

Actions and Limits of NGOs

(Non-Governmental Organizations)

The Case of Haiti

Remembering the past, facing the present and building the future.

By: Dr. Aldy Castor
Haitian Resource Development Foundation



Acknowledgement

My Thanks:

For the help in research and scientific framing that Dr. Fred Eboko brought to this project. Dr. Eboko is a political science and associate researcher at two scientific research laboratories in Bordeaux, France:

- The CEAN of the Institute of Political Studies of Bordeaux, is a center specialized in the political analysis of countries of the South (Politics, Society, International Relations)
- The Society, Health, Development Laboratory, UMR 5036 CNRSS University Victor Segalen Bordeaux 2.

And to:

My daughter Danielle Castor Ridolfi and to Josephine Elizée for their assistance in the English translation of this brochure.

Alex Etienne and Joseph Richardson for their sound advice.

And my dear friend, Dr. Jacques Bartoli, for his unwavering dedication to the growth of the Haitian Resource Development Foundation and his steadfast commitment to implement the programs initiated by the Foundation.

February 29, 2004.

Revised on March 31st, 2008.

The Republic of HAITI

Capital city:	Port-au-Prince
Surface area:	27,750 km square
Population:	7,952,000 inhabitants
Languages:	Creole, French
Nature of State:	Republic
System of government:	Parliamentary ^(a)
Independence year:	1804
Number of Non-Governmental Organizations:	800-1000 (estimate)

^(a) The 1987 constitution conferred Haiti a semi-presidential system of government, and therefore semi-parliamentary with a Prime Minister voted by the parliament. This bicephalic system seems to have created more problems than solutions.

Haiti is commemorating the bicentennial anniversary of its independence. After two hundred years of many upheavals, and broken hopes, the island is once again at a crossroads.

As an isolated island, blocked off from the world, but filled with potential, Haiti has historically been marked by disturbances, crises, and changes along with chronic political instability. These factors have deeply hampered its economic and social development. Independent since 1804, the first “Black Republic” has shifted from the symbol of prosperity and liberation, to its current state of internal and external political and economical subordination.

Before becoming independent, Haiti, then known as Saint Domingue, was the wealthiest of all European possessions in the Caribbean. Within two centuries, Haiti has metamorphosed from the “Jewel of the West Indies” in the 19th century, into the metaphorical and caricatured image of all evils in the 20th century.

Today, the Republic of Haiti is an illustration of the contradictions deriving from its geo-strategic position. The island is situated in the heart of the Caribbean, between the United States to the North and Latin America. As a result, this small country of the Great West Indies¹ is the subject of high political national and international stakes. Today her greatest possession is her pool of human resources despite her 200-year history of “mis-development.” The exploitation of this country combined with its dependence on foreign assistance, has finally resulted in the succession of dysfunctions in Haiti, similar to those observed in all the so-called “countries of the South,” many of which have experienced successive dictates of authoritarian oligarchies.

Adding to the problems created by the dysfunctional state, Haiti has seen repeated unconstitutional changes to power between military and civil dictatorships. Between the marginalization of international organizations, internal upheavals, embargo, and chaos, Haiti has had little chance to control her own economic destiny.

I – An economic potential limited by structural constraints

The Haitian economy, which has for many years been dependent on foreign capital, is now experiencing a marginalization of its national production. Some economists estimate that 40% of consumer goods are imported. As a result, it is the “informal” sector of the population that feeds capital growth. It employs 44% of the population in low added value and low-income activities. This situation has generated structural poverty, which has been heavily worsened by the embargo imposed by the international community in 1991.

Haiti has entered the new millennium badly handicapped by internal and external contradictions that have placed the country in one of the worst socioeconomic situations ever experienced in the Caribbean to this date. In this context, the difficulties have been compounded by the bitter, almost chaotic experiences she endured during the last two decades (1980–2000). This period bore some particularly heavy consequences on the country’s development. By the early ‘80s, Haiti was already the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, with annual per capita revenue estimated at \$253 US dollars. The annual per capita continued to drop and reached \$209 US dollars in 1988. By the early ‘90s, Haiti ranked at the bottom of the poorest countries in this part of the world, and was barely in competition with British Guyana (Ferguson, 1993).

Haiti’s dependency on foreign capital soon became a major constraint. Foreign economic assistance serves more of the personal ends of lobbies (politicians and their supporters), than the real needs of the population. As a result, after a recovery of the annual per capita income of \$380 US dollars in 1991, a substantial drop was registered to barely \$120 US dollars in 1997. Simultaneously, the GDP dropped from 4, 9% to 1,1% (Credes, 2000).

Haiti is classified among the Less Advanced Countries (LAC) of the planet, and therefore experiences the structural disparities that characterize poor countries: 4% of the population holds 66% of the country’s resources, 70% of the population live under the threshold of absolute poverty, and 65% to 80% of the population experience either unemployment or under-employment.

¹ The Great West Indies Comprises: Cuba, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, the island of Hispaniola comprising the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Haiti.

Agriculture, which provides three quarters of available jobs, has continued to show a permanent decline. Farmers' revenues are so low that they have opted for developing (at the margin of the system) food crops instead of modern agriculture. Available lands suitable for agriculture are only 20% for a density of more than 9 inhabitants per hectare.

