

Haiti's Failed Quest for Stability and Development after the 2010 Earthquake

Why Did It Go Wrong?

Policy Recommendations and Lessons for Other Fragile Countries

KOLDO ECHEBARRIA

Abstract

Haiti is once more experiencing a severe crisis of instability and political unrest. The devastating 2010 earthquake catastrophe was seen as a chance to break with the past and steer the nation in a new direction. Although some progress was made, it was only short-lived, insufficient to establish a growth path, uneven across sectors, and, as we have since learned, politically unsustainable. The analysis identifies several reasons the effort was insufficient to bring stability and growth: (i) objectives spanned reconstruction and development while resources were limited; (ii) the approach taken to build up security was unsustainable, leaving an underfunded and institutionally weak police force; (iii) divisive and confrontational politics was recognized as the critical challenge but it was not dealt with as such; (iv) coordination between Haitian authorities and international actors suffered from a deep sense of mistrust, never achieving a shared and clear action plan; (v) state-building efforts failed and institutions deteriorated further; and, (vi) the project-by-project approach followed by international donors dispersed effort, limited adaptation to a complex reality and increased transaction costs. Policy recommendations follow the analysis, arguing for a more focused strategy from the international community with a long-term programmatic approach. Until a reasonable level of stability is reached, security and social protection should take precedence. A final reflection will be offered on how lessons learned in Haiti can be useful in other fragile contexts.

Haiti's Failed Quest for Stability and Development after the 2010 Earthquake: Why Did It Go Wrong?

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Executive summary

Following the assassination of President Moïse in July 2021, Haiti is once more experiencing a severe crisis of instability and political unrest. It has been over thirteen years since the earthquake prompted an unprecedented national and global initiative to “Build Back Better.” This paper looks for reasons why stability and development have eluded Haiti. It will start by arguing that Haiti is not an exceptional case doomed by cultural and historical factors. Its development challenges are comparable to those of other nations that have struggled to overcome polarizing politics and social unrest that have thwarted efforts to establish stable governance. The devastating 2010 earthquake catastrophe was seen as a chance to break with the past and steer the nation in a new direction. Although some progress was made, it was only short-lived, insufficient to establish a growth path, uneven across sectors, and, as we have since learned, politically unsustainable.

The analysis identifies systemic issues that involve both international organizations and Haitian authorities: (i) objectives span reconstruction and development with high expectations while resources were limited and key inhibitors like political and institutional constraints were disregarded; (ii) the approach taken to build up security, a key necessary condition for success was unsustainable, leaving an underfunded and institutionally weak police force, while investments in prevention were fragmented and disconnected from economic development strategies; (iii) divisive and confrontational politics was recognized as the critical challenge but it was not dealt with as such, trusting that elections would settle confrontations and create a virtuous political cycle; (iv) coordination between Haitian authorities and international actors suffered from a deep sense of mistrust, never achieving shared clear priorities or translating into real joint strategies among donors; (v) state-building efforts failed and institutions deteriorated further, with donors relying on alternative mechanisms to achieve quicker results and reduce risks; and, (vi) the project-by-project development approach dispersed effort, limited adaptation to a complex reality and increased transaction costs, hampering efficiency and impact.

Ten policy recommendations will follow the analysis. It will be argued for a more focused and less intrusive touch from the international community, with a stronger political orientation, less short-term ambition, a more constrained scope, and a longer-term programmatic focus. Up until a reasonable level of stability is reached, security and social protection should take precedence. To collaborate more effectively for greater impact, proposals are made for a new institutional framework to be adopted by Haitian authorities and international development organizations. A final reflection will be offered on how lessons learned in Haiti can be useful in other fragile contexts.

Introduction

A security, political and economic crisis in Haiti has plunged the country into a humanitarian crisis. The United Nations (UN) has reported that 2,183 people were murdered and 1,359 were kidnapped in Port au Prince in 2022.¹ By 2023's first semester the number of victims matched that of the entire previous year.² Gangs are said to control 80 percent of the city and more than 160,000 people have been displaced.³ Double-digit inflation rate since 2015 has rendered nearly half of the population food insecure.⁴ In accordance with the last World Bank (WB) update, the economy has had four years of negative growth (1.7 percent in 2019, 3.3 percent in 2020, 1.8 percent in 2021 and 1.7 percent in 2022) and more contraction is expected for 2023. Progress in social indicators and poverty reduction has been undone, with 87.6 percent of the population living in poverty and 30.32 percent in extreme poverty.⁵

Since President Moïse's murder in 2021, the nation has been governed by a transitional administration with insufficient authority to cope with the ongoing crisis. The political and economic elite, weak and divided, appears unable to take concrete steps and move the country forward. The government has repeatedly pleaded for assistance from the international community, but this time foreign nations that had traditionally been involved with Haiti have taken a position that combines distance and hesitation. There is a big deal of uncertainty about what the next steps ought to be, and the country seems paralyzed. Fears of potentially bad outcomes keep external potential players at bay. At the time this text is being written, agreement has been reached at the UN Security Council to allow for a non-UN multinational force to support the Haitian police in reestablishing fundamental security.

"The default mode is to blame the Haitians: their culture, institutions, and lack of ownership," Paul Farmer once said.⁶ However, this argument must deal with an uncomfortable reality. Through a stabilization mission that costed around \$8 billion and the infusion of more than \$13 billion in official development assistance (ODA) between 2010 and 2020, the international community had a significant footprint in Haiti. It cannot simply accuse Haitians and wash its hands of the situation. *Who owns Haiti?* The title of the 2015 book by Robert MacGuire and Scott Freedman is not rhetorical.⁷ It is impossible to separate the current governance crisis, the longest since the military takeover that ousted President Aristide in 1991, from the role of heavy-handed past foreign interventions.

1 United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti. *Report of the Secretary General*. 17 January 2023.

2 *Human Rights Situation. Main Trends*. Quarterly Report: April-June 2023, BINUH (Integrated United Nations Office in Haiti).

3 "As Haiti Police Retreats, Gangs Take Over Much of the Capital," *New York Times*, March 22, 2023.

4 World Food Program, *Haiti Country Brief*, March 2023.

5 *World Bank Country Overview*, March 2023.

6 Paul Farmer, 2011, *Haiti After the Earthquake*. Public Affairs. New York, p. 200.

7 Robert Maguire and Scott Freeman, 2017, *Who Owns Haiti?* University Press of Florida.

This paper's goal is to examine why Haiti's stabilization and development efforts have not produced the desired outcomes. A brief historical overview will be given to make the case that Haiti's development trajectory is not that exceptional. Although every country is unique, there are many similarities between the economic, social, and political developments in Haiti and other post-colonial nations. We argue that Haiti's divergence from other developing nations can be explained by the events of the last half-century. Namely, severe social conflict and violence, predatory elites, divisive politics, and ineffective international interventions have characterized this long period. The catastrophic earthquake of 2010 did not serve as a catalyst to unite the nation behind a new, shared vision. Haiti has remained politically fragmented and unstable, with the international community contributing to the pernicious cycle of sidelining country institutions and eroding state capacity.⁸ As soon as the external support was withdrawn and the country was left to fend for itself, unrest spread swiftly with disturbances starting in 2018.

This paper will analyze the factors that contributed to the Haitian government's and the international community's failure to promote stability and growth in the wake of the earthquake. Instead of assessing how well each development organization or the Haitian government has performed individually, our goal is to step back and try to pinpoint systemic barriers to a more fruitful country-international partnership. We think Haiti is a good example of the challenges the international community faces when trying to achieve state building in less developed nations, not an exceptional case. Based on the analysis, we will recommend a more targeted and well-coordinated approach that will work in tandem with national actors' ability to look for future-focused political and development agreements.

Haiti's violent origin and troubled evolution is not enough to explain its development failure

In contrast to other nations, when analyzing Haiti's poor development record, it is typical to begin by looking back at the colonial era and the revolution for an explanation. Despite its uniqueness, Haiti shares many characteristics with post-colonial nations in terms of its economy and politics. A more recent past can be considered to explain the causes of the Haitian development crisis.

The Haitian revolution is the only slave revolt leading to the establishment of a durable independent state. Haiti was born after the bloodiest conflict in the Americas prior to the American Civil war, claiming the lives of a third of the approximately 450,000-person population. The conflict caused the wealthy plantation economy of the nation to collapse, both because of the destruction of vital capital resources and, more significantly, because of the populace's rejection of the new authorities' attempts to maintain the plantations' operations with paid labor. The process of creating the new

⁸ Paul Farmer, in the Introduction of Mark Schuller, 2015, *Cette Charité qui tue. Haïti, l'aide internationale et les ONG*, Editions de l'Université d'Etat d'Haïti.

country was challenging. Lack of recognition of Haitian independence by neighboring countries, who feared the spread of anti-slavery revolts, severely hindered economic development by drastically reducing trade opportunities. The maintenance of a sizable army and the building of defense fortifications consumed a lot of resources, making military leaders powerful actors in the country's destiny. In 1825 the young nation was forced to pay France an indemnity equal to 280 percent of its GDP in exchange of recognition and to avoid blockade and bombardment.⁹ The government had to take out costly loans to comply, which were not repaid in full until 1947. During this long period, debt obligations consumed most of the state revenues.

The post-revolutionary economic system had to come to terms with a trade-off between a majority of small producers and an urban minority involved in the export-import industry, with an over-sized military engaged in internal warfare to seize power. This is unique to Haiti, where the elite was made up of merchants who were cut off from the production process, in contrast to the latifundia that dominated the political economy of most Latin American nations.¹⁰ The economy was decentralized into 11 regions, each with its own trading port, and it was dependent on the export of agricultural products like coffee, sisal, bananas, and campeche to generate the surplus that was taken by the government and the urban elite.

This divide between a poor rural majority and a small elite concentrated in the cities produced a state that instead of serving most of the population, was devoted to extracting surplus rents and maintaining the army. It was more like a colonial administration working for an outside metropole than a truly national state.¹¹ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, the well-known Haitian anthropologist dubbed this relationship "State against Nation."¹² The country was founded as a proud nation, the "Black Republic," but the revolution ended with the majority being exploited by a minority.¹³ Most of the Haitian population practiced an independent subsistence agriculture, therefore the idea of the "anti-plantation" mentality¹⁴ or the "maroon nation."¹⁵ Peasants could avoid working for landowners and be their own masters, attached to their small plot of land. This is hardly unique in post-colonial countries. State capture by a predatory minority and social conflict derived from deep inequality have been enduring characteristics in Latin America, even if land property structures were different.

9 Kim Oosterlinck, Ugo Panizza, W. Mark C. Weidemaier and Mitu Gulati, 2021, *The Odious Haitian Independence Debt*, Working Paper No. HEIDWP16-2021, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva.

10 According to Fritz Jean, this disconnection leads to the lack of capacity to modernize the production process. Fritz Jean, 2016, *Haiti. La fin d'une histoire économique*, Les éditions Pédagogie Nouvelle, Port-au-Prince, p. 61.

11 This observation comes from Gerard Barthélemy, 1990, *L'univers rural haïtien. Le pays en dehors*, L'Harmattan, Paris, p. 129.

12 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, 1990, *Haiti, State Against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism*, New York, Monthly Review Press.

13 Philippe-Richard Marius, 2022, *The Unexceptional Case of Haiti, Race and Class Privilege in Postcolonial Bourgeois Society*, University Press of Mississippi, Jackson.

14 Jean Casimir, 2020, *The Haitians. A Decolonial History*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

15 Johnhenry Gonzalez, 2019, *Maroon Nation: A History of Revolutionary Haiti*, Yale University Press.

The US occupation between 1915 and 1934¹⁶ left a controversial balance of brutal insurgency suppression, another failed attempt to develop a plantation economy,¹⁷ infrastructure construction with forced labor,¹⁸ and centralization of the state apparatus, which included a reorganization of the military that lost its regional structure, therefore becoming closer with the capital elite.¹⁹ After the end of the second world war an economic crisis ensued, with the collapse of the exchange prices for the export agricultural commodities. A middle-class revolt in 1946 propelled Dumarsais Estimé to the presidency, which is regarded as a period of progressive initiatives of economic development and social justice,²⁰ such as the expansion of education, social programs, irrigation projects and the foundations of new economic development institutions.²¹ Estimé was overthrown in a coup in 1950, under pressure from the elite that feared losing its privileges. The chance to reform the economic model was lost and events that followed could be to a large extent explained as a consequence of this failure.

François Duvalier, who presented himself as Estimé's political heir, came to power in 1957 amid political unrest following another period of instability. He oversaw a brutal regime until 1971, which resulted in the deaths of thousands of opponents and the exile of many more. His muscle was a paramilitary force, the *Tonton-Macoutes*, that employed more armed personnel than the police and the.²² Local *Macoutes* assumed public functions such as dispensing justice or levying taxes or fines, enabling them to surveil and discipline the populace. For internal legitimacy, the regime utilized the discourse of black nationalism, the concept of Haitian exceptionalism to justify authoritarian rule, and the invocation of national sovereignty against foreign intervention.

Francois Duvalier did not rely on a technocratic elite or the military, in contrast to other authoritarian regimes in Latin America. A personal allegiance to the dictator served as the foundation of the power structure ("those who held power enjoyed it only on the bases of a direct link to the head of the state").²³ The state apparatus was weakened. To increase the number of unqualified jobs used to gain the loyalty of the black middle and lower classes, high-level civil service positions were eliminated. Advanced-trained Haitian physicians, educators, and engineers left their country to find employment abroad. One in six Haitians—mostly members of the educated minority—left the

16 A US fiscal representative with wide powers over tax collection and government spending remained until 1941 and the Banque Nationale d'Haiti was under US supervision until 1947. See Laurent Dubois, 2012, *Haiti. The Aftershocks of History*, Metropolitan Books, New York Dubois, p. 295.

17 This shows an important difference with other neighbor countries, like Cuba or Central America where American companies could exploit large plantations. The fragmented land structure of Haiti and the resistance of the population were the reasons. See, Fritz Jean, p. 100.

18 See Edwidge Danticat, "The Long Legacy of Occupation in Haiti", July 28, 2015, *The New Yorker*.

19 For a detailed analysis of the occupation, see Hans Schmidt, 1995, *The United States Occupation of Haiti 1915-1934*, Rutgers University Press.

20 Laurent Dubois, (see n. 16 above), pp. 316-18.

21 See Oliuis et al., 2010, *Mémoire sur la gouvernance économique en Haïti*, Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances, Port-au-Prince, pp. 41-2.

22 Robert I. Rotberg gives an estimate of 10,000 armed *macoutes* and 7,000 military, "Haiti's past mortgages its future," in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 67, No. 1, 1988, pp. 93-109.

23 Trouillot, (n. 14 above), p. 171.

nation.²⁴ Behind a strong-looking government that used arbitrary violence to exert control, Haiti devolved into a weak state.

A closed agricultural economy protected by high tariffs and government monopolies that enriched the ruling class while putting off necessary structural reforms dominated the François Duvalier period. Growth was hampered by this inward-looking, austere, and agriculture-focused economic policy that lacked a development strategy. Fritz Jean claims that Duvalier's political control agenda solidified the "anti-capitalist economic structure."²⁵ By the end of the 1960s, Haiti's development trajectory started to diverge from that of its neighbors, especially the Dominican Republic (see Figure 1 below), whose per capita income was lower than Haiti's in 1960 but started to grow faster. Increased soil erosion, decreased agricultural productivity, and worsening destitution were the results of high population pressure on small agricultural plots. Food imports from Haiti increased starting in the 1970s because the nation was unable to produce what was needed.

Between 1971 and 1986, Haiti was ruled by François Duvalier's son, Jean-Claude, who presided over a government that was less fanatical, more receptive to western influence, but beset by nepotism and corruption.²⁶ The administration was forced to change its course to address urgent economic issues that could endanger political stability. It opened the country's economy to both domestic and foreign capital to accommodate the growing surplus of labor. The apparel industry was considered the quickest way to create employment. According to calculations, at the height of this cycle, 246 businesses and 60,000 jobs were created, and in 1980, per capita income reached its highest level between 1960 and 2020.²⁷

The growth gains of the previous decade were reversed during the 1980s. There was the effect of outside factors like the African Swine Fever, which caused the local porcine stock to be slaughtered, or the stigma associated with AIDS, which hurt tourism. But more importantly, growth began to slow down in the 1980s because the regime was unable to implement the reforms necessary to boost investment focused on exports. At the time, the World Bank cited a business climate that was unresponsive to the demands of global capital.²⁸ Public monopolies were eliminated, but it's possible that they merely changed ownership, concentrating economic power and restricting competition. The regime could never implement reforms "without undermining the very the very sources of the wealth and power its officials enjoyed."²⁹ The Dominican Republic exported three times as much as Haiti did in 1984.

24 Dubois, (see n. 16 above), p. 351.

25 Fritz Jean, (see n. 10 above) p. 101.

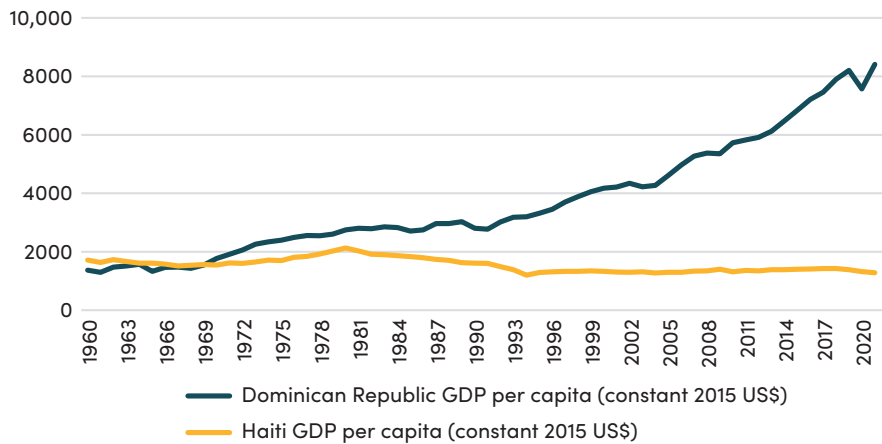
26 A former Jean-Claude Duvalier aide is quoted saying that "money for the father was a way of keeping power. Power for the son was a way of making money," in Anthony P. Maingot, "Haiti: Problems of a Transition to Democracy in an Authoritarian Soft State", in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Winter 1986-7), pp. 75-102. It is during the second Duvalier government that to prevent international aid from lining the coffers of the ruling family, the practice of bypassing the Haitian government to distribute aid through NGOs was adopted.

27 Olius et al., 2010, (see n. 21 above), p. 51.

28 Fritz Jean, (see n. 10 above), p. 136.

29 Alex Dupuy, 1997, *Haiti in the New World Order. The limits of the democratic revolution*. Westview Press. Boulder Colorado, p. 22.

**FIGURE 1. Nominal GDP per capita 1960–2021.
Haiti and the Dominican Republic (WB data)**



Between the beginning and conclusion of the Duvalier regime, Haiti’s population almost doubled (from 3.6 million in 1957 to 6.5 million in 1986), and Port-au-Prince’s population increased by more than fivefold (from 200,000 in 1957 to close to 1 million in 1986). At the beginning of the regime Haiti was a rural country with around 90 percent of the population living in the countryside. Even though the rural population was still larger at the end of the period (see Figure 3), urban concentration had started and grew rapidly as agriculture could not accommodate population growth and urban areas offered the expectation of a better life. As in other developing economies, urbanization was to alter the country’s political equilibria. Urbanization has prompted the emergence of a middle class working in industry and services, which has been a driving force for political stability in successful economies. Due to a lack of economic opportunities, Haiti’s urbanization has been accompanied by widespread population marginalization in shantytowns. The *moun andeyo*, the expression used to refer to Haiti’s impoverished and disenfranchised rural population, spread into the cities, but the urban context will give rise to political and social movements that have had a significant impact on Haitian politics up until the present.

