

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Humanitarian Country Team and representatives of the Haitian Government convened a workshop to define the response plan to the priority humanitarian needs in 2016 ;
- Recent floods have affected more than 10,000 families and heightens the concerns of vulnerable populations in the country;
- Since the beginning of the year, 7,782 cases of cholera and 96 deaths have been reported by health officials as on February, 27th;
- OCHA Director of Operations John Ging, and the United Nations Independent Expert M.Gustavo Gallón, visited Haiti last month and pleaded respectively for the relocation and the rights of the returnees from the Republic Dominican.

KEY FIGURES

Number of IDPs in camps 59,000

Source: DTM, January 2016

Cumulative cholera cases (1st Jan. to 28 February 2016) 7,782

Source: MSPP

Cholera fatality cases (1st Jan. to 28 February 2016) 96

Source: MSPP

Number of people in food insecurity 3,6 million

Source: CNSA

Number of people in severely food insecurity 1,5 million

Source: CNSA

Number of children suffering from Global Acute Malnutrition 131,405

Source: UNICEF



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Haiti: Humanitarian Response Plan

A workshop to identify priority needs and response mobilization mechanisms was held in Port-au-Prince

The humanitarian community along with the Haitian government launched the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) process in Haiti. On February 24, a workshop aiming at consolidating the humanitarian response plans was held under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator. Among the stakeholders who took part in this exercise were the Minister of Public Health (MSPP), the Minister in charge of Haitians Living Abroad (MHAVE), and the Director General of the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation (MPCE).



Members of the Humanitarian Country Team and government officials in Haiti during the Workshop on 24 February in Port-au-Prince. Photo: OCHA Haiti

allowed arriving at a consensus for a Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) based on each humanitarian priority: cholera, drought, bi-national issues, remaining internally displaced persons from 2010 earthquake and, emergency preparedness and response.

In his address, Mr. Jean Yves Robert, Director General of the MPCE stressed that humanitarian action not only distributes urgent aid, but lays also the foundation for sustainable actions to the poorest and vulnerable people to move towards recovery and rehabilitation. The Minister of Health, Ms. Duperval, echoed the same by underlying the necessity to find a link between humanitarian action and development. She thought it was important to focus on the results rather than the process. Mr. Robert Labrousse, the Minister of Haitian Living Abroad (MHAVE) expressed his appreciation of the efforts of the international community in support of the Haitian government to address the priority needs of vulnerable populations, and called for assistance to further engage the Haitian diaspora in the humanitarian action.

In-depth discussions were held around the type of essential humanitarian response to the negative and immediate impacts of most challenging issues such as drought at its consequence on food insecurity, malnutrition, and water scarcity; consideration of the cross cutting issues(gender, resilience, environment, human rights); mapping of

In his introductory word, the representative of the Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Marc Vincent called on the humanitarian partners, the state institutions and the donors in Haiti to produce a high profile document since it will become an entry point for the humanitarian response. He reminded that this exercise is the result of joint actions and discussions among partners that

HCT workshop helped to identify priority actions to address the needs of the most vulnerable populations: cholera, drought, binational situation, displaced persons, preparation and response to emergencies.

malnutrition affecting children from poorest and vulnerable families; health, water and sanitation linked to the resurgence of cholera; and vulnerability to natural disasters caused by environmental degradation. All these discussions led to a review and analysis of needs, prioritization and reassessment of the current response and gaps.

Haiti remains one of the most exposed countries to natural disasters and climate change. Cholera still is an emergency with 27 municipalities remaining on red alert. According to the latest CNSA report, food insecurity combined with drought caused by El Niño affects 3.6 million people among whom; 1.5 million are severely food insecure. The bi-national issue has also increased concerns of humanitarian actors and the Haitian government. Indeed, according to the latest IOM assessment more than 73,000 people have been interviewed on a random basis and reported to have been repatriated or deported or returned from the Dominican Republic since June 2015. These added up to the approximately 60,000 earthquake internally displaced who are still living in 37 camps and in need of assistance.