Natural resources are unreasonably exploited and the country is suffering from a degradation of its ecosystem. Haitians eat an average daily intake of 1700 calories per capita whereas the normal minimum caloric intake is 2200 calories per capita (Credes 2000).

Tourism was one of the most profitable economic resources for Haiti. However, the island's bad reputation materialized in 1981 when the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta ruled that Haitian nationals are a "high risk group" with regard to HIV infection. This complemented the gruesome and infamous social stereotype for HIV patients, more familiarly known as the "Four H's": Hemophiliacs, Heroin addicts, Homosexuals, Haitians... The effects of the CDC ruling were almost immediate. The number of tourists declined from 190,000 in 1980 to 40,000 in 1983 (Ferguson, 1993).

This episode was neither the last of Haiti's misfortunes nor the least of the paradoxes that have left the country on her back. A few years later, a remarkable study in medical anthropology provided the opposite version of the CDC report. Paul Farmer, an American physician, anthropologist, and expert on Haitian issues, proved that tourism was the source of HIV virus transmission in the island, and especially tourists from the United States, and not the other way around (Farmer P. 1992). In spite of the epidemiological axiom and the anthropological demonstration of Farmer's book *The Accused Victim*², the damage was already done and took a heavy toll on the already fragile Haitian economy.

² It is the sub-title of the French translation of the book of Paul Farmer: AIDS in Haiti the accused victim, Paris, Karthala, 1996 (translation by Corinne Hewlett).

II – The internal political situation: from chronic instability to democratic norm?

The geo-strategic importance of the country due to its insular geography and closeness to the United States of America has placed the Republic of Haiti at the crossroads of international relations.

Nevertheless, it is impossible to understand the present situation of Haiti without taking into account two phenomena that have marked Haiti in the 20th Century: First, Haiti as part of the United States' Back Yard (Artaud, 1996); second, the devastation incurred by the "Duvalier reign."

At the end of the first American occupation (1915 – 1934), Haitians believed that Haiti was about to reconcile with its "original destiny" and would become a proud avant-garde nation. The challenges dealt with during this period would have paved the way for the establishment of a pluralistic democracy. Unfortunately, the lessons were not learned. Exploitation of the masses by the elite was perpetuated. Divisions within the elite itself, mostly based on the color of the skin, accentuated, and then exploded into what is currently called, "The Revolution of 1946." This "Revolution" brought forth a compromise: Dumarsais Estimé, a black leader from a rural family, who had married a mulatto of the social elite, was elected president by the Parliament. Estimé was the first "black" to occupy such a position since the American occupation. As Estimé began to fulfill his promises to the neglected masses, he was overthrown in 1950 by the military, which was then regarded as the heir to the American Forces. The resentment provoked by this coup d'état, apparently financed by the elite, nurtured a movement that six years later, produced a political "new deal." Another black leader, a well-trained medical doctor named François Duvalier became president of Haiti.

1 – 1957: "The devil's kiss," the birth of the Duvalier reign:

The Duvalier era, the worst of Haitian dictatorships, started with another historical irony. François Duvalier, alias "Papa Doc," was elected president of Haiti through an election largely controlled by the Haitian Army in which barely half of the population participated. It was the beginning of a dark period characterized by bloodshed, corruption, persecution, torture and assassination. A state of terror was established and contributed to a massive exodus of Haitian intellectuals and businessmen.

By mid 1964, following a fake referendum, Papa Doc proclaimed himself "President for life." Simulated

court proceedings, arbitrary arrests, and summary executions permeated the culture. The dictatorship apparatus was mobilized to maintain the Duvalier regime in power by holding the state of Haiti in a virtual state of fear. Militiamen called “Tontons Macoutes” laid down the law and caused terror everywhere in the country. Political repression was everywhere. In 1971, Papa Doc passed away. He left his son full powers, and a State without any sense of direction, an arbitrary state led by predators out to devour the spoils the country had to offer. Jean-Claude Duvalier alias “Baby Doc” pursued the task of a dynasty of waste until he was overthrown in February 1986.

2 - When the “American dream” turns out to be the Haitian nightmare: the collapse of the Duvalier reign.

Papa Doc and the American Government had never really maintained convivial relations despite sharing anti-communist views, exploited by Duvalier in an effort to gain economic support from the United States. However, Baby Doc attempted to improve his relations with the neighboring superpower. The American support and presence were conspicuous all over the island and pressured Baby Doc to carry out a few apparent reshuffles. The real purpose of the Americans was to develop the economy of a strategically situated country in the Caribbean.

In fact, the long-term economic plan conceived by the United States for Haiti was designed to create a radical change. The plan was to gradually replace “the archaic peasant economy” with an export-directed “agribusiness.” The transformation from a rural economy into the constitution of small enterprises, from agriculture for daily subsistence to a modern food-processing industry was expected to produce a massive and deliberate rural exodus which in turn would provide the cheap labor to fuel the “agribusiness.” This phenomenon could have launched the Haitian economy and expand it into a myriad of export-oriented enterprises, both of major and small sizes (Ferguson 1993: 82). Within these dynamics, Baby Doc put an end to the isolationist doctrine of his father and embraced the *desiderata* of Washington.

The “American Plan,” translated into Creole as “plan meriken,” could be seen as the American vision for the future of Haiti. Upon closer examination, the source of such an inspiration could be found in an American experience dating as far back as the early 1900s.