FIGURE 2. Port-au-Prince population growth (WB data)

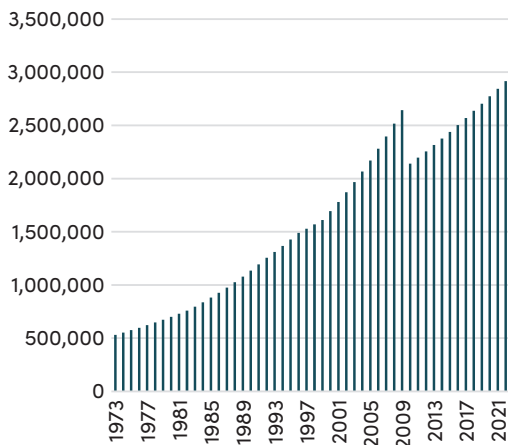
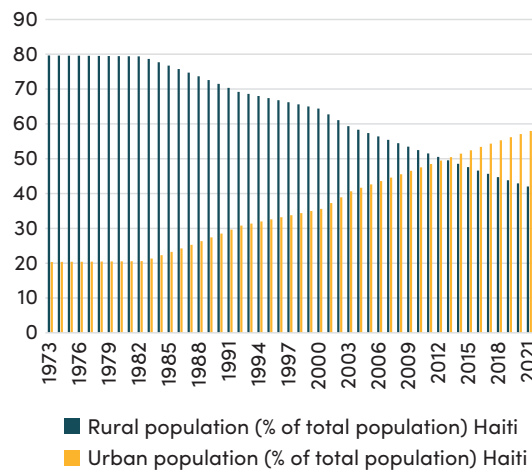


FIGURE 3. Haiti: Rural and Urban population (%) (WB data)



Even though it is extraordinarily relevant, the economic and political tragedy of the Duvalier regime is insufficient to account for how far behind other countries Haiti is economically and politically. Cruel dictatorships were prevalent in Latin America. The countries of Central America were torn apart by brutal strongmen and protracted civil wars up until the 1990s, and Bolivia and Paraguay have struggled even more recently to find stability. Amid extreme poverty and extreme inequality, the majority of them underwent challenging political transitions that helped imperfect democracies stabilize and economic growth pick up speed. In contrast, Haiti has repeatedly failed to manage the political transition, becoming embroiled in unrest and violence that have further reduced per capita income in comparison to its neighbors.

Political transitions failed to establish stable and growth supporting governance

After Duvalier fell, a space of opportunity was opened by the approval of a new constitution in 1987. It established a semi-presidential system with an executive divided between an elected President and a Prime Minister nominated by the President but ratified by Parliament in a procedure requiring subsequent approval of the “general policy” of the new administration. Parliament can also vote to remove the Prime Minister, which has occurred on multiple occasions, but the President has no authority to dissolve Parliament. The Parliament is a bicameral legislative body that renews partially through elections held at various times. This system has resulted in gridlock with lengthy periods of ineffective government when the President’s nominee for Prime minister is not confirmed. When elections to renew the legislature have not been conducted on time, it has also been common that the President governs by decree, unsupervised by Parliament. In this regard, all governments have been ignoring constitutional provisions for long periods of time.

Some analysts point out that the Constitution was more concerned with avoiding another personal regime than with the necessity of building a much-needed strong state, as a necessary condition for sustainable development. Others say that Haitian political leaders ignored the requirements of dialogue and negotiation established by the Constitution. The “winner takes all” political culture didn’t change, with the President concentrating power and³⁰ the Prime Minister serving as a protective mechanism, resigning in times of crisis and staying in power for relatively brief terms. As Trouillot prophesied at the time: “similar regimes will inevitably succeed one another unless the relationship between the state and civil society is reformulated.”³¹

After the fall of Duvalier, economic liberalization measures were adopted with the opening of trade to support export-oriented apparel and the elimination of state monopolies. The objective was to benefit consumers with decreased prices and liberate resources for export-oriented activities, negatively affecting the local import substitution industry and agricultural production.

30 Robert Fatton, Jr., 2014, *Haiti, Trapped in the Outer Periphery*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, p. 144.

31 Trouillot, (see n. 14 above), Chapter 8.

It is calculated that 15 percent of direct and indirect employment was lost between 1987 and 1990.³² But it also benefited import businesses with an uncompetitive licensing system that kept final prices higher than in neighboring nations. The Dominican Republic began acquiring a trade advantage that has only grown over time.

Aristide was elected President by a landslide in 1991, to be deposed by the army in a coup a few months later.³³ In 1994, when Aristide returned to power, the international community stood in his defense. In the interim, tens of thousands of jobs were lost due to an economic embargo that nearly wiped out the most dynamic sector of the economy, the apparel export industry. By the time Aristide returned, the real per capita income had decreased by 30 percent.³⁴

As retaliation for the coup, the army that could have served as an arbitrator was disbanded, without keeping even the infrastructure and support capacities essential for a response in case of natural or humanitarian disasters. A power void ensued, and many former soldiers joined irregular armed groups engaged in new kinds of violence funded by political and financial backers. Aristide also promoted his own paramilitary groups, the *chimere*, to strengthen his power. The newly established civilian police were not in the position to effectively fight violence leaving a lot of space to be filled by the irregulars. The state's inability or unwillingness to intervene caused a process of fragmentation and decentralization of violence that has persisted to this day.

René Prével replaced Aristide in 1996 as a “caretaker” until Aristide’s return, but relations soured as Aristide actively undermined the government. The Lavalas movement fragmented, with Aristide winning the next election in 2000. The President acted in a radical and populist manner, incapable of transforming his broad democratic mandate into a functional government and resorting to violence against his opponents. The international community withdrew its support, and tensions rose again until Aristide was compelled to flee the country in 2004 after a coup by armed irregulars. In 1998, during a political crisis, and again in 2002, until Aristide’s departure in 2004, the transfer of resources from the international community was interrupted. A transitional government, headed by Gerard Latortue as Prime Minister was installed,³⁵ backed by a UN stabilization mission (MINUSTAH).

MINUSTAH was established with an ambitious long-term mandate. This was a lesson learned from previous unsuccessful interventions, jointly with a momentum in the international community

32 Etzer S. Emile, 2017, *Haiti a choisi de devenir un pays pauvre. Les vingt raisons qui le prouvent*. Les Presses de l'Université Quisqueya. Port-au-Prince.

33 See in this regard a paper showing the connections between members of the economic elite families and the military coup that ousted Aristide in 1991. See Suresh Naidu, James A. Robinson and Lauren E. Young, “Social Origins of Dictatorships: Elite Networks and Political Transitions in Haiti”, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 115, No. 3, August 2021, pp. 900–916.

34 See, Mats Lundahl and Riben Silie, 2005, “Haiti, Nothing but crisis”, in Mats Lundahl and Michael I. Wyzan, *The Political Economy of Reform Failure*, Routledge.

35 It is said that Latortue has been the only Prime Minister able to exercise the role according to the Constitution.

favoring externally driven stabilization processes.³⁶ The most pressing problem was restoring basic security and creating a legitimate and effective police force. In addition, it was intended to protect human rights, advance political development, and strengthen Haitian institutions and structures of the rule of law. The mission's primary objective was the establishment of a respected and effective Haitian police force (PNH). It started with an authorized initial complement of 6,700 troops and 1,622 police officers that was increased to 7,500 and 1,892 respectively before the 2006 election.³⁷

Economic policy remained unchanged during this protracted and turbulent political period, but it did not result in the anticipated growth dividend. The Preval and Aristide administrations upheld orthodox economic policy, accepting a series of structural adjustment packages from international financial institutions that included increased liberalization, privatization, and spending reductions to balance the budget while receiving multilateral financial support. Trade barriers were significantly lowered, making Haiti the Caribbean nation with the most open economy, but also permanently harming the country's industrial and agricultural output. A successful export growth strategy, however, requires the development of an institutional threshold for capital accumulation. Democratization in settings with a high degree of deinstitutionalization causes political conflicts that encourage violence. Sensing the absence of the bare-bones institutional framework required to guarantee long-term investment, capital remained elusive. Poorly governed countries with low or even middle incomes without natural resources can suffer greatly if they must rely on the favor of foreign investors.

With a drop in GDP per capita of about 21 percent between 1960 and 2020, Haitian decline and divergence from its neighbors and most of the developing world occurred in the last half of a century (see Diaz-Bonilla, 2022: 2 and 16).³⁸ Exceptionalism that is unique historical, social, and cultural characteristics do not in and of themselves explain the country's trajectory, they have been useful for Duvalier to justify repression,³⁹ for Aristide to rule violently against the elite, and, more recently, by Haitian administrations or the international community to conceal lack of effectiveness. Exceptionalism, according to Jean Casimir, prevents effective communication about Haiti by burying analysis under cultural and historical constructs that are used as "black boxes." It is not thought that other nations with recent appalling economic performance, like Venezuela or Zimbabwe, whose GDP per capita has fallen to the 1960s, are exceptional or are affected by a "progress-resistant

36 See Rory Stewart and Gerald Knaus, 2012, *Can Intervention Work?* W.W. Norton & Company. This thinking was supported by the relative success of the missions to stabilize the former Yugoslavia and the uneasiness created by 9/11 terrorist attacks. More recent unsuccessful experiences have changed that mood.

37 Jorge Heine and Andrew S. Thompson, 2011, "Introduction: Haiti's governance challenges and the international community", in Jorge Heine and Andrew S. Thompson (editors), *Fixing Haiti. Minustah and Beyond*, United Nations University Press, pp. 1-23.

38 Eugenio Diaz-Bonilla (2022), *Haiti and its multiple tragedies: Much more needs to be done*, LAC Working Paper, IFPRI, Washington DC.

39 "The Haitian problem is predominately a cultural problem. And the solution can only be a whole reform of the Haitian mentality", Francois Duvalier, quoted by Gerard Barthelemy, 1990, *L'Univers Rural Haïtien. Le pays en dehors*, L'Harmattan, Paris.

culture.”⁴⁰ The real problem is that, like other low-income or regressive middle-income nations, Haiti has not achieved an “elite development bargain,” a long-term political agreement between the nation’s elites that abides by rules to resolve disputes and accepts political and economic concessions in order to move toward growth and inclusiveness.⁴¹

The 2010 earthquake led to new hopes in old bottles

The consensus is that the situation in Haiti was progressively improving prior to the earthquake. René Préval was elected president of Haiti in 2006 with a 56 percent voter turnout. Preval made security and stability his top priorities and worked hard to achieve them. Contrary to Aristide, he governed with a low political profile and appointed respected professionals in key government departments. Together with the newly elected government, MINUSTAH restored internal security from gang violence after a difficult start. At the end of the period, even slum areas like Cite Soleil or Bel Air were relatively safe.

The country suffered the impact of two large tropical cyclones and a sharp rise in international food prices, which sparked street unrest and political instability. However, the average annual rate of growth in this period was close to three percent. In 2009, the country received \$1.2 billion in debt relief from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI), freeing up much-needed funds for development policies. The approval of the Haitian Hemispheric Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) in December 2006, granting zero-tariff preferential treatment to Haitian exports entering the US market until 2025, was additional positive news. With the participation of the private sector, a plan for economic development was agreed upon, with the focus of boosting foreign investment and an emphasis on economic decentralization.

In this context, Paul Collier authored for the United Nations a paper on Haiti Economic Development Strategy,⁴² that became very influential in the post-earthquake strategy of economic development.⁴³ The document offers an analysis of Haiti’s economic challenges and comparative advantages and recommends a development strategy to integrate Haiti into the global economy. The light apparel industry was viewed as the engine of growth, the only sector capable of creating the tens of thousands of jobs required to employ the nation’s growing youth population. Due to overpopulation and soil degradation, agriculture, despite being the largest sector of activity, was not viewed as a viable investment sector. The underlying concept was that “for the maintenance of social order,

40 This term was used by The New York Times columnist David Brooks drawing on the work of Lawrence Hamilton. However, culture is taken here as a normative concept more than as a behavioral one, “The Underlying Tragedy”, *The New York Times*, January 14, 2010.

41 Stefan Dercon, 2022, *Gambling on Development. Why Some Countries Win and Others Lose*, Hurst & Company, London.

42 Paul Collier, 2009, *Haiti: From Natural Catastrophe to Economic Security: A Report for the Secretary-General of the United Nations*, Oxford, January 28, 2009.

43 See Jonathan M. Katz, 2013, *The Big Truck that Went By. How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster*, St. Martin’s Griffin, NY, pp. 138–145.

military security must rapidly be superseded by economic security.” The proposal overestimated stability’s progress, but it was packed with valuable guidance on the success factors necessary for an effective economic strategy. Regrettably, the report will have a greater impact on identifying the apparel industry as the growth engine than on other crucial accompanying conditions, such as the availability of essential social services or the requirement for all parties to be constrained by a clear and cogent plan of action. Later, we’ll revisit some of these points.

The earthquake that occurred in January 2010 was a tremendous social, economic, and political shock. The damage to the economy was estimated at 120 percent of the GDP, given the high concentration of output in the capital, where over 100,000 homes were destroyed and over 200,000 were severely damaged. Approximately 1.5 million people were displaced and residing in camps and temporary shelters. Even if the number of casualties could have been lower than the official figures,⁴⁴ the earthquake weakened the country’s burgeoning institutional infrastructure. Most of the government buildings were destroyed, including the Presidential Palace, the Parliament, the High Courts of Justice, and all but one government ministry. It was estimated that 17 percent of the government personnel perished.⁴⁵ A state apparatus that was already feeble, undermanned, and underfunded was left empty handed to respond to the disaster.

Strong international response and a powerless Haitian government

In a matter of hours and in response to a request from the Haitian government, US soldiers arrived in Port-au-Prince and began providing security and distributing emergency aid.⁴⁶ Countries from around the world poured in with emergency and rescue missions, NGOs collected billions of dollars in donations of solidarity, the United Nations bolstered the MINUSTAH operation with an additional contingent, and international organizations prepared assessment reports. The international community and NGOs were to replace the Haitian state in basic responsibilities of relief and security. A lot has been written on the emergency and relief effort, the priorities that were followed, its cost-effectiveness, the NGO proliferation, the minuscule volume of resources transferred to Haitian institutions, or the role played of the media in driving attention on certain issues.⁴⁷ In this regard, a statement made by Michaëlle Jean that “charity comes from the heart, but if it is poorly organized, contributes more to the problems than to the solutions,” is quite illuminating.⁴⁸

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44 The Government of Haiti gave many different estimates, one of 236,000 dead a few weeks after the earthquake and another one of 316,000 a year later. Analysis based on mobility data and ratios between dead and wounded, lower the figure to a number between 50,000 and a 100,000. James Robinson and Jonathan L. Weighel, in a research proposal submitted to the IDB consider the lack of a credible figure as a symptom of the lack of basic state capacity to collect and register basic data. On the controversial death toll, see Mats Lundahl, 2013, *The Political Economy of Disaster: Destitution, plunder and earthquake in Haiti*, Routledge, pp. 202–209.

45 This figure appears in Jean Max Bellerive and Bill Clinton, “Finishing Haiti’s Unfinished Work”, *The New York Times*, July 11, 2010.

46 See Gary Cecchine et al, 2013, *The US military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake*, Rand Corporation, Santa Monica.

47 See for a highly critical analysis, Timothy T. Schwartz, 2017, *The Great Haiti Humanitarian Aid Swindle*, Createspace Independent Publishing Platform.

48 Michaëlle Jean: ¿président d’Haïti?, *Le Nouvelliste*, 25 Mars 2013.

Certainly, a lot more could have been done in articulating humanitarian assistance with development efforts given the massive effort made in this first stage. It is estimated that \$7.6 billion was spent on humanitarian and relief effort in the two years after the earthquake, significantly more than the resources committed to development.⁴⁹ Haiti has gotten a lot of humanitarian aid, but it hasn't helped the country develop. It has only temporarily lessened the suffering of the people. Building a solid connection between the short-term humanitarian response and the medium-term development strategy is still lacking in a nation that is frequently devastated by natural disasters. Both types of effort are motivated by distant incentives, which lead to inconsistent behavior.

Many have commented on President Préval's response to the calamity. There is a perception that his default low-key stance, which emphasized his administration's lack of resources and appealed to the international community for assistance, contributed to the power vacuum. He could have called for a broad coalition of Haitian political and institutional leaders, thereby empowering himself before the Haitian people and the international community. It is difficult to evaluate in retrospect. The priority for Préval had always been security and stability,⁵⁰ utilizing his indoor manner of deal-making, relying on close friends and family, but also coopting enemies if necessary and had made a lot of progress until the earthquake struck. The drawback was that he was unable to separate the elite from the state, who would continue to enjoy special treatment during his administration. Positive change from the increased personalization of Haitian politics was his prevalent avoidance of messianic leadership. However, the international community was expecting a more decisive approach and began to express its frustration with what were perceived as delaying tactics or obstructionism on the part of the government.⁵¹ In the end, Préval's painstakingly constructed idea of political equilibrium would be another victim of the earthquake.

The Haitian government developed the Action Plan for the Recovery and Development of Haiti (PARDH) based on the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA). A conference of donors was convened in New York in March 2010 to pledge \$8.3 billion for the reconstruction endeavor, of which \$1.2 billion were debt relief. With a commitment of \$2.3 billion, the United States was to be the largest donor, followed by Venezuela, the European Union (EU), Canada, and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Subsequently, the IDB contribution was significantly increased to \$2.0 billion in a grant facility created for this purpose, in addition to almost \$500 million in debt relief. Venezuela canceled \$370 million in debt and extended Petrocaribe credits by close to \$2 billion. Canada pledged \$1.3 billion, while the EU pledged \$1.6 billion. The World Bank (WB) would provide close to \$1 billion over a decade. NGOs raised \$3.06 billion, but only \$1.06 billion was reported to have been spent in

49 Office of UN Secretary General's Special Adviser on Community Based Health and Aid Delivery. Paul Farmer, 2020.

50 See Patrick Sylvain, 2011, "Haiti: Malversate state and teetering nation", in Jorge Heine and Andrew S. Thompson (editors), *Fixing Haiti. Minustah and Beyond*, United Nations University Press, pp. 78–96.

51 Hillary Clinton at the occasion of a speech in Canada in December 2010 voiced that frustration, mentioning that "there hasn't been the kind of coordinated, coherent response from the Government of Haiti that is called for," in Mats Lundahl, 2013, *The Political Economy of Disaster: Destitution, plunder and earthquake in Haiti*, Routledge, p. 191.

Haiti.⁵² The Haiti Reconstruction Fund was created to pool funding from donors and allocate it to high-priority projects managed by the WB, the IDB and WB. The Fund collected around \$400 million (\$274 from Norway),⁵³ roughly a quarter of its original target of \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion.

There was also an opening in the international community to do things differently and amend the mistakes of the past. Ban Ki-Moon, the UN Secretary General opened the donors conference envisioning “an exercise in nation-building on a scale and scope not seen in generations.”⁵⁴ There was also the idea that Haiti had been particularly vulnerable to the flaws of the aid machinery and that change was a necessary condition for success. The US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, at the same conference said the following:

“In the global community, we must also do things differently. It will be tempting to fall back in the old habits, to work around the government rather than to work with them as partners, or to fund a scattered array of well-meaning projects rather than making the deeper, long-term investments that Haiti needs now. We cannot retreat to failed strategies. I know that we have heard these imperatives before, the need to coordinate our aid, hold ourselves accountable, share our knowledge, track results. But now, we cannot just declare our intentions. We have to follow through and put them into practice.”⁵⁵

Although this commitment was brave, it did not come to pass. It proposed significant changes in strategy and operations and was consistent with the findings of a State Department review into aid to Haiti that was completed just before the earthquake.⁵⁶ It’s unfortunate that old habits are hard to break but they persist for a reason. With a few minor exceptions, all development agencies, including USAID, will eventually conduct their operations in Haiti as usual, with little difference between post-earthquake strategies and earlier development initiatives. They persisted in avoiding the state and relied on a dispersed project-by-project strategy, which will be examined in more detail below.

An attempt to innovate was the establishment of the Haiti Interim Reconstruction Commission (HIRC), authorized and subsequently ratified by the Haitian parliament in April 2010 for an 18-month term. It was co-chaired by Bill Clinton, the UN Envoy, and Jean-Max Bellerive, the Prime Minister of Haiti. The HIRC was supposed to be inspired by a similar authority established in Indonesia following the tsunami, where Bill Clinton served as the UN’s Special Envoy. The success of the Indonesian reconstruction was attributed to the strong central coordination capacity to set priorities, allocate

52 Data coming from Office of UN Secretary General’s Special Adviser on Community Based Health and Aid Delivery. Paul Farmer, 2019.

53 Haiti Reconstruction Fund, *Financial Report Prepared by the Trustee*, June 30, 2016, World Bank Group.

54 The quote is taken from Paul Farmer, (see n. 8) p. 155.

55 Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks at the International Donors’ Conference Towards a New future for Haiti,” March 31, 2010, US State Department.

56 Robert Maguire, 2017, “Who Owns US Aid to Haiti?” in Robert Maguire and Scott Freeman, *Who Owns Haiti?* University Press of Florida, pp. 85–105.

resources, and prevent duplication. It was also intended to provide accountability and transparency regarding the use of resources and results attained. As we will see in the following section, the Haitian replica was hardly a success story. The HIRC disbanded 18 months later with little to show. Even worse, the absence of a credible replacement left coordination in disarray, discouraging donors from pledging new resources or honoring existing commitments.

