilities of overthrow, distributed lands to high ranking officers in maintaining stability in the Revolutionary Army. ‘‘The slave masses that were deprived of lands after independence, to a great extent, their descendants are still economically marginalized and landless. Many have acquired parcels of lands and others were taken as farmers or day laborers. In the lack of programmatic plan to farm on massive scale for the purpose of export, farmers have to cultivate their parcel of lands which result in an agriculture of subsistence that only produces crops and commodities to ensure food survival and to export to local markets for local and national consumption.’’

(Eliscar, 2009)

Food security is a major cause of environmentally-induced migration. It resulted from the problem of land tenure and complicated by environmentally-related problems such as soil deterioration, environmental degradation, and occasional drought seasons. Food security is a problem by design in Haiti. A problem by design, I understand to mean that it is the direct result of conditionalities imposed on Haiti when receiving loan packages from the IMF/World Bank and the illegitimate debt that was accumulated by the Duvalier Regime (1957-1986), and it prolonged well into the 1990s under more subtle practices aiming at producing the same result which is undermining Haiti's agrarian sector while opening national market to foreign agricultural exports. 'It is important to note that the accumulation of these debts were not done outside of the global economic process, since, they were executed through international lending agencies and banks such as IMF and World Bank and others. As a result, these lending agencies put conditionalities which constrained the development process of Haiti by demanding the breaking down of tariff barriers on imports, requiring less investment in the agricultural sector, and cutting on social services such as healthcare and education. Although, all of these can be contributing factors but the factors with the most impact on food security are lack of investment in the agricultural sector and removal of tariffs on imports which gives way to flooding of national markets with foreign commodities to which Haiti cannot compete.' (Eliscar, 2009)

With lack of investment in the agrarian sector, SAPs policies and IMF conditionalities put a toll on rural masses and forced them to metropolitan areas in search of factory-related employment opportunities; a situation that creates the rural exodus. As one

participant explains, “IMF conditionalities and SAP policies of the 1970s and 1980s pressured rural populations and forced them to leave and find work in the *metropolis*. This process continues well until today and constitutes the process of ruralization of Port-au-Prince.” The process of ruralization of the *metropolis* creates an available pool of cheap labor for factories. The result of all this is that, mass migration occurs from rural areas to urban and metropolitan centers as farmers and peasants leaving their lands because farmers/peasants cannot only cultivate their land due to soil degradation but also their productivity is worth nothing. Alex Dupuy, in his article entitled “Beyond the Earthquake: A Wake-up Call for Haiti,” put it best,

There is no doubt that the dominant economic and political classes of Haiti bear great responsibility for the abysmal conditions in the country that exacerbated the impact of the earthquake (or of hurricanes or tropical storms). However, these local actors did not create these conditions alone but did so in close partnership with foreign governments and economic actors with long-standing interests in Haiti, principally those of the advanced countries—the United States, Canada, and France—and their international financial institutions (IFIs)—the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank. Since the 1970s and under various free market mantras, these international actors and institutions sought to and succeeded in transforming Haiti into a supplier of the cheapest labor in this hemisphere for foreign and domestic investors in the export assembly industry; in dismantling all obstacles to free trade; in privatizing public enterprises; and in weakening further the institutions of the state through policies that reinforced Haiti’s dependence on foreign aid organizations—governmental and non-governmental. These policies had drastic consequences for the Haitian economy. Locating the assembly industries primarily in Port-au-Prince encouraged migration from the rural areas to the capital city, contributed to its bloated population and sprawling squalor, and provided a never ending supply of cheap labor for those industries. At the same time, removing tariffs on food imports were detrimental to Haitian agriculture. Whereas in the 1970s Haiti produced most of the rice it consumed and imported only 10 percent of its food needs, by the end of the 1990s it was importing more than 42 percent of its food needs, had become the highest per capita consumer of subsidized US

imported rice in the Western Hemisphere, and the largest importer of foodstuffs from the US in the Caribbean. Thus, US farmers benefitted at the expense of Haitian producers. These policies, too, propelled rural-to-urban migration, with Port-au-Prince as the primary destination, as well as emigration to the neighboring Dominican Republic, the Caribbean, and North America. Haiti is becoming increasingly dependent on remittances from its immigrants, which now represent 35 percent of Haiti's GDP.

In contrast to environmentally-induced migration, forced internal migration as a result of natural disasters is an urban-rural migration. It is what Robert Fatton Jr. termed "reverse exodus". Naturally-induced migration is a sudden, disorganized and chaotic process of migration such is the case of the January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake.

In the aftermath of the January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake, the metropolitan region of Port-au-Prince experienced an intense period of outward migration; an outward migration that Haiti had never experienced before – or at least, it has never been recorded in Haiti's modern history. Flows of internally displaced persons (IDPs) were in the thousands and were heading to all major regional centers of Haiti such as Gonaives, Les Cayes, Cap-Haitien, and Hinche. (See Illustrations 3 and 4) As Robert Fatton Jr. explains, "the earthquake has paradoxically accelerated this process by generating a reverse exodus; masses of Port-au-Princians are now marching back to their villages to escape from the disaster. This spontaneous evacuation is an opportunity to create the necessary incentives and infrastructure for permanent and viable settlements of productive peasants."

Both forms of forced migration are functions of institutional and governance failures; of failures of the civil society's development policy and initiatives; and more importantly, un-sustained actions of people in these regions on their environment and ecosystems resulting into environmentally devastating consequences for areas where natural

structures have been broken and unable to maintain stability under climatic pressures which results in forcing people to migrate in seeking shelter and refuge outside of their habitual and normal habitats.

## CHAPTER 4

### POLICIES AND POST-1994 REFORMS

#### **Policy Implementation and Governance Structure**

A point of caution is vital when addressing the environmental problematique of Haiti which seems to stem from its policies and their implementation or the lack thereof a comprehensive framework to deal with the environment and mitigation of risks of natural disasters. Thus, it is not all too clear how existing environmental policies if any fit within the larger policy body of national development. What is clear however, is that the decentralization project that was supposed to have ushered in a new era of environmental policies as envisioned in the post 1994 reforms was short lived and thrust Haiti back into a centralized policy body and such legacy continues well into the new democratic establishment started with the emergence of the Lavalas regime of Former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in the post-1994 reforms. The failure to fully implement existing or newly designed policies contributed greatly to the environmental and natural vulnerabilities of Haiti, insofar as zoning laws were designed to help depopulate certain areas considered to be vulnerable.

In looking at policy implementation in the context of Haiti, it is imperative to take into account national governance structure upon which these policies were and are supposed to be implemented. The national governance structure, as it exists, serves the purpose of maintaining and concentrating power and decision-making process – and the status quo, in Port-au-Prince. Thus, it reinforces the notion of the *Republic of Port-au-Prince*, nerve center of the entire country.

The consolidation of power and decision-making in Port-au-Prince is the continuum of authoritarian governments which do not want to relinquish power to regional centers of the country, as stipulated in the Constitution of 1987, in the fear of losing their political legitimacy and subsequent overthrow or irrelevance. It is clear in the Constitution of 1987 how the country needs to be organized; however, there is no political will in Haitian leadership that greatly affects national governance structure. The framework established by the Constitution of 1987 is one of a decentralized structure of governance where local, regional, and national forms of governments are inter-connected in their workings.