The American plan for Haiti in the 80’s was earmarked under President Theodore Roosevelt (1901 – 1909). A few weeks following his departure from the White House, President Clinton stated, “*Theodore Roosevelt had to manage an America undergoing a full development: From an agricultural power to become an industrial power; from an essentially isolationist country to become an international nation*”³.

There is a particular similarity between the two countries and the two periods. Within the interval of one century, this transfer to a model of a political economy has been aborted.

Of course, Haiti is not the United States of America. Jean-Claude Duvalier was not cut from the same presidential mold as Theodore Roosevelt, and the last decades of the 20th Century in Haiti cannot be compared to the early years of the 20th Century in the United States. It is obvious that Haiti has failed, and could not adopt the rules of a liberal economy. Moreover, the lack of legitimacy of Baby Doc’s government would only worsen the situation. The economy was drained and the industrial holdings remained at the stage of the “American Dream” or rather the “Haitian Nightmare.”

Baby Doc personally referred to an “economic impasse” (Ferguson 1993: 77). Favoritism and corruption gangrened an already failing State. A report by the Canadian government published in 1982 delivered another blow to the Haitian economy, and invented the neologism of “kleptocracy” to describe the Haitian government (Ferguson, idem). Illegal emigration to the United States increased. The scandal of the “Haitian boat people” attempting to join the wealthy Florida coast shocked the international community. Baby Doc resisted the degradation of his country and tried to grant himself artificial legitimacy. In July 1985, measures aimed at strengthening his power were initiated. Through a fake referendum, he was elected by “plebiscite” to the tune of 99.8% of favorable votes. International tension and discontent all over the country gave the coup de grâce to the popularity of Jean-Claude Duvalier.

Duvalier was overthrown in February 1986 following a military coup. So began a cycle of coups d’état and a long line of political turmoil, promises of free and fair elections and frauds perpetuated by civilian and military dictatorships. Haiti went through a whirl of

³ Interview granted to the American monthly magazine Rolling Stone in December 2000. This interview was carried out by Jann S. Wenner and republished by the French daily Le Monde on Thursday 18 January 2001 pages VI – VII (translation by Sylvette Gleize).

change of power without pluralistic democracy and civil peace. Haitians then talked of “Duvalierism without Duvalier,” with the irony that is attributed to the “cursed people of the world.”

III – “DUVALIERISM without DUVALIER”: The drift goes on.

1 – Economy of a meaningless society: “a waste of time”

Following the fall of Baby Doc, the State no longer had a monopoly over certain sectors of the economy (i.e. the cement industry and other national holdings). Bankrupt state factories had to close their doors.

The already shaky Haitian economy opened up to imports. This gave the final blow to the country's economy with prices that defied any competition. The consequences were disastrous on Haitian agriculture. Imported rice and sugar were sold at prices that were more attractive than locally produced food crops.

Haiti has become the epitome of a popular saying often used by economists: “They produce what they do not eat, they eat what they do not produce.” The island is endemic with all the scourges described by political scientists, which could be summarized by the old expression proposed by Roberto Michels in 1911: “The oligarchy's iron law of wages⁴.” Regimes come and go; elections alternate between farce and tragedy.

The Catholic Church, traditionally supportive of the ruling power, was further empowered by Pope John Paul II's visit to Haiti in March 1983 and witnessed the emergence of a generation of new leaders: young priests who embraced the cause of the underprivileged. They were influenced by the Latin American movement of Theological Liberation, which had its ramifications in Haiti through the “ti-legliz” (small church) movement, as it was called in Creole. They interpreted the Pope's message when he said, “Things must change here!,” as support for their movement from the Vatican. “Radio Soleil,” the radio station of the “ti-legliz,” movement diffused and encouraged discontent against with the ruling authorities. Father Aristide emerged within these dynamics.

Under the watchful eye of former President Jimmy Carter, the people of Haiti aspired to hold democratic elections. With several hundreds of foreign observers present, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a young catholic priest, with the support of his colleagues and the so-called Haitian “Left,” received over 60% of the vote

following a campaign baptized “Operation Lavalas,” whose Creole translation means “Operation flash flood.” Father Aristide chose to consecrate himself to the downtrodden. The United States considered him the partner of choice after his election and the Haitians saw him as a guarantor of a new democratic order.

In September of 1991, his government was overthrown by a military coup. Haiti resurrected her old demons and history repeated itself. Promises of transition were replaced with authoritarianism, and American interference, creating a dysfunctional State. Bis repetita.

President Aristide was brought back from his Washington exile in 1994 by the American army, which, for the second time, occupied Haiti. René Préval, President Aristide's former Prime Minister, was elected president of Haiti, On December 1995.

It was another period of “transition” during which parliamentary elections were organized in Haiti in May 2000. The political “bicephalism” in place during this period, between president Rene Préval and former president Aristide acting behind the scenes, did not produce any democratic results. The Lavalas party won the election with a score reminiscent of the darkest hour of the reign of Duvalier. In January 2001, outgoing President Bill Clinton sent a letter to President Aristide urging him to establish a climate favorable to a democratic revival in Haiti. President Clinton's plea echoed like a broken record.

On February 29, 2004, President Aristide, unable to bring solutions to the social, economic and especially political problems of the country, left Haiti in exile following generalized protests.

Between March 2004 and May 2006, the reins of power, under the watchful eyes of the international community, were confided to a transition team headed by President Alexandre Boniface, Haiti Supreme Court Chief Justice, and Prime Minister Gérard Latortue, a former United Nations official residing in Florida. The transition government's socioeconomic achievements were considered quite meager by most observers.

