

# **THE SUCCESS AND FAILURES OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN THE CASE OF HAITI 2010: LESSONS LEARNT?**

Georgios Pozarlis

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First Supervisor: Kalliopi Chainoglou

Second Supervisor: Fotini Bellou

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**Abstract:**

The deadly earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010 left the country in the balance. The international community rushed to its assistance with gigantic sums of aid. My dissertation addresses the questions of how was humanitarian aid delivered, what were its challenges and successes, how well the funds were spent and finally shed light on today's condition. I argue that better internal and external coordination is required for superior results. My dissertation also expands the international community's way of operating devoid of any accountability for its actions. Improved handling of funding as well as a new supervision system is required so as to avoid any potential prospect mismanagement. Further transparency ought to be placed where financial reports will indeed report on all involved actors' deeds and their irrespective spending. There are many lessons to learn from and applied upon so that in future emergencies the international community can fully respect the local needs.

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# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **PREFACE**

Haiti, a traditionally poor and dependent on wealthier nations country, has truly struggled for growth in its post-colonial era. A troubled and fragile island state prone to political instability, addressee of foreign powers' aid and interference on top of that a frequent recipient of extreme weather phenomena was set to face its greatest challenge yet. The republic of Haiti was severely hit by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake on 12 January 2010. Such a scale is classified into a major class earthquake that caused exceedingly and uncommonly gigantic damage.<sup>1</sup> Such a disaster profoundly exacerbated pre-existing conditions and inequalities on a country that at the time was the poorest in the Western Hemisphere and one of the most impoverished in the globe. Geography-wise, Haiti stands in a precarious location. Being one of the Caribbean island countries, located on the western part of the Hispaniola Island, west of Cuba, Haiti along with the entire Caribbean states faces insurmountable natural threats. The entire Caribbean region is seismically active, rendering the isles incredibly liable to disastrous earthquakes.<sup>2</sup>

Roughly ten years after the earthquake the country is still struggling to stand on its own feet and remains in great need of humanitarian assistance. Today, Haiti has received more than 13.5 billions of sums in aid funding since the fateful cataclysm.<sup>3</sup> Despite the huge amounts of funds granted for humanitarian assistance the conditions in the post-earthquake Haiti have fairly to not in the slightest ameliorated. Therefore it is essential to perform research on the reasons why these funds did not meet their expected outcome. But before that key issues ought to be answered. What is humanitarian assistance? How is it provided? How was it provided in this case? Did the providers aim at short-term or long-term relief? What were the challenges and the successes of those providing the aid? Did all the intended funds reach their destination? To what extent have the conditions in Haiti been improved as a result of the aid today? This research thesis will provide answers concerning the outcomes -the successes and the challenges- of humanitarian assistance that was granted to Haiti.

Being no stranger to political instability, Haiti has been struggling to elect a stable government all throughout its contemporary history. Consecutive coup d'états, revolutions along with short term presidents, ruling with an iron fist by turning the violation of human rights into a conventional act, corruption and excessive violence made the establishment of an ordinary and effective political regime impossible for the island state. Additionally,

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<sup>1</sup> M 7.0 - Haiti region. (2010, January 12).

Retrieved from <https://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/eventpage/usp000h60h/executive>

<sup>2</sup> Caribbean Tsunami and Earthquake Hazards Studies. Retrieved from [https://www.usgs.gov/centers/whcmssc/science/caribbean-tsunami-and-earthquake-hazards-studies?qt-science\\_center\\_objects=0#qt-science\\_center\\_objects](https://www.usgs.gov/centers/whcmssc/science/caribbean-tsunami-and-earthquake-hazards-studies?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects)

<sup>3</sup> Connor, T., Rappleye, H., & Angulo, E. (2015, January 12). *What Does Haiti Have to Show for \$13 Billion in Earthquake Aid?*. NBCNews. Retrieved from <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/investigations/what-does-haiti-have-show-13-billion-earthquake-aid-n281661>

natural disasters contributed massively in destabilizing the balance of life on the island state. The Haitians have been largely affected by hurricanes, tropical storms and as of lately earthquakes. The enormous humanitarian aid it received so as to recover was that badly managed that there is still great need for humanitarian assistance as well as funding for pretty much anything.

Humanitarian assistance to disasters is a rather new and growing concept that is still taking shape. It is a model that has not yet been utterly solidified neither has outright obtained its grey aspects. Humanitarian assistance to natural disasters holds a complicated narrative that is profoundly rooted within the occurrence of conflicts. It was only recently that a distinction between disaster cases ensued. A particular page turner was the end of the Cold War that modified global politics. The framework changed and signaled a shift for humanitarian assistance by departing from the typical supply of aid to wars towards natural disasters. Accordingly aid had the liberty to delve deeper into challenging areas with a new, multifaceted approach. Progressively though further issues come into view with additional actors taking part in the field rendering aid more complex. Rules that govern humanitarian aid, international humanitarian law per se need to modify so as to integrate this fast paced changing environment and render it further potent.<sup>4</sup>

### **HISTORY OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

The notion of providing assistance in any form to those in need has always existed through time. The origins of humanitarian assistance lie in the West European neighborhood as well as on their experience in wars and natural disasters. The sole need to supply aid is also profoundly rooted into diverse cultures. Aid in one way or another has been embroidered into religious beliefs; charity as part of the Christian faith in Europe while Islamic faith in Asia preaches ways of assisting others. Yet it is a topic, the area of human rights protection into disasters, which has become the subject of studies during the past twenty years -in contrast to the study for human rights protection in armed conflict which began since the late 1960s.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of providing humanitarian assistance is to mitigate human suffering caused by crisis situations, diminish the risk of further damage and uphold the dignity of those aided. Until recently, humanitarian aid was inextricably parallel with the treatment of those affected by conflict. Initially, it held a whole different form.<sup>6</sup>

Humanitarian assistance was in fact nowhere similar to the concept it holds in the present day. Its broad notion began taking shape during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The structured provision of aid originated as a result of a book titled “A Memory of Solferino” penned by Swiss activist Henry Dunant in 1862. Drawing inspiration from real life, the battle of Solferino, the book suggests the composition of a permanent relief organisation that

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<sup>4</sup> Heintze, H.-J. (Ed.), Zwitter, A. (Ed.). (2011). *International Law and Humanitarian Assistance: A Crosscut Through Legal Issues Pertaining to Humanitarianism*. Groningen, The Netherlands: Springer

<sup>5</sup> Labbé, J., *Rethinking Humanitarianism: Adapting to 21st Century Challenges*. International Peace Institute, New York, 2012. Retrieved from :

<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/DigitalLibrary/Publications/Detail/?lng=en&id=155534>

<sup>6</sup> Heintze and Zwitter (2011).

would treat soldiers as well as civilians wounded during battle. The insight and the reflection of the horrors of war along with the need to offer assistance to the injured prompted the foundation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1863.<sup>7</sup> The Red Cross is one of the first intercontinental organisations to provide humanitarian assistance. Acquiring its formal mandate in 1864 on the first Geneva Convention, the Red Cross sets an obligation for armies to grant impartial and neutral assistance to the victims of conflict, namely soldiers and civilians. The Convention also introduced the prominent emblem of the Red Cross; depicting a red cross on a white background which symbolizes medical services.<sup>8</sup> On a slightly different note it is worth mentioning that the commencement of funding for international monetary aid, occurred during the Chinese Famine of 1876-1879 which urged the creation of one of the earliest formal international relief funds.<sup>9</sup>

## 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Arriving to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Treaty of Versailles sealed the end of World War I in 1919. In addition the Treaty set the ground for the establishment of the League of Nations, a forerunner that can be characterized as the stepping stone for the birth of the United Nations (UN).<sup>10</sup> The founding of the UN in 1945, following the end of World War II, was the first lasting international organisation where as its primary objective was not only to preserve and promote peace and security but to protect the vulnerable too.<sup>11</sup>

In its own words the UN Charter inscribes its formation with the purpose “to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character.”<sup>12</sup> From this point on, the provision of UN humanitarian assistance commenced. The matters that required interagency were various hence around the same time other UN organisations were established like the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UN set global precedent with the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948; for the first time in history an international organisation is capable of worldwide intervention during international and civil conflict in support of the universal protection of human rights.<sup>13</sup> Such

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<sup>7</sup> Bugnion, F. (2009, April 22). From Solferino to the birth of contemporary international humanitarian law. Retrieved from <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/article/other/solferino-article-bugnion-240409.htm>

<sup>8</sup> INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS. (2016, October 29). *History of the ICRC*. Retrieved from <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/history-icrc>

<sup>9</sup> China Famine Relief Fund Shanghai Committee. (1879). *The great famine: report of the committee of the Chine famine relief fund*. Shanghai, China: American Presbyterian Mission Press. Retrieved from [https://openlibrary.org/books/OL25495777M/The\\_great\\_famine](https://openlibrary.org/books/OL25495777M/The_great_famine)

<sup>10</sup> UNITED NATIONS. *History of the United Nations*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/sections/history/history-united-nations/>

<sup>11</sup> UNITED NATIONS. *Maintain International Peace and Security*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/maintain-international-peace-and-security/>

<sup>12</sup> UNITED NATIONS. 1945. *Charter of the United Nations*. art. 1, para. 1. Retrieved from <https://legal.un.org/repertory/art1.shtml>

<sup>13</sup> UNITED NATIONS. 1948. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

a milestone presented an unforeseen and unprecedented push to the international community for the rapid increase of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) committed to the same purpose. Technological advancements that enabled better transportation and communication contributed to that phenomenon too.

The agreements on the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and their later on adjoined Additional Protocols, stand as a landmark towards further advancement of humanitarian assistance. The four Geneva Conventions protect the wounded and sick soldiers on land and the shipwrecked military personnel at sea during war. The Conventions are also applied to prisoners of war while also protecting civilians, including with those in occupied territory. The three Additional Protocols cover further aspects of international and non-international conflicts. By and large the Conventions along with the three Additional Protocols are deemed as international treaties comprised of the most significant set of laws that confine the brutality of war. Notably, they form the core of international humanitarian law that regulates the conduct of armed conflict and seek to limit its effects.<sup>14</sup> However none of these aforementioned treaties protects let alone covers the human rights of those affected by natural disasters.

Additionally the rapid expansion and proliferation of NGOs rendered the aid becoming to a greater extent available beyond the continent of Europe, to countries far less developed, thus committing to a more regional and global aid. Those countries, frequently called as “third world” countries did not have the nuance they have nowadays. In the past the term was used in order to describe non-member countries of the North Atlantic Trade Organisation (NATO). NATO members were evidently the first world and the Soviet block was the second. Third world countries included those located in Asia, Africa and Latin America who were either underdeveloped impoverished or post-colonial regimes, thus the term “developing” countries. As time went by the term “third world” became the new norm of categorization of those states. Following the end of Cold War, humanitarian assistance gradually started shifting its focus towards developing countries aiming at their further growth. Modern humanitarian assistance began unfolding and evolving, covering broader and more multifaceted layers. Aid emphasized from short term relief to long term rehabilitation and from mitigation of tribulation to greater recuperation.

### **THE HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES**

However the advanced need for aid along with the proliferation of disasters, natural and man-made, ended up intermeddling exterior factors. Political interests as well as aid funding for aid provision were brought on the spotlight. For these reasons alterations had to be made so as to keep up with the ever changing conditions. 1991 was a groundbreaking year for the field of humanitarian assistance. With the Resolution 46/182 and later on 58/114 the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA) formally delineated a framework for

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<sup>14</sup> INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS. (2010, October 29). *The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols*. Retrieved from <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/war-and-law/treaties-customary-law/geneva-conventions/overview-geneva-conventions.htm>



humanitarian assistance and established the principles upon which assistance ought to be governed by.<sup>15</sup> The Resolution among others foresaw the founding of Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

Concerning the humanitarian principles, the first three cover the aspects of humanity, impartiality and neutrality while the fourth one was added in 2004, the principle of independence. When provided, humanitarian assistance must be based on its principles with the intent that it can be productive devoid of any interference. Even so, clear guidance was still lacking on behalf of the humanitarian actions. In 1994 the voluntary UN Code of Conduct was launched which inserted high humanitarian standards of behavior, maintained the humanitarian principles and set guiding values for ICRC, United Nations Agencies and NGOs involved in disaster relief.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless there was still an unclear distinction between disasters and their coping mechanism.

In view of the fact that humanitarian assistance was not a clear and explicit branch of jurisdiction of the UN, plus the unattainable universal definition of it, the UN established organisations responsible for providing in fact humanitarian assistance. Therefore bodies were set up so as to be able to take the appropriate actions equipped with an important ability. One of the most significant elements in humanitarian assistance is the part of decision-making. There are four UN agencies by and large responsible for the deliverance of humanitarian aid which are able to form decisions as well. Inter-governmental UN bodies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the World Food Programme (WFP) are operational agencies with an inter-governmental body that enables them to perform policy decisions. On the contrary, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is a non-operational agency but it does have a policy making body, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Interestingly enough the IASC it is not comprised by the usual country members but by representatives of the largest humanitarian actors.<sup>17</sup>

There are additional international organisations which also provide emergency assistance although at a regional setting. The Organization of American States (OAS) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) for instance equally contend with humanitarian aid. Haiti is a member to both. OAS aims to promote human rights, democracy and development while

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<sup>15</sup> General Assembly resolution 46/182, *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations*, A/RES/46/182 (19 December 1991), available from <https://undocs.org/A/RES/46/182>.