As Alix Cantave, in his dissertation entitled “Non-governmental Organizations and Local Economic Development in Haiti”, points out,

The constitution envisions 707 local government bodies and one central government representing nine (9) departments, 133 communes and 565 communal sections. The number does not include the 41 arrondissements that are represented by vice delegates named by the central government and working under the departmental delegate. The regional governments depend to large extent on a communal assembly or *asanble seksyon kominal* (ASEK). Each of the government levels is responsible for formulating and implementing development policies for its respective local. In reality, the local governments are non-existent or dysfunctional at best. The communes are organized at the executive level and have no financial autonomy or the capacity to formulate and implement policies.

The ASEKs are not fully functional, therefore paralyzing the entire regional system. The central government in Port-au-Prince continues to dictate national, regional and local policies to the extent that they exist at all. Haiti remains a highly centralized state where all decisions are made at the national level and local governments are completely irrelevant. A local government becomes more important only if it serves the purpose of the central government, more specifically the head of state. The effect is that government is less visible outside of the capital city and absent in the rural areas. Consequently, there is a political void at the local level, and most fundamental and basic issues are neglected. (Cantave, 14-15: 2006)

The consolidation of policy-making and decision-making power in Port-au-Prince weakens regional and local structures of governance, and makes implementation and enforcement of policies irrelevant. It is fair to remark that the present governance structure in Haiti contributes to the failure of environmental policies. In the following section, I will analyze these policies, the causes of their failures, and the impacts of such failures within national context.

### **Failed Policies**

The policies envisioned by the Haitian government in 1990s were supposed to have an impact in a span of a decade or so, I will analyze four policies that were supposed to have been enacted, but never took effect, and the impacts of these policies within national context. I will first and foremost define the policies, then; I will analyze these policies by looking at their desired outcomes, actors – local, regional or national, stakeholders, and factors contributing to their failures. In the following paragraphs, here are the policies which will be analyzed: a) national environmental action plan (NEAP), b) national risk and disaster plan (NRDP), c) integrated management of watersheds and coastal areas

policy (IMCAWA), and d) national plan of management of risks and disasters (*plan national de gestion de risques et des desastres, PNGRD*).

**A) National Environmental Action Plan:** in 1999, the Haitian government enacted the national environmental action plan (NEAP) with the support of CIDA, USAID, the World Bank, and UNDP. The NEAP was a major policy as it provided “guidance on all aspects of environmental management.” (Swartley, Toussaint, 31:2006) This policy was also endorsed by the Council of Ministers. The objectives of this policy, as defines by D. Ben Swartley and Joseph Ronald Toussaint in their report entitled “Haiti Country Analysis of Tropical Forestry and Biodiversity”, were to: “strengthen and rationalize the management of the National System of Protected Areas; restore the ecological balance of the watersheds through the implementation of exploitation norms and best practices; improve the quality of life through a better management of urban and rural areas as well as the valorization and conservation of natural and cultural heritage; provide a framework to reach a better coherence among plans and programs within environmental sector.” (Swartley, Toussaint, 31:2006)

**B) National Risk and Disaster Plan:** recognizing great vulnerability of Haiti to natural disasters and hazards, the Haitian government introduced the national risk and disaster plan (NRDP) in 2000. This policy was supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The national risk and disaster plan had two main and specific objectives which were to: “1) work on causes and factors that originate risks in order to reduce the impact of disasters, 2) strengthen the capacity response in case of disaster at the national, departmental and communal level.” (Swartley, Toussaint, 31: 2006) In

implementing this policy, Swartley and Toussaint further explain, it [NRDP] “envisages the creation of coordination and direction entities that could facilitate its implementation. For instance, the Permanent Secretariat for the Management of Risks and Disasters is a technical coordination entity composed of representatives from several Ministries and civil society. This secretariat and the National Committee, constituted of several Ministers, play a key role in the overall management of natural hazards in the country.” (Swartley, Toussaint, 31: 2006)

**C) Integrated Management of Watersheds and Coastal Areas:** in 2001, understanding of finding a solutions to environmental problems and better management of the environment mean that solutions or improvement in the living standards of the people of Haiti, the Haitian government introduced, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the Integrated Management of Watersheds and Coastal Areas (IMCAWA) policy. “The general objectives of this plan,” as Swartley and Toussaint explain, “are set forth by socio-economic and ecological conditions that influence the well-being of Haitian population namely: high rate of poverty, crisis in the local economy, accelerated degradation of watersheds and coastal environments. The IMCAWA proposes actions intended to provide a coherent set of specific and concrete actions for operational activities conducive to the improvement of integrated management of watersheds and coastal areas in Haiti.” (Swartley, Toussaint, 31: 2006)

**D) National Plan of Management of Risks and Disasters:** in the years that follow the turbulent period of natural and environmental disasters and hazards of 2004-2008, it is evidenced that Haiti is naturally and environmentally vulnerable, and vulnerabilities are

increasing at unseen rates, due to many different reasons such as socio-economic factors, *destruction* of local rural economies, and over-use of natural resources, the Haitian government enacted in 2009 the national plan of management of risks and disasters (*plan national de gestion de risques et des desastres, PNGRD*). In 1999 as Haiti became one of the countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region to adopt a new policy of mitigation and prevention of risks, the *Direction de la Protection Civile* (DPC) and the *Secretariat Permanent pour la Gestion du Risque et des Desastres* (SPGRD) were created with mandates to respond and mitigate, and to enforce the national plan of management of risks and disasters policy. In the White Paper of the *Systeme National de Gestion des Risques et des Desastres* (SNGRD) and the *Direction de la Protection Civile* (DPC), the national plan of management of risks and disasters. This policy “it thus aims to orient in a methodological and conceptual manner prescribed interventions in development, in general, and local management of risks, in particular. These procedures are, themselves, in line with the politics of management of the risks and disasters as defined in the national plan of management of risks and disasters...The specific objectives of this policy are: 1) an oriented vision towards the causes of vulnerability, rather towards the impact of disasters and preparation, 2) a systematic vision meaning a multi-sector and multi-institutional vision, rather than the vision of one single responsible institution, and 3) a decentralized vision, according to which it is at the local level that the situation is more apparent and it is at that level that the impact of management must be more visible, on the basis of autonomous local capacities (see Appendix A for original text).” (SNGRD White Paper, 1-16: 2009)

The questions that are needed to be asked are: 1) why these policies failed? 2) What are the impacts of the policy failures? In answering the questions raised, I conclude that the failure of policies in Haiti is not solely based on implementation and participation of different sectors – namely stakeholders but rather due to the weakness of existing institutions, rivalry between these institutions, and outdated laws and policies.

The failure of environmental policies in Haiti stems from a lack of integration and participation of different sectors of the society, mainly civil society. Swartley and Toussaint remark, “these laws are primarily composed of different prohibitions and do not promote stakeholder participation.” (Swartley, Toussaint, 32: 2006) Besides the fact that many laws are outdated, policies are designed in ways that exclude and prevent the participation of other sectors of society that are critical, should these policies be well-implemented. A critical factor of exclusion or *non-rapprochement* of other groups and civil society to state has to do with the Duvalier and post-Duvalier era where many groups keep their distance from the State. This isolation plays a crucial role later when groups and civil society are trying to forge relationships with the State. As Robert Maguire et al., in their occasional paper entitled “Haiti Held Hostage: International Responses to the Quest of Nationhood 1986-1996”, point out, “during the restoration period, local civil society, including grassroots groups and NGOs, confronted the challenge not only of rebuilding and reasserting capacity to implement programs but also of forging new relationships with the state. During the latter part of the post-Duvalier period and throughout de facto rule, many groups had kept their distance from the state.” (Maguire et al, 71:1996)

Although the Haitian Constitution of 1987 provided a framework for governmental institutions to operate and a legal framework upon which these laws and policies can be enacted and implemented, such framework is weak and outdated.

