



**Pan American
Health
Organization**

*Regional Office of the
World Health Organization*

REPORT OF THE

“HAITI DAY”

28 SEPTEMBER 2006

WASHINGTON D.C., USA

October 2006

**Country Support Unit
Office of the Director**

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HAITI DAY

Washington D.C. - 28 September 2006

INTRODUCTION

The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), has strengthened its country presence in Haiti in the last few years. Following the successful completion of the presidential and parliamentary elections in early 2006, new opportunities have opened up for Haiti to advance towards stability and development.

As mandated by the Governing Bodies in the Strategic Plan for 2003-2007, Haiti is one of the five PAHO/WHO priority countries identified for special assistance, together with Bolivia, Guyana, Honduras and Nicaragua. On the occasion of the 26th Pan American Sanitary Conference (2002), the Member States agreed to provide specific attention to those countries with the most disadvantaged health conditions and to work together in unity and solidarity to improve their people's life and health.

During 2005 and 2006 several PAHO/WHO high level missions to Haiti took place in order to define a strategic agenda for health development jointly with new authorities and different partners. In dialogue with Ministry of Health and Population as well as with other national authorities it was agreed that a special session on Haiti could be hosted by PAHO/WHO. This special session would represent an opportunity both for the Ministry of Health and Population officials and for external partners to share views, achievements, challenges and lessons learnt regarding health priorities in Haiti.

The 47th PAHO Directing Council which was held during 25-29 September and which gathers Ministers of Health of the Americas represented a unique opportunity to share information and perspectives with the Minister of Health and Population of Haiti, Hon. Dr. Robert Auguste for national health development.

The "Haiti Day" was planned in one session according to the following objectives: Learn about the health priorities for Haiti; share PAHO/WHO's strategic agenda for Haiti, achievements and lessons learnt; obtain perspectives from key partners and actors in the health field in Haiti regarding their plans for additional support; call for a systematic information sharing mechanism towards technical cooperation response to Haiti needs and commit to improving coordination with respect to technical issues and cooperation approaches.

This aide memoire summarizes the session which included presentations and rich discussions. Special thanks to all PAHO/WHO technical units which actively participated in the event as well as all external partners who shared their views and committed to improving coordination to better support Haiti. The presentations made during the session are attached to this report. Additional information can be found in the following link: <http://www.paho.org/spanish/d/csu/Haiti.htm>

SUMMARY

▪ **Welcome – PAHO/WHO Assistant Director, Dr. Carissa Etienne**

Dr. Carissa Etienne welcomed approximately 80 persons, among whom were: Hon. Minister of Health and Population of Haiti (MSPP), Dr. Robert Auguste; Ambassador of Haiti to the Organization of American States (OAS), his Excellency Duly Brutus; Chief of Cabinet MSPP, Dr. Gadner Michaud; Cabinet Member MSPP, Dr. Ariel Henry; IMF Representative, Mr. Brieuc Monfort; WHO Assistant Director General, Mrs. Joy Phumaphi; WHO Representative, Dr. Xavier Leus; USAID Representative, Mrs. Karen Welch; CARICOM Community Assistant Sec. General, Dr. Edward Greene; Interamerican Dialogue Program Associate, Jillian Blake; IADB Division Chief, Mr. Hector Salazar; Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria Team Leader, Wolfgang Munar; World Bank Senior Health Specialist, Joana Godinho; European Commission Development Advisor, Christiane West; CIDA Representatives, Gaetane Sutton and Amrita Paul; International Organization for Migration (IOM) Representatives, Maegan Marcano and Berta Fernández; Representatives from OAS Missions such as Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, and many PAHO/WHO personnel.

Dr. Etienne, who visited Haiti twice during 2006, mentioned that this session would enable all participants to learn about the health priorities for Haiti; share PAHO/WHO’s strategic agenda for Haiti, and obtain perspectives from key partners and actors involved in the health sector in support of Haiti. She recalled that Haiti was singled out as a priority country for the Organization in 2003 among Bolivia, Guyana, Honduras and Nicaragua and that the Organization has strengthened its technical cooperation in this country in order to achieve health for all in Haiti and will continue to do so.

Haiti health national authorities face many challenges and a window of opportunity is open for the international community to support Haiti. Developmental challenges that Haiti faces require very strong and intersectoral and interagency coordination. Consequently, a two pronged strategy is required: institutional capacity building coupled with local interventions to support the provision of basic services.

Dr. Etienne referred to key events which are to take place: Madrid donors’ conference in November 30, preparation of PRSP and launching of the UN transitional appeal. In this regard, the support from international community requires a strong commitment towards consensus building and coordination of all Haiti partners.

Finally, Dr. Etienne stated that PAHO/WHO is totally committed to supporting national health authorities with technical cooperation in response to Haitian people needs and national health priorities to achieve national health development. She added that during these days extensive discussions with PAHO/WHO technical units were held in order to establish a coordinated and integral response from PAHO (including national, regional and global levels).