Further info on: General Assembly resolution 58/114, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations*, A/RES/58/114 (17 December 2003), available from <http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/58/114>

<sup>16</sup> Heintze and Zwitter (2011).

Further info on: Rysaback-Smith, H., (2015). History and Principles of Humanitarian Action. *Turk J Emerg Med* 15(1), 5–7. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9d52/453167b34a40c5d507f97ba064f7990f72d0.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Heintze and Zwitter (2011).

CARICOM upholds security, financial integration, and foreign policy management as well as anthropo-social development.<sup>18</sup>

### **PRINCIPLES AND GOOD PRACTICE OF HUMANITARIAN DONORSHIP**

In 2003 a monumental meeting took place on the initiative of Sweden. Participants such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the European Commission -on behalf of the European Union (EU)-, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), donor governments, NGOs and academics convened in order to set up standards on humanitarian assistance and its donorship. Under the denominated “23 Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship”, a framework was constituted as so as to delineate humanitarian action and its objectives, affirm general principles, as well as to establish good practices concerning humanitarian aid donors and to promote superior aid accountability. It also affirmed the exact acts that humanitarian assistance stands for and commits. Therefore according to the principles the core objective of humanitarian assistance is “to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crises and natural disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations”.<sup>19</sup> The offering of humanitarian aid is a moral imperative and furthermore an expression of solidarity towards those in need. The difficulty of narrowing aid down into a definition is simply due to its constant change and evolvement.

### **DISASTERS**

Catastrophes such as floods, earthquakes or volcanic eruptions are identified as natural disasters. Consistent with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) natural disasters can be broadly defined as unforeseen and sudden destructive events or situations that cause such significant damage that seriously disrupt the functioning of a community or society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity that can lead to human, material, economic or

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<sup>18</sup> Organization of American States. *What we do*. Retrieved from

[http://www.oas.org/en/about/what\\_we\\_do.asp](http://www.oas.org/en/about/what_we_do.asp)

Further info on: Caribbean Community. *Who we are*. Retrieved from

<https://caricom.org/about-caricom/who-we-are>

<sup>19</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. (2013) *PRINCIPLES AND RULES FOR RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE*. Retrieved from

<https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Documents/Secretariat/Accountability/Principles%20Rules%20for%20Red%20Cross%20Red%20Crescent%20Humanitarian%20Assistance.pdf> European Commission. 23

Further info on: *Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship*. Retrieved from

[https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/23_principles_and_good_practice_of_humanitarian_donorship.pdf)

[site/files/23\\_principles\\_and\\_good\\_practice\\_of\\_humanitarian\\_donorship.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/23_principles_and_good_practice_of_humanitarian_donorship.pdf)

environmental losses and impacts that overpower the local capacity so that a request for external assistance to the national or international level is deemed necessary.<sup>20</sup>

Natural disasters hit developing countries the hardest due to the scarce of financial resources. According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), whose objective is to prevent and reduce damages caused by natural hazards, between 1998 and 2017 climate-related and geophysical disasters have claimed the lives of 1.3 million people. In addition the disasters have left 4.4 billion more injured, homeless, displaced or in need of emergency assistance.<sup>21</sup> For that reason disasters require delicate management by global governance where multiple institutions such as the UN, the World Bank and others are able to provide effective responses to problems that erupt and deeply affect states and their people.

### **RESPONSE TO NATURAL DISASTERS**

Unlike man-made disasters, such as wars, oil spills and fires, natural disasters have no binding set of regulations that define the way of action for the rehabilitation procedure under international law. Conversely, when it comes to war, a man-made disaster, the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols set up the way of response for those involved and affected. Evidently, after a catastrophe a recovery process follows. Still, the rehabilitation procedure can prove out to be pretty complicated matter to handle competently. There is no perfect recipe for addressing a disaster, given that an effective response requires an exceedingly meticulous combination of national, regional, bilateral and multilateral accordance at both the theoretical and practical level.<sup>22</sup> Since disasters can happen at any place and any time, they are impossible to predict. What can be done though, when a disaster occurs is to act swifter and limit its damage. However, as other major disasters have shown, like the Japanese earthquake and tsunami in 2011, there is a clear lack of national legal frameworks for the prevention as well as the response to natural disasters, namely before and after a calamity strikes.

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<sup>20</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. *What is a disaster?* Retrieved from <https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/about-disasters/what-is-a-disaster/>, Further info: United Nations Statistics Division. (2008, May 19-23). *Natural Disasters UNSD Workshop on Environment Statistics*. Retrieved from [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/envpdf/UNSD\\_UNEP\\_ECOWAS%20Workshop/Session%2004-1%20Natural%20disasters%20\(UNSD\).pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/envpdf/UNSD_UNEP_ECOWAS%20Workshop/Session%2004-1%20Natural%20disasters%20(UNSD).pdf), United States Geological Survey. (2018). *Caribbean Tsunami and Earthquake Hazards Studies*.

Retrieved from [https://www.usgs.gov/centers/whcmssc/science/caribbean-tsunami-and-earthquake-hazards-studies?qt-science\\_center\\_objects=0#qt-science\\_center\\_objects](https://www.usgs.gov/centers/whcmssc/science/caribbean-tsunami-and-earthquake-hazards-studies?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects)

<sup>21</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2018). *Economic losses, poverty & disasters: 1998-2017*. Retrieved from <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/61119>, Further info: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Who we are*. Retrieved from <https://www.unisdr.org/who-we-are>

<sup>22</sup> DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. *Law of Disasters: Towards a Normative Framework in the Americas*. Retrieved from <http://www.oas.org/dsd/EnvironmentLaw/CaribbeanLegislationProject/Documents/idrl-amforum-oea.pdf>

Natural disasters can be so damaging that outside help is frequently needed. Yet again when it comes to catastrophes, there are no laws set in stone so as to regulate an action model for international assistance. Solely a few countries have incorporated disaster rules and regulations in their domestic law for outside aid. It should be noted still that a response to disasters entails delicate management given that it requires a multi-faceted approach. Due to this lack of a pattern of instructions, a set of guidelines was introduced by the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement (IFRC) so as to smooth the response of states and other auxiliary actors following a natural disaster. The “Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance” or simply known as the “IDRL Guidelines” were introduced as a result in 2007, aiming at states’ better preparedness without the often occurring national legal impediments. Even though the guidelines have acquired more competences over time they remain precisely what they state to be, merely recommendations plus not mandatory for any party. They simply stand as a model of advice for states on how to better prepare and react in case a natural disaster strikes devoid of needless internal legal delays.<sup>23</sup> The guidelines were also set up in order to provide better management on a few common emergent issues, such as aid efficiency and accountability. Since the IDRL Guidelines are merely voluntary, there is no direct effect onto the domestic law of states parties that obliges them to incorporate the Guidelines.<sup>24</sup>

### **UN ORGANISATIONS THAT DEAL WITH ASSISTANCE**

Since the IDRL Guidelines are merely voluntary, other actors are in sight within the international community that can assist in aid and relief deliverance; international organisations, international institutions as well as INGOs that are responsible for solely providing humanitarian assistance. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is in command of ensuring a consistent response to emergencies such as natural disasters. In addition, OCHA manages the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). CERF is one of the fastest and most efficient ways for humanitarian aid to reach those affected by armed conflicts and disasters. It is able to provide immediate funding globally for life-saving occurrences, while its financial support comes from yearly voluntary funding. Other UN entities such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) take the front seat in supplying humanitarian aid. The World Health Organization (WHO) alternatively,

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<sup>23</sup> United Nations University. (2011, April 29). *Natural Disasters and Human Security*. Retrieved from <https://unu.edu/publications/articles/natural-disasters-and-human-security.html>, Further info: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. *IDRL Guidelines*. Retrieved from <https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/idrl/idrl-guidelines/>, Peace Palace Library. (2017, September 14). Retrieved from <https://www.peacepalacelibrary.nl/2017/09/natural-disasters-and-international-law/>

<sup>24</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. *International disaster response laws, rules and principles (IDRL)*. Retrieved from <https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-law/about-disaster-law/international-disaster-response-laws-rules-and-principles/>

addresses public health issues. In the wake of a disaster, there are numerous who are in grave need of health care services. Thus, under the umbrella of the UN, WHO is responsible in health emergencies for deciding on the agenda, the management, and setting norms and standards on health matters.

### **UN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE APPROACH**

Acknowledging the need to contribute to disasters' response and recovery process, the UN established their own mechanism that deals with disasters so as to provide humanitarian assistance to governments in need once these governments request assistance. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is the UN mechanism that synchronizes all related humanitarian activities under its umbrella. Typically, when a government elevates an assistance request a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team (UNDAC) is dispatched within the first 12 to 24 hours after the disaster so as to estimate the damage and the needs of the inflicted. At the same time UNDAC try to create strong links between the country, regional and international response levels.

Typically, the emergency humanitarian assistance process is composed by the phases of response, rehabilitation and recovery.<sup>25</sup> Depending on the scale of the disaster, there can be miscalculation and speeding up of the whole preparation and response process. In any case, the rest of the model proceeds accordingly. In response to a disaster an initial emergency relief phase takes place at the struck location. The emergency phase typically proceeds for the first ten days after the sudden disaster and its task is to distinguish the groups or individuals most vulnerable in consequence of the disaster and cover their basic needs of food, water, shelter and medical care. Disaster response does not only take place at the field but at the regional and headquarter levels too. At each level a different individual is in charge, the Resident and/or Humanitarian Coordinator at the field is liaising with the local government and the international aid team. This posting also forms the Humanitarian Country Team and is composed of humanitarian actors such as the UN agencies, the Red Cross, NGOs and others whose aim is to lead the humanitarian response as a concrete strategic body. The Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs stands as the Emergency Relief Coordinator at the headquarters and is liable for the collective response of the international humanitarian community. In the possibility of an earthquake-caused disaster the Urban Search and Rescue Teams (USAR) are called in to give a hand. A disaster response also requires funds. Funding comes from the Humanitarian Country Team that based on speedy assessments on urgent needs it forms a Flash Appeal. In turn, the Flash

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<sup>25</sup> UN-Spider. *Emergency and Disaster Management*. Retrieved from <http://www.un-spider.org/risks-and-disasters/emergency-and-disaster-management>

Appeal aims to outline the crucial resources for the funding of the emergency relief phase. In case the crisis persists a Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) may subsequently follow.<sup>26</sup>

Concerning the humanitarian assistance provision in natural disasters, in accordance with the UNGA Resolution 46/182, the UN system for humanitarian assistance needs to respect the sovereignty of States -that is in line with the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore humanitarian assistance ought to be provided with the consent of the affected State and in principle on the basis of an appeal by the affected State as well. Thus territorial integrity of States is fully respected by the UN while the affected state has the primary role of action in emergency situations.<sup>27</sup>

Other non-UN entities such as the IFRC lead humanitarian organizations in disasters as well. OCHA is responsible for the gathering of figures, organisation and coordination of emergency relief as well as for the monitoring of the humanitarian funding. Under its mandate OCHA is able to take initiative and thus lead on assistance-related UN agencies. Still disasters are emergencies that require tremendous coordination. For a cohesive response OCHA has in its disposal multipurpose disaster response tools. In need of better coordination, fewer gaps and less overlaps the Cluster Approach was introduced as a new humanitarian coordination system in 2005. The Approach consists of eleven clusters in total. What is more, the Cluster Approach is employed in conflicts and natural disasters -save for refugee crises. The Clusters are comprised of groups of UN and non-UN humanitarian organisations that focus on the main sectors of humanitarian action, e.g. food, shelter and health and aim at their enhanced cooperation. Every Cluster has clear responsibilities for management under the IASC. It should also be noted that the Cluster Approach is activated in cases where the disaster is that immense that surpasses the capacity of the local government to tackle it therefore a much superior force is needed.

UN-related humanitarian assistance organisations that contribute in the Cluster Approach are the UNPD in the Early Recovery Cluster, the WHO in Health, UNHCR in Protection, Shelter, Camp Coordination and Management and WFP is included in Food Security, Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Clusters.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Roles and Responsibilities of the United Nations System in Disaster Management. *UN Legal*. Retrieved from [https://legal.un.org/ilc/sessions/61/pdfs/english/pop\\_ocha.pdf](https://legal.un.org/ilc/sessions/61/pdfs/english/pop_ocha.pdf), For further info: OCHA. *What is the Consolidated Appeal Process?*. Retrieved from <https://www.unocha.org/cap>, For further info: UN-SPIDER. *The UN and Disaster Management*. Retrieved from <http://www.un-spider.org/risks-and-disasters/the-un-and-disaster-management>

<sup>27</sup> General Assembly resolution 46/182, *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations*, A/RES/46/182 (19 December 1991), available from <https://undocs.org/A/RES/46/182>.