These laws and policies because they are outdated, they serve no purpose to specific governmental agencies that are created to fulfill these specific duties – and vice versa.

Furthermore, these laws and policies are ambiguous or not clear what their meanings are.

Swartley and Toussaint go further to say,

Haiti's current environmental legislation provides a basic framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. More than 100 pieces of laws and decrees, to indicate the most important of them, characterize this juridical corpus, as well as some fifty Multilateral Environmental Treaties signed or ratified by Haiti for international agreements to which Haiti is a party. However the word 'environment' only appears in the national juridical vocabulary after the Rio Summit in 1992 and the word 'biodiversity' only in 2006. Eighty percent (80%) of the environmental legislation is composed of pieces and laws and decrees dealing with trees, forests, soils and fisheries. The majority of the laws are not really enforced given the weakness of State agencies. (Swartley, Toussaint, 32: 2006)

Another major problem in the laws and policies, and it is rooted in the Haitian Constitution of 1987 which gives rise to the rivalry between governmental agencies, is the fact that there are no clear jurisdictions and the powers of different governmental agencies on what are the tasks of each institution and how should they carry out their respective mandates. On this issue, Swartley and Toussaint comment, for instance, on the case of the Ministry of Environment, "the General Decree on Environment, *Décret Cadre sur l'Environnement*, prepared by the Ministry of Environment with the assistance of the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB). This Decree was recently approved by

the Interim Government (November 2005) and promulgated to the Official Journal of the Haitian State, *Le Moniteur*, on January 26, 2006 (161th year, Number 11). The approval of this Decree represents, in theory, a major step in terms of prospects to solve jurisdictional conflicts in environmental management of the country.’’ (Swartley, Toussaint, 33: 2006) Jurisdictional conflicts and ‘‘the politics of environment issues’’ between governmental institutions do not affect these institutions, per se, rather these effects are felt by the country and people whose livelihoods and physical security depend on their natural habitats. Thus, these conflicts consume critical time which could have been used in designing solutions to vulnerabilities of the country.

To illustrate the problem created by jurisdictional conflicts and ‘‘the politics of environmental issues’’ between governmental institutions, the problem is essentially one of distribution of power which the Haitian Constitution of 1987 has failed to do, and no parliamentary sessions never raise or address, or even care to provide a viable solutions by amending previous laws.

For a long time, the domain of the environment used to be handled by multiple governmental agencies depending on what aspects of environmental issues that they were dealing with. Therefore, almost, if not all the ministries of the Haitian government, deal with some aspects of the environment in carrying out their mandates. In Haiti environmental issues and the laws and policies relating to them are the responsibility of many differing agencies of the government and other actors ranging from academia to NGOs to IGOs. But the main actors are agencies within the government apparatus which, more often than not, engage in ‘‘turf politics.’’ For instance, ‘‘*Ministère de*

*l'Environnement (MDE)* prepares, implements and monitors national policy on the environment and has also responsibilities for monitoring compliances...*Ministère de l'Agriculture et des Ressources Naturelles (MARNDR)* has several agencies responsible for major aspects of biodiversity...and *Ministère des Travaux Public, Transport et Communications (MTPTC)* has also several agencies that have responsibilities for key aspects of biodiversity issues.” (Swartley, Toussaint, 28-29: 2006)

However, the return of Aristide to power in 1994 was not only about rebuilding democracy, it was also re-structuring and reforming the entire system of the Haitian government. The end of Aristide presidency and the emergence of the first Administration of René Préval saw major reforms, in laws and policies, and changes. Those changes, as they related to the system of ministries, saw either downsizing of a ministry or the creation of specific ministries and agencies to carry out specific added tasks to their existing mandates. In response to growing awareness of environmental vulnerabilities of Haiti and how prone the country is to natural and environmental disasters and hazards, the *Ministère de l'Environnement (MDE)* was “created in 1995 after the Rio Summit which was one of the hallmarks of the post-1994 reform period. “[It] is the entity responsible for the overall management and coordination of environmental activities. It prepares, implements and monitors national policy on the environment and has also responsibilities for monitoring compliance with obligations made under international Conventions on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention to Combat Desertification (CDD), Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, Pollutants Organic Persistent Convention (POP’S Convention), Basel Convention, and Montreal Protocol,

etc.” (Swartley, Toussaint, 28: 2006). However, it is evident that when the MDE was created, with it came new agencies that were similar to other units of MARNDR and MTPTC. Thus, these new changes also created more ground for bureaucratic battles with other ministries as these ministries tried hard to maintain their relevance; such is the case between three particular ministries: *Ministère de l’Environnement (MDE)*, *Ministère de l’Agriculture et des Ressources Naturelles (MARNDR)*, and *Ministère des Travaux Public, Transport et Communications (MTPTC)*. Without a clear jurisdiction in the execution of their mandates, these newly created units will encounter many bureaucratic challenges.

Historically, aspects of environment used to be the domain of the two largest ministries: *Ministère de l’Agriculture et des Ressources Naturelles (MARNDR)*, and *Ministère des Travaux Public, Transport et Communications (MTPTC)*. With the creation of *Ministère de l’Environnement (MDE)*, a new entity to handle major aspects of environment including policing and enforcement, however, there was no clear separation in the jurisdictions between MDE and the others, creating an overlap in what ministry handle what and when. Thus, jurisdictional conflicts arise, as a result of this overlap.

Traditionally the MARNDR and MPTC have been unwilling to relinquish their grip on environmental policy creating an overlap of mandates as consequence of such an overlap is that MDE suffers a lack of power and resources, and to certain extent a lack of legitimacy in carrying out its mandate as conferred upon by the Decree. Therefore, the lack of legitimacy of the MDE does not only affect MDE, it goes beyond to affect the ways and means by which it formulates and implements policies. Such lack of

legitimacy, thus, results in lack of enforcement and the failure of policies that could have contribute to environmental solutions.

Swartley and Toussaint concluded that, ‘‘the NEAP process and its outputs have enabled Haiti to identify a strategy which sets policy direction and defines an action plan aiming to reverse the drastic environmental degradation observed in the country. The core elements of the strategy and the action plan are used as a research platform, or logical framework, to design specific and individual projects aiming at addressing the key issues of; energy of sustainable development, environmental education, conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, integrated watershed and coastal management, management of natural disasters and hazards, management of urban waste disposal, etc.’’ (Swartley, Toussaint, 31:2006) To the observation and account of many, it is possible that the conclusions of Swartley and Toussaint were preliminary rather than definitive, and their conclusions – whether on NEAP policy or other, are grossly overestimated, because, these policies fall short of its specific objectives.

In answering the question raised above, I will conclude by summarizing how these policies failed to meet their objectives. The implementation of policies and subsequently their success depend on many factors aside governance structure and enforcement. These policies failed because they a) *lack the technical know-how needed to carry them out*: formulating policies is one step but their implementation requires a set of expertise and without it their implementation will be at best difficult, and at worst fail to be implemented; b) *lack sufficient funding*: for policies to succeed, there must be some form of support, whereby certain aspects of these policies require funding, and this funding is

imperative; c) *lack of coordination*: the success of policies depends on well-coordination of all entities involved in their implementation; d) *lack of comprehensive approach*: sound policies, in their implementation, need a comprehensive approach to the region in which they are being implemented and a process of identification of the scale at which some elements of policies need to be implemented; e) *lack the understanding of the root causes of the problem*: sound policies, to be successfully implemented, requires a thorough understanding of the root causes of the problem that they to solve. This goes back to the right technical know-how in implementing policies. Such is the case of Haiti in which policy-makers do not understand or are endowed with adequate data to formulate sound policies; f) *lack proper mechanisms to ensure accountability*: for policies to be successfully implemented in failed states like Haiti with corruption in the high index, given that these policies were jointly undertook by IGOs and the Government of Haiti, policy-makers should create built-in mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency in the implementation process, and to prevent both corruption and mismanagement of funds; and g) *lack of infrastructure necessary to deliver on the intended policies*: it is sometimes overlook by policy-makers, but having the necessary infrastructure where policies intend to be implemented make a difference in how they will be delivered on their intended objectives. In the context of policy implementation in Haiti, these critical factors are missing and they are the causes of policy failure.