With the installation of René Préval, as the new elected President on May 2006, Haiti has made a big step toward the end of the transition. Furthermore, elections of the representatives for the Parliament and the territorial collectivities constitute a positive turn toward

⁴ Through the expression “the oligarchy's iron law of wages, the Sociologist R. Michels underscored the process leading to a gap between a group of political leaders (especially in political parties) and “the grassroots” for whom they are supposed to be working. See Roberto Michels, in “les partis politiques”. Essai sur les tendances oligarchiques des démocraties (1911), Paris, Flammarion, 1984.

2 – The consequences of mis-development on the health care system.

The healthcare sector gives a blunt indication of the hardships experienced by the people of Haiti. In 1990, the mortality rate for children 5 years and under was 131 out of 1,000. In comparison, the South American average was 50 out of 1,000. The mortality rate for women in labor was 4-6 of 1,000 births as against 1-2 in Jamaica and 0-4 in Cuba.

Another disparity further accentuates the problem. Port-au-Prince and its Western department count for one-third of the country's population and yet concentrate 63% of the country health units, 88% of medical officers, and 67% of nurses. Approximately 40% of Haitians are deprived of access to basic health care (Credes, 2000).

In an article published in the newspaper *Nouvelliste* (April 4, 2001), Yves-Marie Chanel noted a persistently alarming health situation for the year 2000. He wrote: *"In Haiti, the mortality of women in labor increased by 14, 44% in the year 2000. According to data compiled for the period 1995 – 2000 by the Alliance for Survival and Development, a local NGO, of 100,000 registered births, there were 523 cases of women who died in labor. In 1996, an inquiry made by the Haitian Childhood Institute revealed 457 cases of death out of 100,000 births. Teenagers represent 15% of maternal deaths and nearly 4% of them were due to risky abortions."*

Almost 300,000 Haitians are estimated to have died of AIDS in the last 20 years. Officials of the United Nations AIDS Program (UNAIDS/ONU SIDA) have estimated that the AIDS virus infects 12% of urban population and 5% of rural population. 7 to 8% of pregnant women are HIV carriers. It must be noted that the figure of 2% represents the threshold from which an epidemic can be considered "serious," according to international norms.

The health coverage in Haiti reflects more than ever before a critical situation: two medical doctors for 10,000 people; 0.17 dentist, 1 nurse, 3 health auxiliaries for 10,000 people, 1 hospital bed for 2,000 people.

The large majority of people who have no access to medical care for reasons connected to costs, distance, or lack of NGO-run health facilities in their communities, will likely resort to "traditional" medicine.

The potable drinking water supply is estimated at 27% in rural areas, 65% in secondary cities, and 51% in the capital city. Access to sanitation facilities is estimated at 30% in urban areas and 1% in rural areas. These figures could have been lower if open-air drainage and lack of sanitary conditions in towns were accounted for in these calculations.

The combination of these factors explains the high rate of mortality and morbidity in the country.

Furthermore, private and international health sectors, which offer substantial and attractive economic incentives, attract the majority of health workers to the detriment of the public sector. The latter therefore pays the high price for its lack of credibility, inadequacy, and absenteeism.

One of the paradoxes of Haiti is the fact that its educational system has been the sector to most resist, the continuous deterioration of the country. Nevertheless, it must be noted that educational standards in Haiti are the lowest in the Hemisphere. In fact, the percentage of school-attending children at the primary school level, age 6 to 12 is 48%. It stands at 15.9% for teenagers aged 13 to 18 at the secondary school level, according to 1988 data. The above figures cause Haiti to rank far below many countries of the South, whether in Latin America, Africa or Asia.

The situation was even more catastrophic at the higher education level. In 1985, for a population of over 5 millions inhabitants, only 5,187 students were enrolled in higher education (92% enrolled at the State University...), with only 600 lecturers, and professors, according to Professor Gerard Pierre-Charles.

Contributions, Limits and difficulties in the activities of NGOs in the Countries of the South: A second breath or a last resort?

The preceding presentation underscores the need for humanitarian assistance in Haiti, whose main socio-economic indicators are in the red. To this end, "the Jewel of the West Indies," which today is at the tail end of the Caribbean, represents a symbol, a "concentration" of the entire social, economic, and political problems found in the countries of the South. Poverty, structural constraints, a quest for democracy, and the obligation to provide humanitarian assistance according to the standards established by International Institutions, explain the emergence of local and international non-governmental organizations.

The support and assistance provided by bilateral and multilateral cooperation Agencies (public institutions) are backed by the actions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Their contributions and massive presence have profoundly marked the social, economic, and political environment, both in Haiti and in other countries of the South. We must therefore address the issue of NGOs in general, both from the North and the South, to better understand the situation in Haiti, which is a paragon illustration of this issue.

NGOs are defined as entities of regulation of social disparities, which can no longer be administered by the State because of its insolvency, inadequacy, and lack of will. They often occupy regulatory functions left vacant by the State in a democratic environment. Certain ambiguity has been noted in some of their methods of functioning. Within the framework of their action, their multiple activities, and their economic strength, they have the ability to attract the best skilled personnel in the country. This imperfect definition of the role of NGOs should not hide their heterogeneous nature.