<sup>28</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2012, June). *OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Principles*. Retrieved from [https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples\\_eng\\_June12.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples_eng_June12.pdf), For further info: Humanitarian response. *Clusters*. Retrieved from <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/coordination/clusters>, United Nations. *Deliver Humanitarian Aid*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/deliver-humanitarian-aid/>, United Nations and the Rule of Law. *Humanitarian Assistance*. Retrieved from

## CLUSTER APPROACH ON PAKISTAN

The Cluster Approach was put to use for the first time in October 2005, the same year the system was inaugurated, in order to counter the effects of the earthquake of Kashmir in Pakistan. The first ever cluster approach was deemed successful save for the numerous inside miscoordinations. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee whose role is to coordinate UN inter-agency forums, policy improvement and decision-making issued a report where it pointed out numerous omissions of behalf of the cluster approach. ActionAid as well as the IASC issued in February 2006 an evaluation and a report in August 2007 respectively in which they raised several issues under review that could ameliorate the process future-wise.<sup>29</sup>

The response to the disaster was deemed effective as a general rule in contrast to the internal and external cluster coordination. As a result numerous issues ought to be tackled for an enhanced internal coordination that will save precious time, will decrease bureaucracy and preserve funds. To begin with, in line with the reporting actors, structural issues need to be addressed starting with a clear illustration of the clusters' function so that each member of staff will be filled in with everyone's role, responsibilities and decision-making capacity. Voices also called for more inclusion on the whole pattern of theory and practice implementation to which all participating actors should be included, accounted for and treated as equals and not as secondary or implementing organisations. Another apparent distinction that needs to be made for future purposes is between the cluster leads and the heads of agencies on their respective duties. To be specific, a depiction of who gets to do what in terms of planning, decision-making and implementing in disaster relief operations is crucial. There was also an issue with representatives of donor agencies. Their role was somewhat ambiguous for example whether or not they should attend meetings or even express an opinion. Therefore representatives' role should be clarified and also encouraged to attend cluster meetings. What is more, back then the media did not have the reach they have today. Nevertheless ActionAid called for further media outreach so that they can be utilized in a way that will spread awareness regarding clusters' activities. On the subject of the local cooperation with the international actors the Pakistani government contributed immensely to the clusters' approach success by its readiness to assist in the

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<https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/thematic-areas/international-law-courts-tribunals/humanitarian-assistance/>, OCHA. *What is the Cluster Approach?*. Retrieved from <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach>, UNHCR. *Cluster Approach (IASC)*. Retrieved from <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/61190/cluster-approach-iasc>

<sup>29</sup> ActionAid International. (2007, August 1). *The Evolving UN Cluster Approach in the Aftermath of the Pakistan Earthquake: an NGO perspective*. Retrieved from <https://actionaid.org/publications/2007/evolving-un-cluster-approach-aftermath-pakistan-earthquake-ngo-perspective>, Further info on: IASC. (2006, February 10-20). *Application of the IASC Cluster Approach in the South Asia Earthquake*. Retrieved from [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/E69F5D6E53A714B085257837005D5426-Full\\_Report.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/E69F5D6E53A714B085257837005D5426-Full_Report.pdf)



process and its eagerness to circulate important facts and figures for the progression of the entire undertaking.<sup>30</sup>

However, the international actors taking part in such a feat are abundant hence a proper management of them all is required. Each cluster is comprised of scores of organisations and a cluster's outcome is dependent on the participatory organisations' constructive collaboration. Additionally, the local societies' contribution in the entire process was minimal. For that reason the empowerment of local democratic structures by the clusters should take place so that they can assist in any way needed, either in dissemination of information, distribution of goods or in providing health services. A further grave issue was that of continuance. It was clear that after the cluster approach would be culminated there was no plan in sight that would retain the path that was laid out with tremendous effort. A clear exit strategy ought to be laid out from the beginning so that the reins of rehabilitation will be able to be passed on to the local authorities while providing as much information and capacity-building as possible. The participation of Pakistani NGOs was rather low. Steps should be taken so that local NGOs are encouraged to attend cluster meetings in view of the fact that in this way they may monitor the process of reconstruction. An additional matter that rose to an object of disdain was that of the use of local language. It was reported by ActionAid that throughout the meetings no interpreters were present that spoke Urdu an act that resulted into the misconception of activities from the side of the local population. The presence of interpreters at meetings would have enabled citizens and local groups to truly engage with the process in a culturally respectful and appropriate way. What is more, more non-UN agencies need to participate into the whole cluster approach so that the voices heard can be more diverse as well as culturally inclusive. Further involvement of non-UN organisations is therefore significant by means of outreach towards local NGOs for their involvement with cluster-wise doings.<sup>31</sup>

Evaluation and monitoring of projects reportedly occurred at a rather slow ratio. Omissions such as those led to an extra layer of bureaucracy, duplication, out of date information and overlap on cross-cutting issues. Better evaluation and monitoring, and enhanced cooperation between clusters can lead to zero duplication, minimised overlaps and overall less omissions. Last of all the means of information sharing need a thorough transition. Info ought to be particularly accurate otherwise it will unsurprisingly lead to miscommunication and that was the case in Pakistan. Since the dissemination of intelligence is relied on stakeholders' providence it needs to be tremendously up to date and extremely accurate.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibis.

<sup>31</sup> Street, A., Parihar, G., (2007, April). *The UN Cluster Approach in the Pakistan earthquake response: an NGO perspective*. Humanitarian Practice Network. Retrieved from

<https://odihpn.org/magazine/the-un-cluster-approach-in-the-pakistan-earthquake-response-an-ngo-perspective/>,

Further info on: ActionAid International. (2007). *The Evolving UN Cluster Approach in the Aftermath of the Pakistan Earthquake: an NGO perspective*. Retrieved from

[https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/doc\\_lib/234\\_1\\_un\\_cluster\\_approach.pdf](https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/doc_lib/234_1_un_cluster_approach.pdf),

IASC. (2006, February 10-20). *Application of the IASC Cluster Approach in the South Asia Earthquake*. Retrieved from

[https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/E69F5D6E53A714B085257837005D5426-Full\\_Report.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/E69F5D6E53A714B085257837005D5426-Full_Report.pdf)



For the fruition of such a feat mechanisms could be set up that would filter and double check stakeholders' activity areas as well as keep the figures up to date. Likewise, the formats in which the data are shared should be agreed beforehand for the reason that the various formats that were used in this case caused a lot of confusion in the entire progress. All in all there are still lessons that need to be learned from the implemented approach. The inter-cluster coordination specifically needs to go through numerous modifications. However, such an interwoven approach cannot be regarded as unsuccessful based on its first endeavor.<sup>32</sup>

The broad theoretical method relating to the cluster approach looked as though one was meticulously scrutinized and all set to be applied on any forthcoming disaster. The theoretical and practical parts were laid out in detail so that once on the field all actors would be aware of their responsibilities, line of authority and limitations. However there was no clear indication that the lessons taught by the first cluster attempt in Pakistan were indeed learned.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibis.

## **Chapter 2: The case of Haiti**

### **INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE PRIOR TO THE EARTHQUAKE**

Given the troublesome history of the island the UN and the ICRC were a few of the common dwellers of global governance that provided international assistance on Haiti decades ahead of the earthquake. Being no stranger to political instability, Haiti has been struggling to elect a stable government all throughout its contemporary history. Consecutive coup d'états, revolutions along with short term presidents ruling with an iron fist through human rights violations, vast corruption and excessive violence made the establishment of an ordinary and effective political regime impossible for the island state. What is more, given the extensive political disarray the country has faced numerous military occupations by the UN and the USA alike.

The UN would settle disputes and then depart after all issues had been dealt with accordingly while having set a path for the local government to follow. As tensions, corruption and political instability rose however the UN Security Council, having been asked for an intervention by means of a peacekeeping force, passed the resolution that would set up a UN Mission on the western part of the island. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1542 established a Mission to Haiti on 29 February 2004. The Mission or more commonly known as MINUSTAH is a French acronym of *Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haïti*, or simply called the United Nations Mission for stabilization in Haiti, was orchestrated for this sole purpose. Its primary goals were to sensitize, prevent and control AIDS/HIV, to welcome international financial institutions and donors, such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), to contribute and cooperate with the effort of ending all violations of human rights, establish a stable government and support the economic, social and institutional development of Haiti over the long term. In a nutshell its purpose was to orchestrate stability and security in the country. MINUSTAH composed of a civilian and a military component of 2,366 military personnel and 2,533 police, supported by international civilian personnel, local civilian staff and United Nations Volunteers.<sup>33 34</sup>

Initially the Mission was expected to last for several years. However, due to complex and unforeseen circumstances it lasted for 13 years, from 2004 until 2017. It is worth noting that MINUSTAH was replaced by another mission, MINUJUSTH, The United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti, which concluded on 15 October 2019. Between 2004, the time when the peacekeeping mission was established, and 2010, the time when the earthquake occurred, MINUSTAH struggled for effective control over Haiti given that the circumstances were far from fitting. MINUSTAH's task was rather difficult

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<sup>33</sup> Weisenfeld, P. E. Successes and Challenges of the Haiti Earthquake Response: The Experience of USAID. *Emory International Law Review*.

<https://www.geni.com/projects/United-Nations-Stabilisation-Mission-in-Haiti-Medal/39285>

<sup>34</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1542. S/RES/1542(2004) 30 April 2007. Retrieved 05-07-2019.

since it had to put an end to anarchy that had erupted in various zones plus to impose and maintain order over the country. Several factors that proved the establishment of order difficult were the armed gangs, the continued violence, the killings of peacekeepers, a severe food crisis along with an unyielding riot in 2008, destabilized government yet again as well as extreme weather phenomena like hurricanes which caused further damage. Due to these ongoing factors, the mandate of MINUSTAH kept getting renewed. At the same time the not so favorable criticism towards the mission's handling of delicate circumstances started assembling. MINUSTAH for instance was accused of standing by and not intervening when violence broke out in Cité Soleil, one of the most densely populated and impoverished neighborhoods of the capital. What is more, the Mission was accused of doing the exact opposite act of what it was called for. There are reports which refer to the UN personnel being involved in sexual abuse scandals, disrespecting human rights violations, but when acting on those violations collateral damage was of no importance to the Mission's success. In fact, the President at the time, René Préval, spoke out against MINUSHTAH in 2007, and stated that if his people were asked if they wanted the UN Mission on Haiti the answer would be unenthusiastic.

Difficult as the completion of the Mission was, Haiti had to face an unthought-of factor and that was the unforeseeable weather. The Republic of Haiti was and remains until today susceptible to extreme weather phenomena as its record confirms. Above all, Hispaniola, the whole island itself, as well as the whole Caribbean region is sitting on a seismically active geographical position making it truly liable to catastrophic earthquakes. Having been a frequent recipient of multiple tropical storms, floods, plus still recuperating from the 2008 hurricanes the Republic was set to face yet another grave challenge, the 7.0 scale earthquake.

## **EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

### **FRANCE**

In times of emergencies, good foreign and diplomatic relations do play a significant part in managing a disaster capably by means of exterior help. France as well as the United States of America (USA) are two states that have deeply rooted connections to Haiti. France and Haiti share a long lasting history tarnished by the memory of colonization, slave trade and slavery. Their intertwined heritage though shares common ideals based on the fundamental principles of freedom, equality and fraternity. The Franco-Haitian connection is strengthened by means of language. As a French colony, Haitians naturally speak a French based language, Haitian Creole, which is spoken mostly in French colonies. Only a small percent of the population speaks French while roughly 12 million people speak Creole in the

world, most of them Haitians.<sup>35</sup> France and Haiti have had a shaky relationship for centuries, ever since Haiti's colonization in 1492. Haitians declared independence in 1804 by fighting off the French and becoming the first black former slave republic in the world. In return for their newly established freedom the French king demanded compensation for financial losses. The Haitian government finally managed to pay the debt in 1947 but in doing so it truly hampered their prospect development.

Pertaining to their diplomatic relations, their inception dates back to 1825, when the King of France denounced his sovereignty over Haiti, formerly named Santo Domingo, and recognized its independence after the agreement of compensation between the two.<sup>36</sup> Following that momentous development, the path to diplomacy was laid out. An important landmark on their bilateral relations was the first ever visit of a French President; that of President Nicolas Sarkozy in 2010, following the catastrophic earthquake. During his visit, President Sarkozy promised €230 million to Haiti over its emergency and reconstruction process and proceeded into 2 rather fundamental motions; he canceled Haiti's debt to France and went as far as to acknowledge the long lasting ramifications of France's brutal colonization on the island nation.<sup>37</sup> What is more, the good will continued with the Haitian President Michel Martelly performing two official visits to Paris in 2014. Another significant beacon of advancement in their shared narrative was that of the first formal state visit of a French President to the Republic of Haiti in 2015 by former President Francois Hollande. Among President Hollande's statements one stood out regarding repaying a "moral debt" to the Haitian people.<sup>38</sup> He also pledged \$145 million for development projects to the state while a joint declaration was signed aiming to further partnership in education and training.<sup>39</sup> This accord was cemented all the more with the visit of the Haitian President Jovenel Moïse to the Elysée Palace in 2017.<sup>40</sup>

At the wake of the earthquake in Haiti France rushed to aid the prevailing chaos. The very next day, the French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs stated that France "expresses its complete solidarity" and immediately immobilized emergency resources.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> DeGraff, M., Ruggles, M. (2014, August 1). *A Creole Solution for Haiti's Woes*. New York Times. Retrieved from

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/02/opinion/a-creole-solution-for-haitis-woes.html>

<sup>36</sup> La France en Haïti. *La première ambassade française en Haïti*. Retrieved from

<https://ht.ambafrance.org/La-premiere-ambassade-francaise-en-Haiti>

<sup>37</sup> BBC. *Haiti promised €230m as Nicolas Sarkozy visits former colony*. Retrieved from

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/feb/17/sarkozy-haiti-visit>

<sup>38</sup> BBC. *Hollande promises to pay 'moral debt' to former colony Haiti*. Retrieved from

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/13/hollande-haiti-visit-france-former-colony>

<sup>39</sup> BBC. *French President Hollande pledges Haiti investment*. Retrieved from

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-32715493>

<sup>40</sup> La France en Haïti. *Visites recentes*. Retrieved from

<https://ht.ambafrance.org/Visites-recentes>

<sup>41</sup> The Telegraph. (2010, January 13). *Haiti earthquake: US and France rush to provide aid*. Retrieved from

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/centralamericaandthecaribbean/haiti/6978399/Haiti-earthquake-US-and-France-rush-to-provide-aid.html>

## U.S.A.

Haiti's bond with the United States (US) has an unending complexity and profundity of centuries. Their interconnection dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Bearing in mind their close proximity, it is to the US's advantage for Haiti to be democratically stable so that it can develop with strong institutions as well as embark on economic affairs by means of trade. The US has had its fair share of a role in Haiti's political and financial state. Their back-story consists mainly of external interventions leading to military occupations, aiming to democratic and armed forces restructures in addition to the provision of nutrition needs, financial and medical aid.