Hurricane season: an imminent threat to Haiti's most vulnerable populations

Following recent heavy rains, floods have already affected more than 10,000 homes

Flooding could further complicate the situation of vulnerable families already facing economic difficulties.

The rainy season has not started yet but several departments of the country, especially the North, Grand Anse and West, have already affected by the effects of flooding that have increased the vulnerability of thousands of families. According to a report by the Civil Protection Directorate (DPC) on March 3rd, more than 10,000 homes were flooded in the north and west. One person was killed and another was missing in the department of Grand-Anse following heavy rains on February, 27th thru 29th.

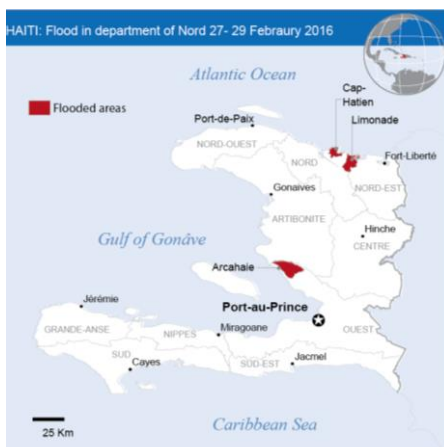


A flooded street in Cap-Haitien. Photo credit: DPC

Northern authorities also reported damage to school infrastructures, as well as agricultural and livestock losses in Limonade and Cap-Haitien which were the two most affected communes.

While waiting for further assessments, more than 10,000 families are in need of food, blankets and mattresses. Mosquito nets and kitchen sets are also needed.

Sanitary conditions were aggravated by bad weather, which may contribute to the spread of cholera in the affected neighborhoods. Water purification products (chlorine, detergent) and hygiene kits will be crucial in those areas.



As part of the response efforts, states' emergency response institutions in the affected communes have been mobilized to distribute shelter items (blankets, mattress and food), hygiene kits and cleaning supplies to affected families. Oxfam GB decontaminated four water sources in Cap-Haitien and started strengthening community-based monitoring and awareness against cholera.

In the West department, particularly in Arcahaie, where more than 250 homes were flooded, the Haitian Red Cross, ACTED and Oxfam GB have distributed hygiene kits, set up water chlorination points and organized awareness sessions. The local authorities intend to maintain the mobilization in order to keep up the preparation

and response under way, particularly in the affected municipalities. In the same vein DPC made a number of recommendations in their latest situation report: continuing the assessments to inform response activities; increasing mitigation strategies (cleaning canals, sewerage and drainage of rivers); restoring access to affected areas and raising awareness on the risk of epidemics (cholera, Zika).

Actors intensify preparation

In the framework of the preparation strategy for the next hurricane season, the National Risk and Disaster Management System remains alerted, while the Civil Protection Directorate (DPC) is planning a simulation exercise (SIMEX) on April, 29th. The SIMEX is planned in Cap Haitien to test the functional capabilities of the National Risk and Disaster Management System (SNGRD) at the central and regional level, including national stakeholder's coordination capacities. The national and departments' capacity to cope with critical situations in the event of several hurricanes hit Haiti, as well as the interactions with the international humanitarian community will also be evaluated.

In addition to the above, the DPC is working on the update of the contingency plan with the support of the international community. Such plan aims at coordinating preparedness and response activities to natural disasters in 2016. National and international actors also remain vigilant and prepared to sustain and support the efforts of the Government.



Evacuation exercise at village Gari, St. Philomène, Tabarre.
Photo: COOPI

Among the NGOs, several awareness campaigns are underway, notably COOPI and GOAL jointly performed the first simulation exercise for evacuation on February 25th, as part of the capacity building in preparedness, mitigation and response to disasters in vulnerable urban communities. Funded by the European Commission Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), this exercise simulated an evacuation following a landslide scenario with the community in collaboration with the departmental Civil Protection entity,

at local and communal level as well as with the Community response teams in the area.