Contrary to popular belief, humanitarian aid was promptly distributed. Expectedly, development funds took considerably longer to disburse. Most of the effort was allocated to relief operations immediately following the disaster. These include the mobilization of naval and air force assets for the rescue operation to provide security and aid to the population. Few of the funds were distributed through Haitian institutions. Less than 10 percent was disbursed to the Haitian government, and less than 0.6 percent went directly to Haitian organizations, according to UN calculations.⁵⁷ The impact on these resources in the local economy was significantly less than if the funds were distributed directly. This was consistent with long established practices in Haiti that relied on international NGOs to implement programs. Even, as Paul Farmer recalled, if “Haiti had little to show after decades of NGO driven development projects.”⁵⁸

The political regime was altered by the earthquake, but the predatory and divisive political culture persisted

In November of 2010, elections were held with voter turnout as low as 22 percent. The international community played a role beyond that of a neutral arbitrator in the subsequent highly contentious scrutiny. In the second round of the election, Michel Martelly was elected, marking “a turning point in political history” with a Duvalier nostalgic coming to power for the first time after the end of the regime.⁵⁹ Martelly is a popular vocalist with a great deal of charisma, which allowed for a special connection with the people. He was elected with a mixture of anti-establishment and nationalist rhetoric but lacked a clear sense of government priorities. Named for his bald head, *Tet kale*, his political party was essentially a campaign instrument with very limited penetration into Haitian society. Martelly lacked political and institutional experience, and his ability to lead Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake was uncertain. Having lost faith in Préval, the United States favored Martelly even though he represented the unknown. As President, he received substantial support from the international community, from the United States to Venezuela.

It is not surprising that the presidency of Martelly would shortly encounter difficulties. The President relied on a small group of close allies to run the government. With his party holding a few seats in Parliament, it took ten months to ratify a Prime Minister who lasted only a few months. The support offered to members of Parliament for their upcoming reelection facilitated the appointment of the

57 Office of UN Secretary General’s Special Adviser on Community Based Health and Aid Delivery. Paul Farmer.

58 Paul Farmer, 2013, *To Repair the World*, University of California Press, Oakland, p. 170.

59 This point is raised by Juan Gabriel Valdes, “Politics in Haiti: Between Authoritarianism and Meffiance”, in *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, Vol. 6, No. 3, December 2011, pp. 79–84.

second and more durable Prime Minister. Elections were postponed later in the mandate, and when no elected officials remained, the country was governed by decree without parliamentary oversight. Government ministries frequently changed hands, resulting in continuous policy changes.⁶⁰ Allegations of favoritism and corruption soon began to tarnish the government's reputation. Haiti was back to highly personalized politics amid the consent or at least the indifference of an international community.

In the subsequent years, some progress was made, but it was sluggish, below initial expectations, and uneven across sectors. The availability of additional resources and concerted action with the private sector and NGO community resulted in a substantial improvement in health and education. Roads, telecommunications, water, and sanitation also experimented progress. Thousands of employment opportunities were created thanks to concentrated investments in infrastructure and industrial parks in the North. Extreme poverty and poverty declined. In the realms of housing and institution-building, little progress was made. In agriculture results were mixed with some promising initiatives needing scale to become really changemaking. The resources provided by the international community permitted internal social conflicts to remain subdued, aiding in the maintenance of stability throughout Martelly's entire term in office.

The underlying issues of governance or security were not addressed, and they reemerged. Unrest erupted in 2014 over the postponement of elections and the Prime Minister had to resign following the recommendation of an external commission. When elections were held in 2015, the results were contested based on allegations of fraud. A deal was reached whereby Martelly would step down at the end of his term and a provisional government led by Senator Privert would organize new elections in 2016.

Petrocaribe resources were crucial to support the Martelly administration. Préval signed a program with Venezuela in 2007. Haiti had to pay only 60 percent of the gasoline's value and retain the remaining proceeds as a loan with a 20-year repayment tenor, a two-year grace period, and an interest rate of 1 percent. It is estimated that Petrocaribe provided the Martelly administration with an annual revenue close to \$400 million for discretionary expenditures.⁶¹ By the end of the program, Haiti had accumulated around \$2 billion in debt. In comparison, multilateral financial institutions disbursed an average of around \$230 million during the period that, except for a small portion of budget support, had to adhere to predefined objectives and tight expenditure procedures.

60 Jacqueline Charles, "More changes in Haiti's young, inexperienced Government", Miami Herald, April 12, 2013.

61 See Robert Maguire 2017, "Who Owns US Aid to Haiti?" in Robert Maguire and Scott Freeman, *Who Owns Haiti?* University Press of Florida, pp. 85–105.

TABLE 1. IDB and WB disbursements (in million dollars) 2010–2021

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
IDB	177	175	148	186	206	188	116	122	113	64	110	169	1,774
WB	112	64	87	94	62	51	71	73	121	90	135	139	1,099
Total	289	239	235	280	268	239	187	195	234	154	245	308	2,873

The wealth of Petrocaribe resources was used to fund a variety of public works across the country as well as numerous social programs and government cash needs. Infrastructure expenditure reached its greatest level in the decade. There was no effective project prioritization or social program targeting, nor was there coordination with other donor resources. The management of the resources was highly discretionary, placing expediency ahead of transparency and control. Reports published by a Senate Commission in 2017⁶² and the Court of Auditors in 2019⁶³ accused the administrations managing Petrocaribe resources of mismanagement and embezzlement, with only 77 percent of resources accounted for and numerous specific evidence of fraud.

With Petrocaribe resources available, the government had limited interest in funding from other sources. The policy influence of donors working with the government, such as the WB, the IDB, and the EU, was compromised. Despite the power usually attributed to international actors and generous transfers in budget support operations, their influence on policy was minimal. The reform agenda to improve the business climate, create a sustainable energy sector, and strengthen critical public institutions made very little or no progress. The perception is that, given the ambitious commitments made after the earthquake, the international community was more interested in keeping the perception of progress than to face reality and change course. They remained focused on the project-by-project dynamic, concentrating on the nontrivial difficulties of physical and financial execution. They knew that without reforms, the fiscal situation would rapidly deteriorate and become a ticking time bomb, but international actors had positioned themselves in a role that left them very little room for negotiation.

A foreseen crisis: Security and stability collapse⁶⁴

Jovenel Moïse won the 2016 elections with only 17.6 percent of the electorate participating. The President began his mandate in February 2017 counting with the support of both houses of Parliament controlled by his party. However, this appearance of political unity was a mirage. The previous political regime had disintegrated and been replaced by an even looser coalition of political

62 Senat de la République de Haïti, Octobre 2017, *Rapport Finale de la Commission Senatale Spéciale d'Enquête sur les fonds Petrocaribe couvrant les périodes annuelles allant de septembre 2008 à septembre 2016*.

63 Haiti Superior Court of Auditors and Administrative Disputes, June 2019, Government Audit of Venezuela Petrocaribe Oil Program.

64 Michaëlle Jean, "Chronique d'une catastrophe pressentie," *Le Nouvelliste*, 10 juillet 2021.

entrepreneurs pursuing individual agendas,⁶⁵ some of whom were connected to dubious, if not outright criminal, networks. Political parties shifted from social movements during the Aristide administration to individual-centered organizations to raise and distribute funds to garner ballots.

Moise was another political outsider, but his background and attitudes were vastly distinct from those of Martelly. He was a self-made businessman from the North who founded a successful water company in Port-de-Paix and rose to the position of President of the local Chamber of Commerce. He became well-known after launching a banana export enterprise with substantial financial backing from the Martelly administration. He lacked his own political network, relying on the same individuals who had supported Martelly. In addition, he had no institutional experience to comprehend the true power of the position he was assuming. Compared to Martelly, he was a more ideological figure. He had ambitious goals for state-led development in road infrastructure, energy, and agriculture, but lacked the resources and institutional capacity to carry them out. To garner public support, he initiated “The Caravan of Change,” an innovative program of local infrastructure rehabilitation utilizing state machinery and personnel, which toured country departments repairing roads and cleaning waterways. Despite the President’s enthusiasm, lack of management and resources, rendered the program a little more than a political gesture. Petrocaribe was about to close, and the government’s coffers were empty, running on cash management to pay for salaries.

A ticking time bomb for government stability was the fiscal situation

Aid flows to Haiti dropped quickly after the earthquake (see Figures 4 and 5) from nearly 25 percent in GNI in 2010 to less than 5 percent in 2019, as shown in Figure 4, due to the high component of humanitarian aid. Support from Venezuela plummeted in 2016 before ending in 2018. The access to non-concessional external resources was prohibited by the country’s debt relief commitments.⁶⁶ As the fiscal deficit grew, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) requested the government to reduce expenditure. In the absence of an agreement with the IMF, the WB and the IDB were unable to provide budget support, and only the EU granted much-needed untied resources. The government resorted to monetary financing, resulting in a 90 percent depreciation of the gourde between 2016 and 2020 and double-digit inflation. Two natural calamities, hurricane Mathew in 2016 and an earthquake in 2021, wreaked havoc on the South, causing damages up to 32 percent and 10.9 percent of GDP respectively.⁶⁷

65 See Benedique Paul, 2016, “Entrepreneurs-politiciens: défi ou dérive d’un nouveau genre d’hommes d’affaires en Haiti?”, *Etudes caribéennes*, Décembre 2016.

66 The transitional government had signed an agreement with a private Chinese bank to finance a new airport, which the Moise administration was required to cancel as part of the country’s debt relief agreements.

67 World Bank, 2022, *Haiti. Pathways to responding to recurrent crises and chronic fragility*, Systematic Country Diagnostic, Update June 2022, p.17.

FIGURE 4. Net ODA received (% GNI) (WB data)

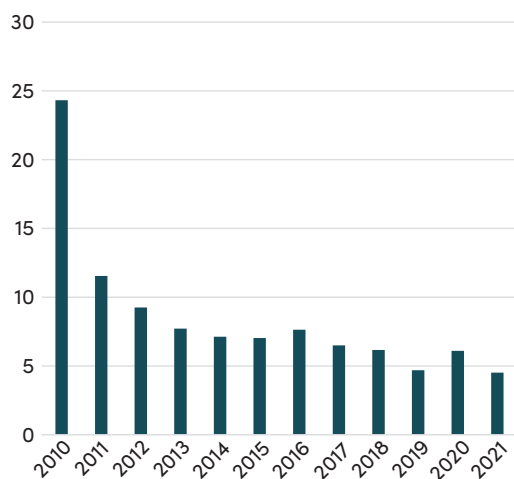
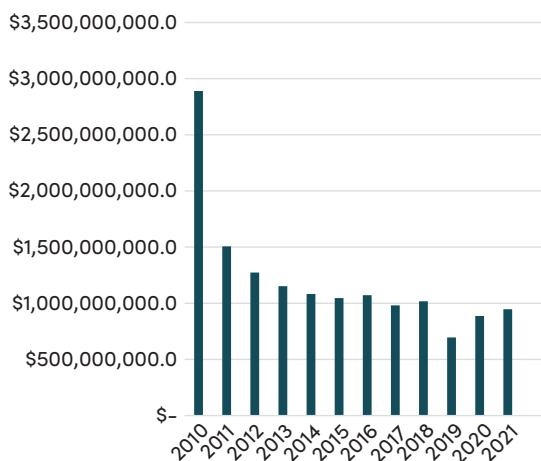


FIGURE 5. Net official aid received (Current US) (WB data)



Moise presided over a deteriorating security situation. After a relatively safe period, crime began to step-up in 2016, with robberies and hijacking on the rise. Criminal activity resumed after cash for work and social programs could not continue for lack of funding. The same informal groups that serve as community intermediaries to distribute project funding, engage in illegal activity to keep the money flowing to supporters. There are hundreds of these organizations, which are divided up according to the urban areas they control where they find sanctuary and recruit their members. This phenomenon, like other informal armed groups in Latin America and the Caribbean’s urban slums, has political and economic underpinnings in addition to their criminal nature. When the state is unable to exercise social control through legitimate presence, it gets replaced by groups that fight for territorial dominance.

MINUSTAH’s badly planned and politically motivated withdrawal

In the middle of a deteriorating security situation, the decision was taken in 2017 to replace MINUSTAH with MINIJUSTH a significantly smaller force of 300 police officers that ended in 2019. This was done despite of the fact that the goal of deploying 16,000 Haitian police officers and other planned benchmarks had not been met, and there was evidence that the PNH lacked fundamental resources to perform their duties effectively.⁶⁸ This transition has been heavily criticized for lacking political strategy and being done in the absence of an effective consultation with the Haitian Government.⁶⁹

68 A Government report stated that of the 70 targets set in the 2012–16 PNH Development Plan, only 6 had been fully achieved, 38 showed significant progress and 25 were in initial stages. See Baranyi and Sainsine, 2015.

69 See Namie de Razza, 2018, *Mission in Transition: Planning for the End of the UN Peacekeeping in Haiti*. International Peace Institute.

There was mounting pressure from UN headquarters to end the mission after 13 years. In October 2017, the UN Secretary General reported to the Security Council that “political violence has significantly diminished and immediate threats from armed gangs have been significantly reduced ... the (police) force has demonstrated increased capacity in the planning and execution of complex operations.”⁷⁰ The truth is that a political decision was made as part of the efforts to demonstrate the performance of UN peacekeeping and the organization ability to close their missions. Transition should have been planned to prevent a relapse into conflict and instability, but the mission was ended even if it was at least “unclear whether it (the PNH) will be able to maintain lasting security.”⁷¹ MINUSTAH was under severe criticism after the 2010 cholera epidemic introduced by peacekeepers, which killed nearly 10,000 people.⁷² Additionally, peacekeepers had been involved in various scandals of exploitation and sexual abuse that further damaged reputation. As a result, local support for the mission disappeared.⁷³ Nobody questioned publicly the withdrawal, even though the future of security was uncertain⁷⁴ and most observers on the ground questioned the capacity of the PNH to take charge of the security related work performed by MINUSTAH.⁷⁵

In fact, the precariousness of the situation was revealed by the first symptom of unrest after the replacement of MINUSTAH. In July 2018, in response to a recommendation from the IMF to reduce the government deficit, the government announced a significant increase in gas prices. Throughout the nation, violent demonstrations erupted, paralyzing activity for several days and compelling the government to retreat. The PNH were quickly overwhelmed and forced to remain in their stations to save their lives. George-Pierre Monchotte, the Brigadier General in command of the UN police mission defended the move as “a strategy of defeat,”⁷⁶ the only way to preserve the force and redeploy it later. No one had anticipated the ferocity and violence of the uprisings or the police’s inability to combat them. A great deal of debate surrounded the question of whether the violence was organized, spontaneous, or a combination of the two, but it was clearly seen as a turning point.

The events of 2018 were followed by a sequence of occurrences that kept worsening the security situation. When reports were released condemning corruption and mismanagement of Petrocaribe resources as well as accusing President Moïse of benefiting from it, there were demonstrations calling for his resignation. In 2019, fuel shortages prompted protests known as *peyi lok* (lockdown) that paralyzed the nation between September and November. Street violence grew and the police failed to halt it due to a lack of resources and experience. Numerous people were killed during anti-

70 UN Security Council. *Report of the Secretary General on the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti*, October 5, 2017.

71 Athena R. Kolbe, 2020, “Prospects for Post-MINUSTAH Security in Haiti”, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 27, No. 9, pp. 44–57.

72 Centers of Diseases Control and Prevention, 2021, *2010 Haiti Cholera Outbreak and CDC Response*, 12 April 2021.

73 Nicholas Lemay-Hebert, 2014, “Resistance in the Times of Cholera: The Limits of Stabilization Through Securitization in Haiti”, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 198–213, p. 198.

74 Michel Deibot, “The end of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti. What it Means for the Country Future”, June 21, 2017.

75 Wenche Iren Hauge, 2018, *Haiti: A Political Economy Analysis*, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. Peace Research Institute. Oslo. p. 23.

76 From of a meeting that took place at the UN Headquarters in Port-au-Prince, July 12, 2018.

gang operations. Allegations surfaced that the government forged arrangements with the gangs to keep the peace in particular neighborhoods or confront opposition forces on the streets.

As with the previous administration, parliamentary elections were postponed indefinitely, and the government ruled by decree. Moïse grew increasingly isolated, antagonistic toward members of the economic and political establishment, and incapable of managing the deepening crisis. A group of foreign mercenaries assassinated President Moïse on July 7, 2021, thanks to the inaction of the presidential guard on assignment. As the very well-informed Jacqueline Charles points out two years after, that the magnicide “yields more questions than answers.”⁷⁷ With the backing of the international community, Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who was nominated by President Moïse just days before he was assassinated, has continued to lead the Haitian government despite having very little capacity to deal with the escalating violence and political turmoil.

There had been growing indications of an impending economic and political crisis since at least 2017, but raising a red flag meant admitting failure, which no one wanted to do. It is challenging to forecast where Haiti is headed right now. The environment remains unstable and unpredictable. Gangs now pose a greater threat than in the past, making life for ordinary people resemble a war zone.⁷⁸ The Government has promised to hold elections to allow for the newly elected President to take office in February 2024. There are no indications as to how or when the election might take place. The possibility of a new international intervention has been discussed in the UN, after a request from the Haitian Government. A compromise had been struck in diplomatic talks for a partner country-led “non-UN mission,” which would mostly consist of a police force with some military support.⁷⁹ Still an intervention could be the only choice if the situation deteriorates further. Learning from past mistakes would be the least to expect from it.⁸⁰

What went wrong? Why did stabilization and development fail?

In contrast to most fragile governments, Haiti is not landlocked, adjacent to failed states, replete with internal racial or religious conflicts, or abundant in natural riches that could be exploited by predators. Therefore, Paul Collier, the author of these characterization, pointed out that “Haiti should not be a fragile state.”⁸¹ It is a nation with a strong sense of identity (no nation-building is required), the size of a large metropolis, close to the enormous US market, relying on a prosperous

77 See, Jacqueline Charles, “Two years after Haiti’s President’s Death, the mystery yields more questions than answers,” *Miami Herald*, July 7, 2023.

78 Frantz Duval, “Haiti, la guerre qui ne dit pas son nom”, *Le Nouvelliste*, 8 mars 2021.

79 See the analysis of International Crisis Group, Briefing Num. 48, 14 December 2022, *Haiti’s Last Resort: Gangs and the prospect of Foreign Intervention*.

80 See James B. Foley, “I’ve Seen Military Intervention in Haiti Up Close. We Can’t Repeat the Same Mistakes”, *Politico*, December 1, 2022.

81 Paul Collier, 2011, “Haiti’s Rise from the Rubble”, *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2011.

diaspora, and still favored by a young population advantage. Why then has it been so difficult for Haiti to progress politically and economically despite having ample support from the international community?

There have been many different interpretations put out, spanning from two extremes. For some observers, the reason for the failure is that the international community lacks the instruments to adequately engage in Haiti's circumstances. According to them, an international full receivership mechanism would be needed as a policy option to deal with failing governments.⁸² On the opposite extreme, it has been also stated that Haiti's failure is primarily due to excessive outside interference and external dictated solutions.⁸³ In this line, Trouillot observed that, "the more Haiti appears weird, the easier it is to forget that it represents the longest neocolonial experiment in the history of the West."⁸⁴

Between these schools of thought, there is a lot of space. It's also plausible that international involvement was insufficient in some instances, failing to have sufficient impact over policy, and excessive in others, damaging the development of local institutions. For instance, the efforts being made to build-up security exhibit this paradox. While the Haitian police, despite the training and investments received, never achieved the bare minimum of required numbers and the international community was not involved in important institutional development decisions, a very expensive international force was directly engaged in police responsibilities for a long period of time. This paper's premise is that to understand what went wrong, we need to look beyond the efforts of the individual local and international organizations that were involved. The failure to address challenges that are no one's sole responsibility but cut across organizational borders could have rendered the sum of the best efforts from each institution insufficient to succeed. We point to larger system factors that frame the overall rationale and performance of the actors involved.

The factors below are not all equally important. There are first order and second order problems, each with a distinct explanatory power. Unless there is basic governance in place, socioeconomic development interventions, no matter how well they are planned and executed, will not result in sustained benefits. If the causes of violence are not addressed, security cannot be maintained over time. The more practical elements, such as development strategies, resource planning, coordination, and execution, are at a lower order. Numerous of these concerns have been examined in evaluation studies that focus on the efficiency of specific organizations. A comprehensive analysis reveals that these problems are structural and point to common internal governance and incentive problems, which make innovation and adaptation challenging for development agencies. When trying to solve the problems of a nation like Haiti, they run into serious methodological issues. Technocratic

82 Stephen Krasner, 2004, "Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsing and Failing States", *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 85-120 and Michael Ward, 2006, "The case for an international trusteeship in Haiti", *Canadian Military Journal* 7, No. 3.

83 Ricardo Seitenfus, 2015, *L'échec de l'aide internationale à Haïti: Dilemmes et égarements*, C3 éditions.

84 Trouillot, (see n. 14 above), p. 7.

justifications and rigid tools are poorly suited to a seriously flawed political environment. In the words of Jean-Germaine Gross, “failed states are too messy and volatile to facilitate the tasks of international bureaucrats.”⁸⁵ Not surprisingly, Haiti is not an exception to the international community’s ongoing frustration with state-building.