Pertaining to the foreign aid, Haiti has been an aid recipient provided by foreign benefactors, one of them being the U.S., for 20 years prior to the earthquake according to the Official Development Assistance (ODA) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).<sup>42</sup> For one the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID), whose aim is to support and strengthen the Haitian livelihood in all of its aspects, has achieved remarkable progress in the past decade.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the largest number of NGOs per-capita resides in Haiti, a lot of them American. However as many as the NGOs are, they operate outside the Haitian Government's framework and not within it. Therefore all the resources spent on their projects exclude needs' assessment by the national government, adding to the administration's difficulty to function.

The U.S. response to the earthquake's obliteration was "swift, coordinated and aggressive" by order of the U.S. President Barack Obama, pledging an initial \$100 million of aid to support emergency assistance, reconstruction and long-term development. A U.S. military response was dispatched within 24 hours after the disaster, restoring air traffic control, plus granting search and rescue missions in addition to performing emergency medical procedures.<sup>44</sup><sup>45</sup> Furthermore, at the request of President Obama a fund was established by two other former U.S. Presidents, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, so as to lead a major fundraising for Haiti's relief effort.<sup>46</sup>

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, CUBA, VENEZUELA

Haiti's geopolitical position can be deemed as rather intricate. Its bilateral relations with closer neighbors such as the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Venezuela have also had their

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<sup>42</sup> ReliefWeb. (2011, June). *Has Aid Changed? Channelling assistance to Haiti before and after the earthquake*. Retrieved from

[https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/has\\_aid\\_changed\\_en.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/has_aid_changed_en.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> USAID. (2017, March). *HAITI COUNTRY PROFILE*. Retrieved from

[https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/FINAL\\_Haiti\\_Country\\_Profile\\_March\\_2017\\_0.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/FINAL_Haiti_Country_Profile_March_2017_0.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> Margesson, R. Taft-Morales, M. (2010, February, 2). *Haiti Earthquake: Crisis and Response*. Congressional Research Service. Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41023.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Obama White House. *Haiti Earthquake Relief*. Retrieved from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/haitiearthquake>

<sup>46</sup> Phillips, M. (2010, January 16). *The Clinton Bush Haiti Fund*. *Obama White House*. Retrieved from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2010/01/16/clinton-bush-haiti-fund>

ups and downs in financial, trade and political affairs. Located east of Cuba, Haiti is situated on the eastern part of the Hispaniola island while the Dominican Republic lies on the western part. Their relations have been rather rocky to say the least however in a time of grave need the Dominican Republic was the first country to send aid to the struck Haiti with emergency and medical assistance, humanitarian aid and logistics support.<sup>47</sup> Additionally, Cuba was one of the first responders after the disaster sending medical personnel, while Venezuela pledged more than \$2 billion in humanitarian aid and also canceled Haiti's debt.<sup>48</sup>

### **THE AFTERMATH OF THE EARTHQUAKE**

On 12 January 2010 an earthquake of 7.0 magnitude struck Haiti. A tremor of such scale translates into an undeniably major class earthquake that causes exceptionally serious damage whereas it was the biggest quake the country experienced for the past two centuries. It was also the biggest catastrophe in the Western hemisphere's history.<sup>49</sup> The epicenter of the earthquake was by and large the city Léogâne and the capital of Haiti, Port-au-Prince. The quake hit approximately 25 km west of the capital, but also damaged a few other cities in close proximity. What is more, the tremor had a rather unusual 35 second duration which was more than enough to change the country's course and destabilize it for the next decade. The Dominican Republic in the East was also slightly affected but not nearly as harsh as the west part of the island. Thus, the Dominicans were mostly left unscathed from the quake but not from its socio-economic effects. Up until 24 January 52 aftershocks took place, while some of them reached magnitudes as high as 5.9.<sup>50</sup> The huge scale quake and its aftershocks generated a tsunami two weeks after the devastation. It was a rather

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<sup>47</sup> White, S., Mendelson Forman, J. (2011, November 16). The Dominican Response to the Haiti Earthquake. *CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES*. Retrieved from <https://www.csis.org/analysis/dominican-response-haiti-earthquake>

<sup>48</sup> Wyss, J. (2010, July 10). Venezuela leads the world in earthquake relief. *The Canada-Haiti Information Project*. Retrieved from <https://canada-haiti.ca/node/448>

<sup>49</sup> Earthquake Magnitude Scale and Classes. *UPSeis*. Retrieved from <http://www.geo.mtu.edu/UPSeis/magnitude.html>

Further info on: Haiti earthquake: Day by day. (2010, January 24). *BBCNews*. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8465266.stm>,

Caribbean's earthquake prone. (2010, January 14). *BBCCaribbean*. Retrieved from [http://www.bbc.co.uk/caribbean/news/story/2010/01/100114\\_quake.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/caribbean/news/story/2010/01/100114_quake.shtml) ,

Weisenfeld, P. E. Successes and Challenges of the Haiti Earthquake Response: The Experience of USAID. *Emory International Law Review*. Retrieved from <http://law.emory.edu/eilr/content/volume-25/issue-3/symposium/haiti-earthquake-experience-usaid.html>

<sup>50</sup> As Haiti mourns quake survivor found in rubble. *New York Daily Times*. Source accessed 12/07/19, not accessible anymore.

[https://web.archive.org/web/20110427015403/http://www.newyorkdailytimes.com/news/story/y/75005\\_as-haiti-mourns-quake-survivor-found-in-rubble.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20110427015403/http://www.newyorkdailytimes.com/news/story/y/75005_as-haiti-mourns-quake-survivor-found-in-rubble.htm) 12/7/19, Further info on:

Pallardy, R. 2010 Haiti earthquake. *Britannica*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/event/2010-Haiti-earthquake>

undersized but lethal tsunami which claimed merely three lives but swallowed nearby buildings in the south coast areas of the capital.<sup>51</sup>

The damages in lives and infrastructure were beyond gigantic. It is estimated that in average three million people were affected by the earthquake. For a country whose population was 10.4 million at the time, 3 million accounts to 20% of its entire population, quite a high percentage for those affected. What is more, the death toll was estimated to 230.000 while 300.000 others were injured. A total of 1,5 million inhabitants were displaced due to the quake just as 600.000 fled the capital to live with family in other cities or left towards the eastern neighboring country.<sup>52</sup>

In the same way, the destruction and damage in buildings was enormous and exceptionally severe, as a lot of crucial administrative buildings for the basic operation of the state were struck by the quake. To begin with, the Presidential Palace, the official residence of the Haitian President, was harshly hit as parts of its ceiling caved in along with whole floors. It should be noted that the President at the time, René Prével, was not among the casualties since he was not inside the palace during the quake.<sup>53</sup> The Haitian Parliament, 14 out of 16 in total ministries, the Cathedral of Port-au-Prince and the national penitentiary were also particularly badly hit, killing as a result the Archbishop, the opposition leader and allowing in the process prisoners to break out of their confinement. To make things worse, the United Nations Headquarters of the Mission for Stabilization in Haiti /MINUSTAH collapsed killing along with it the Mission's Chief. Hence, the Mission was left headless as well as without headquarters. In a broader aspect the disaster left tens of thousands dead or trapped under rubbles, buildings totally or partially destroyed and the infrastructure largely inoperable. The search for survivors ended nearly two weeks after the quake while the usage of mass graves was the standard way of disposing of bodies given that the morgues were jam-packed.<sup>54</sup>

It is worth mentioning at this point that the pre-earthquake conditions, such as the longstanding extreme highs of poverty along with the literally weak governmental institutions contributed to the proliferation of loss of life and the heavy destruction of infrastructure. More to the point, Haiti had a total lack of building codes.<sup>55</sup> Having witnessed numerous extreme weather phenomena for centuries in addition to the Haitians not having previously reinforced their urban settlements against those phenomena it comes as a natural consequence that buildings would collapse as soon as those weather phenomena would reappear.<sup>56</sup> A central factor that contributed to the rapid collapse of the Haitian

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<sup>51</sup> Gill, V. (2010, February 25). Lessons to be learned from Haiti's tsunami. *BBCNews*.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/8536561.stm>

<sup>52</sup> Haiti quake death toll rises to 230.000. *BBCNews*. Retrieved from  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8507531.stm>

<sup>53</sup> Pallardy, R. 2010 Haiti earthquake. *Britannica*. Retrieved from  
<https://www.britannica.com/event/2010-Haiti-earthquake>

<sup>54</sup> Associated Press. (2010, January 13). Haiti earthquake: UN staff killed as rescue effort continues. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/centralamericaandthecaribbean/haiti/6981530/Haiti-earthquake-UN-staff-killed-as-rescue-effort-continues.html>

<sup>55</sup> Pallardy, R. 2010 Haiti earthquake. *Britannica*. Retrieved from  
<https://www.britannica.com/event/2010-Haiti-earthquake>

<sup>56</sup> The U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. (2013). RAND Corporation. Retrieved from

buildings was sadly the local construction techniques. Building codes were not applied nor respected. A total lack of governmental building regulations signaled the defeat of law and order and thus led to the harm or death of hundreds of thousands of people. The state had failed to provide security for its population, a fact that depicts the state's inability to function efficiently. In some states such inaptitude is considered a form of crime or violence on behalf of the state itself. Hence the security of its people seemed to be of no substance by the government of Haiti. Such a liability falls deeply within the policy of the state which is deemed by the international community as profoundly corrupt and equipped with weak institutions.<sup>57</sup> What is truly tragic in this particular natural disaster is that the country was struggling in all aspects even before its pre-earthquake era for centuries. For instance, there was not enough clean water or sanitation for everyone who lived in rural or urban areas. Having suffered the biggest blow yet to their country, Haitians had to recreate and rebuild what was barely functional.<sup>58</sup>

The earthquake of 2010 triggered a landslide of events for Haiti for many years to come. Haiti, an island country that has been depended on aid from other states since its inception was once more in even greater need for humanitarian assistance. What complicated the deliverance and actualization of aid was the constant occurrence of new incidents over Haiti where every once in a while a new predicament popped up. On top of the previous occurrences that were already under management, new incidents had to be handled efficiently as well whereas every single one of the incidents demanded to be dealt with one hundred percent, each with different means and approach. Therefore, additional aid and assistance was more or less constantly required so as to provide further aid, restoration and stabilization. Within the same year, in October 2010 a cholera outbreak broke out in Haiti. It was the first large-scale outbreak of such disease in modern time which claimed more than 10.000 lives and its eradication proved very difficult to handle. Further tropical storms and hurricanes followed in 2012.

Following the disaster the remaining officials of the government of Haiti sent an urgent request for assistance. The US President at the time, Barack Obama, replied and promised a "whole-of-government" and ordered an immediate swift, coordinated, and aggressive response to the catastrophe under the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).<sup>59</sup> The international community wanted to prevent the looming chaos after the country's collapse. Consequences of the earthquake started coming into the surface immediately with harrowing acts like looting and stealing becoming the new norm. In the direct aftermath of

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[https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR300/RR304/RAND\\_RR304.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR300/RR304/RAND_RR304.pdf) ,  
Further info on: Weisenfeld, P. E. Successes and Challenges of the Haiti Earthquake Response: The Experience of USAID. *Emory International Law Review*. Retrieved from  
<http://law.emory.edu/eilr/content/volume-25/issue-3/symposium/haiti-earthquake-experience-usaid.html>

<sup>57</sup> Bolton, M. (2011). Human Security After State Collapse: Global Governance In Post-Earthquake Haiti. *LSE*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/globalGovernance/publications/workingPapers/haiti.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> RESPONSE TO THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN HAITI. (2010). IASC. Retrieved from  
[https://www.ifrc.org/docs/IDRL/Haiti/IASC-Haiti\\_6Mos\\_Review\\_USA-2010-005-1.pdf](https://www.ifrc.org/docs/IDRL/Haiti/IASC-Haiti_6Mos_Review_USA-2010-005-1.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> The U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. (2013). RAND Corporation. Retrieved from  
[https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR300/RR304/RAND\\_RR304.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR300/RR304/RAND_RR304.pdf)



the quake, responses to appeals for humanitarian aid materialized. Already on the next day of the disaster, aid started arriving. The USAID arrived the very next day to Haiti while it officially commenced its work on the 14 January 2010. USAID led the American effort to Haiti designed for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief for the long-term. Along with it, numerous U.S. Government agencies (USG) and interagency partners, international organizations, NGOs, foreign militaries and volunteers contributed to laying the groundwork for Haiti's overall reconstruction. The US was one out of the total 129 countries who sent supplies and personnel, under the strong leadership of the UN. <sup>60</sup>

The arrival of help however was not an easy task. Due to the brutal force of the quake, the electricity power system had collapsed but was repaired not long after. However, the most effortless and basic means of communication were inoperable. Airports, seaports or the simplest route of transport, roads, were altogether filled with rubbles or were seriously underperforming. Furthermore, a wave of confusion and delay gathered when it came to the management of aid and rescue efforts due to the aforementioned circumstances regarding for example the general air traffic congestion in properly prioritizing flights during the very early on part of relief work. Consequently, the distribution and delivery of first aid items took place gradually all over Haiti. <sup>61</sup>

The number one goal of the humanitarian aid was to address and provide the most essential needs such as water, food, sanitation and shelter for the internal displaced persons ("IDPs"). Upon reaching their destination, the humanitarian organisations realized that the damage was much wider than what they visualised. Experienced as the personnel were, they faced a different type of catastrophe this time. What was distinct and unprecedented in this natural disaster was the fact that the earthquake had struck an urban area and not a rural one, destroying everything in its path thus complicating the reach of those in need inside habituated regions. Furthermore, earthquakes usually hit rural areas, meaning that the staff sent to support was experienced in rural areas of emergencies. Organisations' approach therefore had to be restructured, a technique that cost precious time.

