



**Pan American
Health
Organization**

Regional Office of the
World Health Organization

110
1902 - 2012



Call to action: a cholera-free Hispaniola

In January 2012, the presidents of Haiti and the Dominican Republic joined PAHO, UNICEF, and the U.S. CDC in issuing a “Call to Action” to eliminate cholera from the island of Hispaniola through major new investments in water and sanitation infrastructure. The partners called on donor countries and agencies to fund such investments by honoring pledges made after Haiti’s 2010 earthquake and through new funds specifically targeted at water and sanitation infrastructure. These investments are needed to bring Haiti up to the level of neighboring countries in terms of access to clean water and sanitation services.

Key facts

- Since October 2010, cholera has claimed more than 7,000 lives and sickened more than 530,000 people in Haiti (as of 1 April 2012)
- Even before the January 2010 earthquake, only 63 percent of Haiti’s residents had access to improved drinking water
- Access to sanitation declined from 26 percent of the population in 1990 to 17 percent in 2008
- Water and sanitation coverage in Haiti is much lower than the regional averages for Latin America and the Caribbean, and Haiti is among the lowest 12 countries worldwide in terms of sanitation coverage
- Estimates of the costs of needed water and sanitation investments range from \$746 million to \$1.1 billion (IDB, World Bank, Office of the Haitian Prime Minister)
- Following the 2010 earthquake, donor countries and agencies pledged some \$4.5 billion to support reconstruction and recovery in Haiti. Of these, \$2.4 billion (53 percent) in pledges have been honored
- In the 1990s, a cholera epidemic in Latin America spread to over 20 countries in the first two years
- Investments in water and sanitation infrastructure and health promotion helped stem Latin America’s epidemic and contributed to the virtual elimination of cholera from Central and South America within eight years
- The increases in water and sanitation coverage in Latin America contributed to declines in other waterborne diseases, including typhoid fever and hepatitis A, and to improvements in infant and child mortality
- Epidemic cholera has not recurred in Latin America

Key actions

In coordination with the governments of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, PAHO, CDC and UNICEF are supporting three key processes as follow-up to the Call to Action:

1. *Formation of task forces for water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure as well as for case management, prevention, health system strengthening and health promotion. (Task forces have been created in both countries.)*
2. *Development of detailed action plans and timelines for water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure. (Action plans are under way in both countries.)*
3. *Creation of a high-level “Coalition on Water and Sanitation for the Elimination of Cholera in Haiti and the Dominican Republic” to strengthen and streamline efforts by multilateral agencies, donor institutions, national and international NGOs, members of the private sector and the governments of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. (Members are being invited to join, and a declaration is planned for June 2012.)*