Through this exercise, GOAL and COPI supported efforts to strengthen preparedness to response capacities in the most vulnerable communities, trying to create automatic reaction to improve the management of emergencies and minimize the number of victims.

Cholera: a downward trend since the beginning of the year observed despite recent rains

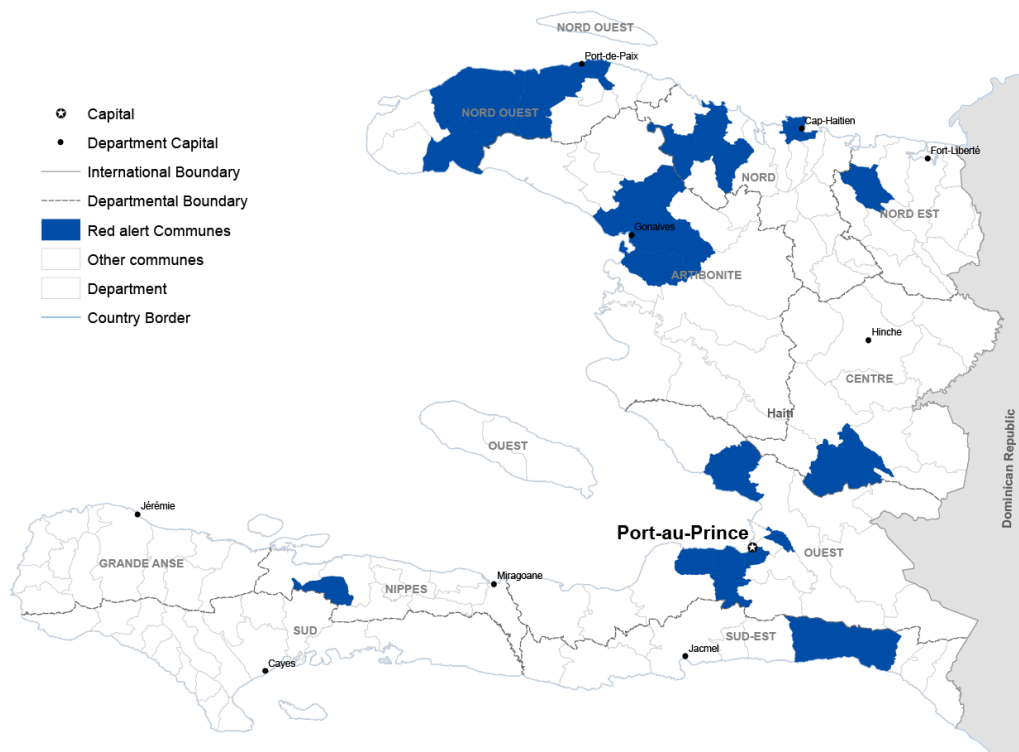
According to official data, 7,782 cases and 96 deaths reported since the beginning of the year

Aid actors should remain vigilant and strengthen prevention efforts as well as sensitization of the populations living in areas at risk.

Official data published by the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP) indicates a gradual reduction in the number of cases. From 1 January to 27 February (week 8 of 2016), 7,782 cases and 96 deaths (65 institutional deaths and 31 in communities) were reported. Even if January is characterized by a higher number of cases than at the same period in 2015, the trend observed since January, 1st to February, 27th shows a gradual reduction in the number of cases in each epidemiological week and this despite recent rains. The number of deaths is higher in 2016 (96) than in 2015 (67) for the same period.

