



DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS & GOVERNANCE FACT SHEET

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BACKGROUND

To achieve long-term stability and economic growth, Haiti must establish representative, accountable governance institutions and ensure the rule of law. Yet even prior to the devastating January 12, 2010 earthquake, Haiti was a country in which the government could not or would not deliver core functions to the majority of its people. The Government of Haiti (GOH) then experienced severe setbacks after the earthquake, including the loss of a large percentage of its most senior civil servants.

KEY CHALLENGES

In the absence of fully-functioning governance institutions and enforceable legal norms, Haiti has been unable to provide all it could for the economic and physical well-being of its citizens. The consequences of this weak governance for the people of Haiti have been dramatic – they are considerably less educated, in poorer health, hungrier, and less physically secure than their counterparts in the region. And their faith in government, even at the local level, is among the lowest in Latin America and the Caribbean. Lack of transparency and accountability in government policy implementation and procurement decisions, as well as the lack of qualified, trained staff at all government levels, contribute to this lack of faith.

Despite these challenges, important progress has been made in recent years to advance the legal rights of vulnerable groups, including legislation criminalizing trafficking-in-persons, updated adoption regulation, and laws protecting the rights of children.

USAID STRATEGY & ACTIVITIES

SUPPORTING CREDIBLE POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL PROCESSES

- **Building the capacity** of Haitian electoral authorities to conduct elections
- **Strengthening the capacity of elections observers** – domestic and international – to provide credible and impartial assessments of the election process
- **Increasing civic and voter education** and ensuring that women and persons with disabilities can fully participate in the electoral process.
- **Training women candidates** to improve their campaigning and political participation skills



STRENGTHENING NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

- **Promoting transparency and government accountability** through an Integrated Financial Management System, which provides automated financial functions, enhanced control of revenues and expenditures, and facilitation of investigations.
- **Supporting decentralization** by building the capacity of nine targeted municipal governments to help them more effectively and transparently plan, collect, and manage revenues, deliver basic services, and coordinate emergency relief efforts.
- **Modernizing civil service** by improving government human resources management, including introducing competitive hiring in the public sector through a partnership between USAID and the Haitian government's Office of Human Resource Management.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- **Addressing pretrial detention** through the provision of equipment, technical assistance, and improved case management in targeted jurisdictions. USAID deployed Haiti's first computerized case management information system in Saint-Marc and Port-au-Prince.
- **Providing free legal assistance** to underserved residents of Port-au-Prince, Saint-Marc, Croix des Bouquets, Cap-Haïtien, and Fort Liberté.
- **Supplying technical assistance** to a newly created body that provides independent oversight of the judiciary, including to the Judicial Inspection Unit and the Superior Judicial Council vetting committee.
- **Supporting the reform of the penal laws** through the provision of technical assistance to the Ministry of Justice's Criminal Code Reform Commission.

PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

- USAID supports initiatives to improve physical security, provide services to victims of abuse, collect and analyze data, build institutional capacity, and empower vulnerable populations by working with the GOH and civil society organizations dedicated to ensuring that every woman and girl, - no matter what her status, sexual orientation or disability - receives equitable treatment and access to services in Haiti. Training on sexual and reproductive health, and support to advocacy efforts against gender discrimination and sexual harassment, address historical barriers to women's full participation in Haiti's development.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Supporting credible electoral processes: Support for electoral operations, administration, logistics, and election observation enabled Haiti to conduct the first two rounds of long-delayed elections in 2015.

Strengthening local government: Nine target municipalities collected more than \$9 million in revenue, an increase of more than \$1 million over the previous year. The Ministry of Interior and local authorities have now taken full ownership of CIVITAX—software developed locally with USAID support--and local development plans with citizen participation.

Access to justice and legal aid: USAID and local bar associations provided legal services to more than 6,000 people through mediation centers serving low income and marginalized communities in Cité Soleil and in the Martissant area of the capital. Also, in three jurisdictions, USAID provided new case management software and training to process cases more efficiently and help address overcrowding in jails and prolonged pretrial detention times.

Human rights advocacy: USAID contributed to drafting and public education on new Adoption, Responsible Parenthood, and Anti-Trafficking laws, as well as a draft law against gender-based violence. USAID supported the development of a National Child Protection Strategy and provided training for 240 judicial actors on this strategy. USAID also strengthened local referral networks to address child protection and gender-based violence, and improved services through 23 grants to Haitian non-governmental organizations.