The analysis is presented in the following way: (i) first, the overall expectations for reconstruction and development and resources available are reviewed; (ii) second, we analyze the strategy to build-up security and the reasons for the PNH being overwhelmed; (iii) third, bad governance and the approach taken to it by international agencies will be examined; (iv) fourth, a close look will be taken at coordinating arrangements, regarded as a key ingredient for success in reconstruction and development; (v) fifth, the impact of development interventions on state capacity is reviewed, both considering the intended effects of state-building programs and the unintended effects of other interventions; (vi) finally, the traditional investment project as the basic instrument to channel development resources will be questioned as the adequate tool for achieving impact in this context.

With limited resources, aspirations for reconstruction and development led to unrealistic expectations

It is necessary to reevaluate the notion that massive resources have been available in Haiti for reconstruction and development. The PDNA evaluated the physical and economic damage at \$7.9 billion. According to UN data, official donors promised a total of \$10.7 billion in 2010, adding \$2.4 billion afterwards, with \$1.2 billion included in debt relief. In the years 2010–2012, \$6.3 billion was spent on relief and recovery efforts. From the \$3.06 billion that NGOs raised, \$1.18 was distributed between 2010 and 2012. This indicates that the entire cost of the humanitarian recovery effort was \$7.6 billion, which is nearly equal to the \$7.9 billion in earthquake-related damage. This leaves \$5.6 billion for development programs, once debt relief has also been discounted.⁸⁶ This is equivalent to around 5 percent of Haitian GDP for the period or barely \$50 dollars per Haitian per year. It is a substantial effort, but it doesn’t qualify as the Marshall Plan advocated at the time.⁸⁷

Great ambitions for “building back better”

International donors and the Government of Haiti viewed the earthquake as a chance to steer Haiti into a new development trajectory from the outset. It was the time for “Building Back Better,” which entailed reconstruction to higher standards and a new comprehensive development plan for the

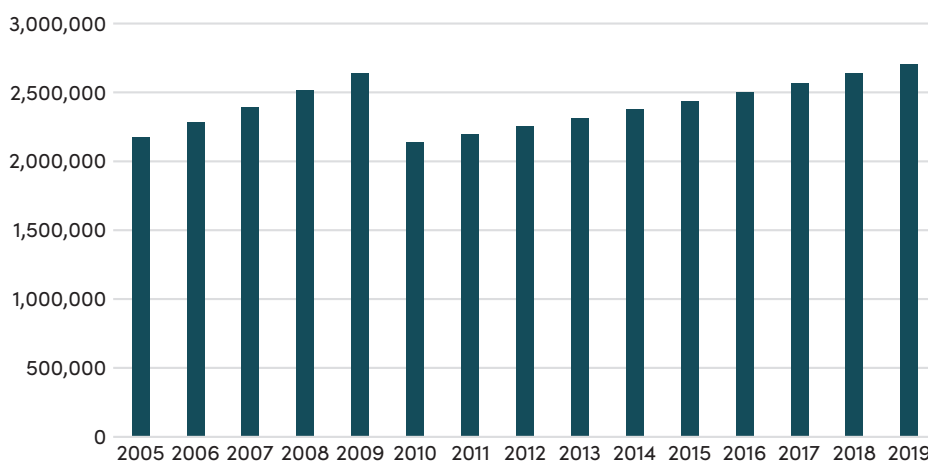
85 Jean-Germaine Gross, 1996, “Towards a taxonomy of failed states in the New World Order: Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda and Haiti”, in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 3, (455–471), p. 469.

86 Office of UN Secretary General’s Special Adviser on Community Based Health and Aid Delivery. Paul Farmer, 2020.

87 The Marshall Plan suggestion was formulated by the IMF Managing Director at the time, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, *Why we Need a Marshall Plan for Haiti*, January 22, 2010. According to Jean-Baptiste Gosse et al., *Lessons from the Marshall Plan for the European Recovery Plan*, Eco-notepad, post num. 236, Banque de France, October 29, 2021. The average amount of aid received by Marshall Plan beneficiary countries was 10 percent of GDP for four years basically in direct resource budget support transfers.

entire nation. Decentralization was identified in the Préval government's economic plan to lessen congestion in the city by allocating resources to growth hubs outside of the capital.⁸⁸ This was hardly a new idea. The WB had suggested in the early 1980s that factories be scattered through the various departments.⁸⁹ After the earthquake, Port-au-Prince's populace fled in large numbers, and this was considered a supporting occurrence (see Figure 6). The plan's foundation was infrastructure investment, which included housing, rehabilitated roads, ports, power plants, and industrial zones for export. This follows the Collier strategy, which suggested a focus on apparel export and specific growth poles.

FIGURE 6. Population of Port-au-Prince (2005–2019) (WB data)



This type of coordinated investment was followed along the North Corridor between Cap Haitien and Ouanaminthe. The road was repaired, a sizable industrial park was constructed in Caracol,⁹⁰ a power plant to feed the park and the neighborhood, housing, water facilities, and even a new university was built in Limonade. Our own calculation indicates that around \$600 million of all donors were poured in this area, with around \$100 million of private investment after 2010. Textile exports increased from \$491 million in 2009 to \$740 million in 2019, largely due to the production in Caracol. According to banking data gathered by Dorsainvil, the region exhibits greater economic vitality than the rest of the country, indicating that the endeavor is paying off.⁹¹ A similar effort has not been replicated in the rest of the country and would have required a much higher resource injection.

88 See Olius et al., 2010, *Mémoire sur la gouvernance économique en Haïti*, Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances, Port-au-Prince, p. 195–96.

89 This point is mentioned by Trouillot, (see n. 14 above), p. 210.

90 For a critical analysis of the process of construction of the industrial park, see Yashmine Shamsie, 2019, "Reflections on Haitian Democracy: Zooming in on a Megaproject in the Hinterland", *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 54, No. 1, pp. 35–49.

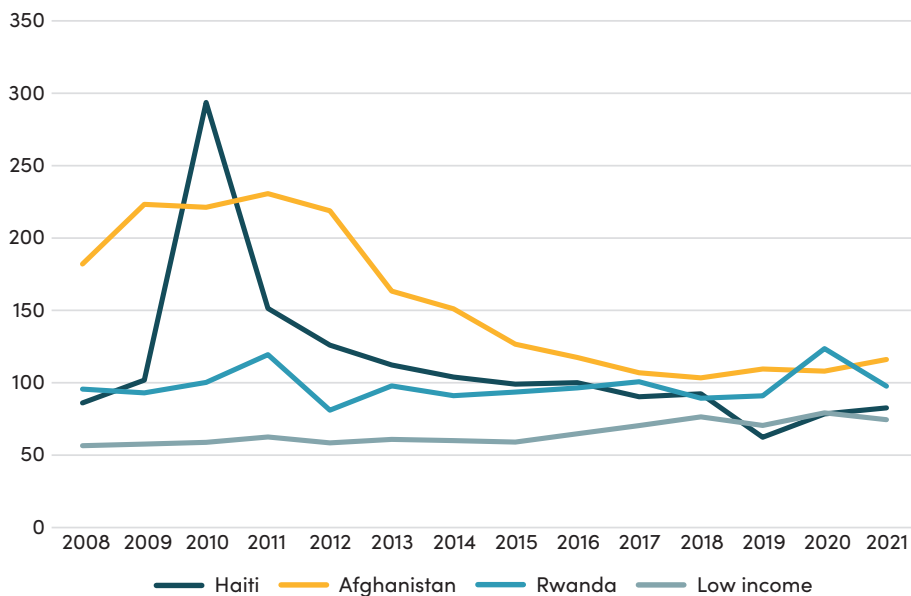
91 Daniel Dorsainvil, 2022, *A study on where international aid may have failed: the case of Haiti*, for Think Tank-Haiti, Université Quisqueya in partnership with the Inter-American Dialogue.

Were resources available up to the ambition?

The question is whether enough resources were available to carry out reconstruction in the earthquake-affected areas while also putting this ambitious development strategy into action across the entire nation. This issue isn't considered in any strategy plan or document that we know. The analysis of Dorsainvil, comparing the resources available for investment in Haiti with those of other low-development nations that have recently had substantially higher growth than Haiti, is very helpful in sorting out the question.

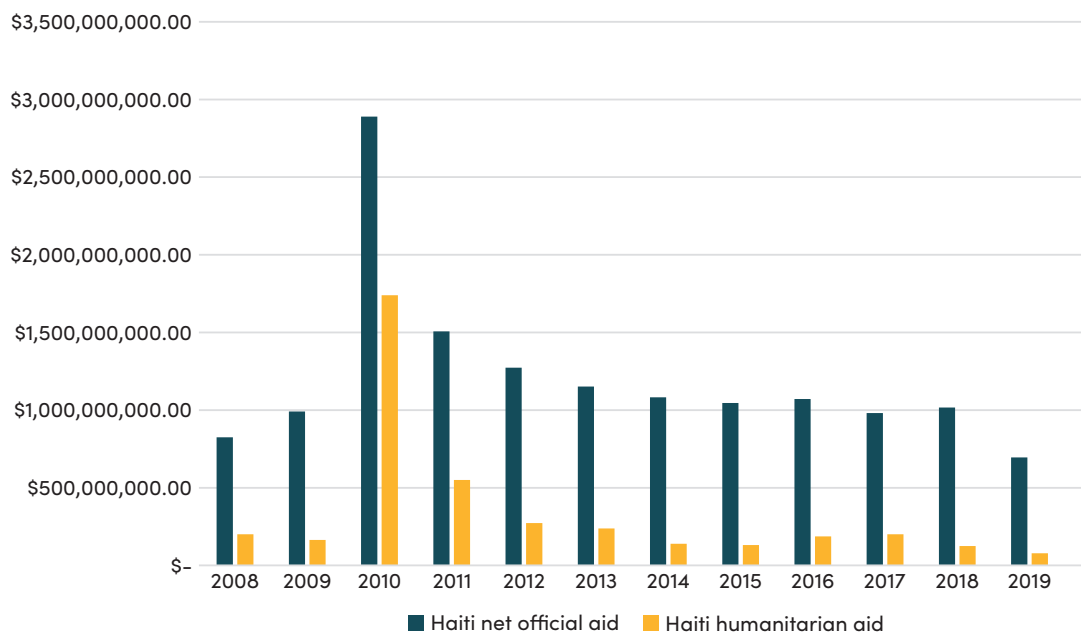
Haiti receives a significant amount of official development assistance. We can see the evolution in Figure 7. It is low compared to the aid given to European Balkan nations, which have per capita incomes of about \$5,000 and receive two to three times as much as Haiti. It is significantly less than the aid given to Afghanistan, which reached 100 percent of GDP in 2011 and remained at 45 percent in 2020. Perhaps more significantly, help to Haiti has fluctuated, reaching its highest point after natural disasters, and declining afterwards. Contrast this with nations where a steadier flow of resources has allowed for predictability and better planning with a higher proportion of funds going to building productive human and physical capital.⁹² Haiti has also a large component of humanitarian component aid (see Figure 8). According to the data showed above, Haiti aid per capita after the earthquake, once discounted debt relief and humanitarian aid, could have gone down to around \$50 per capita, even below the average of low-income countries.

FIGURE 7. Net ODA per capita (Current US) (WB data)



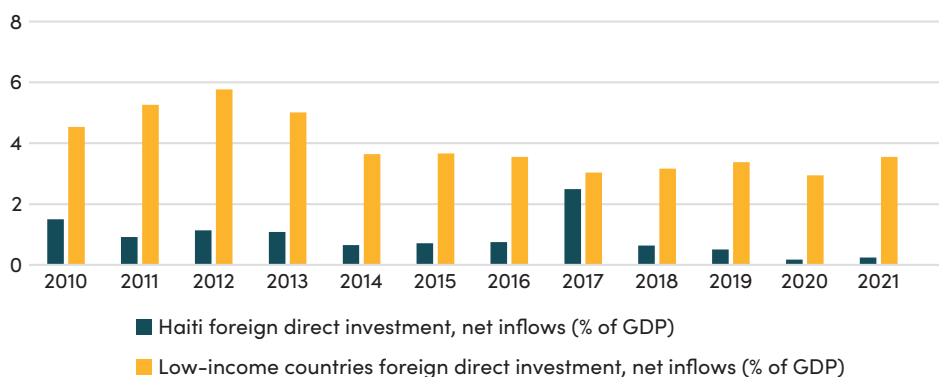
92 Dorsainvil, p. 8.

FIGURE 8. Haiti net official aid and humanitarian component of the total (Current US) (OECD data)



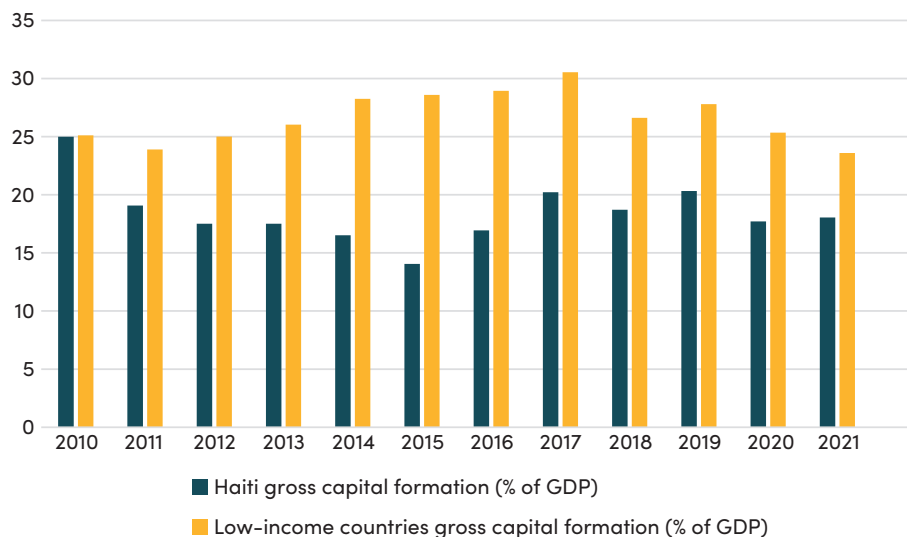
Parallel to this, other resources for investment have been extremely limited. Private banking institutions hold private savings unused under very conservative lending practices. In recent years, the public sector’s own treasury resources used to finance capital investment have been less than 1 percent of GDP. Remittances are high in Haiti but are mainly used for consumption, with most of the remaining portion going to savings. Foreign direct investment in Haiti has been very low due to an unwelcoming investment climate (see Figure 9). The support of multilateral development banks private sector windows in Haiti has also been negligible, showing their low incentives of international capital to engage in a fragile context.

FIGURE 9. 2010–2021 Foreign direct investment (% of GDP), Haiti and low-income countries (WB data)



The consequence is that, except for the year immediately following the earthquake, gross capital formation in Haiti has been less than 20 percent of GDP (see Figure 10). This is lower than the average for low-income nations. Evidence gathered by WB Growth Commission,⁹³ shows that for high and sustainable growth to occur, investment must reach at least 25 percent of GDP with a public investment component of around 7–8 percent of GDP. In the period examined Haiti has been far from these magnitudes.

FIGURE 10. 2010–2021 Gross capital formation (% GDP), Haiti and low-income countries (WB data)



The conclusion is that investment resources to accomplish the twin goals of development and reconstruction were insufficient. Haiti never received in aid the equivalent of a Marshall Plan that was advocated after the earthquake. However, there is evidence that development aid was used successfully in some areas, like human capital growth and employment creation in the North. As demonstrated by Dorsainvil, Haiti’s human capital and the country’s transportation and communication infrastructure are not lagging comparable low-income nations.

The argument above may seem contradictory with the observation made by evaluation agencies that aid to Haiti has been allocated without considering the country operational absorptive capacity. But absorptive capacity is not a fixed condition. It greatly depends on the modalities of aid provision. When aid is fragmented into dozens of infrastructure projects, absorptive capacity will be more constrained than when budget support or cash transfers are a significant component of the portfolio. Despite the arguments of low absorptive capacity, Haiti’s performance in this period both for the IDB and the WB is on par with or better than that of comparable nations. Investment operations at the IDB experienced a higher disbursement curve than comparable nations that received concessional

93 World Bank, 2008, *The Growth Report: Strategies for Sustainable Growth and Inclusive Development*, Washington, DC, p. 34.

funding.⁹⁴ The WB's annual disbursement rate for Haiti is 26 percent, which is very close to the average for Latin America.⁹⁵

With a hostile business environment, aid could not stimulate private investment

Additionally, aid funds can only serve as a catalyst to spur private sector investment, which is what generates most of the new capital. Capital eluded Haiti, as we have demonstrated, despite the favorable momentum for development and reconstruction created after the earthquake and President Martelly's appeal that Haiti was open for business. Many multinational corporations that are waiting for stability and a welcoming business environment to take root continue to put the country on their "no-go" lists for investment. It became quickly apparent that predatory politics persisted in Haiti, with the government favoring the well-connected elite, maintaining anti-competitive practices, and having arbitrary powers to tax and regulate new businesses. The most significant barrier to the export-oriented economic strategy's ability to generate investment and employment was the business climate,⁹⁶ which is significantly worse than in other low-income countries. As in the past, poor governance hampered a technocratic vision of economic expansion.

Conflating expectations of reconstruction and development has been detrimental to Haiti's overall international aid record. A long-lasting perception of failure has been created due to media depictions of unfinished projects, untested anecdotal interventions, and people left to fend for themselves. A striking example is the Canaan informal colony, in the north of Port-au-Prince, where 300,000 people settled without access to basic infrastructure or services.⁹⁷ The Haitian Government, under pressure from donors, expropriated land and moved people of the camps in the city-center to the to the area. They went on the condition that new homes would be built, and jobs would be offered in a new industrial pole, but for various reasons, this never happened, and the settlers were forced to rely on shoddy self-construction. Canaan, the promised land, has become the image of the reconstruction failure after the earthquake, a new Cite-Soleil, where the state is absent and gangs rule over the population.⁹⁸

Haiti needs much better planning for realistic development goals in the future. Choosing priorities and specific goals to achieve while considering the resources at hand and absorptive capacities is primarily a government task. Donors also need to exercise more restraint in focusing their investments, adhering to their priorities, and reducing transaction costs. The worst consequences of a protracted feeling of failure are a loss of credibility and the ensuing donor fatigue and indifference.

94 OVE Country Program Evaluation. *Haiti 2011–2015*, July 2016.

95 World Bank IEG CLR Review, Haiti 2009–2014, 22 September 2015.

96 See, International Finance Corporation, 2020, *Haiti Country Private Sector Diagnostic*, Washington, p. 9.

97 See Jacqueline Charles, "Ten years after the earthquake: A decade of aftershocks and unkept promises", *The Miami Herald*, January 12, 2020.

98 For an account of this unfortunate episode, see Jonathan Katz, (see n. 43 above) pp. 171–87.

International agencies have a duty to maintain reasonable expectations and to be more cognizant of how difficult it is to effect real change in unsteady environments.

Resources to build-up security did not achieve sustainable results

It is impossible to understand why Haiti has failed if one does not consider the political economy of violence. Violence has periodically “neutralized most attempts at governance.”⁹⁹ After the Duvalier government fell, violent decentralized informal gangs started to proliferate because the Haitian state was unable or unwilling to protect the population. The disbandment of the army by Aristide accelerated the decentralization of violence and the state has never been in the capacity to recover the monopoly of coercion. There are many types of violent informal groups, some of which have connections to influential political and financial figures, others to international criminal organizations, and many of which were neighborhood-based groups vying for dominance and rent-seeking. They exert their authority using violence because governmental institutions are unable offer protection and basic services to marginalized people. They recruit and mobilize support in a context of economic insecurity and divisive politics.

However, as Feldman points out, “the nature and character of violence in Haiti remains puzzling”.¹⁰⁰ Despite being the country of the region with the strongest structural conditions for violence, Haiti has been characterized by moderate crime rates compared with other Latin American countries. After the joint efforts of the Préval Government and MINUSTAH between 2006–2010 conditions improved. UN data showed that Haiti homicide rate in 2010 was one of the lowest among the Caribbean nations. It stood at 6.9 per 100,000 people, compared with Jamaica at 52.0, Trinidad y Tobago at 35 and the Dominican Republic at 24.0.¹⁰¹ It was also noted that international criminal networks operating drug-trafficking routes to the US did not translate into widespread violence as in neighbor countries, even though MINUSTAH was not involved in transnational organized crime issues. This could have been the result of a “high degree of complicity with key figures in government and the police,”¹⁰² so there was no need to assert dominance with force. Also, the expectations of a criminal surge after the earthquake when 5,000 inmates escaped prison were not realized and the country remained relatively calm. This means that “structural conditions do not provide a full account for the nature of violence experience in Haiti.”¹⁰³ Political context and resource availability to cushion economic insecurity operate as key factors to explain the spread of violence.