- **Haiti's health priorities, Minister of Health and Population, Hon. Robert Auguste**

The Honourable Minister of Health and Population of Haiti, Dr. Robert Auguste made a presentation focused on the vision of the Ministry of Health and its objectives and the activities to be developed. Dr. Auguste stated that among the objectives are: strengthen leadership of the Ministry of Health and Population, specially the normative and regulatory role; improve services supply to the most vulnerable population and national coverage extension; increase access to basic medicines; strengthen priority programs which are already in place; improve coordination among health sector partners.

Regarding the activities to be developed within this framework, Dr. Auguste mentioned: to strengthen leadership of the Ministry of Health and Population, especially the normative and regulatory role it is urgent to work on the legal and normative framework of the Ministry of Health and Population, the organic law as well as the improvement of the information system. Regarding the improvement of services supply to the most vulnerable population and national coverage extension it is necessary to work on physical infrastructure, human resources, laboratory and water and sanitation. In terms of increasing access to basic medicines: Ministry of Health and Population will focus on increasing the number of patients under ARV treatment, improvement of PROMESS management as well as the periphery warehouses and assure the availability of essential medicines at all UCS (Unités Communales de Santé). On the issue of strengthening priority programs which are already in place, it was mentioned that the MSPP will focus on: improvement of vaccines coverage, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, maternal mortality reduction, malaria and tuberculosis. Finally, Dr. Auguste referred to the need of reorganizing the health system, focusing on decentralization and strengthening coordination among all actors and partners involved in the health sector, multisectorial approach and interventions are required.

- **Health Development in Haiti, PAHO/WHO Representative in Haiti, Dr. Beatrice Bonnevaux**

Dr. Bonnevaux made a presentation which focused on the health situation in Haiti, especially in relation to the unfinished agenda and the main indicators related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In this sense, Dr. Bonnevaux made reference to other determinants, such as natural disasters, political crises, violence and unemployment. To address these challenges, a multidirectional strategy has been adopted by PAHO/WHO: the Organization will continue to work in close collaboration with the MSPP, our main partner, towards institutional capacity building coupled with local interventions. The strategy of decentralized technical cooperation will also be applied to border areas with Dominican Republic, especially to address diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, among others.

Dr. Bonnevaux also referred to the importance of macroeconomic interventions in health, health as a right for all. Investment in health has to be seen as an investment in human capital, which will allow economic growth and at the same time social development and poverty reduction.

Finally, PAHO/WHO Representative in Haiti reinforced the statement made by the Minister of Health and Population of Haiti in regards to improving coordination and strengthening intersectoral approaches within the health sector.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION ON COORDINATING SUPPORT TO HAITI – PLENARY SESSION

In general, all participants expressed their support to Haiti and to the Minister of Health and Population.

Comments and discussions took place around the following issues:

- a) Access to basic services and how the MSPP is planning to address it, through partnerships with NGOs, private, public sector or a mix of all.
- b) Communicable diseases and the importance of intersectoral alliances and bi national approach with Dominican Republic to address them.
- c) Intersectoral interventions and importance of interventions at community level (health, education and agriculture for example).
- d) Human resources and the need to invest in mid level providers to serve the majority of the population.
- e) Maternal health and the importance of strengthening family planning towards maternal mortality reduction.
- f) Health systems and need for long and sustained strategy towards efficient interventions. In this regard, greater coordination among all partners is required.
- g) Collaboration with CARICOM and Development Fund to which Haiti can have access. Haiti has to be treated as a special case and CARICOM is willing to collaborate with PAHO in accelerating response in the health sector.
- h) Technical Cooperation among Countries and the need for greater advocacy among countries in the region to ensure more TCC projects with Haiti.
- i) Global Fund and the possibility of having a binational project within the GF, especially in border areas to address one, two or the three diseases: HIV/AIDS, Malaria and/or Tuberculosis.
- j) Importance of reinforcing MSPP leadership to ensure better coordination among several partners, as well as harmonization and alignment. Funds execution has to be translated into concrete results. Health and Planning sectors need to work together.
- k) Migration and health, and the importance of a bi national approach with Dominican Republic (migrant workers, impact on health services, etc).
- l) Haitian Diaspora and the importance of improving communication and information sharing.
- m) Need for a structure for delivery of health services and importance of international community commitment to this. There are many experiences within WHO from which Haiti can benefit from.

CONCLUSION

The “Haity Day” was very successful in sharing information with many partners working already in Haiti, in the context of the national health priorities emphasized by the Minister of Health and Population. The Minister identified the Organization as the leading partner for technical cooperation in national health development.

The presentations and discussions enabled very useful suggestions for strengthening international community partners’ contributions to national health development in Haiti.

ANNEX 1
EXTERNAL PARTICIPANTS IN THE PAHO/WHO HAITI DAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2006

Nombre	Apellido	Title/Cargo	Organization/Organización	Address/Dirección	Tel/phone	e-mail
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