## CHAPTER 5

### NEW UNDERSTANDING OF IDP AND REFUGEE PROBLEM IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN

It is evident that environmental and natural disasters of Haiti will be a problem for quite some time, and finding solutions to these problems is a challenge, not only for Haiti but also for the region and beyond, as the seismic event of January 12<sup>th</sup> had highlighted. As many observe, these problems will further complicate and amplify in the years to come, should Haiti remain a vulnerable state, and will create more problems stemming from security threats and risks, diseases, irregular flows of forced migrants whose displacement by sudden or near-continuous disruption of their livelihoods and disturbance of their normal habitats will seek refuge in other places. The region, however, and the United States – a safe refuge by default, is not equipped to deal with irregular flows of forced migrants or will be unwilling to shoulder the burden. As it stands in the region, there is no one approach, although it is evident that such situation can arise (for

instance, forced displacement of two-thirds of Montserrat's population after the eruption of Soufriere Hills volcano on July 18, 1995), to address flows of forced migrants.

In proposing a new approach to understanding the IDP and refugee problem, it is necessary to look at the existing understanding of such groups in the international system of sovereign states. Who is considered to be refugee? Who is considered to be an internally displaced person (IDP)? According to the 1951 United States Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1 (A) (2), a refugee is, "someone owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his formal habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it." (1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees)

Although the UN definition of refugee is unanimously accepted and signed by member states, it remains insufficient. Thus, several regional organizations have re-defined or expanded the definition in addressing needs specific to their region. For instance, The Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted in September 1969 in Addis Ababa, extended the meaning of the term refugee of the 1951 U.N. Convention and in its Article 1 Section 2 to read as, "the term 'refugee' shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or national." (1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific

Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa) In November of 1984, country representatives of Latin America held a meeting in Cartagena, Columbia on the issue of refugee flows and protections. The meeting resulted in the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. In its Article 3 Section 3, it recommended a broader definition of the term appropriate to the region to read, "hence the definition or concept of a refugee to be recommended for use in the region is one which, in addition to containing the elements of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, includes among refugees, persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order." (1984 Cartagena Declaration)

An internally displaced person, by definition, is someone who is forced to flee but remains within the confines of national borders. A United Nations report entitled, "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement," defines internally displaced persons as, "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border." (United Nations, 1999)

It is of importance to notice that the definition of these terms – refugee and internally displaced person – is understood in a political and legal language, and they have been defined according to regional specific needs. Thus, the new approach to understanding of IDP and refugee should be broader in scope to encompass the political and legal aspects of the problem, and should address emerging needs whether they are environmentally or naturally related. The new approach should go beyond the political and social motivations of why people seek refuge or internally displace to

consider environmental motivations of why people seek refuge or move outside of their normal habitats. The new approach, above all, should not take into considerations economic motivations.

As proved in the case of January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake, natural and/ or environmental disasters can create scenarios in which a country experiences both types of forced migration: one that is internal which results in movements of IDPs, and the other produces environmental refugees. In the days that followed January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake, the United States responded quickly, in addressing the Haiti crisis, by providing and expanding TPS status, processing at an all fast-rate adoption applications, and allowing groups of individuals without any status to enter the United States as a means to relieve pressures on the Government of Haiti (GOH). These groups of individuals without any status, should I say legal status, which is authorized by the government of the United States to enter the country in providing a response to the crisis in Haiti, are environmental refugees. Under normal circumstances, these groups of individuals would not be allowed to enter the country without any legal status.

The international system, in which existent laws and norms pertaining to migration have been defined, does not rightfully address the problem because the term refugee is narrowly defined within the political context. Given the current state of affairs, it is imperative to understand the terms refugee and internally displaced, and use the new approach that is discussed in the previous sections above. Such new approach is needed in the Caribbean Basin in addressing the problem because the problem, after all, is a matter of security and stability for states in the regions. The instability and insecurity of one state can escalate into further problems for other states, thereby, threatening regional

security. The Caribbean Basin region is a region endowed of environmentally vulnerable states with rampant poverty. Poor countries that do not have enough resources to secure the livelihoods of their own people, disasters – whether it is environmental or natural – only further complicate this situation because they not only threaten the livelihoods of these people, but they also dislocate them from their natural habitats, and they undermine the security and stability of the state which is not equipped to respond to disaster let alone to coordinate massive migration flows.

In addressing the problem from a regional standpoint, it necessitates an understanding of the sustainable security approach. As defined by the Center for American Progress, in this document entitled “Sustainable Security 101”, “sustainable security is a bold rethinking of national security that introduces the notions of collective and human security and rebalances the three tools of foreign policy—defense, diplomacy, and development.” (Center for American Progress, 1: 2009) Gayle Smith, a senior fellow at Center for American Progress, goes further to state that, “sustainable security is the pursuit of our security [national security of the United States] over time; over the long-term. To achieve sustainable security, we need to operate on all cylinders: defense, diplomacy, and development.” (Center for American Progress)

The United States and other states of the Caribbean region should counter collective security threats that are transnational threats such as environmental and natural disasters in a collective and innovative manner. Sustainable security approach provides a framework to do so by linking national security interests of all states of the region to one another to their *collective* human security. The sustainable security approach is an

integral part of human security. It provides a framework for investment in development in structures and infrastructures in other countries that are likely to pose a burden on other states in the region, and allow tackling pertinent issues stemming from development head on by using collective diplomacy and rebalancing of defense. Thus, sustainable security creates a nexus of development-diplomacy-defense. Reuben Brigety and Natalie Ondiak, in their case study entitled ‘‘Haiti’s Changing Tide: A Sustainable Security Case Study’’, comment,

The sustainable security paradigm developed by the Center for American Progress provides a useful framework for examining developments in Haiti and rethinking U.S. policy toward the country. Sustainable security is a view of foreign policy that combines national security, collective security, and human security. It argues that the challenges arising from poor development outcomes can present very real threats to American security. As such, the best way to meet such national security threats is to address the core development problems from which they arise, and to do so in a cooperative manner with the host government and the international community. The core of the sustainable security approach is to use the nexus between development and security as both a means of identifying threats to our interests and a method for dealing with them. The complexity of Haiti’s development challenges makes it a highly appropriate candidate for the sustainable security model. (Brigety, Ondiak, 2: 2009)

The notion of security must be rethought and re-defined on more global, regional, and collective terms in order to re-define and re-position the term refugee from an ideological to a human security context. The region will be more stable when security threats affecting every state can be dealt with in a more collective manner.