I – The "NON-GOVERNMENTAL" ACTION: Between alternate ideologies and increasing disparities.

1 – International relations, legal statutes, and the economic weight of NGOs: between powers and dissensions.

Like the majority of the countries of the South, Haiti entered the "era of NGOs" in the early 70s. The concept of humanitarian action conceived in the North, accompanied the issue of the emerging "civil society" in developing countries. Though the UN has been taking the action and "voice" of NGOs more and more into account, their legal status is not clearly defined. NGOs operate in environments with no clear legal status between the national laws of their countries of birth, the countries in which they operate, and the rules and regulations laid down by international institutions. These ill-defined legal limits encourage political strategies and delaying tactics by some governments. These governments take advantage of this ill-defined legal status to exercise control over these new sectors, which are sensitive to international assistance.

Nevertheless, the weight of NGOs has never been as considerable as today, both with regard to their achievements (humanitarian assistance, fight for the respect for human rights), and to their economic power.

At the creation of the UN in 1945, some forty non-governmental organizations were associated with the principles of the world organization. In the early 70s, this number increased tenfold. In 2001, there were 2,010 NGOs recognized by the UN. The Secretary General, Mr. Koffi Annan, has spurred a new relationship between his organization and NGOs, by making it possible for the latter to be officially accredited by the United Nations. This accreditation was initiated with the reform of the "advisory statute" granted to NGOs by the UN. Also a resolution by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) made official this reform in 1996. This allows NGOs to take part in UN meetings, committees and conferences. In some cases, they may even amend the agenda of working sessions, ask questions, and challenge issues raised by governments⁵. This is in conformity with the philosophy of Mr. Koffi Annan, who emphasized the "citzenerly" nature of his organization and has willfully reminded the first words of the UN charter: "We, the people of the United Nations..."

⁵ See "Le Monde" of 4-5-2001 pages 2-3.

This new power conferred on NGOs sometimes places them in conflict with host countries, which do not approve of their preeminent presence, especially in matters of human rights. Therefore, countries that are frequently cited as human rights violators are also the biggest opponents of non-governmental actions. For instance, the Chinese government accuses NGOs of being “criminal organizations”. This same attitude can be observed from countries like Russia, Sudan, Algeria and Cuba, to mention just a few. Notwithstanding these extreme cases, some “major democracies” do not experience idyllic relations with NGOs.

Ideologically and historically, countries with strong state traditions are less receptive to NGOs’ actions. Public Aid for Development (PAD), which is channeled through NGOs from developed countries, is divided into two categories: liberal tradition on one hand, and state tradition on the other. Therefore, it is not surprising for France to be at the tail end of the European Union (EU) as far as its share of PAD contribution for non-governmental actions: (0.65%). France is far behind Spain (6%), Sweden (6.8%), Finland (7.6%), Belgium (8.17%), Denmark (8.17%) and the Netherlands (9.8%)

In the United States, the major portion of public aid intended for poor countries is funneled through NGOs. The main institution responsible to disburse the aid is USAID (United States Agency for International Development).

The result of the aforementioned ideology shows NGOs from Anglo-Saxon origin have a strong financial foundation. The majority of French NGOs are smaller in comparison with their American, German or British counterparts.

However since 2005, we can observe a substantial increase of the French public assistance to Haiti, which jumped from 12 millions Euros to 24 millions Euros in 2007, and with a trend for another increase in 2008.

2 – Diplomatic positions and public implications Versus NGOs: Less State or “more State”: Different political spaces Versus NGOs.

The opinion of diplomats from donor countries also follows this line of thought as far as NGOs are concerned. Many believe that NGOs worsen the economic situation and urge the recipient country governments to take more stringent measures in tackling their social ills. Others consider NGOs to be the

new norm in matters of intermediation and proximity, for the implementation of development programs.

For example, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hubert Vedrine, expresses reserve with regard to NGOs, and has revived a debate in France, while this issue is not a concern in Anglo-Saxon countries. French diplomacy is divided into two poles in the international debate on NGOs.

On the one hand, according to a French diplomat, “*The Jacobin French State is not used to letting others do what the state can do, especially on international matters. In France, there is no tradition of delegation of public service as far as external action is concerned.*”⁶ The followers of the French Jacobinism philosophy loyal to the hexagonal tradition endorse the opinion of their leader: “*There is in all NGOs something to eat and something to drink; they are infiltrated by sects, multinationals and Americans...*”⁷

On the other hand, a large sector of French diplomacy opted for a new partnership with NGOs as promoted by the UN. A French diplomat expressed it in the following way: “*The tendency in France is... for an increasingly great consideration of the work of NGOs, so much so that the present government and the Minister himself are rightly searching for a more effective method of relations with them.*”⁸ Senator and former French minister of cooperation Mr. Charles Josselin during a conference at the French Institute in Port-au-Prince on February 2008, pleading for the “construction of a decentralized State in Haiti” had advocated for the implication of sectors in this development of Haiti, particularly the Haitian elite and the non Governmental organizations.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that, in matters of cooperation, France has always promoted the ideological dimension of the issue of “civil society”.

The United States and the United Nations have officially sided with NGOs for “traditional” reasons. From this point of view, the Assistant Secretary General of the UN, American-born John Ruggie, explained: “*It is simple, the UN would have been unable to achieve what it has without the contribution of NGOs (...)* NGOs know how to exercise pressures on government. Their non-profit nature provides them with enough

⁶ A French diplomat, quoted by Claire Tréan “NGOs are imposing their influence in international relations” in “Le Monde” idem, page 2.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Ibidem.