99 Louis Herns Marcelin, 2015, “Violence, Human Insecurity, and the Challenge of Rebuilding Haiti. A Study of a Shantytown in Port-au-Prince”, *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 56, No. 2, (April), pp. 230–255.

100 Andreas E. Feldman, 2019, “Making Sense of Haiti’s State of Fragility and Violence”, in Pablo Polizer (ed.), *The Politics of Violence in Latin America*, University of Calgary Press, Calgary, (19–52), p. 19.

101 UN Office on Drugs and Crime. The 2011 Global Study on Homicide. Vienna. p. 93.

102 Walter Kemp, Mark Shaw and Arthur Boutellis, 2013, *The Elephant in the Room. How Can Peace Operations Deal with Organized Crime*. International Peace Institute, p.32.

103 Feldman, p. 36.

Security improvement diverted the attention of the international community towards the objectives of reconstruction and development. The crucial link between economic and physical security was overlooked as programs focusing on security and those assisting in reconstruction and development operated in parallel and lacked cohesion.¹⁰⁴ MINUSTAH maintained its expensive and heavily militarized strategy that addressed the symptoms while the underlying causes were addressed in a scattershot and uncoordinated fashion. The international community did not consider the creation of a well-funded, well-designed, and properly managed permanent social safety net, providing economic security to the most vulnerable.

The situation started to deteriorate at the end of the Martelly administration, turned for the worse with Moïse in office and developed into a war-like situation after his magnicide. It is estimated that 300 armed groups operate in the country, with 9,000 armed members, compared with the 10,000 active policemen of which 3,300 at on duty per shift.¹⁰⁵ Gangs seem to be more powerful and to control more territory than they did in the past. They also seem more resilient since they have access to more and better weaponry and a stronghold in communities where they can blend in with the population. They fight with one another for territory, but they have also created alliances and laid forth political positions.

An unsustainable approach to build up security forces

The uncomfortable question is why the Haitian police have been so swiftly overrun after 15 years of UN missions with sizable military and police contingents and significant resources invested in infrastructure, equipment, and training. It is estimated that the cost of MINUSTAH was close to 8 billion and that Canada and the US alone have provided around \$600 hundred million in security programs.¹⁰⁶ This problem has two sides to it. The first relates to the strategy used to increase the size and capability of the security institutions, and the second to the preventive measures taken to address the political and economic causes of violence. In the peace building vocabulary, they are the top-down and the bottom-up approaches to violence reduction that need to be well integrated to achieve sustainable results.¹⁰⁷

One of the experts who worked on developing the PNH, Keith Mines, highlights the error of “underestimating what needed to be done and overestimating what we had done.”¹⁰⁸ It would probably be beneficial to look at some numbers. The Haitian police had around 12,000 officers by the end of the MINUSTAH operation in 2017, the majority of whom had received training from the UN mission,

104 Erin Mobekk, 2017, *UN Peace Operations. Lessons from Haiti, 1994–2016*. Routledge. London, p. 8.

105 Robenson Seffard, quoting the Commission Nationale de Désarmement, Démantèlement et Réinsertion, *Le Nouvelliste*, August 23, 2023.

106 Jake Johnston, “Haiti by the Numbers, Ten Years Later”, CEPR, 10 January 2020.

107 Timotht Donais, 2015, “Bringing the Local Back In: Haiti, Local Governance and the Dynamics of Vertically Integrated Peacebuilding”, in *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, Vol. 10, No. 1.

108 Keith W. Mines, 2020, *Why Nation Building Matters. Political Consolidation, Building Security Forces and Economic Development in Failed and Fragile states*, Potomac Books, University of Nebraska Press.

although they fell short of the 16,000 officers planned. Compared to UN standards of 2,1 policemen per 1000 inhabitants and considering a population of 11 million, the aim was quite modest. According to Robert Muggah,¹⁰⁹ Haiti has one of the lowest police-to-civilian ratios in the world, without considering that the country's poor infrastructure and challenging geography make command and control harder. Additionally, quasi-military responsibilities including border security, coastline surveillance, and jail security must also be covered by the Haitian Police. The size issue is crucial since adequate coverage and service continuity can only be guaranteed if a critical mass of resources has been reached. Haiti has never got to that point.¹¹⁰

The arrangement with the international community was that current expenses, such as salaries, were paid from the Haitian treasury, while donors funded capital costs and training. However, including current expenses in the government budget had a detrimental impact on the force's size and led to a persistent shortage of operating expenses. Although most police officers have gone through decent recruitment and training, they are underequipped and lack the bare necessities to do their duties effectively, such as gas for their vehicles, appropriate protection measures, and communication equipment.¹¹¹ Payroll delays and the loss of purchasing power of salaries all contributed to a decline in employee motivation and attrition of the workforce. The UN estimates that as of December 2022, there were 10,000 available, with many officers having left the police in recent years.¹¹²

In addition to the direct security tasks handled by MINUSTAH, international responsibilities over the police "had a relatively narrow, technical agenda emphasizing training and vetting-certification."¹¹³ This was further complicated by the fact that there was a "lack of strategic vision and coordination among actors supporting police reform, with each state providing as what they saw as best policies".¹¹⁴ International support for oversight and accountability has been largely absent. The Haitian government has made most of the decisions concerning the force's institutional development like internal organization and appointments. Internal management of resources and operations has been weak with middle supervisors poorly prepared. In addition to numbers, the strength of a police force is determined by the extent to which ideals like meritocracy, ethical behavior, and accountability have been institutionalized. Weak institutionalization is directly associated with the risk of collapse in the face of threatening forces. Erin Mobekk, in his evaluation of the UN peace

109 Robert Muggah, 2023, "Haiti Faces Home-Grown State Failure", *Foreign Policy*, February 17, 2023.

110 As a comparison, the New York City police department has 36,000 officers for a population of 8.5 million. New Zealand, one of the safest countries in the world, has 15,000 agents for half the population of Haiti. Jamaica with a population of 2.7 has a police force of 15,000 officers. The Dominican Republic has 32,000 officers for a population of around 10 million. Unlike Haiti, all these countries have armed forces available to support the police if needed.

111 For an analysis of the results of the efforts to build up police capacity, see Stephen Baranyi, 2019, "Second Generation SSR or Unending Violence in Haiti?", *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 1-19.

112 United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti. *Report of the Secretary General*. 17 January 2023.

113 Timothy Donais, 2011, "Reforming the Haitian national police: From stabilization to consolidation", in Jorge Heine and Andrew S. Thompson (editors), *Fixing Haiti. Minustah and Beyond*, United Nations University Press, p. 101.

114 Erin Mobekk, 2017, *UN Peace Operations. Lessons from Haiti, 1994-2016*. Routledge. London, p. 80.

building, emphatically argues that capacity building without organizational and institutional change is meaningless.¹¹⁵

Security is also dependent on the connection of the police with the larger criminal justice system. Most support concentrated in the police while marginalizing judicial and penal reform. There was extremely limited progress on judicial reform, due to both political and judiciary unwillingness and too little resources.¹¹⁶ The prison system is another soft spot with establishments overcrowded with most inmates waiting for trial. The perception of a collapse or non-cooperative judiciary by the police has led to multiple episodes of vigilante summary justice. Recent events have even gone further with the *bwa kale* movement that has been responsible for the lynching of dozens of gang suspects, sometimes handed over by the police.

An alternate arrangement might have been conceivable. Dorsainvil,¹¹⁷ has made several observations that suggest an alternative course of action. The MINUSTAH budget averaged around \$600 million per year;¹¹⁸ the complete deployment of the Haitian police would cost \$338 million per year. Only \$130 million of the Haitian government's own funds could be used for the police, leaving the force with insufficient resources. The international community established a trust fund to pay police capital expenditures and training, but it did not always provide enough resources. The primary contributors to the expansion of the police force were the US and Canada, investing \$350 and \$250 million respectively between 2010 and 2020.

The deployment goals might have been accomplished if donors had diverted funds from MINUSTAH to pay for current police expenses, including salaries. This would have also allowed for a more integrated use of capital and current expenditure. But donors resist providing budget support for the police until they receive guarantees on resource use and police accountability. This means getting more involved in matters of institutionalization that were outside their influence. As we said above, less direct policing through a costly stabilization mission and more influence in PNH development with direct budgetary support would have been a preferable course of action. The implication, as the WB diagnostic of Haiti concludes is that "security interventions by the international community have contributed to short-term improvements in security but have not resulted in significant strengthening of the state's capacity to provide security for citizens."¹¹⁹ Paul Collier in his report on economic strategy rightly said that if Haiti reverted to socio-economic fragility all the resources spent in peace building would have been analogous to humanitarian assistance rather than to development assistance.¹²⁰

115 Mobekk, p. 82.

116 Mobekk, p. 117.

117 Dorsainvil, (see n. 80).

118 In Gerard Le Chevalier, 2011, "The 'MINUSTAH' experience", in Jorge Heine and Andrew S. Thompson (editors), *Fixing Haiti. Minustah and Beyond*, United Nations University Press, p. 120.

119 World Bank, 2022, *Haiti. Pathways to responding to recurrent crises and chronic fragility*, Systematic Country Diagnostic, Update June 2022, p. vii.

120 Collier, (see n. 42 above) p. 2.

Insufficient but relatively successful initiatives in crime prevention

Prevention, although more palliative than transformative, is the second aspect of managing security. In this regard, understanding the causes of gang violence, their shape and character and how it impacts Haitian society is the first step for a successful intervention.¹²¹ Conflicting ethnic, religious, or other identities do not cause violence in Haiti. It is a decentralized social phenomenon with varying intensity and strongly influenced by political and economic factors. Socioeconomic marginalization leads to mixing criminality and the quest for social recognition and dignity, the “respect” cry of the outcasted Haitians. Most of the gangs are in poor and densely populated urban areas, crowded with people migrating from the rural areas, especially in Port-au-Prince, where they spread from the shanty towns to the rest of the city. These organizations have been characterized as a “street sovereignty” movement that try to play the role of a state absent from the neighborhoods.¹²² When NGOs bring development projects to local communities, they run a successful business providing aid, managing water and electrical systems, and conducting police work¹²³. They turn to violence to extort money from criminal activity when aid resources disappear. This is, as Kivland notes emphatically, “the contradictory outcome of outsourcing the work of development.”¹²⁴

The international community and the Haitian Government engaged in preventive work through support for community security in urban centers. Preval created the National Commission for Disarmament, Dismantlement, and Reintegration to pacify the gangs-controlled areas. Some of these programs were implemented in concert with the PNH and MINUSTAH and reported significant reductions in key indicators of armed violence in the neighborhoods where they intervened.¹²⁵ In parallel, other donors focused on more voluntary and community-oriented projects on the ground. A paradigmatic example was the integrated violence reduction program, launched in 2007 by the Brazilian NGO Viva Rio in the heart of Port-au-Prince. It is interesting to note that these efforts were complementary with the security-first stabilization approach of the UN peace building mission. After the earthquake the focus shifted quickly to the humanitarian implications of the catastrophe.

The security situation was relatively steady throughout the Martelly administration because there was money to distribute thanks to Petrocaribe resources, and the police were being gradually strengthened and helped by the UN mission. The international community left social protection to the Haitian Government that established a variety of programs, which provided support for a

121 Robert Muggah, 2013, “The political-economy of state-building in Haiti”, in Mats Berdal and Dominik Zaum (Eds.), *Political Economy of State Building. Power after Peace*. Routledge. New York. (293–305), p. 30.

122 Chelsey Kivland, 2020, *Street Sovereigns. Young Men and the Makeshift State in Urban Haiti*. Cornell University Press.

123 For an analysis of the modalities of engagement with gangs to gain access to neighborhoods under their control, see Moritz Schubert, 2017, “To engage or not to engage Haiti’s urban armed groups? Safe access in disaster stricken and conflict affected cities,” *Environment & Urbanization*, International Institute for Environment and Development, pp. 1–18.

124 Chelsey Kivland, 2017, “Street sovereignty: Power, Violence and Respect, Among Haitian *Baz*”, in Robert Maguire and Scott Freeman, *Who Owns Haiti?*, University Press of Florida, pp. 140–165.

125 Robert Muggah, 2012, “Stabilization and humanitarian Action in Haiti”, in Perin, B (Ed.), *Edges of Conflict*. Vancouver. UBC Press, pp. 328–347.

variety of disadvantaged people, reaching their highest level of 1.5 percent of GDP in 2013. Fraud was rampant, planning and targeting were subpar, but money was exchanged for stability. Social programs ceased to exist when Petrocaribe closed in 2018, and more resources were required to pay for energy subsidies.¹²⁶ Social protection was at its lowest point when the unrest began in 2018, despite donors' awareness of the fragility of the situation and IMF advice for compensatory social programs. Only after 2018, the IDB and the WB start a change of direction that accelerated with the pandemic to invest in social protection.

Bad governance has been unanimously recognized as the central problem, but no solutions have been found to deal with it

The political crisis in Haiti is the result of a failed transition from a totalitarian regime. Although the old state was dismantled in the transition, a new governance structure that would have put the government at the disposal of most of the people could never be created. The change which brought the motto "*tout moun se moun*" (every human being is a human being) could not achieve its objectives. This has resulted in a permanent power crisis leaving the government with little ability to respond to basic needs while creating ample opportunities for entrenched interests to take hold. In that very context, spaces of social control and autonomy are built through various mechanisms, one of which is violence, which has periodically thrown the nation into chaos.

For a long time, analysis from bilateral and international organizations have pointed to "governance and political problems" as the key factors that explain Haiti's failure at economic development. The word governance is a euphemism used by the international community to mean politics. It usually concentrates on a formal institutional approach, but actual institutions "cannot be separated from the raw processes and practices of politics that bring them into being, organize their evolution, sustain their continuity or manage their change."¹²⁷ The message is repeated in documents written before and after the earthquake. A 2002 WB program evaluation makes a conclusion as clear as the following:

"While the Bank objectives are consistent with major economic problems, the relevance of donor objectives is limited by the failure to give highest priority to resolving the political and governance problems that undermine economic development... without fundamental reforms to the political and institutional obstacles to progress, no other reforms, however important in their own right, will work."¹²⁸

Terry Bush and Adam Gardner in a 2008 thorough review of foreign aid six years later arrive to the same conclusion: "donors collectively failed to deal with political instability and poor governance as

126 Estimates come from International Monetary Fund, *Haiti: Selected Issues, Social Protection Spending*, 20 April 2020.

127 Adrian Leftwich, 2007, *States of Development. On the Primacy of Politics in Development*, Polity Press.

128 World Bank, Operations Evaluation Department, *Haiti. Country Assistance Evaluation*, February 2002, p. 3 and 4.

the most important drivers of failure, from which other negative consequences will follow.”¹²⁹ The WB Systematic Country Diagnostic repeats the same message in 2022: “Haiti’s economic and social development continues to be hampered by political instability, corruption, and fragility.”¹³⁰

Bad politics and governance have held socio-economic development hostage. However, development organizations have not operated along this rationale. They were established to address economic problems, not political ones, which, in the case of development banks, were expressly excluded from their purview. Their underlying assumption was that political development would be taken care of by raising income levels. There is plenty of evidence that it is not how reality necessarily works, but this implicit assumption has been present in intervention strategies to this day. The strategy followed in Haiti after the earthquake by development agencies is a recent example of persistent failure to realistically assess the implications of bad governance.

Promises and limitations of the fragile country category

Development failures in tough environments have gradually made some space for more politically conscious thinking. The WB 2020 Strategy for fragile countries states that “political processes are crucial and economic advancement cannot take their place.”¹³¹ In the 2000s, the concept of fragility was established by the international community. It was intended to create a category for countries with unstable internal situations that posed a danger to the international community.¹³² States are fragile when they are unable or unwilling to provide fundamental services for most of the population because of conflict, widespread violence, or predatory capture by a minority.

But fragile states are like the unhappy families in Tolstoy. Each one is fragile for their own reasons, making it problematic to use the concept for analytical purposes.¹³³ Fragile countries suffer from “very dissimilar national contexts of political disruption.”¹³⁴ Among them are countries divided by tribal structures that can hardly be considered nations and countries of strong national identity but with very unequal access to wealth and power. There are desperate poor rural countries without natural resources and formerly middle-income countries that are now poor due to political mismanagement. This variability has the effect of making general recommendations vague and superficial. Context specificity is needed for both analysis and interventions. But this has hardly been the case. As a WB document on lessons learned in Afghanistan recognizes, “the Bank lacked an

129 Terry F. Buss and Adam Gardner, 2008, *Haiti in the Balance. Why Foreign Aid has Failed and What we can do about it*. Brookings Institution. Washington DC.

130 World Bank, 2022, *Haiti. Pathways to responding to recurrent crises and chronic fragility*, Systematic Country Diagnostic, Update June 2022, p. vi and 14.

131 World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence, 2020–2025, p. viii.

132 The terrorist acts of September 11, 2001 and the necessity to justify international cooperation and aid spending, were behind it. According to the World Bank, by 2030, more than half of the world’s severely poor people would live in these countries.

133 See the special issue on Fragile States: A Political Concept, of the *Third World Quarterly*, 35 (2014).

134 Sonja Grimm et al., 2014, “Fragile States: introducing a political concept”, in *Third World Quarterly*, 35, p. 205.

empirically grounded theory of change on how to address fragility and resolve conflict.”¹³⁵ A review of WB strategies in fragile countries points to the little effort the institution made in adjusting its priorities or to synchronize them with the political objectives on the ground, with “minimal influence of the post-conflict governments in shaping their own development policies.”¹³⁶ This lack of an effective fragility framework has also been one of the main criticisms to the IDB Haiti strategy after the earthquake.¹³⁷

Haiti is presented as a paradigmatic case of the “most extreme form of fragility” where the state lacks legitimacy, capacities and resources, and political process for handling conflicts are fractured.¹³⁸ This can lead to institutional collapse in face of unrest and violence, as we are seeing in the country now. The problem goes beyond the divisive political and economic elite behavior and the capture of state resources. Hundreds of informal armed groups exercise sovereignty thanks to state absence. The political and social roots of informal armed groups in Haiti needs to be recognized as a central part of the governance problem. The usual formal institution-building approach of the international community to improve governance will not work in this context, as has been recognized by their own evaluation reports.

The problem of governance in Haiti is not only of a weak state. It is also of a political field occupied by excessive and disordered forms of governance, with multiple actors and intervention procedures that “confuse the locus of sovereignty.”¹³⁹ This is an important observation that is largely overseen by donors operating in the country when they bypass the state to implement projects. The implication is a deep sense of statelessness on the part of the population and the emergence of alternative sources of power, like gangs, that further erode security and stability. There is a direct connection between weakening the state via alternative delivery arrangements and the deteriorating security situation.

Elections as a necessary but insufficient condition of political development

The theory of change of for political development by the international community in Haiti has been centered in the celebration of elections. However, as Trouillot indicated “well intentioned observers reduce Haiti’s problems to a matter of procedures of access to political power ... once a President is selected through “free” elections, Haiti will be in the road to democracy.”¹⁴⁰ Even the tragedy of

135 Tobias Hacque, Nigel Roberts and Atiqullah Abmadzai, 2023, *Tackling Fragility and Building Institutions. Lessons from Afghanistan*, World Bank, 2023.

136 Susan Woodward, 2013, “The IFIs and post-conflict political economy” in Mats Berdal and Dominik Zaum (Eds.), *Political Economy of State building. Power after Peace*. Routledge. New York, 140–157, p. 143.

137 IDB Office of Evaluation and Oversight, 2022, *Evaluation of the Use of the IDB Grant Facility for Haiti’s Reconstruction and Development*, July 2022.

138 OECD, 2008, *Concepts and Dilemmas of State Building in Fragile Situations*, p. 19.

139 Chelsey L. Kivland, “Unmaking the State in ‘Occupied’ Haiti”, *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Nov. 2012), pp. 248–270.

140 Quoted by Jonathan Katz, 2013, *The Big Truck that Went By. How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster*, St. Martin’s Griffin, NY, p. 250.

the earthquake failed to alter Haitian politics, leading to yet another tumultuous and contentious political event in the form of the election that followed.