The definition of the term refugee, as it is understood today, is a political definition which takes into account the fact that states are sovereign and have the right to what they do within their own borders. However, the international system of sovereign states is

becoming ever more complex, and its complexities are exacerbated by climatic changes. Existing notions in the international system are being eroded and should re-define in order to address these complexities, because one state's actions or what happens within one state's geographic limits can affect the well-being and threaten the security of another state's citizens. Susan F. Martin comments,

The 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as "a person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country". In the decades since the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol were adopted, there has been substantial debate about the legal norms and institutional frameworks for responding to complex emergency movements of people who fall outside of the legal definition of a refugee... As early as 1969, the Organization of African Unity adopted a convention that expanded the definition of a refugee to include not only those fleeing persecution but also those who flee their homelands "owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order". Subsequently, other groups in need of assistance and/or protection have come to the attention of the international community, with many terms used to define their specific situations (internally displaced persons, war-affected populations, returnees, temporarily protected persons, stateless people, and development- and environment-induced forced migrants, etc.). (2000: 1-2)

It is clear, however, that none of these definitions address or are broad enough to include and consider environmental refugees in the context of complex emergencies such as earthquakes and other disasters. Notable regional efforts aiming at broadening the definition of the term refugee should be considered. As Martin points out, "drawing on international refugee, human rights, and humanitarian law, legal and institutional frameworks have evolved over time to cover this widening array of persons in need of assistance and protection. Humanitarian and human rights laws, in conjunction with the example set by the OAU Convention and Cartagena Declaration, have been used to

expand protection for externally displaced persons who do not meet the 1951 Refugee Convention definition but would be harmed if returned to their countries. In particular, during the 1990s, largely because of changing geo-political contexts that have affected concepts of sovereignty as well as the increasing recognition of the universality of international human rights and humanitarian law, considerable progress has been made in defining standards (termed guiding principles) for protection of internally displaced persons.” (2000: 2)

Although regional efforts are notable, but these efforts are limited in scope because of geo-political interests, pressing domestic issues, shared burden, and narrow definition of the concept of sovereignty. Therefore, there is a need to broaden the definition and a shift in paradigm, and with such shift in paradigm, a shift in the way response to environmentally- and naturally-induced crises and emergencies capable of triggering forced migration. The term refugee should be broadly defined to include complex emergencies and humanitarian crisis stemming from environmental and/ or natural disasters, and should not reflect ideological tendencies.

In responding to these crises, there is also a need for a new framework of operations. This framework should be one that is regional and one in which the burden can be shared among parties. The United States and other countries in the Caribbean Basin should develop a framework that takes into account operational and policy coordination. There should be an agency whose mission is to research, disseminate, and provide an *action plan* to respond to such crises when they arise. There should be a body of regional policies on how to deal with such crises when they arise in the region and how to best

manage them so that their effects can be contained. As Dr. Koko Warner et al., in their article entitled “ Human Security, Climate Change, and Environmentally Induced Migration,” point out,

Environmentally induced migration has emerged as a policy-relevant research area, due in part to improved understanding and public dialogue about the effects of climate change, as well as ever-widening economic and social gaps between already-developed and less developed countries. As signals of environmental degradation, natural hazards, migration, and a wide spectrum of other stressors have increased, experts have sought a new concept of human security and development to guide policy. (2008: 2)

## CHAPTER 6

### FINDINGS

This research study concerns policy reforms and their implementation, and the impacts of the failed policies as it pertains to producing the desired outcomes to address issues regarding environmental and natural disasters. I investigate these policies through in-depth interviews with policy-makers in Port-au-Prince and other regional centers from many different ministries, services, and specialized offices of the Haitian government. The impacts of these failed policies come at tremendous cost, not only for the government but also to the country, in the sense that, their failure contributes to the increase in vulnerability of Haiti. My findings reveal more than anything a long standing *state of crisis* in Haitian leadership and governance. Nonetheless, there is no continuation in the politics of one government to the next; this *state of crisis* is a protracted one that prevents significant policy reform. Here are the findings of my fieldwork:

**Legacy of Political Instability since 1986:** Haiti, as the first Black republic, emerges as a state through an intense period of political violence and rebellion. From its inception, Haiti did not emerge as a democratic society. Throughout Haiti's history, one can observe

that many forms of governments were tried in Haiti, from monarchy to kingdom to republic. Although, periods of political stability were short-lived, however, since 1957 with the Duvalier regime – dictatorial as it was – up until 1986, Haiti had enjoyed political stability and order, followed by periods of economic progress.

Given the dictatorial nature of the regime, to maintain itself it had to rely on massive force as means of control of the population. Discontent brewed and social movements made headway, finally after long periods of rebellions and social unrest, the Duvalier regime collapsed on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1986 with Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier fled to France. The political void has not been filled out since then, and Haiti has been experiencing short or prolonged periods of political violence. In his dissertation, Alix Cantave remarks, “Haiti has experienced one crisis after another since 1986. In 15 years, the country has witnessed ten governments, five military coup d’états, one military intervention, two free elections, and one contested election. For the past 15 years, government officials have been primarily managing crises, which left many other public functions unattended.” (Cantave, 15: 2006)

Political instability is a major challenge to implementation of environmental policy, because it does not only erode power and legitimacy of the central government, local-regional authority but also creates a vacuum of political will to resolve the issues that are paramount to Haiti’s stability point in case Haiti being under a UN trusteeship. Hence without political stability – a critical element, enforcement of policies and regulations is impossible. As one participant explains, “there used to exist environmental policies that was under the Duvalier regime. After 1986 until today, there is a lack of security and

nothing will be done because the government has no capability.’’ (Interview with Participant 8, 2010) Another participant whose ranking is of importance in the implementation of environmental policy, notes, ‘‘political instability leads to lack of state authority and chaos or anarchy in the population. Thus, the structures in place to protect these resources are not functional.’’ (Interview with Participant 7, 2010)

***De Facto de-legitimization of the government:*** it is almost unnecessary to make reference of the weakness of the Government of Haiti (GOH). The contributing factors to such weakness come from a wide range of sources. Among these sources, we can mention: legacy of political instability, un-supervised control of the NGO sector, and socio-economic factors exposing the inability or unwillingness of the state to provide to its citizens.

Although the NGO sector is providing social services and employment to a relatively large sector of the population, it also does a disservice to Haiti for the simple reason that it weakens the state by eroding its presence in many areas and corrupting local-regional authority. Haiti becomes what Robert Fatton Jr. termed ‘‘La République des ONGs’’, the NGO republic. Due to the overwhelming presence of the NGO sector, it creates a form of monopoly of social services, by interfering with government agencies providing those services in some areas and excluding or overshadowing these agencies in others.

However, the work of the NGO sector is limited and constrained; therefore, they are unable to foster sustained economic and social change. This is born out of the reality that the NGOs cannot guarantee security in terms of social, political and economic wellbeing while operating in Haiti. In his article entitled ‘‘Hope Amidst Devastation: Towards a

New Haitian State’’, Fatton Jr. explains, ‘‘more than 10,000 NGOs have been doing ‘development work’ for the past three or four decades. They have been the privileged partner of international financial institutions channeling assistance to the country. While they may be well meaning, they are not the engine that will generate self-sustained growth in Haiti. Uncoordinated among themselves and having no national coherence, they are a palliative agent in the struggle against poverty. The earthquake has demonstrated their obdurate limitations.’’ This situation is what I call *The Haitian NGO Sector Paradox*; that is, a situation in which the NGO sector is claiming doing development work, however, the outcome of their work does not measure up. Fatton goes further to say that ‘‘the emasculation of the state is no accident, however; it is partly the consequence of the neo-liberal regime implanted in the country by the major international financial institutions (IFIs). By advocating the withdrawal of the state from its social and regulating obligations, and by promoting the supremacy of the market, this regime has contributed to an economic, political, and social disaster. The emasculated state has left the population unprotected from the harsh realities of poverty, unemployment and the vagaries of nature.’’