The departments in the West (especially the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince), North, Artibonite and Central are the most affected and both account for almost 76% percent of the cases seen. MSPP reports that 18 communes are on red alert. These are Gonaïves, L'Estère (Artibonite), Cap-Haitien, Limbe, Pilatte, Port Margot (North), Trou du Nord (North East), Port de Paix, Bay de Henne, Jean-Rabel (North-West), Cabaret, Gressier,

Carrefour, Tabarre, Port-au-Prince (West), Plaisance in the South (Nippes), Mirebalais (Centre) and Belle Anse (South East).



This situation reflects a better capacity of transmission control during outbreak and at the same time, the need to enhance efforts to strengthen the management of cases. The humanitarian community continues to stand beside the Haitian government in its efforts, not only to ensure a rapid and effective response to the cholera outbreak, but also by improving access to services such as drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and health but also to reduce the vulnerability of people living in the areas most at risk of cholera. A good evidence of this commitment is the development of the humanitarian response plan in which the response to the cholera epidemic is one of the priorities.

Meanwhile, the Haitian government and the humanitarian community recommend the vigilance of both actors and the population at a time when the country look forward to more rains. The pursuit of public awareness rising on good hygiene practices, the provision of medicines in hospitals and the distribution of water chlorination products make up the current response.

Humanitarian action to address the bi-national mixed migration crisis with Dominican Republic

The response must take into account not only the relocation of returnees but also their protection in terms of access to basic services.

The humanitarian situation in Haiti challenges the actors at the international and national levels. The UN Independent Expert M.Gustavo Gallón, in his annual report on the situation of human rights in Haiti, mentioned five major problems in terms of human rights in Haiti, the plight of those affected by the earthquake, the victims of cholera, and the Haitian deportees or returnees, who are still in need of humanitarian response, among others.

Mr. Gallón noted the efforts of the humanitarian community and the Government of Haiti to carry on the relocation measures with provision of decent and lasting living conditions for remaining 60,000 IDPs still living in the camps. Specifically, on migration, Mr. Gallón praised the work of civil society and religious organizations in these precarious circumstances. He urged the Haitian authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure the rights of those who are directly affected.

The country's humanitarian situation has further deteriorated with the arrival of tens of thousands of people from the Dominican Republic; which resulted in installation of spontaneous sites in Anse a pitres

It bears noting that Haiti is part of global advocacy and resource mobilization to address humanitarian needs. In this regards, OCHA's Director of Operations, Mr. John Ging, made a visit to Haiti from 11 to 13 February. During his stay, he visited two sites in Anse-a-Pitre housing people deported and repatriated from the Dominican Republic, in order to get an overall idea of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country and to discuss with the actors on the field.



One of the families in temporary sites in Anse a Pitres. Photo: OCHA Haiti

arriving from the Dominican Republic; the protection of those born in the Dominican Republic; and to migrants and people with specific needs, including relocation.

At a time when the international community turns its attention to the biggest humanitarian crises, such as Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, etc..., it is imperative to advocate for the humanitarian situation in Haiti and make sure Haiti is not forgotten. This requires a new strategy for communication and mobilization of resources and new approaches in the implementation of humanitarian projects and programs. In this context, the Head of OCHA Coordination Response Division in Geneva and the Head of Office in Haiti have briefed the donor community on the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Haiti.

In brief

More than 200,000 Haitian children under the age of 15 years in unacceptable conditions of domestic work, study finds

A study conducted by the Norwegian FAFO research foundation, in partnership with the Haitian Institute of Childhood (IHE), has revealed that about 207,000 Haitian children are working more than 14 hours per day. A situation deemed unacceptable because that is an exploitation of children for house chores.

That research also shows that these children under 15 are working, for the most part in dangerous or conditions similar to slavery (the worst forms of child labor). The study adds that one in four children is not living with their biological parents in Haiti and 77percent of Haitian children are behind their normal school grades.

Based on objective information collected about the placement of children and the situation of working children, this study recommends two protection mechanisms: an "informal" protection based on children, adults and the community involved in the child's placement - and a more institutional protection, under the authority of the State with the support of NGOs, international organizations, and civil society.

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