It is perplexing how the international community keeps unlimited faith in the electorally legitimized leader to solve stability and development conundrums in fragile contexts. As Robert Fatton says, in Haiti even capable leaders have not the resources to deal effectively with the crisis and become exhausted.¹⁴¹ That is why focusing on elected leaders but bypassing the state, undermining its capacity to deliver is not only contradictory but highly dangerous for stability. Leaders will look for alternative means of support to keep their grip on power. They will be tempted to lean on informal actors ready to offer support in exchange for capture. This has been part of the Haitian road to instability in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Worse than that, as Seitenfus correctly says, “electoral politics hold everyone’s effort to ransom.”¹⁴² Elections are “a source of great instability”, and “disputes (over election results) have undermined governmental authority, invited foreign interference and nurtured political conflicts.”¹⁴³ The distance between getting active in election administration and having an influence on the outcomes is relatively short, as it happened during the elections after the earthquake. People matter in politics, both domestically and internationally, and the powerful nations are always tempted to consider whose candidate is best to their interests. These has consequences: first, by participating in this game, the international community transforms from a reliable partner into another internal political actor; second, deciding on the best candidate is far from obvious, and mistakes are made; third, electing a new President does not ensure that a good administration will follow. Good politics need the right people, but in a nation with a weak state like Haiti, it takes more than just the president to change politics.

In addition to that, with turnouts around 20 percent in the last two presidential elections, elections are becoming less representative. There are many candidates, many of whom are running on personal platforms. In 2015, there were 54 presidential contenders, 128 political parties, and 1,852 candidates vying for 139 parliamentary seats.¹⁴⁴ Political parties have poor programmatic and representational capabilities. The contest for power is fierce, and it is not surprising that politicians and criminals have links, and that illegal means and violence are employed to advance one’s political position. When organized crime infiltrates the political process, “it is difficult to say which problem needs to be solved before the other.”¹⁴⁵ It is equally true, however, that only an administration with

141 In “Twenty-First Century Haiti—A New Normal. A conversation with four scholars of Haiti”, in Millery Polyne, 2013, *The Idea of Haiti. Rethinking Crisis and Development*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis (243–267), p. 251.

142 Ricardo Seitenfus, 2011, “The nature of Haitian politics and international challenges”, in *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 89.

143 Robert Fatton Jr., 2011, “Haiti’s unending crisis of governance: food, the constitution and the struggle for power”, in Jorge Heine and Andrew S. Thompson (editors), *Fixing Haiti. Minustah and Beyond*, United Nations University Press, p. 46.

144 Jake Johnston, “Haiti by the Numbers, Ten Years Later”, CEPR, 10 January 2020.

145 Renate Segura, “Haiti’s State of Paralysis. How to Break the Deadly Relationship Between Politics and Crime”, April 20, 2022.

at least some electoral legitimacy has a chance of handling the crisis successfully. However, for the political system to progressively change, additional steps must be taken. Haiti electoral institutions are fragile and US\$ 3 billion of cooperation invested in elections over the years have not fixed some basic technical and political problems.¹⁴⁶

Identifying bad politics as the main problem to confront in a country like Haiti, needs also to recognize that, first, strategies of economic and social development will have very limited transformative potential and, second, that there is not much that development agencies can do in governance reform without a strong and broad-based political settlement by Haitian actors. The capacities of development agencies are not well suited to reform politics.¹⁴⁷ Abundance of development resources can serve the opposite, being used by the elite to protect themselves and avoid necessary reforms. As Oisin Tansey indicates, “when international actors seek to reshape the political economy of the states where they intervene, it is often the political economy that ends up reshaping the international effort.”¹⁴⁸

Coordination never achieved shared and well-defined objectives and development agencies didn’t adopt a clear division of labor and a joint strategy

When examining development efforts in Haiti, a lack of adequate coordination has frequently been listed as a problem. The WB notes “sub-optimal (coordination) resulting in fragmentation, lack of sustainability, and absence of sufficient focus on investment in core priorities.”¹⁴⁹ The IDB evaluation office points to “inadequate coordination on absorption capacity, political will, and power relations.”¹⁵⁰ An in-depth examination of why coordination has failed is nevertheless lacking. Coordination is crucial for intervention in fragile states where “interdependence is a defining feature.”¹⁵¹ But coordination is not simple. Since it involves decision-making among various parties, coordination is neither power neutral nor cost-free. Coordination is always dependent on the degree of shared ambitions and interests among the parties and their willingness to sacrifice independent decision making for a common goal. We will address two coordination-related issues: first, the degree to which donors and recipients shared well-grounded common priorities, and second, the extent to which donors worked together to ensure strategic consistency and operational effectiveness and efficiency.

146 The figure can be found in Seitenfus, p. 75. Support to elections was provided by the UN mission, the Organization of American States Electoral Observation Department, and the Caribbean Community. Ensuring free and fair elections was a core part of the MINUSTAH mandate.

147 See Thomas Carothers and Diane de Gramont, 2013, *Development Aid Confronts Politics. The Almost Revolution*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, pp. 255–69.

148 Oisin Tansey, 2013, “State-building and the limits of constitutional design” in Berdal and Zaum, 18–32, p. 32.

149 World Bank, 2022, *Haiti. Pathways to responding to recurrent crises and chronic fragility*, Systematic Country Diagnostic, Update June 2022, p. 18.

150 IDB Office of Evaluation and Oversight, 2022, *Evaluation of the Use of the IDB Grant Facility for Haiti’s Reconstruction and Development*, July 2022, p. xv.

151 Collier, (see n. 42), p. 12.

No common, measurable goals for development and reconstruction were established

The definition of a common objective, to which all parties must contribute, is the first step at coordination. The recipient country must lead this assignment with advice and support from donors. However, planning is challenging, and ambiguity develops as a natural tendency when needs are overwhelming and local capacities scarce. If the exercise is done after a catastrophic earthquake, with little resources, and in a short period of time, the resulting document is likely to be filled with multiple and vague goals followed by very preliminary resource estimates. The Action Plan for the Recovery and Development of Haiti (PARDH) was a document produced as a request for donors to commit resources. It needed a lot of additional work to specify priorities, flesh out objectives and allocate resources.

This point is more generally raised by Daniel Dorsainvil in his analysis.¹⁵² Without specific quantified impact objectives broken down by sector, it was impossible to gauge the required resources and allocate them according to priorities. The implication was that each development organization de facto had a lot of freedom to choose specific goals and how much money to allocate. As a result, there is the dispersion and overlap mentioned below as well as a lack of aggregated impact in priority reconstruction areas.

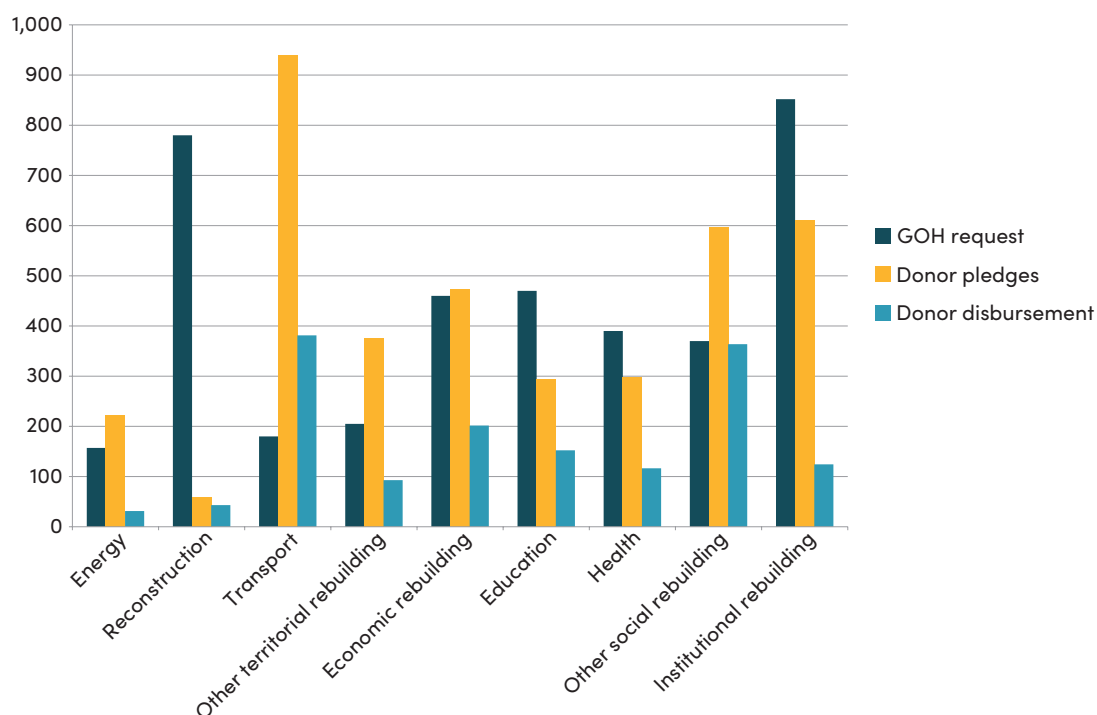
To complicate matters donors pledged funds to specific pillars and sectors as opposed to the whole plan, making country requests and pledges not consistent. Based on information from the UN, Ramachandran and Walz created the Figure 11 shown below.¹⁵³ The most glaring inconsistency relates to the funds required for reconstruction that did not garner many donor pledges. Contrarily, transportation infrastructure far exceeds government requests. Institutional rebuilding is another necessity overlooked by donors, showing that funding governance “does not provide the same gratification as funding infrastructure.”¹⁵⁴ It is difficult to resist getting the sense that donors continued to focus on their favored priorities notwithstanding the needs after the earthquake or the priorities of the Haitian Government.

152 Dorsainvil, (see n. 80 above).

153 Vijaya Ramachandran and Julie Walz, 2012, Haiti: Where Has All the Money Gone? Center for Global Development Policy Paper 004, May 2012.

154 Buss, (see n. 126), p. 20.

**FIGURE 11. Government priorities vs. donor pledges and disbursements 2010–12
(Current US in millions)**



Source: Vijaya Ramachandran and Julie Walz, 2012, Haiti: Where Has All the Money Gone? Center for Global Development Policy Paper 004, May 2012.

The Interim Haitian Reconstruction Commission failed to establish itself as a reliable coordination body

This is the reason why some form of shared, long-term structure for decision-making is necessary, so specific enough goals can be established, resources allotted, sequencing planned, and conflicts and discrepancies resolved. This endeavor necessitates a constant balancing act between competing agendas, political imperatives, limited resources, technical imperatives, and pressure exercised from a variety of stakeholders. It must be supported by qualified personnel doing technically sound assessments as well as by positive political leadership both within Haitian institutions and the donor community. The Interim Haitian Reconstruction Commission (IHRC) was established to fill this void.

The IHRC was expected to emulate the highly effective Indonesian organization that oversaw recovery efforts following the Banda Aceh tsunami. However, they ended up being very different for at least the following reasons: (i) while the IHRC was a joint international and Haitian commission with two co-chairs, the Indonesian body was a fully national public sector agency with an Indonesian executive president; (ii) the Indonesian body was focused entirely and exclusively on reconstruction of the affected areas with clear and precise targets set from the beginning, while the IHRC had a

whole Haiti development mandate but lacked clear objectives;¹⁵⁵ (iii) the IHRC was a decision-making super-structure and the Indonesian body had not only approval and allocation powers, but it was given implementation capacities to fill the gaps when needed, and administrative functions (one-stop shop clearing house aggregating administrative services for reconstruction projects and land titling extraordinary powers); (iv) finally, the Indonesian agency was set for a four years mandate and the IHRC for 18 months, that were not renewed, so it ceased to exist.¹⁵⁶

To sum up, international donors and some prominent Haitians did not consider Haiti ready to manage reconstruction, so instead of adopting the Indonesian model, a joint international-national commission was created. Paul Collier noted that the IHRC as a joint entity was a potentially “far reaching innovation ... that could serve as a prototype for aid in fragile countries.”¹⁵⁷ Unfortunately, the IHRC worked from the beginning amid a notorious lack of trust between the Haitian authorities and the international community. The Haitians wanted a structure where they had decision making power, while the international community rejected handing over decision-making authority to a Haitian authority and lose control over how funds were allocated and used.¹⁵⁸ The IHRC was born as hybrid organization jointly run by the Haitian government and the international community, with seats in the Board divided half and half. The President of Haiti was given veto power over the decisions of the IHRC, which was never used. According to the resolution establishing the IHRC, after completing the mandate, it was to be replaced later by a fully Haitian development agency, following the Indonesian model. This never happened.

The IHRC did little more than provide its stamp of approval to the proposals submitted by major donors or approve projects without the requisite financing being available. For urgent but unappealing needs like debris cleanup, finding resources took a long time and wasn't always successful.¹⁵⁹ It was understaffed during the whole term, supported by a just few experienced development professionals and having to rely on inexperienced short-term consultants. It also lacked

155 HIRC mandate was the following: “the coordinated, effective and efficient planning and implementation of priorities, plans and projects in support of Haiti’s recovery and development”, moreover, “be responsible for continuously developing and refining development plans for Haiti, assessing needs and gaps and establishing investment priorities.”

156 See Executing Agency for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, 2009, 10 Management Lessons for Host Governments Coordinating Post-Disaster Reconstruction. The objective of the Agency was to build 140,000 houses, 1,000 health clinics, 2,000 schools and 3,000 mosques, with around \$6.7 billion executed from the \$7.2 pledged. The objectives were mostly achieved and even exceeded in some cases.

157 Paul Collier, 2011, “Haiti’s Rise from the Rubble”, *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2011.

158 This became a political sensitive issue, with future President Martelly campaigning against the IHRC as an example of abdication of sovereignty.

159 Jean-Max Bellerive and Bill Clinton, “Finishing Haiti’s Unfinished Work,” *The New York Times*, July 11, 2010, asking the WB to speed up the application of resources in the Haiti Reconstruction Fund, a multi-donor trust fund establish to integrate resources from smaller donors. It was followed by a letter to the editor by the WB Managing Director, pointing to delays in donor contributions and need to ensure fiduciary requirements to disburse the resources. It is anyway telling of the coordination atmosphere in the IHRC, where the WB was sitting, and Bellerive and Clinton were co-chairs.

proper review procedures to engage all parties constructively, making the Haitian representatives very critical of a decision-making process that didn't give them have a proper say.

For all these reasons, the IHRC was not an effective coordination structure, but it was better than nothing. Bill Clinton brought up this topic in an interview with the Miami Herald in 2020, claiming that the demise of the IHRC “slowed the willingness of donors to honor their commitments and made them more determined to control how the money is spent.”¹⁶⁰ According to Gabriel Verret, the Executive Secretary of the IHRC, “reverting to the previous arrangement, in which donors dealt directly with each ministry, was worse, because it allows the donors to play the ministries off against one another.”¹⁶¹ The body created later by the Martelly administration for coordination under the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation never went beyond a polite exchange of information.

The WB and the Global Facility for Disaster Reconstruction and Recovery's housing review¹⁶² offers a concrete example of how coordination didn't go as planned. It draws attention to the fact that there was no overarching reconstruction strategy, and “the IHRC was not capable of serving this role.” The conflicting proposals on what should be done in housing were never discussed and “agencies with funding were on their own to design and program housing interventions. With costs rising as projects progressed, the number of housing units decreased sharply ... Public and donor funds were rarely used to leverage private investment.” The expectation that Haitian reconstruction would result in a booming housing market that significantly boosted the country's economy was never realized. Housing, the core of reconstruction, was an abysmal failure. Reconstruction was mostly done on site by the people with their bare hands without following standards or proper supervision by the authorities.

Lack of joint strategies and a clearer division of labor in donor coordination

The coordination between donor organizations might also have taken a different, more fruitful route. It is not true that development aid is very fragmented in Haiti posing a tough coordination challenge. More than three-quarters of the funding is concentrated among the five major donors (the USA, Canada, EU, WB, and IDB) (see Figure 12 below for the main bilateral and multilateral donors' contribution and total aid). Most UN organizations, although critical in security and policy dialogue, are relatively smaller in their funding contribution and frequently rely on resources from big donors. UNICEF and the World Food Program (WFP) would be an exception, but they have a narrow

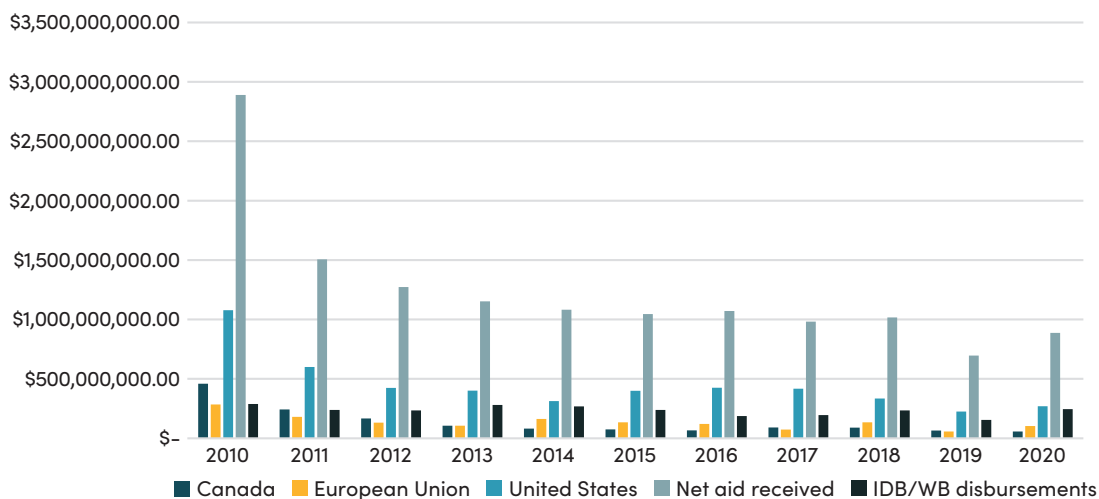
160 Interview with Jacqueline Charles, “Bill Clinton once enjoyed a bright legacy in Haiti, then the 2010 earthquake struck,” January 14, 2020.

161 Quoted from Mats Lundahl, 2013, *The Political Economy of Disaster. Destitution, plunder and earthquake in Haiti*, Routledge, p. 264.

162 World Bank, 2016, *What Did We Learn? The Shelter Response and Housing Recovery in the First Two Years after the 2010 Haiti Earthquake*, Washington.

focus, making party to party coordination easier. More challenging could be the social sectors and agricultural development where NGOs crowd the field. However, only a few of them carry sizeable budgets and mainly operate from a humanitarian perspective. Most of them are scattered in small projects all around the country. Coordination costs would exceed benefits at this level except in the case of an exceptionally large project or in the presence of organizations with effective policy influence.

FIGURE 12. Multilateral and bilateral main donors' disbursements in Haiti except Venezuela and total net official aid received (current US) (OECD data)



Haiti has a system of sectoral tables in place that is run by the most relevant funding agency and includes the majority of donors active in the sector, multilaterals, bilaterals, and NGOs. This mainly offers low-level coordination based on information sharing and, to some extent, consultative discussions that are not legally binding. Setting agendas or addressing differences in sector approaches among donors are not the responsibilities of the mechanism. They operate under the rules of diplomatic courtesy and are not supposed to involve exposing and resolving conflicts. Nevertheless, they are not expensive to maintain and give most donors a seat at the table, opening the door to other more productive bilateral exchanges.

The coordination of the major donors is the main issue because they have the means and the ability to influence policy and make a significant impact. These are organizations with numerous formal and informal mechanisms for relationships as well as strong governance ties. They are also sizable agencies with their own internal incentive dynamics and political authorizing environments. According to our assessment, coordination between them has fared better at the operational national level than at the strategic level, which is more reliant on headquarters logic.

The degree of labor division among parties that lowers coordination costs and permits more consistency and agility in goal delivery is paradoxically the first indication of healthy coordination. According to evaluation reports, donor strategies adopted in the wake of the earthquake show a significant amount of inertia from earlier initiatives, with resources allocated to various sectors for each. Even though they avoided field overlap by using geographical or other criteria, this meant that several agencies operated in the same sector. Table 2 below includes important sectors and development organizations, as well as the distribution of each organization's activities and the number of donors involved in each area. For instance, the WB, the IDB, and the EU all worked on road infrastructure; the WB, the IDB, and the USAID had various projects in agriculture. The WB, the IDB, and Spain all contributed to the sharing of water and sanitation. WB, IDB, and Canada all had substantial education initiatives. Institutional rebuilding is the area where donors are most active, with the most significant projects being those of the WB, the UE.

This demonstrates how each organization follows its own strategy without compromising its independence in defining intervention sectors and dividing resources among them. Common targets were never established (the number of housing units to be built, agriculture production targets, km of roads to be rehabilitated, etc.). Specific intervention strategies aligned over time, but this was more a result of development professionals having similar standards than of top-down intentional agency coordination.

Coordination was well-established at the operational level, and joint agreements allowed for the more effective and efficient accomplishment of various goals. We are discussing bilateral, not multilateral, mechanisms that result from formal and unofficial agreements between agencies. This kind of cooperation was enabled by the challenges of delivery in the Haitian context. Beyond inter-agency rivalries, interpersonal ties among field staff greased these coordination structures. Co-financing arrangements between bilateral and multilateral projects have been made at the sectoral level. Multilateral organizations, such as the IDB and the WB, have resources from other organizations attached to projects in the fields of agriculture, transportation, health, and education that make use of the knowledge and resources available locally from the larger organizations. When working with government ministries, the WB and the IDB also agree to use the same sector project implementation units to build up a critical mass of technical and administrative capabilities. Finally, informal relationships among country-based staff are beneficial for a variety of issues that arise during policy discussions, project planning, and execution.