The *de facto* de-legitimization of the government, considering civil society, is mainly a phenomenon caused by socio-economic factors. The state – i.e. the government, is unable, but in most cases, the state is rather unwilling to protect and provide for its citizens. The government is corrupted which hinders its capacity to deliver its services and serve its constituents. Going through economically depressed neighborhoods in the capital Port-au-Prince, the discontent of the population against the state is visible on the

walls in the expression ‘‘Nou Bouke’’ which translates into English ‘‘We Are Tired.’’ In small community gatherings, one can sense that social unrest is brewing. This is a warning sign or a prelude, if one will, to mass scale social unrest and rebellions. The perception of the population towards the state is that since the state is incapable of fulfilling its basic duty of protecting and providing to its citizens, such a state needs not to be respected, instead it should be uprooted through radical social movements so that to give way to a more responsible government.

**Failure of the Decentralization Project:** the failure of environmental policies in Haiti, in terms of their implementation, is the direct consequence of the failure of the Decentralization Project. It is explicit in the Haitian Constitution of 1987 there exists a framework for decentralization of power for the purpose of better governance. Decentralization of power, mainly executive and legislative power, in Haiti was a major pillar of the post-1994 reforms that took place.

It is evident that the failure of the Decentralization Project was orchestrated by the Executive and Legislative power because dispersing power would pose a threat to these branches of government. Besides, from the very beginning, laws and decrees enacted to that end were in contradiction with specific articles in the Constitution of 1987 on what is the existing framework for decentralization of power. ‘‘The Constitution is the fundamental point of reference. The principles of decentralization, and of participation of the entire population, are announced in the preamble. The form of decentralization is described in articles on ‘local governments and decentralization’ defined as communal sections, communes, and departments – including provision for local executives and local

assemblies. The Constitution establishes the ‘administrative and financial autonomy’ of communal government (Article 66). It provides for the Inter-Departmental Council as a channel for representing local governments at the highest levels of central government (executive branch, council of ministers). Furthermore, Article 87-4 requires that decentralization be accompanied by deconcentration of public services.’’ (Smucker, 4-5: 2000)

The failure of the Decentralization Project is the mirror of the failure of the political will of Haitian leadership for true and meaningful change, and such political act costs Haiti’s environmental policy regime. The failure of the Decentralization Project was not just a failure in and of itself, it also makes existing structures for decentralized power inert by creating dysfunctional and unconstitutional parallel structures which creates a whole new system in which all tasks are daunting, at best, or impossible to be fair. Decentralization has been politicized, instead of being a necessity for change and renewal of a modern and democratic Haitian state; the political talk of decentralization serves the purpose of what political party is in power and what is the social make-up of legislative chambers. The Decentralization Project has failed because concentration of power and services in the ‘‘Republic of Port-au-Prince’’ is still being used by Haitian leadership as means of control and means to exert power on the rest of the country.

## CHAPTER 7

### RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

Political instability, weak governance and leadership, and social and economic inequalities present major challenges to policy reform and implementation in Haiti. However, measurable and well-targeted policies and action plans can be initiated. For policy reform to be viable, radical shift in the configuration of the architecture of the governance structure and society is needed, and it is necessary to re-think the rebuilding of the *new* Haiti in terms that take into account local, international, and trans-national actors and stakeholders. Building upon my research findings, I propose these policy recommendations, which are as follows:

**Institutional reform and legitimacy:** in the last decade or so, Haitian leadership and governance has suffered because of its irresponsibility and lack of legitimacy, at the national level as well as the international level. This problem stems from the fact that corruption and mismanagement are rampant. In the aftermath of the January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake, it is clear that the Haitian leadership is powerless and incapable of providing

the bare minimum to its citizens without the assistance of the international community. For the past two decades, local and international partners of Haiti have done a lot in undermining the power of the Haitian government. This situation has to change, if Haiti has to recover.

For Haitian leadership to be legitimate and institutional reform to be implemented, it requires full participation of all segments of national life and beyond – meaning the Diaspora and the international community. Actions of active segments of the Diaspora and the international community such as the IGOs and NGOs have impacted Haitian leadership in ways that weaken existing institutions. These actors – and at times stakeholders, have to recognize and support fully institutional reforms of Haitian leadership and governance, and work towards its viability. Thus, policies of these actors must fall in line with that of the government of Haiti.

For Haitian leadership to be legitimate, Haitian government must fulfill its responsibility towards its citizenry. The Haitian government must embark on fundamental reforms on policies affecting the well-being of the people, and radical changes aiming at changing the socio-economic landscape of the Haitian populace. Poverty, for instance, is a major factor in political instability and illegitimacy of Haitian leadership. In his book *Haitians: Migration and Diaspora*, Anthony V. Catanese writes, “the deepest roots of Haiti’s political problems lie in social inequality and economic misdistribution. The political sphere will follow if these important issues are addressed.” (Catanesse, 77: 1999)

**Re-structuring international aid and the non-profit sector:** in the last 20 years, Haiti has received substantial amount of aid from the international community and it’s

Diaspora, but yet it has failed to develop. It is evident that assistance from the international community can provide support to local communities; however, it requires the state – in that case Haitian state, to ensure and guarantee development. It is of importance to recognize that NGOs are not guarantors of development. NGOs emerge as entities that provide services to supplement that of the state for a specific period of time. However, as the need for development increases, the NGO sector becomes a permanent sector sustained by donors and grants from IGOs such as USAID or CIDA. The development model of NGO is not one that is sustainable, but, their existence and work can certainly make a difference in specific region at a small scale. It is of importance to re-structure international aid and the non-profit sector because they can be partners in the national development project.

The assistance of the international community and the work of the non-profit sector have been largely unsupervised and unregulated by the Haitian government. While these sectors are working in development, they operate outside of the national framework of development. From the 1970s until today, millions of dollars have been invested through IGOs or NGOs in Haiti, but the result is negligible. Lack of coordination in foreign assistance further exacerbates issues of poverty and inequality. Haiti has been a failed state for the past decade and remained, therefore allowing NGOs to become the *de facto* advocate in the eye of the international donors, receiving most of the foreign aid and implementing projects sometimes contradictory to each other or without governmental oversight. Because of the status of the failed states, it [the state] is corrupted, untrustworthy and unpredictable; there is a tendency for NGOs to undermine state

authority of the fragile state. The state, as guarantor of delivery of social services to all, takes a sit back because it is stagnated and incapable to organized NGO sector in providing these services; thus, this situation exacerbates already existing poverty and inequality. Efforts aiming at engaging Haiti in the development process have been done by international donors and NGOs and the Diaspora, however, there is lack of coordination in foreign assistance from international organizations and agencies, NGOs and the Diaspora, thus the development process slows down because of lack of clear and comprehensive strategy, poor governance and corruption, these efforts aiming at solving the problem have failed. ‘‘In the absence of effective state policies, foreign assistance has sought to fill the void, but a clear strategic and comprehensive policy approach does not exist. Funding fluctuates in accordance with political circumstances, donor strategies vary, and the government has little influence over the use of funds. Project visibility, not good result, is often the priority.’’ (International Crisis Group, 5: 2009) Crystal Andrea Felima, in her essay entitled ‘‘Haiti’s Disproportionate Casualties after Environmental Disasters: Analyzing Human Vulnerabilities and the Impacts of Natural Hazards’’, goes further to state, ‘‘simply put, short-term humanitarian projects provide ‘relief’, not development. These projects serve as ‘band-aid’ initiatives; they address surface issues concerning basic needs and environmental degradation. To tackle the root causes of vulnerability in Haiti, sustainable development projects intended to provide continued benefits to the population must be pursued.’’ (Felima, 23: 2009)