*credibility and reliability with regard to public opinion; they know how to talk to the media and they are fast. You cannot have better partners than them!*⁹

To this must be added a neo-liberal opinion held by some Americans who consider the State in general, and the Third World countries in particular, evil.

Reinvention of the U.S. Foreign Assistance for the 21st Century

The US Foreign Assistance for the 21st Century is being reinvented into becoming a critical instrument for advancing the country's national security, interests and values. This policy has been articulated by Lael Brainard for the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in June 12, 2007.

As 90 percent of the world global population expansion over the next 20 years will be "concentrated in mainly developing countries, many poorly equipped to provide for the growing ranks of their young, America's national security strategy must place development on par with defense and diplomacy". The fight against global poverty is becoming a necessity for the US global security.

"Impoverished states can explode into violence or implode into collapse, imperiling their citizens, regional neighbors, and the wider world as livelihoods are crushed, investors flee, and ungoverned territories become a spawning ground for terrorism, trafficking, environmental devastation, and disease".

The US "needs a national security strategy that deploys foreign aid as a key instrument of American soft power and a key determinant of the face of America seen around the world, while leveraging the resources and dynamism of the American public, NGOs, and private sector".

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), are new ad hoc institutional arrangements created to respond this new global challenges. Meanwhile, by default rather than design, the Defense Department is taking on a growing role, now accounting for 1/5th of U.S. Official Development Assistance (ODA)".

The "international civil society": New myth or new reality?

The international civil society, tied to the neo-liberal ideology of "less state," has been in vogue in the industrialized countries since the crisis in the socialist oriented countries. This was the case in France, as with the emergence of "civil actors" in the North and the South. These two types of preoccupations (from the North and South) have joined forces to create a new ideological tendency through which "NGOs constitute the main instrument for managing collective forms and for reflecting on today's solidarity" (Hours B. 1999:34).

NGOs perform humanitarian "development" projects, which rotate simultaneously between emergency aid and "sustainable development."

The success of NGOs cannot be denied. The French Documentation Service has just published a guide called *The Freedom of Association in the World*. The director of this work, Michel Doucin from the High Council for International Cooperation (HCCI), has described NGOs in 138 countries.

He has revealed disparities between Western countries, just as he underscored the explosion of associations in Africa, "where civil societies are increasing by confirming themselves as a constant amidst non-democratic regimes," or in Latin America where associations "are the supporting point of a democratic transition affected with an unexpected ease." Nevertheless, Mr. Doucin noted a paradox that must be emphasized:

*"It has never been talked of so much as the 'international civil society, of the power of NGOs in the World,' whereas the legal foundation of these new diplomatic actors remains very fragile.— (...) We still do not really know what it is all about and no international legal framework has been set up for them."*¹⁰

Within this international context, NGOs that operate in the countries of the South have varied experiences according to the work they are doing in the country. The impoverished populations in poor countries have increased since the 1980s. By contrast, the struggles for democratization in these countries have opened the way to local NGO movements since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The logic of the liberalization of

⁹ Quoted by Afsané Bassin for "Le Monde" Ibidem p. 2"

¹⁰ Quoted by Claire Tréan, article mentioned above, page 2.

political life was a follow-up to the advent of multiparty politics in these former monolithic States. There was then a blossoming of both political parties and non-governmental organizations. The latter varied in nature and unequally powerful, depending on their connections with NGOs in the Northern hemisphere, the personality of their leaders and their relationships with the officials in the countries where they operated.

The reality is that the lacks of local regulation, and the absence of an international legal framework, have caused these NGOs to remain under of the *desideratum* of public authorities who can control, subdue or simply dissolve them according to the political inclinations and turn of events. These problems are acute in matters of human rights and where there are financial stakes. In any case, the social environment of these countries tends to change with the creation of NGOs. This illustrates the desire for collective mobilization and autonomy of citizens as a strategy for the personal management of their countries' economic crises.¹¹

The decline of material resources of the public and private sectors in these countries has caused some difficulties. Therefore, the distinction between public servants and NGO officials has reduced considerably. These are instances where you find "double agents," who carry many hats depending on the situations.

"Transnational networks" were set up to link NGOs from the North, NGOs from the South and international aid donors. Their influence appears to be very effective in matters of helping the poor or defending individual rights. At times, they can shift away from and overlook the local needs to the benefit of the transnational networks. In any case, it is obvious that a new element is taking shape at the international level: the supranational and non-governmental nature of the mobilization of citizens through NGOs.

3 – "The Other", between recognition and instrumentality in the field of NGOs

From this perspective we can also mention the instrumentality of "the other" (the foreigner), considered on the one hand a universal receiver, and on the other a universal donor. Such logic originated in both the North and South in the 1970's, when the Third World began to embrace the theory of economic liberalism. Instead of performing "non-governmental" duties, some North and South NGOs fed on each other (givers and receivers), which in many cases become a relationship of self-preservation.

In such cases, assistance is no longer only a means, but an end in itself, a method and an ideology depicted and/or decried under various forms, according to the following books: "Between Politics and Business" (Condamines C. 1989), "Another Man's Sorrow" (Kouchner B., 1991), "The Humanitarian Trap" (Rufin C., 1986), etc...

