

PAHO Publication

<http://www.paho.org/english/d/csu/TheChallengeofHaiti.pdf>

*Dr. Mirta Roses, PAHO's Director introductory note.

HEALTH: A RIGHT FOR ALL. The Challenge of Haiti.



Haiti is one of the poorest and most vulnerable countries in the Americas. In recent years, conditions have worsened as a result of the unstable social and political situation, and the impact of natural disasters, which have affected large areas of the country.

With the decided and manifested commitment to Democracy of the Haitian population, a new Government presided by his Excellency René Préval has initiated its mandate providing new opportunities for further solidarity and cooperation from the international community.

Life expectancy at birth is currently estimated to be around 53 years, compared to 49 years in 1990, according to United Nations estimates. In the last few years, Haiti has remained free from cholera, polio, and measles, although there are still many challenges to face. Sustained and joint efforts by the Government, the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and other international governmental and non governmental organizations have been successful in protecting the health of the Haitian people.

PAHO/WHO has focused its activities in Haiti in two main areas: Humanitarian Assistance and post-disaster rehabilitation; and technical cooperation for National Health Development within the Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF).

PAHO/WHO has been working for decades in Haiti. This sustained work has been possible thanks to a great collective and collaborative effort: PAHO/WHO's permanent country presence, its strong technical support, from both the regional and global levels; support from PAHO/WHO neighboring country offices, particularly from the Dominican Republic; mobilization of horizontal cooperation from other countries and the continuous support of national authorities, donors and multilateral cooperation agencies. Also key to PAHO/WHO's efforts has been coordination with other United Nations and Inter-American System agencies, the Cuban Medical Brigades, non governmental organizations, Haitian civil society as well as other bilateral cooperation.

As a result of this collective effort, many activities and concrete actions have been carried out to benefit the country's population. In this regard, the Millennium Development Goals provide a framework within which aid can be received and invested in long-term and sustainable solutions for the country. PAHO/WHO is advocating for a bi national approach to support Haiti together with Dominican Republic, taking into account the interdependence of both economies and the intense migration between both countries and its impact on the health sector.

This report has three main objectives: first, to share some of the activities developed by PAHO/WHO in the last few years in Haiti; second, to inform the international community and Haitian society about the achievements attained in the health sector resulting from collaborative efforts; and third, to reaffirm to the international community that achieving "Health for All" is not a utopian ideal, but rather an attainable goal even for countries facing complex situations such as Haiti.

In order to move forward in support of Haiti, we must all commit to sustained long term efforts, aiming at improving the country's institutional capacities in the public sector for social inclusion and strengthening democracy under justice, freedom and peace.

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