**Environmental and disaster risk management:** Haiti’s environmental and natural problems stem from its lack of infrastructure, and the absence of or non-enforcement of

existing policies and critical capacity to mitigate environmental and natural threats, hazards and disasters. Tackling and ultimately solving the environmental and natural problems of Haiti will need to be done within a framework – a policy framework. Haitian leadership needs to start evaluating existing laws so that the government finds where there is need for policies and regulations. This work should be an overhaul of the entire system [by system I understand to mean the present policy and legal structure]. Within this new framework, strategies aiming at curbing down soil and environmental degradation, better management of watersheds, and flood protection should be applied. L. Eichler, in his Master's Thesis entitled "Community-based Environmental Management: A Tool for Natural Disaster Risk Reduction in Haiti?", provides the following recommendations:

The implementation of reforestation strategies: this will address a variety of environmental issues including soil degradation, weather patterns, ecosystem health, deforestation, and flooding...the integration of watershed management (i.e., flood protection, water storage systems, drainage systems, etc.): this serves as a means to manage water supply and improve water quality. This will mitigate flood destruction of shelter and crops and ensure the availability of safe drinking water...Improving agricultural practices: this will support soil fertility, reduce landslide risk and loss of crops, and promote agricultural productivity...Investment in alternative, cost-friendly energy sources: this will reduce the dependency on wood for fuel and energy. It will also promote better use of the natural environment (Eichler, 14-15: 2008). (Felima, 21-22: 2009)

**Empower and engage local actors and stakeholders:** the failure of policies, in their implementation, has to do with participation of a wide variety of actors and stakeholders. The environment – one that is safe and everyone can enjoy – is a public common; therefore, maintaining such environment should not be the duty and responsibility of government personnel only. The policies and regulations should be participative and

inclusive in their implementation. In other words, maintaining the environment should also be the duty and responsibility of all, no matter what sector of society they belong. Enforceable policies and regulations should empower and engage local actors and stakeholders, and establish a system of “check-and-balance” that will keep GOH, local actors and stakeholders, the NGO/ NPO sector, and civil society accountable to the impacts of their actions on the environment.

### **Suggestions for future research**

Researching the impacts, short- and long-term, of failed policies and reforms in the areas of environmental policy and disaster risk reduction is very important. Expanding Haitian scholarship to include these areas and foster policy debates on policy recommendations to address these matters is critical. Given the geographic position of Haiti in complex systems of fault lines and its potential, if shaken, to disrupt or heavily impact neighboring states of the Caribbean Basin region, it is imperative that environmental security of the Republic of Haiti be a regional security concern for other states; therefore, the breadth and scope of policy debates should broaden to include these neighboring states, and Haitian leadership should push for a “collective regional security framework” in this framework mechanisms such as burden sharing and regional resettlement of displaced persons has to be viewed and understood within a regional context. Geologist Claude Prepetit has done research on seismic activities in Haiti. Prepetit’s research have to be discussed in policy debates, and his recommendations should be part of the “national strategic plan for development, reconstruction, and security” for the threats to national

security are no longer limited to environmental degradation, over-exploitation of natural resources, food security, and political violence, but they can also come from natural disasters such as earthquakes.

## **Conclusion**

The impacts of the failure of these policies, on a national scale, are serious, and have caused many setbacks to Haiti. As a result of the failure of these policies, displacement of those affected is frequent in cases of environmental disasters, and sudden in cases of natural disasters. In any event, forced migration, whether it is environmental or natural, is not only a burden for the national government but also it constitutes a burden for the Caribbean region and beyond, such is the case that the seismic event of January 12<sup>th</sup> had highlighted. Forced migration is a serious problem with implications beyond geographical limitations of Haiti. Appropriate solutions and response to the problem has to be regional and should include mechanisms such as burden sharing. In solving such problem, given that on the one hand it is caused by environmental and natural disasters and on the other hand by factors stemming from policy failures, sustainable solutions should aim at transforming conditions on the ground, and reverse the vulnerability of Haiti. These solutions have to be coordinated and to be executed as public-private and regional partnership involving elements of the government, civil society, and regional bodies since the extent of such a problem can have an effect on the well-being and security of their citizens.

It is without question that the seismic event of January 12th has highlighted many of the failures of environmental policies of Haiti. Many will agree that it is a wake-up call for Haitian leadership; a wake-up call, to a great extent, an opportunity to correct and redress the wrongs and failures of the past in order to build a stronger and more resilient society. By resilience, I do not only mean *the ability to recover and to return to original state* but also a *collective* ability to recover and to build stronger institutions. This collective ability to recover has to be at the national level as well as international level so as to include the Diaspora. When the cameras and international attention and the memories of the devastation fade from the scene, Haitians will rebuild their society and country, just like it was done after the Revolution of 1789 which led the way to the creation of the first Black independent republic of the Americas in January of 1804. Manolia Charlotin, a Boston-based activist and political organizer and co-founder of Haiti 2015 – a non-profit organization, captures this sentiment and projects this hope more accurately. In an open note posted on her Facebook page, she writes, “looking back at this moment a month later, my understanding of the resilience of the Haitian people has deepened. The earthquake that devastated my family's homeland on January 12<sup>th</sup> can do just that - destroy what was built on the land. It cannot destroy the spirit of a people whose ancestors built the Citadel. Nor can it defeat the determination of a liberated people to maintain their freedom. Over the coming weeks, months and years, the Haitian people along with friends of Haiti, will toil endlessly as our labor becomes extremely complex and enormously daunting. These uncertain times will challenge the core of what we believe, what we stand for and ultimately, who we are. One thing remains certain.

Somewhere in Haiti, someone is singing, a group is dancing in celebration of a victory and that triumph of life transcends.’’ (Charlotin, Facebook, February 3, 2010)

As Jacques-Edouard Alexis, General Coordinator of Centre National de Recherche et de Formation (CENAREF), in the manifesto of the Center entitled ‘‘Vision Strategique pour le Développement National,’’ writes, ‘‘ The strategic vision is a representation of a future commonly wishes by wide sectors of the society for an improvement of the national *collective*. Specific projects and well-planned actions have to be put in place to assure their execution (see Appendix B for original text)’’. (CENAREF, 3: 2009) He [Alexis] goes further to remark, ‘‘we propose to resolutely re-orient dialogue with our foreign partners towards structuring actions, instead of getting stuck us in dictated short-term approaches, but non-justified, by the acuity and the exigencies of daily needs. The new governance in Haiti, while engaging in indispensable reform of the state, will have to itself adopt an innovative approach for cooperation with the international community. This cooperation will align with our directions and priorities, as recommended of the Paris Declaration. Otherwise, next year and years to come, same repetitive actions, without impact on the country, and same charitable recipes of humanitarian assistance will come to haunt our consciences, with their trail of illusions, of frustrations and of indignity (see Appendix C for original text)’’. (CENAREF, 4: 2009)

Haiti, today, is facing a critical challenge at an exceptional time; a time to start anew and a time for Haitian leadership to assert itself and work towards redressing the policy failures and embark on fundamental institutional reforms. The problem is one of Haitians to solve collectively, but with the support of regional and international partners.