NGOs have different relationships between them, ranging from dependency to competition to complementary goals. Major international institutions, including the agencies of the United Nations, play a prominent role at initiating all these relationships.

"For example, are the programs launched by the UN on poverty, sustainable development, women, primary health care the result of pressures of NGOs or of a change of direction in major international institutions? (World Bank since 1974, WHO as from 1977). "Perhaps both ..." (Olivier de Sardan J-P-, 1999: 24).

Between the different ideological dimensions, NGOs are involved in a world where disparities between rich countries and poor countries have increased considerably while "social divisions" inside those countries have worsened. These facts justify the action of NGOs, and have caused them to more or less shift away from the principle of charity.

¹¹ As an illustration in matters of fight against AIDS, we can read: as an example in Africa, Fred Eboko, "International logics and contradictions in the AIDS field in Cameroon" Autre part, (Cahier des Sciences Humaines) Le Sida des autres, Paris, Edition de l'Aube – D N° 12 December 1999 pp 123 – 140; as an example in India, Frederic Bourdier, "NGOs and public powers in the fight against AIDS in India; Socio-political stakes and consequences" Autre part, Le Sida des autres, op, cit, pp 105 - 12221.

The “Charity business”

With regard to the notion of “charity” and solidarity pacts signed between the North and the South, the myth of giving has persisted. Whether at the level of the action of NGOs or at the instances of bilateral cooperation from developed countries, technical assistance, and humanitarian aid have already led to much discussion. A post-colonial guilt-ridden North and a dependent South have joined in the globalization of exchanges out of a neo-liberal domination and international pressures for new trans-border solidarities. Amidst the combination of ideologies and actions, contradictions often occur. At times antagonism between the various poles, official lines and real practices, gives the impression of missed opportunities. In every country of the North and in every international institution, the official instruments related to aid intended for poor countries emphasize the desire to improve the living conditions of the poor, enhance their economic performances, and help to develop the countries of the South.

Between talks and realities, there is ambivalence. According to some critics, aid for development originates through taxation by *“taking money from poor people in rich countries to give it to rich people in poor countries...”* This criticism is given due to the fact some consultants, public officials, and other national and international “lobbyists” in Haiti become the newly rich in a country where the general population is among the poorest in the World.

All these views are intended to comply with the rules of market economy on one hand, and to officially “support” the efforts towards democracy by former authoritarian political regimes, on the other.

The pattern which derives from the ashes of the defunct East-West bipolarity, following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, reveals a familiar picture: The vicious circle of placing the developing countries under a “state of dependency” with the official cover of the “virtuous” logic of assistance and then autonomy.

“Charity” numbers may be misleading. Substantial sums of money allocated for technical assistance to poor countries are channeled back in large proportion to the countries of the North. In this context, the Franco-African experience and the case of the United States with its Latin American neighbors are similar. It is a fact that the most important share of the budget for technical assistance and cooperation in poor countries is budgeted to pay salaries. It is evident that technical experts come for the most part from

the donor countries, even when the same qualified experts are available in the assisted country.

It is not an exaggeration to call this technical assistance, from an economic standpoint, a “North-North” circle. Within this logic the South is more a means than an end. In that sense, poor countries serve as venues for the regulation of employment and unemployment in rich countries. To justify this logic, some of the cooperation from the North alternates between hypocrisy and the denunciation of their perceived stereotypes of cultural patterns of the South, which would hamper “development.” Others make no attempt at justifying their position.

Brian Atwood, the former Director of USAID, the American Agency for International Development, stated publicly at a conference in New Orleans that 80% of money allocated for aid must be channeled back to the USA under the form of currency and contracts to countries from the developed countries. Charity in such cases is a “business” and above all, an economic flow at the service of the American economy through salaries paid to American personnel abroad. It has been observed that in Haiti for instance, public works engineers are recruited where a skilled bricklayer would have done the job. And above all, there is a lack of appropriate equipment adapted to the country.

Some NGOs of the North also encourage young people to find employment overseas under the cover of “humanitarian service,” as a way to reduce youth unemployment in developed countries.

Many projects are conceived without taking into account their feasibility and usefulness vis-à-vis the population’s needs. The results are sometimes ironic: Schools are built without any plan for teacher recruiting; referral hospitals are over-equipped but not accessible by the populations etc... It is sometimes a question of justifying budgetary lines rather than meeting the material, human, social, economic and political expectations of the poor.

The role of NGOs is very complex in fulfilling an intermediary function between the various poles of supply and demand, whether it relates to NGOs from the South or NGOs from the North. This intermediary role structures the scope of assistance, reveals and generates social forces, economic flows, ambiguous statutes and ambivalent situations. Haiti is a perfect illustration.

The number of NGOs operating today in Haiti stands between eight hundred and a thousand, according to various estimates. The scope of their activities is heterogeneous, their field of action wide-ranging, and their source of funding varied. One of the major characteristics of these non-profit organizations is their connection with foreign institutions, which often determine their financial importance and their level of influence. If the advent of NGOs in Haiti cannot be dissociated from the action of foreign NGOs, their relationships with the State of Haiti is also an essential factor in understanding their working dynamics. Therefore, we will structure their scope of activities according to two poles: The first pole interfaces the international and the local NGOs, and the second relates to their relations with the State.

I – Local NGOs and NGOs from the North in HAITI: New dependency or new solidarities?