In the wake of the obliteration it was as if a whole capital, let alone a country had to be restructured from scratch. It was obvious that a multi-faceted approach was required. Densely populated as Port-au-Prince was, pieced together with relatively bad infrastructure, the earthquake made it all the more difficult for organisations to reach people and certain parts of the city. With every one of the governmental buildings damaged or largely destroyed, the administrative personnel was heavily decimated due to deaths and injuries, while the state was incapable of rendering an effective response at a local or national level

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<sup>60</sup> Weisenfeld, P. E. Successes and Challenges of the Haiti Earthquake Response: The Experience of USAID. *Emory International Law Review*. Retrieved from <http://law.emory.edu/eilr/content/volume-25/issue-3/symposium/haiti-earthquake-experience-usaid.html>

<sup>61</sup> Hengst, B. (2010, January 19). Aftermath of Haiti Earthquake: The Will to Survive in a Disaster Zone. Spiegel International Online. Retrieved from <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/aftermath-of-haiti-earthquake-the-will-to-survive-in-a-disaster-zone-a-672655.html>, Further info on: Pallardy, R. 2010 Haiti earthquake. *Britannica*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/event/2010-Haiti-earthquake>

at the initial stages of recovery. Organisations which existed on Haiti prior to the earthquake were also unable of providing assistance due to losses or injuries of staff and destruction of bases as well as homes, a fact that limited their effectiveness over the initial response phase.

### **HAITI'S REACTION AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE**

The very next day of the disaster, 13 January 2010, the Haitian President René Prével called the devastation caused by the earthquake as “unimaginable” and compared the prevailing circumstances to a wartime bombardment.<sup>62</sup> Additionally President Prével appealed to the international community for international assistance.<sup>63</sup> Permanent Representative of Haiti to the United Nations Léo Mérorès also called for urgent aid and expressed his gratitude towards the international actors for their unwavering support and response.<sup>64</sup>

In turn the international community rushed to contribute in any way possible. A global relief effort was launched without delay. The General Assembly of the United Nations called upon its Member States to provide swift and adequate support to Haiti in its early relief, medium- and long-term recovery, rehabilitation and development.<sup>65</sup> A Flash Appeal was issued on 15 January 2010 by OCHA for the emergency assistance of the initial six-month period.<sup>66</sup> This particular Flash Appeal was based to an unusual large degree on remote sensing and estimation and not on approximate or concrete confirmation. As a result of the magnitude of the calamity, circumstances were rather unclear and assessments were still taking place for days after urgent assessments had already been made. Originally, 3 million people were believed to be affected by the disaster, be it either wounded, dead, trapped under rubbles or missing, at the same time as infrastructure was hit to an extent where no bridges, roads, airports, electricity or water supply rendered unavailable. Therefore, due to the scarcity of information and approximate the Flash Appeal required \$575 million for the early planning of rehabilitation. UN Special Envoy to Haiti President Bill Clinton arrived on the island to

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<sup>62</sup> Haiti earthquake: President Preval says country like a war zone. (2010, January 16). *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/centralamericaandthecaribbean/haiti/7003082/Haiti-earthquake-President-Preval-says-country-like-a-war-zone.html>

<sup>63</sup> LIBRARY OF CONGRESS WASHINGTON DC CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE . (2010). *Haiti Earthquake: Crisis and Response*. DEFENSE TECHNICAL INFORMATION CENTER. Retrieved from <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a513517.pdf>

<sup>64</sup> United Nations, Department of Public Information, *General Assembly Expresses Solidarity, Support for Haiti after Massive Earthquake; Appeals for Speedy, Sustainable Aid for Relief, Early Recovery, Reconstruction*. GA/10913, 22 JANUARY 2010, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2010/ga10913.doc.htm>.

<sup>65</sup> General Assembly resolution 64/250, *Humanitarian assistance, emergency relief and rehabilitation in response to the devastating effects of the earthquake in Haiti*, A/RES/64/250 (30 April 2010), available from [undocs.org/en/A/RES/64/250](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/64/250).

<sup>66</sup> World Health Organisation. *UN Flash Appeal – Health*. Retrieved from [http://www9.who.int/hac/crises/hti/appeal/un\\_flash\\_appeal\\_health/en/](http://www9.who.int/hac/crises/hti/appeal/un_flash_appeal_health/en/)

coordinate and assist in relief efforts.<sup>67</sup> Additionally, the UN launched the biggest aid appeal has ever been for a natural disaster on 18 February 2010 calling for the expanded amount of \$1.44 billion for the early reconstruction process of Haiti.<sup>68</sup>

Haiti's case is unique simply because of its colonial past which renders the state a product of colonial economy plus due to its proneness to natural disasters. Being a French colony meant that Haiti was bound to come to terms with its colonist by meeting their economic demands on exporting raw materials from their land, such as coffee and sugar. Once liberated through their revolution against the French they were called to pay reparations that reach \$21 billion today but in doing so it truly hampered their prospect development. Apart from the financial factor the geographical one also endangers Haiti's status quo. Being a recipient of frequent natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes they truly weaken the state's ability to recuperate. Therefore as soon as the quake occurred it increased but also tested the vulnerability of an already fragile state.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> UN News. (2010, February 5). *Bill Clinton arrives in Haiti to help with UN post-quake aid effort*. Retrieved from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2010/02/328652-bill-clinton-arrives-haiti-help-un-post-quake-aid-effort>

<sup>68</sup> UN News. (2010, February 18). *Haiti: UN launches largest-ever appeal for natural disaster*. Retrieved from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2010/02/329882-haiti-un-launches-largest-ever-appeal-natural-disaster>

<sup>69</sup> Rodney, W. (1985). *The Colonial economy*. UNESCO Digital Library. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000064472>, Further info on: Sperling, D. (2017, December 6). *In 1825, Haiti Paid France \$21 Billion To Preserve Its Independence -- Time For France To Pay It Back*. Forbes. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2017/12/06/in-1825-haiti-gained-independence-from-france-for-21-billion-its-time-for-france-to-pay-it-back/#52b4eef6312b>

## **Chapter 3: Application of humanitarian theory to practice**

### **DELIVERY OF HUMANITARIAN AID**

Mere hours after the grave disaster, help started arriving. Hundreds of international organisations started landing to join those already on the island prior to the catastrophe in an attempt to contend with the deadliest earthquake of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The international community had no idea what they were going to come up against. Upon reaching their destination, international organisations, volunteers, INGOs and countless other actors realized that the occupying conditions were far from the common standard for such disasters. Humanitarian actors were experienced in disasters struck in urban areas not rural, let alone in obliterated cities. Port-au-Prince was as if it was bombarded a fact that required an extra bit of time so that the humanitarian aid could install their camps in a danger free zone. A whole capital let alone a whole country was swarmed in debris. The state was barely functional ahead of the tragedy but with the arrival of a disaster of such magnitude the living conditions on the island were deeply exacerbated. It was as if a whole country had to be built from scratch. Humanitarian assistance actors faced an impossible situation; they had to rebuild an disintegrating state that was already broken prior to the earthquake, meaning that double the amount of work had to be done.

The headquarters of the humanitarian actors were set up in the UN Logistics base, just outside the capital. Upon their arrival each and every one of the humanitarian actors got to work. The initial phase of emergency response which is to save lives, provide food, water, medicine, sanitation and shelter was initiated without delay plus effectively. OCHA commenced setting up through dividing the participating organisations into their respective Clusters and later than that, the plan for the long-term rehabilitation process. The U.S. established the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC) in an attempt to lead the reconstruction. This commission intended to incorporate and involve the civil society, the private sector and donors as well as aimed to ensure accountability and transparency and a platform where the Haitian desires will be heard. The Commission was also co-chaired by the Government of Haiti and the UN Special Envoy for Haiti, Bill Clinton.<sup>70</sup> Global governance was accountable for the decisions taking place from then on. Most of the aid was focused on the capital and nothing but a few sparse actors focused on the surrounding cities and nearby areas.

### **CLUSTER APPROACH ON HAITI**

OCHA's coordinating mechanism was established with the help of additional authorities. The grave need for collection of figures, analysis of data, followed by needs assessment and the dissemination of information on the part of communication in such chaotic circumstances reached the limits of the coordinating mechanism. Each cluster was delegated with a cluster

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<sup>70</sup> Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti. *Building Stability and Prosperity in Haiti Through Justice*. Retrieved from <https://www.ijdh.org/tag/interim-haiti-recovery-commission-ihrc/>

lead, incorporated by a UN organisation. To be precise, the Food cluster had as its lead party the World Food Program (WFP) while its sub-cluster Agriculture was under the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Camp coordination and Camp Management cluster were underneath the International Organization for Migration (IOM), while the Early Recovery cluster had the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as its lead. What is more the Education cluster was incorporated into the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund more commonly known as UNICEF and the Save the Children a NGO with global presence. The Emergency Telecommunication cluster was under the umbrella of the World Food Program (WFP) and the World Vision International (WVI). Accordingly, the Health cluster had as its leads the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) while the Logistics cluster was under the supervision of the World Food Program (WFP) and the Nutrition cluster under UNICEF. A broad cluster such as the Protection one was incorporated into the Human Rights Section of the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti or generally identified as MINUSTAH, its subcategories of Child Protection was naturally under UNICEF and the Gender-Based Violence under UNICEF/UNFPA. The Shelter cluster along with the non-food items were under the jurisdiction of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the IFRC while the WASH cluster which stands for water, sanitation and hygiene was under the leadership of UNICEF.<sup>71</sup>

However, since the clusters are merely used as information platforms in emergencies' immediate relief efforts and operate as locally pivotal contact stations for NGOs they have under no circumstance authority to issue directives. Their mandate stands on the subject of dissemination of information. Only national governments can draw programme line directives. Consequently the clusters cannot instruct agencies and organisations while their smooth coordination process is heavily relied on the goodwill of participating actors. Many were the NGOs that omitted attendance in cluster meetings where exchange of information and updates on commenced, completed, or discontinued projects were shared. As a result gaps emerged but were ultimately tackled though in a much later on instant. For that reason a chain of events of sub-function was unwillingly inaugurated by the same NGOs that had landed on the island to contribute to the smooth function of the rehabilitation process. For example there were no reports on if the previously announced projects were indeed put into action punctually or in reverse. The coordination of thousands in some cases NGOs in one cluster made the coordination an unfeasible task. Experienced staff was moved into different posts or even off the island, replacing it with inexperienced personnel that was in turn required to form vital decisions. Attendance in meetings was easier said than done bearing in mind the added predicaments such as the establishment of the UN base far away from the capital which as expected required means of transportation. The difficulty of

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<sup>71</sup> Razum, O. Stumpfenhorst, and M. Stumpfenhorst, R. *The UN OCHA cluster approach: gaps between theory and practice*. Journal of Public Health. (April 2011): 587–592. Retrieved from: [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Miriam\\_Stumpfenhorst/publication/251366413\\_The\\_UN\\_OCHA\\_cluster\\_approach\\_gaps\\_between\\_theory\\_and\\_practice/links/574b7dc008ae5c51e29eabca.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Miriam_Stumpfenhorst/publication/251366413_The_UN_OCHA_cluster_approach_gaps_between_theory_and_practice/links/574b7dc008ae5c51e29eabca.pdf), Further info on: Vinbury, N. *Cluster Approach: Gaps and shortcomings in UN coordination of humanitarian actors in post-earthquake Haiti and implications for policy concerns of the New Humanitarian school of thought*. Clark University. (December 2017). Retrieved from: [https://commons.clarku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1183&context=idce\\_masters\\_papers](https://commons.clarku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1183&context=idce_masters_papers)

getting to the meetings was incomed since the streets were filled with rubbles, aside from the inability on behalf of a number of NGOs to dispatch personnel for long hours to evidently endless hours to often daily meetings and without the much needed local contribution. Many NGOs found the meetings overcrowded and time-consuming and since many had different plans of action it was impossible to acquire a clear depiction of all their intended diverse activities.<sup>72</sup>

Another issue was that of the NGOs policies sidelining the local needs. They seemingly operated driven by their own gain and goals on predetermined needs. Vast attention was paid to the emergency relief phase, thus to the short term aid, but less so to the long-term re-development. Funds were disbursed for emergency relief however to a smaller extent were they allocated towards the subsequent phase. Many actors underlined the importance of improved communication, through timely feedback and regular progress reports between clusters as well as NGOs and the set up of an optimal information system for the distribution of facts and figures in a timely manner. Better budget allocation and more experienced staff were also echoed as criticism on behalf of parties involved.<sup>73</sup>