Understanding of traditional notions and concepts should be re-defined, re-thought, re-conceptualized, and re-configured, so that to approach existing notions of development, security, and sustainability with alternatives and new perspective. Reversing existing vulnerabilities whose factors are rooted in socio-economic and political factors will be a daunting task, however, steps towards minimizing vulnerabilities should be taken at the earliest immediacy and should be done in an integrated manner so as to include all sectors of society, and to engage regional and partners.

# Illustration I

## Haiti's Political Map

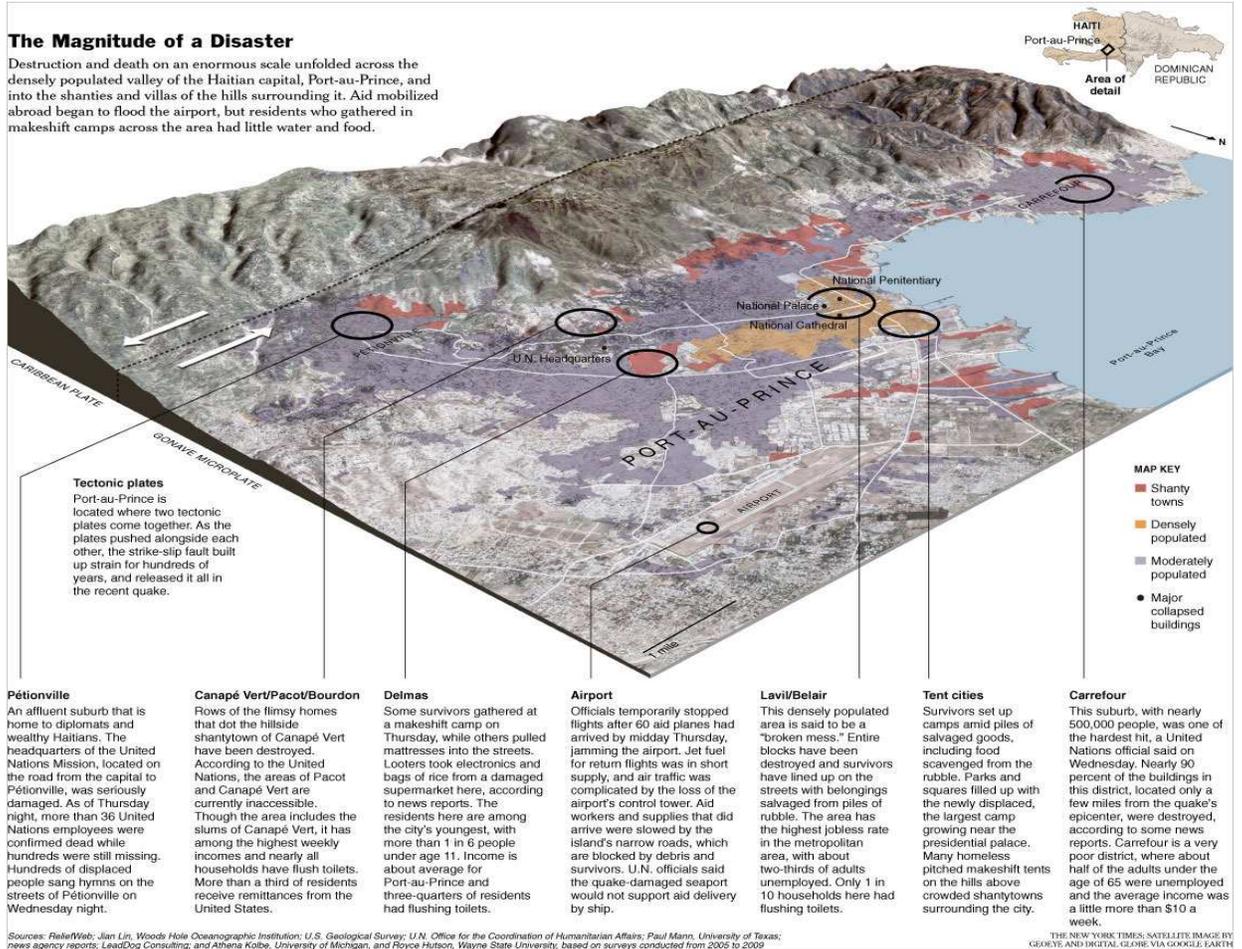


Sources: Canada's Air Force – Deployment Support Center

[http://www.airforce.forces.gc.ca/DSC/ComoxDsc/maps/Haiti\\_01.gif](http://www.airforce.forces.gc.ca/DSC/ComoxDsc/maps/Haiti_01.gif)

## Illustration II

### The Magnitude of a Disaster



Sources: ReliefWeb; Jian Lin, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution; U.S. Geological Survey; U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Paul Mann, University of Texas; news agency reports; LeadDog Consulting; and Athena Kolbe, University of Michigan, and Royce Hutson, Wayne State University, based on surveys conducted from 2005 to 2009

## APPENDIX A

### SYSTÈME NATIONAL DE GESTION DES RISQUES ET DES DÉSASTRES (SNGRD) / DIRECTION DE LA PROTECTION CIVILE – LIVRE

#### **Plan National de Gestion de Risques et des Desastres (PNGRD)**

Il vise ainsi à orienter de façon conceptuelle et méthodologique les interventions inscrites dans le Développement en général et dans la gestion locale du risqué en particulier. Ces démarches s'inscrivent dans la politique de gestion des risques et désastres telle que définie dans le Plan National de Gestion de Risques et des Désastres (PNGRD).

Cette proposition conceptuelle et méthodologique a servi de base pour la conception de la politique haïtienne en la matière. Ses points forts étaient:

- La vision orientée vers les causes de la vulnérabilité, plutôt que vers l'impact de désastres et la préparation.
- La vision systématique, c'est-à-dire, une vision multisectorielle et multi-institutionnelle, au lieu de la vision d'une seule institution responsable.
- La vision décentralisée, selon laquelle c'est au niveau des localités que la situation est plus concrète et c'est à cette échelle que l'impact de la gestion doit être visible, sur la base de capacités locales autonomes. (1-16)

*SNGRD White Paper published in March 2009.*

## APPENDIX B

### CENAREF VISION STRATÉGIQUE POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT NATIONAL – MANIFESTE POUR UNE NOUVELLE HAITI

#### **Présentation du Coordonateur Général Jacques-Edouard Alexis**

La vision stratégique est une représentation du future communément souhaité par de larges secteurs de la société pour une amelioration de la collectivité nationale. Des activités et projets spécifiques bien planifiés devront etre mis sur pied pour assurer la concretization. (3)

*Document published in September 2009.*

## APPENDIX C

### CENAREF VISION STRATÉGIQUE POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT NATIONAL – MANIFESTE POUR UNE NOUVELLE HAITI

#### **Présentation du Coordonateur Général Jacques-Edouard Alexis**

Nous proposons d'orienter résolument le dialogue avec nos partenaires étrangers vers des actions structurantes, au lieu de nous enliser dans les approches à court terme dictées, mais non justifiées, par l'acuité et la démesure des besoins quotidiens. La nouvelle gouvernance en Haïti, en engageant l'indispensable réforme de l'État, se devra d'adopter une approche novatrice pour coopérer avec la communauté internationale. Cette coopération devra s'inscrire dans un alignement sur nos orientations et priorités, comme le recommande la Déclaration de Paris. Autrement, l'année prochaine et les années après, les mêmes actions répétitives, sans impact sur le pays, et les mêmes recettes caritatives de l'aide humanitaire viendront hanter nos consciences, avec leur cortège d'illusions, de frustrations et d'indignité. (4)

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