TABLE 2. Distribution of donors' interventions by sector (own elaboration from country strategies), according to PARDH priorities

PARDH Priorities	Sectors	USAID	IDB	EU	Canada	WB	Spain	France	UN
Territorial rebuilding	Environment	x	x	x					x
	Watersheds	x	x					x	x
	Urban Areas			x		x		x	
	Road network		x	x	x	x			
	Energy	x	x			x			
	Water/Sanitation	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
Economic rebuilding	Agriculture	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
	Fishing		x				x		x
	Service sector								
	Tourism		x			x	x		
	Mineral resources		x			x			
	Job creation	x	x		x	x			
Social rebuilding	Higher/technical education		x		x		x	x	x
	Primary/secondary education	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Health	x			x	x		x	x
	Housing	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
	Social protection							x	x
Institutional rebuilding	Legal reform	x	x	x	x			x	x
	Democracy	x		x	x			x	x
	Central government	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Decentralization			x	x	x	x	x	x
	Civil society	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
	Justice/security	x			x			x	x

State-building was subordinated to accelerate delivery and reduce reputation risks, further weakening institutional capacity

Development agencies have a schizophrenic relationship with state institutions. On the one hand, they are considered susceptible of technical intervention, much like physical infrastructure, applying money and knowledge combined in a project structure to deliver change. On the other hand, the same agencies are wary of the state in developing nations when they must deliver through it, as captured by special interests, and chronically weakened by politization. These contradictory assumptions contribute to state failure on two fronts: first, by implementing reform strategies that ignore the political nature of institutions; and second, by undermining state institutions using parallel structures for implementation or hiring NGOs. This is in short, the story of what has happened in Haiti after the earthquake.

Despite its weakness, Haiti's State is crucial to the political economy of the nation

Regardless of how we look at it, Haiti's state capacity is very low. Only 5.4 percent of GDP was collected in taxes by 2022,¹⁶³ less than half the average of low-income countries. The ratio of public sector employees to the population is low (0.8 percent) compared to neighbor countries (Jamaica, 2.7 percent, Dominican Republic, 3.1 percent, and Nicaragua, 1.8 percent).¹⁶⁴ According to Barbara Nunberg, "Haiti's civil service, decimated by natural disasters and weakened by longstanding political instability, is operating at a very low capacity ... lacking institutional structures ... to meet its most basic developmental challenges."¹⁶⁵ Nearly 45 percent of social services in Haiti are delivered by NGOs and private contractors, including 85 percent of the education and 70 percent of the healthcare.¹⁶⁶ The NGO dominance has created a parallel state that the government is incapable of supervising,¹⁶⁷ exacerbating the fragility of state institutions.

A weak state is not an inexistent state. First, state weakness can be the intended result of actors actively working to hollow out the state to defend their own interests and power. This might happen in concert with adjustment packages that while looking for fiscal balance miss these second-order effects. Haiti has been traditionally compliant with these logic without building state muscle in core functions essential for development. As Fukuyama rightly says, "the state-building agenda which was at least as important as the state-reducing one, was not given as much emphasis."¹⁶⁸ It is difficult to argue against the idea that international financial institutions have been ideologically ill-disposed to enlarge the state.

Second, in a country with such a small economy as Haiti, some tasks are crucial and have an impact on the political economy. One of them is issuing import permits, and the other, at least at the main entry points, managing customs. Imports into Haiti total more than \$4 billion and are managed by a powerful economic elite. Certain ministries can also be significant clients of goods and services, such as electricity generation. Additionally, organized crime has an interest in infiltrating public institutions to secure a free hand with the most obvious targets being the justice system, police, and customs administration.¹⁶⁹ Even small and weak, the state control the means that allow to monopolize prebendary gains. Further to that politics is seen as a way to reach positions that allow politician-entrepreneurs to access resources that otherwise would not be in their reach. This is a

163 Haiti. *Joint World Bank-IMF Debt Sustainability Analysis*, January 2023.

164 IDB HA-L1131: *Strengthening Public Management to improve Service Delivery*, July 2, 2019.

165 Barbara Nunberg, 2018, *Building State Capacity in the Caribbean: The State of the Civil service in Haiti*, document for the IDB, in conclusions.

166 Vijaya Ramachandran and Julie Walz, *Haiti: Where Has All the Money Gone?* Center for Global Development, May 14, 2012.

167 See proposals by Vijaya Ramachandran, 2012, *Is Haiti Doomed to be the Republic of NGOs?*, Center for Global Development, January 9, 2012.

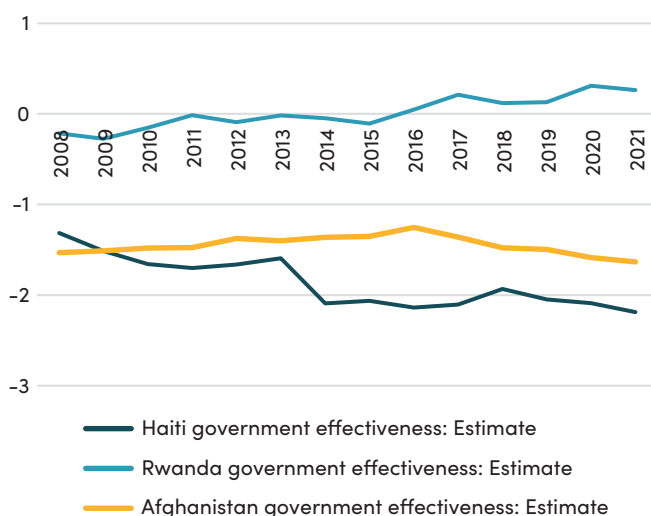
168 Francis Fukuyama, 2004, *State-Building*. Cornell University Press. Ithaca, p. 12.

169 In 2017, over \$700 million of imports from the Dominican Republic were not registered in Haiti while registered as exports in the Dominican Republic, International Finance Corporation, 2020, *Country Private Sector Diagnostic*, p. 15.

factor that explains why political struggle in Haiti can become so fractious and violent. The state plays a role in the nation’s political economy which is well above what its small size and relative weakness may indicate.

This does not dispute the fact that state capacities have been in decline. Data gathered by the WB demonstrates that government effectiveness, as the capacity to provide services to the population, is very poor in Haiti. Losing trained staff to development agencies and NGOs or high turnover caused by politization, have taken a big toll on professional capabilities or government ministries. Haiti’s government effectiveness score is lower than that of Afghanistan, which has been at war during this time, or Rwanda, a nation with a lower per capita income. Not only is Haiti’s value low, but it has decreased over the past ten years (see Figure 13).

FIGURE 13. Haiti government effectiveness compared (WB data)



Although efforts to strengthen government institutions were unsuccessful, more harm was caused when projects were carried out bypassing the state

Evaluation reports show that the results of interventions to reform state institutions have been unsatisfactory. The “mechanical metaphor” of state building in fragile states has treated them as “broken machines that can be repaired by good mechanics”,¹⁷⁰ as if the transfer of good practices through the combination of investments in technical assistance, on one hand, and conditionality in budget support to defeat political resistance, on the other hand, will do the job. In Haiti, as in other countries in similar conditions, the assumptions have not been realized. According to the WB diagnostic,¹⁷¹ “this assistance has not been translated in more effective governance and

170 Mats Berdal and Dominik Zaum, 2013, “Power after Peace” in Berdal and Zaum, 1–14, p. 6.

171 World Bank, 2022, *Haiti. Pathways to responding to recurrent crises and chronic fragility*, Systematic Country Diagnostic, Update June 2022, p. 14.

institutional capacity.” The IDB evaluation, points that efforts have been hampered by an “insufficient acknowledgement of the political interests and the forces at play.”¹⁷² State-building in a fragile context is a challenge for which development agencies have not yet found the right strategies and tools.

Beyond unsuccessful projects, the decline of government effectiveness is more importantly the result of bypassing government institutions to achieve results faster and cleaner. Let’s look at some data that illustrates the scope and expenses associated with these practices. According to the IDB Country Program Evaluation 2011–2015 the IDB paid for an estimated 715 personnel per year (consultants and government workers) between 2014 and 2015.¹⁷³ The high cost of relying on NGOs for delivery is also demonstrated in WB evaluation documents, with an intermediation cost of 25 percent of the project’s total funding.¹⁷⁴ For USAID, prime contractors who channel resources incur an additional cost of about 20 percent.¹⁷⁵ According to a comparison of salaries for similar positions in NGOs and project implementation units, the highest-grade consultant makes three times as much (\$2,947 per month) as the maximum monthly compensation for the highest civil servant (\$1,021); the highest IDB fee (\$4,580) is between four and five times.¹⁷⁶ There is an irresistible incentive for the best government staff to leave their jobs in the permanent structures. As Fukuyama pointed out more generally, “the international community is not simply limited by the amount of capacity it can build; it is actually complicit in the destruction of institutional capacity.”¹⁷⁷

A US State Department Review that was completed just before the earthquake blamed the weak aid performance on a lack of country ownership.¹⁷⁸ Numerous US-based NGOs and for-profit contractors carried out the programs, which could not be transferred to the government and became unsustainable. This is true for both the maintenance of recently constructed infrastructure and the improper use of facilities like schools, water pumps, and government buildings. The review suggested switching to a country-led, capacity-based assistance framework. The same points were made in other reports and analyses that were written either before the earthquake or right after it. The capacity of the Haitian state must be strengthened, according to a Brookings Institution report, for it to manage resources and carry out typical state duties.¹⁷⁹ A report from the Rand Corporation

172 IDB Office of Evaluation and Oversight, 2022, *Evaluation of the Use of the IDB Grant Facility for Haiti’s Reconstruction and Development*, Washington, July 2022, p. xi.

173 OVE *Country Program Evaluation. Haiti 2011–2015*, July 2016.

174 IEG WB, Project Performance Assessment Report. Port-au-Prince Neighborhood Housing Reconstruction, March 27, 2019.

175 Jake Johnston and Anne Lorentzen, 2022, *Capacity Development for Whom? An Agenda for USAID reform in Haiti*, Center for Economic and Policy Reform, Washington DC, p. 13.

176 Barbara Nunberg, (see n. 164 above).

177 Francis Fukuyama, 2004, *State-Building. Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*, Cornell University Press, p. 39.

178 Robert Maguire, 2017, “Who Owns US Aid to Haiti?” in Robert Maguire and Scott Freeman, *Who Owns Haiti?*, University Press of Florida, pp. 85–105.

179 Terry Buss with Adam Gardner, 2008, *Why Foreign Aid in Haiti has Failed and What We Can Do about it*. Brookings Institution. Washington DC.

was also released, emphasizing the importance of investing in long-term government capabilities, and cautioning against sidelining state institutions in post-earthquake plans.¹⁸⁰

Despite public claims to do the contrary, bilateral, and multilateral organizations decided that carrying on as usual was the safest course of action to quickly address post-earthquake needs and rising worries about corruption.¹⁸¹ However, as Jean Abel Pierre persuasively contends, there are two distinct evils to combat: the corruption itself and an anti-corruption strategy that further erodes the state.¹⁸² It is unbalanced to make claims that Haiti, a country with a very small economy by any standard, is one of the most corrupt countries on earth. The same holds true for accounts of corruption that view it as a historical and cultural phenomenon rooted in the past of the nation. The evidence is that incentives work to defeat corruption, as other nations have discovered after emerging from that undesirable equilibrium. It is interesting to note, for example, that national programs in Afghanistan were managed through the national budget and only used NGOs selectively. The goal was to create sustainable platforms for aid delivery at a lower cost than non-governmental alternatives. Because the choice was made at a very early stage and institutional capacity was weak, this strategy was known to be risky. However, it was a conscious decision to reinforce national institutions in accordance with the notion of country ownership.¹⁸³ The problem in Afghanistan was that, in parallel, a huge amount of funding was managed as part of the military effort at counterinsurgency. These resources were used to buy local support and enriched warlords and other local power brokers while undermining state institutions.¹⁸⁴

The traditional development project-by-project approach dispersed effort, increased cost and reduced impact

The traditional project-by-project assistance doesn't work well in fragile state operational contexts. Projects are management structures that enforce discipline in the utilization of resources to achieve objectives within a timeframe. They concentrate on converting inputs to outputs but depend on technical systems and external conditions that are largely stable. Projects were adopted by development agencies when infrastructure investment dominated, and public sector organizations were seen competent enough to carry out projects with some technical support. The project structure is likely to fail in a context of high uncertainty and complex interdependence of factors. This is the case in fragile contexts where the project structure becomes a straitjacket without the flexibility to manage unexpected and complicated problems. The project approach also separates

180 Keith Crane et al., 2010, *Building a More Resilient Haitian State*, Rand Corporation, Santa Monica.

181 Robert Maguire, 2017, "Who Owns US Aid to Haiti?" in Robert Maguire and Scott Freeman, *Who Owns Haiti?*, University Press of Florida, pp. 85–105.

182 See, Jean Abel Pierre, 2022, *Sociologie Critique de la Corruption. Comment Haïti est pris au piège de la pauvreté*, Trust Press, Fort-Lauderdale.

183 Yaseen Zazai, 2023, *Effectiveness of the UK and other Aid in Afghanistan: A Recipient Perspective*, Center for Global Development.

184 Tobias Hacque, Nigel Roberts and Atiqullah Abmadzai, 2023, *Tackling Fragility and Building Institutions. Lessons from Afghanistan*, World Bank, 2023.

the development process into loosely related pieces, missing the interdependence of conditions in fragile contexts. Projects, looked at one by one, may easily give the wrong impression that progress is being made when the overall situation is collapsing. Projects are mostly useful for one thing: constrain execution through a rigorous procedural sequence that exerts tight control over the flow of resources, reducing risk of corruption.

The project-by-project method results in effort dispersion and high administrative costs

The first negative implication of the project-by-project approach is fragmentation. The aid process is separated into loosely related components that operate separately from each other, losing the overall consistency or synergy that should link them. Resources are divided up in projects between and within sectors for motives that are more closely related to the internal incentives of the development agencies than to the needs of the country. Most of the time, programming is done annually, and sector departments compete internally for their share. As a result, managing a sizable portfolio of investment projects from a diverse group of donors places a great burden on the country's limited operational absorption capacity. When the earthquake occurred, there were 27 IDB projects in execution in Haiti. An additional 46 operations were approved through 2020.¹⁸⁵ The same document notes that during the same period, the WB approved 25 operations, USAID approved 29 projects, and the French cooperation agency approved 22. A 2016 report mentions that Canada had 170 ongoing operations.¹⁸⁶ It is worth noting that out of more than \$11,500 billion disbursed in ten years, less than \$300 million was budget support.¹⁸⁷

Administrative costs rise because of numerous projects. Even though most projects only disburse a few million dollars per year, they all have a dedicated management team to ensure that all formal criteria are met, including those for financial and audit statements, management plans, procurement strategies, risk assessments, and performance monitoring records. Depending on the type of implementation arrangement chosen, project administration costs will range from 15 to 30 percent of all project resources. Donors and independent contractors will also oversee project execution units with additional resources. Processing transactions linked to meeting bureaucratic regulations takes up most of this work. This implies that staff members of donors located in the country spend far more time in the office filling out paperwork to comply with the institution's regulation than they do supporting executing agencies and on field trips to observe how actual projects are carried out and how to prevent and remedy implementation problems.

185 IDB Office of Evaluation and Oversight, 2022, *Evaluation of the Use of the IDB Grant Facility for Haiti's Reconstruction and Development*, Washington, July 2022.

186 Evaluation of Canada-Haiti Cooperation 2006–2013—Synthesis Report, January 2015.

187 Jake Johnston, "Haiti by the Numbers, Ten Years Later", CEPR, 10 January 2020.

Miscalculations are common in projects when the environment is uncertain

Second, the logic behind project approval encourages teams to maximize goals and minimize obstacles to achieving them. All development organizations in Haiti have experienced goal, timeline, and cost miscalculations, leading to underdelivering of results planned. They prioritized infrastructure investments without coordinating their sequencing, which saturated the market's supply capacity. The evaluation for the WB program, reports that where 65,000 water connections were planned only 33,000 were installed, and where initial goals of mending 8,300 houses and building 3,700 new ones were changed to 1,162 and 938, respectively.¹⁸⁸ The IDB evaluation indicates that although 200 schools were supposed to be built or rebuilt, only 97 were completed and, instead of the 301 kms of road rehabilitation that were anticipated in the strategy, only 104.2 km delivered.¹⁸⁹ The cause was cost and time overruns. Costs for school construction increased more than 100 percent and 40 percent in road rehabilitation. The same problems are highlighted in the US General Accounting Office report on Haiti reconstruction. Only 2,600 of the 15,000 planned homes were constructed, at a cost per unit increasing from 8,000 to 33,000.¹⁹⁰

Market saturation is the main cause of higher costs than anticipated, but procurement policies do not help. They are written on the assumption of a transparent, open market with multiple providers willing to compete and offer the best conditions. This is clearly not the case in Haiti. Local suppliers are few and weak financially. They typically face delays and fail to meet expectations when they win a contract. Incomplete project documents allow international bidders with more experience in larger contracts to submit low bids and make significant modification requests. Contractors may abandon projects or request contract amendments in the event of a natural disaster or act of violence blaming local circumstances. Due to the strong anti-discretionary bias of the donors' procurement policies and procedures, these situations are challenging to manage. Lack of flexibility to manage contracts results in higher costs and longer implementation timelines.

Better planning and risk-based project management are common recommendations in evaluation documents, but this is hardly helpful. It disregards incentives that are built into the approval and disbursement process and apply to all development agencies. Further to making projects look good to be approved, restructuring projects when conditions change faces disincentives, with higher authorization and uncomfortable justifications required.¹⁹¹ Canceling failed projects also goes against the ingrained motivations of devoted implementation teams and staff. For effective results management in conditions of instability and difficult delivery, what is needed is what Honig calls, "navigation by judgement." In a book analyzing over 14,000 projects, he convincingly argues that

188 US General Accounting Office, *Haiti—USAID and State Should Improve Management and Assessment of Reconstruction Activities*, March 2023.

189 OVE *Country Program Evaluation. Haiti 2011–2015*, July 2016.

190 World Bank IEG CLR Review, *Haiti 2009–2014*, 22 September 2015.

191 The IDB has recently made a special effort to facilitate reformulations and cancellations, increasing the discretion of the country office in assessing local conditions.

in countries with unpredictable environments, granting flexibility through more decentralized authority contributes to successful implementation.¹⁹² The contrary happens in Haiti where project teams are subject to the anti-discretionary bias of oversight offices that step-up compliance supervision, giving priority to procedural accountability over results accountability.

Projects are too small to have a significant impact, and results are unsustainable because capital and current expenses are split

Third, the detrimental effects of the fragmented project-by-project approach are also mentioned in sector analyses. Projects tend to be too small to achieve sizeable impact. For instance, in the housing sector, project-based resources, as opposed to programmatic ones, “made the results more unequal... with a small number of high-cost housing reconstruction projects.”¹⁹³ This appears to be the case in agriculture as well, where donors manage numerous independent projects without the scale required to achieve meaningful production results. Even though there are some successful examples, such as the USAID project to increase sorghum production for a multinational brewery company, not enough is being done to replicate and scale-up these programs. According to Michelle Oriol, “projects are more for demonstration than for exhaustive problem solving,” without the necessary action being taken to scale up the results obtained.¹⁹⁴

Inconsistencies that affect effectiveness and sustainability are caused by the division between project budget and current expenditure ministerial budget. The field of education is a good example. While new schools are being built, the ministry lacks the funding to hire and pay new qualified teachers. Jobs may be given out informally based on local political connections in the hope that the Ministry will accept it as a *fait accompli*. The new teachers frequently lack credentials, are not paid, and resort to using school resources to feed their families. The maintenance of school facilities is also neglected, as evidenced by the rapid disrepair of restrooms, water pumps, school kitchens, and solar panels. We could keep going with comparable accounts from other sectors, like water and sanitation, health facilities or agricultural infrastructure.

Financial considerations take precedence over final outcomes in project management

Fourth, projects also focus the donor’s attention on financial rather than on output and outcome results. The disbursement rate is the true indicator of success, as output and outcomes results are not seen as subject to uncontrollable factors. Accomplishing spending targets that require a sustained effort in procedural management is considered a great achievement. The highly volatile and uncertain context of the country reinforces this incentive which is common to all development

192 Dan Honig, 2018, *Navigation by Judgement. Why and When Top-Down Management of Foreign Aid Doesn’t Work*, Oxford University Press.