### **COORDINATION**

In the first few months after the obliteration it was reported that another looming chaos was taking place; that of aid coordination. Orchestrating a disaster relief under the current circumstances was thoroughly intricate and the steps that had to be followed were many. After a disaster the emergency relief response takes place, then the recovery phase takes over and finally the reconstruction.<sup>74</sup> But first a clear path of organisation with solid foundation had to be laid out. The Haitian governance system was still reeling from the catastrophe and its effort to assist in the damage was in endless flux. Furthermore, the international community faced numerous ups and downs in their efforts to provide aid. Agencies and NGOs were off performing their own agenda irrespective of their instructions. The personnel and staffing of UN agencies and NGOs changed repeatedly a fact that ended up dispatching inexperienced personnel to unfitting missions. The constant staff rotation in turn created even bigger problems of productivity than it solved. What is more, in the administrative line of work decisions were taken and then they were hastily changed without any prior notice, communication was mixed up too where emails and phone calls could not put through while proposals met dead ends due to the constant change of those liable at the top. The answer to this state of affairs is simple and in this case the phrase the more the merrier does not apply. The large number of diverse agencies involved with different mandates overlapping spiraled things out of control, duplicated services and created liability gaps. Furthermore the rapid need for staff assortment created misorganisation in picking the appropriate staff for such a mission. As it turned out there were cases in field missions where a quantity of groups were short of necessary knowledge

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>What is the Cluster Approach? Humanitarian response. Retrieved from <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach>

and practice. Various groups lacked experience in disaster struck areas, they had never to that point lived overseas and they had little to no prior familiarity with field missions. From all of these reports with clear evidence it can be assumed that the fitting staff was not picked for the right tasks. What is not understandable though is for what reason this inexperienced staff was sent to field missions and not kept at the base for administrative work and dispatch in its place a group with more expertise. It is unknown however which staff was available for whichever mission. Reports with actual results on the progress of humanitarian assistance actors started coming into view from 2011, more than a year after the calamity struck to be exact.<sup>75</sup>

### **FUNDING and SPENDING**

In the present day Haiti has been the recipient of approximately more than \$13,5 billion in humanitarian aid.<sup>76</sup> What remains unclear however is the amount of funds that the struck country has actually received. Until today the exact quantity of the entire sum that was indeed sent to Haiti is imprecise. It appears from reports that funds which were destined for Haiti did not actually reach Haiti even indirectly. The common belief that billions of dollars were sent straight up to the reeling country for relief aid is one that can be deemed as false. Billions were indeed sent for Haiti but not directly to the country itself. Even though Haiti was the focal point around which the whole axis was set up, it was by and large perceived and treated as the recipient of insignificant amounts. Only a small amount was sent directly to Haiti and characteristically enough in some cases no more than one percent of project funding was distributed to Haitian actors. On the other hand bigger amounts corresponded to global beneficiaries such as international aid agencies, outside governments, well-networked NGOs as well as for-profit companies whose subject of dealing was disasters. Such an action became the new norm on the island. Moreover the Haitian government, local companies and NGOs had no opinion on the manner the grants were spent.<sup>77</sup>

The funding model international organisations followed was rather obscure. One early example for instance with reference to the UN Special Envoy for Haiti where he reaffirmed in June 2011, one year and a half after the catastrophe –the time when funding was most needed- that from the \$2.4 billion committed for aid, which amount totaled from UN appeals, 34% of that amount was given to donors' civil and military units to be used for disaster response. Another 28% was conferred to UN and non-governmental agencies for specific UN projects while an additional 26% was granted to NGOs and private contractors. What is more the percentage that was left was divided into three measurements where 6% was given for in-kind services to recipients, 5% to the national and international Red Cross

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<sup>75</sup> Reitman, J. (2011 August 4) Beyond Relief: How the World Failed Haiti, *Rolling Stone*. Retrieved from <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/how-the-world-failed-haiti-20110804>

<sup>76</sup> Connor, T., Rappleye, H., Angulo, E. (2015 January 12). What Does Haiti Have to Show for \$13 Billion in Earthquake Aid?. *NBCNEWS*. Retrieved from <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/investigations/what-does-haiti-have-show-13-billion-earthquake-aid-n281661>

<sup>77</sup> Duplat, P., Parry, E. (2010 March 2). Haiti: From the Ground Up. *Refugees International*. Retrieved from <http://www.refugeesinternational.org/policy/field-report/haiti-ground>

societies and solely 1% was allocated to the Government of Haiti. Such a small amount is truly diminutive when taking into account the quantity of construction that had to be implemented for the entire rehabilitation of the state. Pertaining to the funds that Haiti received from the first UN appeal not a single Haitian NGO was involved in the funding while from the second UN appeal Haitian NGOs acquired in total four-tenths of 1% of its funds.<sup>78</sup>

Unfortunately the same pattern appeared to be followed by outside governments which donated money to Haiti. The U.S. for instance bears a striking example of the prevailing reality at the time. The U.S. had allocated roughly \$3 billion for immediate aid and reconstruction to Haiti two years after the disaster. It appears though that from the initial part of \$379 million most of that money was not headed even indirectly towards Haiti. The Associated Press, a U.S. not-for-profit news cooperative, went on record with a piece where it shed light on the situation. Since the earthquake occurred in January 2010 for each U.S. dollar that was bestowed to Haiti 33 cents were directly sent back to the U.S. so as to reimburse their military for being dispatched to provide assistance. Additionally 42 cents ended up in NGOs, private and public organisations such the UNWFP, Save the Children and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). What is more, less than one cent of each dollar was actually sent to the government of Haiti. Amounts like these are exceptionally low towards the local governing factor and can be deemed as degrading for the people in need and for the whole purpose and process of humanitarian assistance. Minimum dispatched funding and on top of that no opinion of the local Haitian authorities on how funding for projects intended for Haiti is spent amounted to the total sidelining of the Haitian actors. Accordingly the displeasure of Haitians towards the way they were treated started shaping up.<sup>79</sup>

Likewise, President Bill Clinton, the UN Special envoy to Haiti, affirmed that seven months after the commencement of the aid the IHRC had merely received 10% of its foreseen pledges.<sup>80</sup> On another note, in countless of cases the whole total of funding for specific projects was not used and instead solely a small amount was disbursed. Additionally, there were many rumors which supported that aiding organisations, international or non-governmental as well as Haitian institutions harnessed the unbelievably massive flows of money that were being distributed to their own advantage. It was estimated by June 2011 that \$1,6 billion -roughly \$155 per Haitian- for relief assistance was given to Haiti by international donors, and inside two years after the quake \$2 billion -roughly \$173 per Haitian- were funded to Haiti in recovery aid. However complains of inadequate funding or actual results started surmounting from the time where two years past the disaster one million people still lived in informal camps, the mass of ruins from destroyed buildings were still laying where they collapsed and a preventable cholera outbreak was swarming the

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<sup>78</sup> Office of the Special Envoy to Haiti. (2011). *Has Aid Changed? Channeling assistance to Haiti before and after the earthquake.*

<sup>79</sup> Associated Press. (2010, January 28). Haiti gov't getting little U.S. quake aid. *USA Today*. Retrieved from [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2010-01-27-Haiti-aid\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2010-01-27-Haiti-aid_N.htm)

<sup>80</sup> Bellerive, J.-M. , Clinton, B. ( 2010 July 11). Finishing Haiti's Unfinished Work. *N.Y. Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/12/opinion/12clinton-1.html?ref=haiti>.



country by killing thousands and affecting hundreds of thousands more.<sup>81</sup> Official reports of 2015 from the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) and the Haiti Advocacy Working Group (HAWG) on funding and spending figures contained incomplete data with many inconsistencies, no linkage between projects and outcomes, omissions and deficiencies thus making it impossible to know the accurate figures that were granted and spent.<sup>82</sup> Lastly, according to a report by the Center for Global Development merely 1% of more than \$9 billion in earthquake donations reached the Haitian government.<sup>83</sup>

## RECONSTRUCTION

Reconstruction reportedly proceeded at a rather slow pace. The International Red Cross report of December 2011 stated that in the immediate after effects of the quake 100.000 homes were entirely torn down and another 200.000 were seriously damaged. Additionally, 80 of rural houses had endured serious damage. Consequently 1.5 million Haitians which equals to 20% of the total local population were in imminent need of shelter. The humanitarian community took upon action and provided hundreds of thousands of tarpaulins (two per family) by three and a half months following the catastrophe, by the middle of May 2010. Small temporary shelters started being built without delay as homes were being repaired. The rate of shelter construction reached a propos 7.000 per month. However permanent and not temporary shelters were required for the effected population of 1.5 million people.<sup>84</sup>

An inspection of the first period of the international community's actions performed in April 2011 by the Office of the Inspector General of USAID which examined the said organisation's attempts to make available transitional housing. It was discovered that 22% of their set target had been accomplished accounting to 7.179 transitional shelters while some of those lodges were deemed as substandard. Out of the \$138 million pledged for shelter construction by USAID only \$38 were disbursed by January 1<sup>st</sup> 2011. An additional essential aspect of the largest grants issued by USAID was the fact that they derived from voluntary non-competitive submissions and ended up as rewards to foundations like the Cooperative Housing Foundation International, World Vision and Catholic Relief Services.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Office of the Special Envoy to Haiti. (2011). *Has Aid Changed? Channeling assistance to Haiti before and after the earthquake*. Further info on: Quigley, B., Ramanauskas, A. (2012, February 26). Haiti: Where is the Money? *UALR*. Retrieved from <https://ualr.edu/socialchange/2012/02/26/haiti-where-is-the-money/>

<sup>82</sup> Johnston, J. (2018, January 18). Where Does the Money Go? Eight Years of USAID Funding in Haiti. *CEPR*. Retrieved from <http://cepr.net/blogs/haiti-relief-and-reconstruction-watch/where-does-the-money-go-eight-years-of-usaid-funding-in-haiti>

<sup>83</sup> Ramachandran, V. Walz, J. (2013, January 14). Haiti's earthquake generated a \$9bn response – where did the money go? *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2013/jan/14/haiti-earthquake-where-did-money-go>

<sup>84</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. (2011). *An Evaluation of the Haiti Earthquake 2010 Meeting Shelter Needs: Issues, Achievements and Constraints* .

<sup>85</sup> Office of the Inspector General. (2011). *Audit of USAID's Efforts to Provide Shelter in Haiti*.

Nigel Fisher, the UN's humanitarian officer in Haiti was surprised by the atypical method of funds' management. He went on the record about his curiosity on what happened to the \$1.5 to \$2 billion the Red Cross and NGOs had received from public and government donations as well as on the complexity of tracing this sum of funds.<sup>86</sup>

The Clinton Bush Haiti Fund was formed in January 2010 by the two aforementioned former U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush in response to the request of then U.S. President Barack Obama. Its purpose was to assist in the rescue effort that was took place by collecting donations and grants. It raised more than \$50 million but none of it seemed to be addressed to its foreseen purpose. Instead some of this amount was used in luxurious hotel construction in the U.S.<sup>87</sup>

Approximately 2.5 million Haitians still require humanitarian assistance. Out of the 1.5 million people that were left displaced as a result of the earthquake and were later on moved to camps, 95% of them were moved by 2015. Many of them however are not placed in permanent housing but rather to temporary housing where their current facilities sometimes lack the equipment of electricity, running water and/or sanitation. As a result according to recent reports nowadays there are thousands of people still affected by the incorrect decisions in temporary housing. Accordingly, around 50.000 people still live in camps and makeshift encampments. Others less fortunate moved back to their damaged houses and subsist in deplorable conditions. Public institutions were built such as hospitals, schools and administrative buildings. The numbers of the constructed buildings however did not reach their prior set goal. The Red Cross has been under fire multiple times in charges of funds mismanagement. It was accused that out of nearly \$0.5 billion in donation funds it built solely 6 homes in Haiti while reportedly spending millions of dollars on unrelated purposes such as internal expenses, something the Red Cross has strongly refuted. Furthermore it was revealed that the Red Cross was not equipped with the necessary expertise to mount its own projects and thus it resulted in offering money to other groups in exchange of theirs construction skills. Haiti then again has had an exceptionally terrible decade where several natural disasters occurred. Further hurricanes in 2012 and again in 2016 and a subsequent earthquake in 2018 kept putting out of schedule the reconstruction process. Subsequently after each disaster the Haitians along with the international aid attempt to rebuild what was lastly destroyed.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Robles, F. (2011, January 9). Critics question funds for Haiti, *Miami Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/01/09/v-fullstory/2008079/critics-question-funds-raised.html>

<sup>87</sup> Quigley, B., Ramanauskas, A. (2012, February 26). Haiti: Where is the Money? *UALR*. Retrieved from <https://ualr.edu/socialchange/2012/02/26/haiti-where-is-the-money/>

<sup>88</sup> Connor, T., Rappleye, H., & Angulo, E. (2015, January 12). What Does Haiti Have to Show for \$13 Billion in Earthquake Aid?. *NBCNews*. Retrieved from <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/investigations/what-does-haiti-have-show-13-billion-earthquake-aid-n281661>. Further info on: Cook, J. (2017, January 12). 7 Years After Haiti's Earthquake, Millions Still Need Aid. *Huffpost*. Retrieved from [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/haiti-earthquake-anniversary\\_n\\_5875108de4b02b5f858b3f9c](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/haiti-earthquake-anniversary_n_5875108de4b02b5f858b3f9c), ProPublica. (2015, June 4). Red Cross Built Exactly 6 Homes For Haiti With Nearly Half A Billion Dollars In Donations. *Huffpost*. Retrieved from [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/red-cross-haiti-report\\_n\\_7511080](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/red-cross-haiti-report_n_7511080)

