

REPORT ON TECHNICAL MISSION TO HAITI

The Haiti Task Force was created in October 2006 by the Secretary General under the chairmanship of the Assistant Secretary General to review OAS programs and operations in Haiti with a view to rationalizing the structure and aligning programs, personnel and resources. This directive was undertaken and is being carried out with the goal of increasing effectiveness and efficiency to better respond to the needs of the Haitian government and people, the fiduciary requirements of donors, and the overall programmatic and operational goals of the Secretariat.

The Haiti Task Force is comprised of members from all the substantive and administrative areas of the Secretariat including the Secretariat for Political Affairs, the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development, the Secretariat for Administration and Finance, the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, the Department of Legal Services and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. This representative participation allows the Haiti Task Force to engage in full consultation on all substantive matters and decisions.

In this regard, a Technical Mission, led by Assistant Secretary General Albert Ramdin and comprised of OAS staff managing projects in the area of Human Rights, Trade and Tourism, Civil Registry and Democratic Governance, visited Haiti and held a series of meetings, March 19-21, 2007.

Objective of the Technical Mission:

1. Refine concrete objectives and deliverables,
2. Identify counterparts and agree on lines of communication and responsibilities,
3. Establish timelines for execution of projects,
4. Align activities with resources in order to improve administration of projects.

1. CIVIL REGISTRY

Meeting with the Minister of Justice of Haiti (Mariclaire Acosta and Felix Ortega):

- The Minister reaffirmed that the Haitian Office of Identification (the ONI) will be housed in the Ministry of Justice, as per the decree issued by the provisional government (pre-Preval) and pledged that a public announcement of this decision would be made by Friday, March 23, 2007.
- The OAS agreed to a "carta de entendimiento" on the implementation of the civil registry project as well as an aide memoire/plan of action outlining the work that needs to be done in the area of civil registries.
- May 1, 2007, was established as the goal date to begin implementation of the work plan.
- NOTE: The OAS already has the ID card and registration software ready and has begun sensitizing the various HA institutions (e.g. hospitals) etc. on the need to establish offices to begin registrations.
 - o With current funding, the OAS can input 100% of the historic data available and install new civil registry/ identification offices in 15 of the 184 departments.
 - o Additional funds will be needed for mobile units
 1. to go across the country to register persons,
 2. to register new births and deaths, and
 3. to draft the laws necessary to support the civil registry.

Meetings with donors (EU, CIDA):

- Meetings with the international community underscored the need for cooperation and ongoing dialogue. The EU expressed interest in receiving a copy of the Civil Registries proposal from the OAS. CIDA, which already supports the project, reiterated its support and asked to be briefed on progress.

2. ELECTORAL REFORM/PROCESSES

Meetings with partners (MINUSTAH, UNDP) (Elizabeth Spehar, Bernice Robertson)

The parties discussed:

- Need to agree on a mechanism that will enable the start of technical assistance to strengthen the Haitian electoral institution (CEP). Possible means of obtaining that mechanism could be through the updating of the 2004 MOU signed between the OAS and the UN to provide electoral assistance for the 2005-2006 electoral process, which would clearly outline the respective roles of both institutions and the coordination mechanism between them in this new phase of electoral support and institution-building, as well as the approval of a CEP technical assistance plan by the Government of Haiti.
- The OAS and the UN have already worked on the outline of a technical assistance plan for Haiti, which details the various tasks that should be completed in order to finalize the current electoral cycle and move towards the creation and consolidation of a permanent electoral institution in Haiti. Both agreed to work together to review and update that document and to submit it to the Government of Haiti for feedback and approval. Feedback from the current CEP would also be important.
- NOTE: The OAS suggested that international cooperation focus on articulating a program of creating a solid Haitian electoral administration body (via institutional organization, capacity building and institutional strengthening programs), with the goal of transforming this work into a permanent civil service function, regardless of what actions are taken by the state regarding the political component of the electoral body, that is the membership of a Permanent CEP. The UN fully agreed with this approach.

Meeting with the CEP (Elizabeth Spehar, Bernice Robertson)

The parties discussed, among other issues:

- Continued need for targeted OAS assistance to finish the current electoral cycle, particularly in terms of conducting re-run elections scheduled for April 29th and the holding of indirect elections several months later. Furthermore, OAS assistance will be required to resume the registration of voters for the upcoming elections to renew the first third of the Senate, potentially slated for November or December 2007. Clarity is needed regarding the modus-operandi for the registration exercise mentioned above: Would the ONI carry out registration and transfer the voters list to the CEP? Would the ONI be operational on time to ensure a timely registration process? If citizen registration is placed under the administration of the ONI, could priority be given to citizens of voting age?
- Attention should be given to the National Identification Cards (CIN) left to be distributed and the citizens who need corrections made on their CIN.

Meetings with donors (CIDA, USAID, EU)

- The OAS electoral representatives briefed the various donors on plans for continuing its electoral support in Haiti, and in particular, on the important goal of creating and consolidating a Haitian

electoral administration body. Emphasis was placed on the need for close and effective coordination among the different international institutions that will be involved in these exercises (OAS, UN, others), as well as the need to have the electoral and civil registry components of the OAS role functioning smoothly and in very close cooperation on the ground. The donor entities were anxious to see the initiation of the new phase of electoral support to Haiti; one central issue mentioned was the importance of working quickly so as not to lose the very substantial investment of the international community in terms of trained personnel, equipment and other goods which was made to enable last year's elections to take place and which should be retained and utilized to create a permanent Haitian electoral administration body. The donors requested to be kept abreast of the development in the OAS' electoral assistance program, and in the case of those who have committed resources (CIDA, USAID), there is expectation of receiving soon the requisite detailed work plans.

3. TOURISM (Kim Osborne, representatives from the Caribbean Tourism Organization)

The meeting was attended by officials from the Private Sector Hotel and Tourism association, tour operators, hoteliers, RCCL representative in Haiti, representatives from the Prime Minister's office, the ministry of public works, the ministry of social development, USAID, EU, Caribbean Tourism Organization.

Outcomes:

- The OAS approved Tourism Public Attitudes and Awareness program was presented and was very well received as the first step for Haiti's re-entry into the tourism marketplace;
- Plans for follow-up on training capacity building with the private and public sector were established;
- Plans for Haiti's attendance and the Caribbean Marketplace tourism trade show (scheduled to be held in the Bahamas) were established. Note - CHA has offered a free booth, free registration and AA airlines free tickets for private sector attendance;
- The local private sector and other ministries of government, the CTO, CHA and the OAS all pledged various levels of support for the efforts of the Ministry of Tourism;
- Plans for the development of the craft sector, the agricultural, and education sector and the linkages with tourism were presented and discussed.

4. JUDICIAL REFORM (Jaime Arellano, CEJA)

In meetings with the Prime Minister and Minister of Justice, CEJA:

- Proposed holding a Conference in Haiti with members of the legal and judicial communities from other parts of the hemisphere to enable Haiti to benefit from the best practices developed in other countries and regions;
- Requested that the Ministry of Justice identify and appoint leaders in the legal and judicial field who can benefit from learning from leaders in other countries about developing public policies in the legal area. These leaders would be a source of experts for the Ministry of Justice, which would take the lead in legal reform;
- Promised that as a part of the project, CEJA documents will be translated into French to ensure that the Haitian legal community can benefit from the dialogue and exchange of knowledge facilitated by CEJA;
- CEJA offered to work with the Government of Haiti to reduce pre-trial detention time (they have worked successfully on this in other countries).