193 IEG WB, Project Performance Assessment Report. Port-au-Prince Neighborhood Housing Reconstruction, March 27, 2019.

194 Michele Oriol, 2022, “Aide internationale ou politique étrangère? Léçons apprises depuis 1990”, for Think-Tank Haiti, Université Quisqueya en partenariat avec Inter-American Dialogue, p. 14.

agencies. Using Hirschman's expression, risk management approaches incentive projects to be "trait taking instead of trait making." The in-built incentive discourages experimentation and adaptation, which are essential to succeed in unstable and unpredictable environments.

As a WB evaluation report concludes, "project-by-project approach is not fully effective and needs to be replaced by a programmatic approach that is more effective in supporting the government sector strategies."¹⁹⁵ One of Collier unfollowed observations gave a warning about the wrong incentives implicit in the project approach and his preference for wider programmatic instruments.¹⁹⁶ Sector programs larger in scale, guided by specific output and outcome measures, covering both capital and current expenditures temporarily and providing more discretion to implementing managers to adapt to contingencies, would be a feasible alternative. As the OECD principles for engagement in fragile states propose, where there is a credible strategy of state-building, direct support of the state budget should be the preferred strategy. This doesn't mean a free hand. Procedural controls can still apply selectively and, most important, results accountability can be reinforced by emphasizing the achievement of developmental results.

Policy recommendations: A narrower scope and sequential programmatic interventions supported by stronger local ownership and coordination

It would be tempting to say that Haiti's problems are insurmountable and beyond the capabilities of effective international assistance. The 2010 earthquake deepened the economic cleavages and disparities within the Haitian society and the international community subscribed to a voluntaristic approach that didn't match the magnitude and complexity of the challenge. However, the conclusion that everything done in Haiti has failed is not supported by the analysis presented above. It provides a richer, more complex picture. Successful initiatives have been undertaken, and specific sectors like education, health, or job creation have seen advancement. However, it is also undeniable that other sectors, like housing or institution building, have been plagued by failure. It also shows that no matter how successful specific initiatives have been, when the country lapses back into violence and instability, the overall stabilization and development strategy can be considered a failure.

The analysis also identifies issues that are systemic in nature and fall outside the purview of Haitian or international organizations. Only by recognizing the interdependence of this problem structure and carefully learning from the lessons of previous successes and failures will future progress be made. Despite receiving a lot of analysis, Haiti has gained little knowledge. Silver bullets or charismatic personal leadership won't help Haiti escape its dire circumstances. Experience has also taught us that no single nation or organization, no matter how strong, is able to take responsibility

195 World Bank IEG CLR Review, Haiti 2009–2014, 22 September 2015.

196 Collier, p. 15

for the problem and offer solutions. The time is now for thoughtful coalition building, sustained support of regional institutions, and generous resource allocation. Money is not the first step in solving the issue, though. Only if certain political and institutional conditions become available will development resources advance. Otherwise, without much hope for further advancement, results will be limited to meeting humanitarian needs. Having said that, the humanitarian component needs to be adequately funded, carried out, and equipped with the necessary resources. When a population is enduring a war, right protection and security should be a part of the humanitarian effort.

However, a purely humanitarian strategy this will be equivalent to turning Haiti into a permanent refugee camp, signaling the lowest level aspiration for the international community and the Haitian elite. There needs to be the recognition that countries exposed to external shocks, with little economic space afforded by the global system, and trapped in an internal political labyrinth, need a lot of external support.

This suggests a preference for a more constrained and targeted strategy in the case of Haiti, where moving into new phases of intervention should be contingent upon local political advancement. This implies that the international community will play a smaller, more focused, and more decisive role in Haitian affairs beyond providing humanitarian aid. This calls for a new power arrangement between the government of Haiti and the international community, where to gain more room for resource management and the development of its institutional framework, Haiti will have to make specific concessions of sovereignty. Experience indicates that this will be a challenging negotiation. The basic policy recommendations are presented as follows:

1. Haiti needs a sequenced strategy where the international community and the Haitian elite agree on phases based on benchmarks responding to specific political commitments.

The first step is to interact with the Haitian elite and look for a political framework to guide the transition. The Caribbean Community has already begun moving in this direction, but it needs the direct and full participation of the powerful nations that have real sway over Haitian affairs, especially the United States and Canada. To exert pressure on the Haitian elite, these nations have increased the use of sanctions against Haitian nationals engaged in illegal activities; however, they appear to be avoiding taking greater responsibility. Haiti needs a situation akin to an international peace conference where the powerful must sit down and negotiate under the influence of strong incentives. A successful strategy to advance the political agenda may involve the selection of impartial international mediators endorsed by the authority of influential nations in Haiti that prepare the ground for a political settlement.

2. Agreeing on presidential and parliamentary elections is a necessary step of the political development agenda, but it is neither the first, nor the final step.

Without legitimacy, the Haitian government has no chance of regaining some initiative and taking the lead in the stabilization effort. However, it is also true that the electoral process itself can lead to polarizing politics and increased unrest. Elections are an essential first step in creating at least somewhat legitimate authorities, but given the situation, they are likely to result in low turnout, weak representation, and populist unreliable leadership. This means that decisions about things like the make-up of the electoral authority, how elections are conducted, or the requirements for candidates should be made to reduce risks. Seitenfus gives a good overview of strategies that can be put into action right away, like using electronic voting and enforcing rules on political parties to reduce fragmentation.¹⁹⁷ Through international anti-laundering mechanisms and political commitments on open campaign financing, the risk that illegal money will be used in the election to buy support must be taken seriously and avoided. Donors must also adopt a long-term approach to promoting political development and increase their support for institutions like important political parties, civil society groups, think tanks, and media organizations that contribute to the development of stronger and more equitable intermediation. US, Canadian, and EU efforts in this direction in the past have been fragmented and adhoc rather than based on a long-term vision.

3. Haiti needs a multinational force to support the PNH in the framework of a wider peacekeeping strategy.

The PNH cannot reestablish security on its own. The PNH is overrun by violence due to a lack of strong political leadership, a shortage of manpower, and other critical resources. A situation where the police are only capable of defending themselves or collapsing completely can result from staff attrition and more aggressive gang behavior. It is urgent to deploy a multinational force with a broad and powerful mandate to stop violence. If the mandate is only to temporarily restore security, it will most likely collapse again in a few years. A political plan to maintain stability over the long term that considers the responsibilities and capacities expected of the police and the military as well as supplemental actions to offer some level of economic security in the most vulnerable areas. It is not possible to replicate the previous arrangement where donors provided capital resources and training for the police and current expenditures in the Haitian government. To advance, the police operation needs financial support, but this also needs to be accompanied by a stronger international voice in institutional and organizational decisions. The only way to advance the agenda for security reform would be through a joint institutional decision-making and oversight structure between Haiti and the international community.

¹⁹⁷ Ricardo Seitenfus, "Le chemin de croix électoral", *Le Nouvelliste*, 20 avril 2023.

4. International donors need to concentrate resources in the establishment of a permanent safety net for the vulnerable population.

This is an element where a lot of ground has been covered recently. The government adopted in 2020 a national policy for social protection and promotion (*Politique Nationale de Protection et Promotion Sociales*) with the support of the IMF, the WB and the IDB. Increasing government spending in social programs is one of the conditions included in the IMF staff-managed program and the WB and the IDB have been devoting a larger share of their portfolio to protect the vulnerable population.¹⁹⁸ Direct cash transfers are the only way to help the most vulnerable people and act as a safety net against escalating instability. Haitian institutions have made progress in prioritizing the target and creating a database of possible recipients with strong support from the WB and the IDB.¹⁹⁹ Diaz-Bonilla makes a detailed analysis of the social protection programs implemented after the earthquake and provides different cost estimates based on the degree of coverage of a permanent safety net. It also mentions the importance of investing in an effective and efficient delivery structure and points to progress already made by the Haitian authorities.²⁰⁰ Direct cash transfers made through a dependable payment system are to be preferred. However, as Marcelin rightly points short-term stabilization projects, led by NGOs, and implemented through local groups, “will mitigate the effects of gang conflicts but will not be able to affect the structure of the gangs or the conditions that fuel them.”²⁰¹ It is essential to avoid fragmentation and increase the capillary power of the Haitian state. To ensure that the state receives the credit it requires for the program, this must be done bolstering Haitian social protection agencies, and using NGOs more selectively.

5. The Haitian government needs a clear and simple plan supported by precise programmatic objectives in a few key sectors, consistent with the real budget, donor commitments and supported by an IMF program.

Although it might seem obvious, this has never actually been the case. Without clearly defined objectives and resources, plans have been made to project unrealistic development strategies or to ask the international community for assistance. This suggestion is founded on clarity and coherence. The concept is to elaborate the plan in accordance with the macro-framework established with the IMF and the funding provided by donors, considering actual expenditure and administrative constraints. The suggestion is for a four-year plan that will be closely watched and adjusted as

198 The IDB is devoting 45 percent of its portfolio amount to social programs, compared to 11 percent in the 2010–18 period.

199 World Bank, 2022, *Haiti. Pathways to responding to recurrent crises and chronic fragility*, Systematic Country Diagnostic, Update June 2022, p. 31.

200 Diaz-Bonilla, (see n. 48 above).

201 Louis HERNES Marcelin, 2011, “Cooperation, Peace and the (Re-) Construction? A Tale from the Shanties”, in *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, Vol 6, No. 3, p. 28.

needed every six months with the IMF and other major international donors cooperating with the Haitian state.

6. To elaborate the plan, coordinate with main donors and fleshing out intervention strategies, Haiti needs a central expenditure coordination structure within the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

The Haitian government must enhance overall coordination within its administration to increase internal consistency and exert more influence over international donors. Michelle Oriol made a valid point when she suggested setting up a department within the Ministry of Economy and Finance that would coordinate expenditure with international agencies (this already happens with the multilateral development banks).²⁰² This will prevent the division of development and current expenses and allow for budgetary consistency by centralizing negotiations under one authority. This new body would oversee and evaluate the above-mentioned plan. Donors will be able to work with a structure under the direction of the Haitian Government. As this recommendation might be seen in conflict with the competences of the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation, both ministries could be headed by the same person as a minister.

7. Main donors should agree on a joint strategy, setting a sharp division of labor and specific priorities to be negotiated with the Haitian government.

As we previously discussed, by reducing overlap and coordination requirements, the division of labor among the major donors can be improved. The ideal scenario is for each donor to focus their financial support on just two or three sectors where they can play a significant leadership role on behalf of the international community. Co-financing and technical support agreements can be used to support this, allowing development agencies' resources and expertise to be combined in a single program. A shared agenda with agreed-upon priorities will help with negotiation and coordination with the Haitian government while also benefiting overall coordination. Donors must coordinate the timing of their strategies and the distribution of their resources to accomplish this. A de facto joint development strategy and partnership agreement would result, which would then be approved by the governing boards of each agency. Although this has never been done before and the proposal is far from simple, it is a crucial commitment that runs concurrently with the Haitian Government plan.

202 Michele Oriol, 2022, "Aide internationale ou politique étrangère? Léçons apprises depuis 1990", for Think Tank-Haiti, Université Quisqueya en partenariat avec Inter-American Dialogue, p. 54.

8. Medium term sector program with a large budget support component should be the central operating instrument of international donors.

To address the issues discussed above, development agencies' internal workings need to be updated. A program approach could take the place of the project-by-project method, offering consistency and flexibility while preventing fragmentation and easing administrative burdens. Programs would have a sector scope and last two years, consisting of a budget support component linked to capital and current expenditure and a technical support component. Ideally, if donors' resources are pooled in a single large budget-support fund, a single standard of accountability can be followed, reinforcing transparency and fiduciary control over resource usage by the government.

9. Autonomous executive agencies, under the structure of government ministries, should be established in the key priority sectors to carry out programs co-financed by the international community.

There is no shortcut to state building if results are to be sustained. Government capabilities can be selectively strengthened and gradually assume project administration responsibilities, both in central departments and key sector ministries. An alternative to the current parallel project implementation units and the outsourcing to NGOs must be found to ensure the strict and professional implementation of sector programs while also strengthening permanent government capacities. In his paper, Collier suggests creating Independent Services Authorities.²⁰³ They are government organizations that use funds from the state and other sources to carry out policies and rules to deliver services either directly or in collaboration with other public and private organizations. A framework agreement that establishes distinct responsibilities as well as guidance and control mechanisms serve as the foundation for their relationship with the sector ministry. They are led by a Governing Board presided by the sector minister, who may also appoint independent experts with established credentials in the field. The agency's employees are career officials hired through merit-based processes and governed by civil service laws. A limited number of ministries, including Public Works, Agriculture, Education, Health, and Social Affairs, could adopt these structures, gradually replacing the current project implementation units.²⁰⁴

203 Collier, (see n. 42 above).

204 This is the approach taken by an IDB project that unfortunately has been caught in the middle of the current instability. See, IDB HA-L1131: *Strengthening Public Management to improve Service Delivery*, July 2, 2019.

10. The Haitian Government and the international community should set up an international extra-territorial jurisdiction to fight crimes affecting the commitments between the Government of Haiti and the international community.

Without institutional guarantees that corruption will be addressed, the international community will never accept the abovementioned proposals to direct aid resources through Haitian institutions. Development organizations are especially concerned about reputation risks because scandals involving the misappropriation of resources can seriously undermine their credibility. Institutions that uphold the rule of law in Haiti do not offer enough protections from impunity. A more reliable and tested mechanism needs to be found. The International Commission Against Impunity (CIGIG), which was established in Guatemala between 2007 and 2019, serves as the basis for this proposal. It was a joint UN and member state initiative to create an independent international body that can conduct investigations and serve as a supplemental prosecutor to strengthen the rule of law. During the years it was in operation, it established a solid reputation for combating organized crime and corruption in the Central American nation.

Final reflection: Lessons learned for fragile contexts

This paper has emphasized that Haiti is not an exceptional case. Fragility and state failure have spread in the world and the international community has not been able to respond effectively. State-building interventions have ended in frustration, with a growing number of countries experiencing persistent fragility. The dynamic of the global economy constrains the ability of low development fragile economies to pursue catch-up development strategies. Institutional requirements of international capital are inaccessible to fragile nations. Natural resource wealth may have helped to contain fragile conditions, but it has very infrequently enabled expanded inclusive growth and representation. In addition, there is ample evidence that populations in nations with weak governments suffer greatly because of natural disasters like droughts, floods, wildfires, earthquakes, and storms.

Regardless of how difficult it may be to deal with fragility, the international community has no choice but to step up and improve intervention strategies. Isolation or containment are not practical options for fragile nations because unauthorized immigration, criminal networks, or disease spread instability outside of their borders. The issue is that intervention hasn't led to significant advancement so far, as we saw in Haiti. The paper argues that donors' or international organizations' lack of financial support or political commitment is not the reason for failure. It is more concerned with the disconnect between fragility conditions and the framework for responding to them. Fragility is defined by high levels of interdependence between political, economic, and social conditions, but responses have been fragmented according to different institutional mandates and strategies. The experience of Haiti leaves below several lessons worth considering in other contexts affected by fragility.

The first is that local context is extremely important. As was previously mentioned, fragile nations are like unhappy families; they are all fragile for different reasons. There are various structural and contingent factors that may contribute to the spread of violence. Urban slums are where most violence occurs in Haiti, driven by marginalized populations and the absence of the state. Violence in other countries is explained by other reasons: racial or religious cleavages, insurgency movements or control of natural resources. Therefore, a security-only approach will only address the symptoms rather than the underlying root issues. Additionally, each nation's political and economic circumstances are unique and influence the options available. International organizations frequently rehash their preferred policy options without paying enough attention to local circumstances. For instance, the focus on export-oriented growth strategies in Haiti did not include reflection on prior failures and the development of a clear plan to avoid them in the future. The same can be said for other sectors where an infrastructure first approach has not been well suited to local needs, such as health or education. A thorough understanding of local context is key for the design of effective interventions.

The second is the requirement to comprehend the primacy of the political processes to make long-term advancements. When dealing with fragile states, international organizations have been plagued by technocratic myopia, prioritizing solutions that have grossly underestimated the destructive nature of fragile politics. The lack of a lasting political settlement has made progress short-term, uneven, and unsustainable. Understanding local politics means capturing the patterns of distribution of power in society, the makeup of the ruling class, the function of political parties, trade unions, and religious institutions, the level of public support for political causes, and the ability of criminal elements to influence politics. The international community wields strong positive and negative incentives to persuade local actors to make concessions. Political leadership from important countries and international organizations is necessary to facilitate political settlements. The only nations in a position to lead are those that the local actors regard as powerful. If not, polarizing politics are likely to rule with no end in sight. Haiti also demonstrates that elections are a necessary but insufficient condition for political development to take place. Meeting requirements before elections and institutional investment before and after elections are necessary for political development. The same holds true for having excessive faith in a strong leader. Honest and competent leaders are crucial, but in the absence of other factors, they risk remaining helpless and, worse yet, using the wrong instincts to hold onto power.

The third lesson focuses on the main fault lines of the international community in Haiti, the disconnection between humanitarian, security, and development interventions. Vast amounts of humanitarian aid have been given to Haiti but without articulation with the goals of political and economic security. Humanitarian aid requires mechanisms that can achieve its objectives swiftly because it operates in an environment of extreme urgency and human suffering. Planning to make humanitarian aid

more consistent with other goals would help given the recurrence of crises in Haiti and other fragile countries. Each organization, for instance, manages access to conflict zones in accordance with its own standards, which runs the risk of empowering undesirable actors. The disconnect between economic security and physical security is part of the same fault line. Peacekeeping operations have a significant militarized component that may not be suitable for the level of violence experienced in a place like Haiti. In the short term, violence can be prevented, but unless structural changes are made to create economic security in collaboration with development organizations, the security intervention will be unsustainable.

The fourth lesson deals with the need to change state-building strategies and instruments.

State-building must be prioritized by the international community in fragile states and alternative delivery mechanisms must stop undermining local capacities. There are no way around legitimate state institutions to create long-term stability. The formal approach to capacity building based on conventional technical cooperation has proven incapable of institution building in fragile contexts. The case of the Haitian police is a good example of resources being wasted in training and capital investment without institutional growth. This requires again acting on the political conditions of institutional reform. Budget support mechanisms that safeguard spending in institutional structures against fundamental demands of bureaucratic discipline need to receive more attention. Service delivery authorities with autonomy and reasonable professional standards must be considered to replace project implementation units and NGOs. Additionally, problem-focused interventions that emphasize building local capacity for service delivery from the ground up are a complementary strategy supporting sector programs. Finally, in exchange for a greater reliance on public institutions to manage resources, temporary institutional arrangements that give the global community more control over governance and accountability could be necessary. The international community needs assurances against impunity with robust institutional arrangements in place to prevent and punish corruption.

The fifth lesson is that gains could be undone if interventions aren't scaled up to a level commensurate with needs. Part of the failure of Haiti's export growth strategy, the deployment of the security forces, or the protection of the vulnerable population are due to insufficient scale and scaling up strategies. In addition to resources not being consistent with needs, programs were not created with a scaling strategy in mind, aiming at reaching significant magnitudes. Even if there were short-term successes, they fell short of the critical mass required for lasting impact.²⁰⁵ To achieve scale, development agencies need to agree to a mutual accountability framework that specifies joint outcomes and delivery methods. When interventions don't ensure a threshold of coverage of needs, instability will rule in fragile states, with competing social control mechanisms vying for influence and territory.

205 Laurence Chandy and Johannes F. Linn, 2011, *Taking Development Activities to Scale in Fragile and Low-Capacity Environments*, Global economy & Development at Brookings, Working Paper 45, September 2011.

Sixth, international organizations' strategies and tools must be adapted to the conditions of fragile contexts. On the one hand, there is a need for much tighter coordination at both the strategic and operational levels. The primary development partners should collaborate on a joint strategy that establishes a clear division of labor and common, quantified goals that have been approved by the national authorities. To avoid expensive administrative requirements, they should also come to an agreement on common standards or mutual recognition of fiduciary requirements. More importantly, programmatic interventions that are both large-scale and flexible enough to achieve lasting impact should take the place of the project approach, with budget support for both capital and current expenditure receiving top priority. Finally, to deal with the fragile operating environment, local managers should have more discretion to cope with the uncertainties and complexities of a fragile context.

The lessons above build on recent analysis and strategies that demonstrate a deeper understanding of the issues encountered and the conditions necessary for effective interventions. A good illustration of the advancements made in diagnostics and action suggestions is the most recent World Bank Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence. The US Global Fragility Act also demonstrates the significance of developing a comprehensive strategy to deal with nations in fragile situations. It should ideally be followed by a global accord involving multilateral and bilateral development organizations, with shared priorities, resource allocation policies, and programs specially designed for each nation that accurately reflect their political, economic, and social conditions. Fighting fragility should be regarded as another kind of global public good whose benefits go beyond the countries affected and benefit the whole international community.