## INCLUSION

Another essential matter was that of inclusion. As many as the NGOs were, -around 12.000 in the beginning of the aid- they used solely one language, English. Most of Haitians speak Creole, a sort of idiom of colonial French and only a small number spoke English. Since the international language of those providing aid was English all of the meetings that took place at the HQ were in English. Merely in a number of cases the French language was used as the leading vocal force or there were interpreters in French but not in Creole. It was reported that even imperative decisions were not even summarized in Creole. Therefore when Haitian officials were attending the meetings it was impossible for them to fully comprehend the essence of the gatherings.<sup>89</sup>

What is more, the HQ was established far from Port-au-Prince meaning it was not easily accessible to everyone, especially those with no means of transport such as vans or cars. This part turned the access for Haitians rather difficult since most of them did not possess any kind of vehicle. Another aspect was that of admittance to the headquarters. Forms of identification changed a great number in the first few months and it was even difficult for the international aid workers to get in sometimes. It was even more difficult for local Haitians since they had not acquired proper ID cards plus there was no update on time about the constant change of the accreditation system. That means that even if a Haitian managed to arrive to the HQ it was not certain that this person would enter the premises and once he or she succeeded it was not guaranteed that they would be aware of what the meeting was about. Additionally Haitian institutions did not have the staff capacity to send workforce to the UN compound and spend long hours at the location.<sup>90</sup>

All of these factors created a wave of confusion towards the local Haitians. It was perceived as the international community that had arrived on their land for the benefit of Haitians was not taking into consideration the Haitian inclusion in decision-making let alone in updating them. Neither their access to the HQ nor their particular language was respected; Haitians had no to very little representation in the decision-making that concerns their needs and land therefore there was no way of having their voices heard in the whole process. It was as if the whole system was established these so as to promote and build upon the western world's ideas of development without bearing in mind the local culture. The structure would just bypass the Haitian society, but by excluding them they excluded an important factor in the rehabilitation process since the locals are better aware of their needs than any system that sees them as spectators.

The UN governance system argued that the English language was used for improved and swifter coordination and action. With reference to the inclusion of the local population the international community was precarious of the Haitian government, plus any other forms of administration such as the civil society or Haitian NGOs, which anchored in the fact that the local institutions were notoriously corrupt. The international community was aware of the

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<sup>89</sup> O'Connor, M. R. (2011, January 7). Does International Aid Keep Haiti Poor? *Slate*. Retrieved from [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/dispatches/features/2011/does\\_international\\_aid\\_keep\\_haiti\\_poor](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/dispatches/features/2011/does_international_aid_keep_haiti_poor)

<sup>90</sup> *Id.*

credibility of the Haitian actors before arriving on the island and was precautionary about assigning them whichever task. Consequently the aid relief providers preferred to keep away from any contact with the local administration so as to avoid any possible grant mismanagement. Even during the preparatory phase concerns were echoed about the Haitian government's ability to control amounts of money devoid of any miscalculations thus the international community concurred to linger that decision until that skepticism was appeased. That was a justification for which funds were not straightforward sent to the hands of Haitian management. In doing so though the locals were deprived of a platform where they could have their needs and voices heard. Consequently the prevailing sentiment of Haitian officials was that Haiti had once again given permission to foreigners to arrive onto their land and take over. They knew however that their government could in no circumstance cope with such a colossal destruction.<sup>91</sup>

Furthermore the Interim Haiti Recovery Committee (IHRC) was facing difficulties in its smooth performance. It was anticipated that the Committee's members would be equally divided into half Haitian and half international practically for voting purposes. A performance office and an audit bureau were expected to be established with the power to allow the Haitian President to veto decisions and also in another way to bar presidential veto and able to issue land titles. Miscommunication within the walls of IHRC was one of the greatest objects of criticism where there was inadequate internal contact between the IHRC staff, the IHRC members and the executive committee.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore the Haitian IHRC members complained of being left utterly disconnected from IHRC activities. For instance they were not given any information regarding project funding nor were they given any time to analyze and comprehend submitted projects. The list goes on to the point where Haitian members were not familiar with IHRC consultants' names and respective assignments or receiving any updates on approved funds of millions. A striking case in point was that of a meeting that carried on despite the absence of the Haitian Prime Minister.<sup>93</sup>

The IHRC's mandate foresaw its termination upon nearly two years of its operation –that is by October 2011- and from then on the government would take over all of its work. Still upon its closing days it was still unclear if the IHRC would shut down or if its operation would be extended.<sup>94</sup> Within the general atmosphere of underperformance that was elevated around IHRC, Oxfam a contributing organisation and part of OCHA's Clusters, came to add another layer echoing that the responsibilities which were placed in the hands of

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<sup>91</sup> Reitman, J. (2011 August 4) Beyond Relief: How the World Failed Haiti, *Rolling Stone*. Retrieved from <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/how-the-world-failed-haiti-20110804>

<sup>92</sup> Associated Press. Clinton-Led Reconstruction Commission Starts Up In Haiti. (2010 June 6). *NEWSONE*. Retrieved from <http://newsone.com/nation/associatedpress2/clinton-led-reconstruction-commission-starts-up-in-haiti/>

<sup>93</sup> Doucet, I. (2011, January 12) One Year Later, Haiti Hasn't Built Back Better. *The Nation*. Retrieved from <http://www.thenation.com/article/157665/one-year-later-haiti-hasnt-built-back-better>

<sup>94</sup> Associated Press. (2011 October 22). Haiti Quake Panel's Mandate Ends. *YahooNews*. Retrieved from <http://news.yahoo.com/haiti-quake-panels-mandate-ends-221211759.html>

IHRC were not possible to carry out since it was not equipped with the fitting staff nor with the technical capacity to lead the reconstruction process.<sup>95</sup>

### **CHOLERA OUTBREAK**

Another misfortune that occurred in Haiti in less than a year after the earthquake was a cholera outbreak in October 2010. In the modern world such a disease can be treated without difficulty and consequently can be easily controlled so it does not spread all over. In Haiti however the situation proved to be far trickier. It was as if tragedies were piling up one after the other. A disease outburst had to be dealt with swiftly and effectively while the post earthquake rehabilitation process was still in its early stage. Sadly there was only one site of waste management in Port-au-Prince, a capital city of three million people. To make things worse the disease spread like wildfire since the sanitation services were not ameliorated at the time. What set out as an outbreak turned into an epidemic. Even though there were around 12.000 NGOs on the island at the time of the outbreak the epidemic proved difficult to treat and manage. The UN Health Cluster alone comprised of 420 organisations that dealt with health, water and sanitation. The Clusters which were considered as the principal operators of the whole aid effort did not meet expectations of delivering technical support with concrete substantial information but rather they reportedly delivered basic facts along with a few solid results in the fast-pacing process. It was stated that the additional funding that was needed to combat the disease could not be allocated for this sole purpose as it was retained for different objectives therefore the outburst faced deployment gaps concerning forms of containing it such as the control of contaminated waters. What is more inexperienced staff was put to work in rural areas where the outburst was blossoming. On the whole the outbreak claimed the lives of at least 30.000 people and transmitted the disease to hundreds of thousands more.<sup>96</sup>

After numerous hypotheses and investigations it was reported that the UN personnel was accountable for causing the cholera outbreak. Findings supported that UN soldiers from Nepal carried the cholera bacterium with them and transferred it to the locals by dumping their raw sewage from their camps directly into rivers from which many Haitians used that same water for personal needs like drinking, washing and cooking. The UN contended that all of its personnel had passed the appropriate health qualification standards and firmly denied any involvement with the outburst. Finally the United Nations admitted their moral responsibility in 2016 while a case against the UN is being brought to the Supreme Court of

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<sup>95</sup> Oxfam International. (2011). From Relief to Recovery: Supporting good governance in post-earthquake Haiti .

<sup>96</sup> Karunakara, U. (2010). Haiti: where aid failed. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/dec/28/haiti-cholera-earthquake-aid-agencies-failure>

the U.S. in order to decide on the liability of the UN for the cholera outbreak. Lastly it is worth noting that Haiti is still struggling to die down the outbreak.<sup>97</sup>

All in all a very carefully crafted model of humanitarian aid was not able to prosper in the wake of Haiti's obliteration. The contributing factors in favor and against the accurate application of such an interconnected model were immeasurable. The international community managed to pass through countless of impediments in an attempt to deliver its purpose in the highest quality standards possible.

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<sup>97</sup> Karunakara, U. (2010). Haiti: where aid failed. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/dec/28/haiti-cholera-earthquake-aid-agencies-failure>,

Further info on: Pilkington, E. (2019). Haitians urge judges to find UN culpable for cholera outbreak that killed thousands. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/01/haiti-cholera-2010-un-us-supreme-court>,

Pilkington, E., Quinn, B. (2016). UN admits for first time that peacekeepers brought cholera to Haiti. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/dec/01/haiti-cholera-outbreak-stain-on-reputation-un-says>

## **Chapter 4: Concluding remarks**

### **DISCUSSION**

Less than 30 seconds were enough to bring an already disintegrating country on its knees. The earthquake left approximately 300.000 dead and 230.000 injured, totaling up to 20% of the total population. Countless of buildings collapsed as if they were made of thin air killing or trapping people underneath their rubbles. The fact that facilitated the collapse of the state is the complete lack of basic building codes. What contributed all the more in this fall down is the state's inability to enforce its policies on its infamous weak institutions. A large wave of corruption has been following the Haitian government for a long time and as a result the state literally crumbled. What was once the richest colony is today one of the most impoverished states. The all in all eleven clusters were in way over their heads with such an immense catastrophe. The earthquake truly put to the test the aid effort.<sup>98</sup>

From the very beginning of the tragedy that turned Haiti upside down humanity rushed to its aid. Numerous live television broadcasts intended for aid donations took place gathering millions at the same time as international humanitarian actors dispensed gigantic amounts of funding on the road to Haiti's aid. The disposition to assist is witnessed by the number of money and actors involved in the rehabilitation process. In 2010 the year of the earthquake it was calculated that more than 12.000 NGOs were on the island whereas up to today it is acknowledged that more than \$13.5 billion have been channeled to the tiny Caribbean state.

However this amount was not directed to Haitian stakeholders, directly or indirectly. Haiti's soaked in corruption reputation preceded its disaster. This dishonesty on behalf of the state towards its people was the primary factor that led the international community to circumvent almost entirely the Haitian government and the further local Haitian actors. The international community however, even on its own it did not thrive in handling decently the colossal sums of funding coming its way. As reported, more than \$13.5 billion were dispatched to Haiti's relief and reconstruction stage. Even though the emergency relief phase was successful the one after that was far more delicate to be accomplished. The reconstruction process which aimed at long-term projects of development can not in any circumstance be deemed as triumphant. Tons of funds were found to be missing even since the relief phase but the rehabilitation process is the part where the UN along with its international actors failed Haiti. Upon reaching Haiti, humanitarian aid actors realized their plans for long-term deployment were not feasible due to limited funding, bad communication, and consecutive natural disasters so they switched to short-term plants. Even those plans however did not bear the expected outcomes. A number of schools, hospitals and administrative buildings were built and repaired but the goal was much higher than was what actually achieved.

It should be loud and clear that between the 12.000 humanitarian actors that arrived on the island, even divided per Cluster, there was no effective inter-communication among them.

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<sup>98</sup> Randall, D. (2010, January 17). Earthquake in Haiti: Gone in 30 seconds. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/earthquake-in-haiti-gone-in-30-seconds-1870284.html>



The constant staff rotation, the change of those at the top who bore the burden of grave decisions and the regular shifting of emails and phone numbers unequivocally concluded to an organisational chaos. Hence, that a large quantity of international agencies and NGOs seemed impossible to coordinate. As a result the international agencies and (I)NGOs were moving around and doing what they thought was best or else what was best for their interests which in turn generated more disorder than certainty and safety.

The actors however were countless and as in past emergency cases such as Pakistan the same ambiguous pattern was followed. Global governance looked upon the reeling Haiti as if it was a business opportunity. It is not as if the international community had no intention of providing assistance, quite the opposite, but when it comes down to the financial part it is anticipated that everyone will attempt to benefit from the extremely large amounts. Real life examples of donations to Haiti seem to reaffirm that outline. Huge sums were set to be sent only for an insignificant percent to arrive to its destination. Still from the \$2.4 billion collected from the UN appeals, even though the whole sum was dispatched for relief aid, only 1% reached Haiti. Big fractions of the subsidies were returned to UN agencies, NGOs and private and public companies.

The Haitians were spectators to an endless spiral of confusion. Their point of view was neither asked, nor mattered whilst they were witnessing an array of projects carried out which sometimes was repeated, had no effect or no point. The complete bypass of the Haitian government, NGOs, civil society, companies and all kinds of local Haitian actors by the international community is indefensible considering that the whole humanitarian assistance effort was centered on and around Haiti. Since the local voices were not heard, let alone given a platform to address their issues, and a western model of development is applied without taking into consideration the regional culture it comes as a natural outcome that dismay will prevail among the locals. Haitians have a better knowledge of their needs than humanitarian agencies who just execute projects devised in another state or continent.

What is more the total prevalence of English language during the UN meetings, with a tiny exception of the use of French language in particular cases, can be deemed as entirely disrespectful towards a nation whose English speakers amount to less than 1% and French speakers around 5%, yet all of them speak Creole.<sup>99</sup>

The set up of the UN base far away from the capital facilitated in the steady detachment of relations between the two leading forces the internationals and the Haitians. Haitian actors found difficulty in obtaining vehicles as well as staff to move far from Port-au-Prince and for long hours as well. Moreover the continuous neglect to inform Haitian officials on subjects of funding, project development or any update concerning important decisions resulted in the complete lack of involvement on behalf of the Haitian side.

This lack or worse neglect of supervision on behalf of the humanitarian community towards its actors brought in its wake other long-term problems. The issues of accountability and

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<sup>99</sup> Hebblethwaite, C. (2011, August 24). Should Creole replace French in Haiti's schools? BBC News. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-14534703>, Further info on: What Languages Are Spoken In Haiti? (2019, July 29). *World Atlas*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-languages-are-spoken-in-haiti.html>



transparency are two of the most regular aspects the humanitarian actors are most often called out for. Such actions also created a credibility gap.

Since the funding passes from numerous actors, initially from the donor to a UN agency, then to an INGO, from then on to a local partner and then the fund actually finally reaches its beneficiaries, it is impossible to know how much of the whole sum each actor has detained since the current monitoring process is rather vague. This chaotic approach created an accountability gap. Therefore the accountability of how, who and where the money is spent is an issue that needs to be taken care of faultlessly. For better allocation of funds and for factual results the system needs to go through numerous fundamental changes where the required resources reach their long awaited projects without the presence of intermediaries. Radical changes ought to be made so that the funds will arrive to their rightful recipient without ending up in big firms' pockets, circle back to international organisations' cash registers or arrive to the destined country but the local actors not being able to make use of them because they remain in an uncanny sheltered custody of undispensed funding. In cases sums arrived in what seemed to be installments but the one after that never quite turned up. Enormous amounts were reported to be missing plus not one principal possessed any information of why only partial sums were sent instead of the whole sums.

Furthermore it is impossible to know where funds end up since financial implementing partners have failed to present public data that identify where the funds end up and to what end they are spent. Nonprofit watchdogs have accused international agencies multiple times for improper mismanagement of funds. For that reason greater transparency is a prerequisite so that donors, governments and the public are aware of where their money winds up so that the link between results and the money spend can be traced accordingly.

NGOs and other international agencies repeatedly abuse their power thus creating a black hole of accountability and transparency where everything is sucked in never to be seen again. Since the majority of the cooperating organisations are non-profit and not for-profit is simply means that their accountability standards are set much lower than their fellow counterparts'. They are aware that there can be no penalty; hence massive sums are mishandled inappropriately. Huge gaps are created and as a result incomplete financial reports come to the surface with no response as to how or why. Superior accountability as well as transparency is a must if the humanitarian assistance regime is about to move forward efficiently and leave its grey miscellaneous dealings behind.<sup>100</sup> The UN itself has acknowledged that particular issues need to be tackled, including the upgrading and strengthening of humanitarian leadership, the enhancement of capacity-building by involving more local actors, guarantee enhanced transparency and finally ensure

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<sup>100</sup> Yuhas, A. (2015, June 5). The Red Cross, Haiti and the 'black hole' of accountability for international aid. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/05/red-cross-haiti-black-hole-accountability-international-aid>

accountability to the local Haitians with better participatory mechanisms through new technology.<sup>101</sup>

Additionally the building construction companies that arrived with the wave of humanitarian aid brought their own personnel and material at a lower price than the local one and thus inadvertently drove the local Haitian construction companies out of business since their prices got well above local pay so no one would purchase their services. The longer-term reconstruction aim was not able to be put into practice simply due to ongoing administrative and non-administrative organizational chaos. In contrast projects were focused mostly on short-term reconstitution development. The disaster risk reduction goal can be deemed though as a success. From the time when intelligence has been spread and workshops done plus the essential facts have been assimilated by the locals and people now take into consideration building codes and techniques that can enhance buildings' endurance in cases of earthquakes.

Such a disaster that wiped out every aspect of state sovereignty in its path required a coordinated multi-faceted approach. This difficult feat truly put the international community to the test. The humanitarian system needs to be taught from its lessons so that it can flourish. Its fast evolving context does not leave any room for contentment or for dwelling in the past setbacks. Humanitarian actors should find a common language and build upon it so that next time they can be better prepared and far more effective.

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<sup>101</sup> McGoldrick, C. (2011, December). The future of humanitarian action: an ICRC perspective. *ICRC*. Retrieved from <https://international-review.icrc.org/sites/default/files/irrc-884-mcgoldrick.pdf>

## CONCLUSION

Humanitarian assistance is a carefully structured system that still has a long way to go. Aid can be more productive than its past experiences as long as it learns from its lessons. The same omissions and errors should not be repeated over and over again. It is understandable that humanitarian assistance to natural disasters is a relatively new concept and is still trying to figure out its best possible delivery mechanism. Therefore it ought to reflect on earlier missions and weigh in the positive and negative occurrences in order to conform its actors for improved operations in the future. It is rather clear that applying theory into practice where each aspect is expected to operate smoothly proved out to be harder than originally thought or planned.

In cases of emergency such as the occurrence of natural disasters states are brought to an unforeseen and unprecedented situation to which they are incapable of countering the destructive outcomes effectively and as a result external help is required. External aid that offers humanitarian assistance can originate from any actor such as an international organisation, INGO, volunteer or foreign government and in any form such as food and water supplies, construction equipment, health supplies or funding. In the case of Haiti a mixture of all the aforementioned actors and items were disbursed. In total more than \$13.5 billion of aid was sent to Haiti. In theory all these funds were supposed to reach Haiti and thereon to start rebuilding the state. However the results were far from fitting the money disbursed for their purpose. To be fair the challenges the humanitarian community faced in its effort to provide assistance were innumerable. To begin with, the blocked streets with rubble caused important delays in the initial phase. The detached staff was not experienced for emergency cases taking place in urban areas while the long chain of command as well as all the issues surrounding funding caused organisational and executive turmoil.

The challenges of the humanitarian community serving its purpose were innumerable. To begin with the arrival of external actors was tricky since the airports, ports and roads were destroyed. During the emergency phase forces were difficult to reach those in need since the earthquake had struck that hard it was as if a whole city was swallowed in debris. The removal of ruins from the streets was slow to the point where until the present day there are streets filled with rubble. What is more the dispatched staff was not experienced in disasters taking place in urban areas but in rural areas. Upon reaching the island humanitarian actors came to the hard realization that a multifaceted approach had to go off that would cover all aspects of grave humanitarian aid on the island. The weak governmental institutions in addition contributed to the collapse of buildings and thus to the proliferation of loss of life. The local government was notoriously corrupt a fact that unfortunately made it all the easier for the international funders to bypass it and intimately sideline it given that the humanitarian community was dubious of Haitian actors handling decorously the huge amounts of grants.

First of all, the humanitarian aid under the UN authority is provided by OCHA and through it by means of the cluster approach. The aid is then divided into phases, the major ones being the emergency relief and the rehabilitation phase. The first phase was deemed as successful on Haiti since it provided aid to those most affected by the earthquake with water and food

supply, medical services and temporary shelter. The rehabilitation phase was where wrong doings started piling up. The clusters, being the leading forces on the field, found unfeasible to coordinate more than 12.000 participating NGOs. Emails and phone calls were bouncing back. As a result numerous NGOs were off doing that they thought was best for Haiti or for their own profit, with minimum update from or towards the cluster heads. These repeated acts ended up not only creating an organisational chaos but an executive one as well since countless project duplications were exhibited, shortcomings and brought to the surface systematic deficiencies. For a superior outcome an enhanced coordination and cooperation is thoroughly encouraged. Often the chain of command can be rather intricate which makes effective communication even harder. Given that the headquarters of the mission are in New York and the field mission's headquarters lie in the affected country, in this case outside the capital of Haiti, and in between all the clusters that entail UN agencies, large NGOs, big companies and numerous volunteers decisions can be difficult to come to pass. Nevertheless no matter how the complex string of top ranking actors is there needs to be established better coordination and higher accountability. When for example in one cluster there are around 450 participating organisations one figure has to manage their internal communication. Otherwise, as proven in countless of examples, NGOs operate with no liability or intra-organisational communication therefore contact gaps and duplication of projects became the new norm. Straightlining of communication mix-up is required to happen swiftly. Counteracting the continuous bureaucratic loop can occur by utilizing the available means differently. Enhanced digital communication with the submission and issuance of more frequent reports that will automatically distribute and therefore update all contracting members instantly can provide disentanglement. That way gaps, duplication of projects and cross-cutting issues can progress more steadily.

Following, the meetings that took place within the clusters, naturally based in the headquarters, were established far from the capital meaning transportation was required. Haitians had no means of transport plus moving around was difficult due to the roads being blocked from debris for an extensive period of time. Other aspects that restricted the presence of locals in meetings were the accreditation system and the language barrier. The authorization system used for entrance into the compound was apparently changing constantly without any prior notification to Haitians. What is more there were reportedly no interpreters in Creole or in French during the meetings while the outcome of them was not even summarised in the local languages. The entirety of these practices contributed to the Under-representation of Haitian authorities in cluster meetings which in turn led them to being utterly uninformed and bypassed since there were no interpreters nor outlines in Creole within meetings therefore no way of update on developments taking place on the island. Respect for the locals is an imperative that should not be overlooked. Initially meetings, decisions, drafts etc. should include the language of the local population, which is Creole French in Haiti, in the form of interpreters, translators or in any other way possible since the whole effort is about them. Haitians' access to the UN compound should be effortless with accessible vehicles or means of transport used solely for the Haitian stakeholders. Additionally the accreditation system could be more flexible towards Haitians who had no way of finding out about the constant change of identification method which resulted in them missing many meetings for this and all the aforementioned causes.

Due to the wide miscommunication countless of projects were either left unfinished or did not even commence. Furthermore most of the NGOs' mandate regarded short-term projects therefore much attention was paid to such developments. The goal for long-term rehabilitation projects was somewhat sidelined since those NGOs who were tasked with long-term assignments could not bear fruit due to the constraints of funding. Besides the organisation chaos and the inexperienced commanders that resulted from the frequent staff rotation that ended up posting untested individuals to top posts and sending inexperienced staff into field missions. Consequently a short-term relief process was chosen due to the limited funding. The initial idea and goal was to plan a long-term relief operation so that the rehabilitation process can offer far beyond the initial emergency phase. Additionally a plan should have been paid out so that when the international forces will depart the local authorities will be ready to step up and take over the rehabilitation process. However an exit strategy was not planned and the local communities were for the most part sidelined.

Concerning the aspects of funding huge amounts of grants were disbursed for the purpose of Haiti's reconstruction process. However the route of funding is long and difficult to keep track of a fact that resulted in enormous amounts of funds to by no means reach their intended destination. In other cases parts of the sent grants were immediately returned back to its dispatcher purely because the pattern operates in this way. For instance there were reports where for every dollar directed to Haiti only 1% or even less was indeed sent to Haiti. As a result projects were partially funded or underfunded while others were not commenced at all. Since humanitarian aid is heavily depended on donations and the disbursement of those donations, streamlining to the funding process is highly prompted so that the aid can truly be effective and efficient. Numerous UN actors and humanitarian observes have called out the international community for additional accountability and further transparency. A clear path of accountability ought to be set out by the humanitarian community on its actors that will keep track of international agencies' and NGOs' actions. Such organizations frequently abuse their power and go on into careless actions that lead to massive waste of money. Even though it is rather difficult to hold into account these organisations since they are non-profit thus they enclose a lot more superficial disclosure regulations than for-profit organisations, higher bars of accountability standards have to be placed. Furthermore, detailed financial reports ought to be crafted and hence issued so that the public, governments and all other donors can be aware of where their donations have been placed and to what purpose.

Today, not much has changed on the small state of Haiti. Being a country that is prone to frequent earthquakes and hurricanes Haiti can still sense the passing of the 2010 7.0 magnitude earthquake. Only a fraction of the billions pledged by international organisations passed through Haitian hands. Although there is no consensus on the amount Haiti received as part of the aid process it is estimated that more than \$13.5 billion were disbursed. The finger is pointed on substandard governance and inordinate bureaucracy which led with accuracy to the lack of progress. Promises for new infrastructure such as ports turned out to be unfeasible. Assurances in favor of permanent residence for all those affected were proven to be false. Haitians still live in displacement camps while others have moved to

other parts of Port-au-Prince where there is still shortage of potable water as well as healthcare services at the same time as many have less access to food. Many are those who compare the current situation with the one prior to the quake stating that now it is worse than before.

In theory the cluster approach should have worked. However in order for the successful execution to come about all intersecting actors need to abide by the humanitarian principles and center on their common goal. The theoretical aspects were completely sidelined for the sake of profit. The international community along with the UN agencies, the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies, INGOs, NGOs, large corporations and companies need to own up to their actions, miscalculations and mishandlings. That is the single way they can improve for their prospect endeavors. Despite their good intentions the actions done by the international community did not bear the expected outcome. Assistance can only work if all its actors communicate and cooperate with one another. Haiti is still in as much of a need as it was a few years ago. After all Haitians will still be in Haiti after all the post-earthquake funds and actors are gone to face reality on their own.



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