1) Western NGOs and the emergence of Haitian NGOs: Historical and sociological processes.

A study from the Department of Development Sciences of the Faculty of Ethnology in Port-au-Prince by Professor Sauveur Pierre Etienne accurately describes the international sources of the Haitian NGOs' resources.

"Haitian NGOs are generally created upon initiatives of NGOs from the North and in this context, it is not an exaggeration to consider, to a certain extent Haitian NGOs as subsidiaries or branches of NGOs from the North. (...) More often, Haitian NGOs only execute programs on behalf of NGOs from the North, and when they introduce a proposal or any project, they are compelled to do so in conformity with the requirements of aid donors" (Etienne, 1997: 181).

The historical process

The history of the Haitian NGOs dates as far back as 1860, with the concordat between the Government of Haiti and the Roman Catholic Church. Their non-governmental social actions were then related to connections with foreign institutions. On October 30, 1864, French priests and nuns from the Brotherhood of Christian Instruction of Ploërmel (*Les Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne de Ploërmel*) founded Haiti's first Congregationalist school with the enrollment of 120 pupils. In 1952, about 600 nuns and 200 French

priests were teaching 30,000 to 35,000 students (both boys and girls) in 700 Presbyterian schools located throughout Haiti. Most of Haiti's elite were educated, almost free of charge, in these French religious schools:

Fathers of the St. Spirit, Brotherhood of Christian Instruction, Daughters of Wisdom, Sisters of St. - Joseph of Cluny (*Pères du St-Esprit, Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne, Filles de la Sagesse, Sœurs de St-Joseph de Cluny*). The French clergy was also involved in providing health care (Hospice St. François-de-Sales (*l'Hospice St François-de-Sales*) and social activities (the Salesian Sisters in the shanty town of La Saline located next to today's Cité Soleil). Nevertheless, *"the presence of NGOs in Haiti, strictly speaking, dates as far back as the 1950's"* (Etienne, idem p. 162).

The new dynamic then only involved a few organizations, such as Cooperation for American Relief Everywhere (CARE), Catholic Relief Service (CRS), Haiti Christian Service (SCH) and Haitian-Netherlands Cooperation (COHAN). In the 1960's, the protestant Churches¹² introduced in Haiti NGOs of protestant persuasion. Northern American churches particularly carried out the expansion of these humanitarian works.

During the 1970's, the number of NGOs increased in Haiti through the combined action of the international involvement in the country, and the internal political and economic situation. In effect, Jean-Claude Duvalier launched a policy of "economic liberalization" to encourage non-governmental initiatives. The Catholic Church seized the opportunity to compete with and check the expansion of the Protestant Churches through Caritas by launching a vast campaign of development projects in rural Haiti (Etienne, ibid-p. 162).

¹²Concerning the protestant religious structures, Pierre Etienne Sauveur uses the expressions "sects" and "churches" indifferently. For objectivity reasons, we shall use the meaning "protestant churches", so as to avoid bad connotations relating to the term "sect" that we no longer have any justification to use for protestant churches and for any other religious denomination involved in this task.

¹³ The succession of Mr. Mc NAMARA at the head of the World Bank caused an evolution in the style, beyond the official preoccupations of that institution with regard to poverty alleviation. Likewise, President Wolfensorjn recommended long stays by his officials in poor countries. The trend initiated by Mr. Wolfensorjn may be the title of the book published by the Bank in 1991: Putting People first (Cernea, 1991) see Baré (1997:52).

This offensive by Caritas closely resembles the programs launched in 1974 by the President of the World Bank, Robert Mc Namara.¹³

These programs, based on the concept of “*basic human need approach*,” consisted of promoting access to basic human needs to combat poverty in the Third World. Meanwhile, denunciations by political opponents of the Duvalier dictatorship speeded up the proliferation of NGOs through which international aid was channeled to supposedly avoid it being diverted by the ruling regime.

The scandal of Haitian “boat people” and its dissemination by the media in the 1980’s brought to light the distress and extreme poverty of the people of Haiti. These events accelerated the implantation of Northern American and European NGOs in Haiti. Local NGOs received substantial humanitarian assistance. The neo-liberal policy of Ronald Reagan partook in the process of “avoiding” and “court circuiting” the State. The American assistance administered by USAID was distributed through American NGOs working in Haiti; and especially Port-au-Prince. This also led to the creation of new NGOs in the 80’s.

The fall of Baby Doc on February 7, 1986, led to a massive return of Haitians who had been in exile. Their return was a sign of hope, and a new socio-economic and political drive in the country began. This migratory wave of cadres from different fields led to the creation of NGOs, which especially operated in areas of human rights and professional training. Their basic target groups (neighborhood associations, women and youth associations, etc...) rapidly aroused the interest of international organizations who saw the benefits that could be reaped from working with them. It became then necessary to look for “persons needing assistance” in order to create NGOs and develop one’s action. Preferably, these targets had to be “organized” to have access to the financial assistance. The opponents as well as the supporters of the Duvalier regime formed their own “local” NGOs. This proliferation of humanitarian good did not go without problems.

“(...) Many persons who enjoyed the privilege of the fallen regime and conservatives from all walks of life, engaged in the instigation of their former foreign bosses or allies, in the creation of various NGOs, with the obvious purpose of preventing anti-duvalierist sectors from having absolute control over basic groups and therefore giving some popular bearing to “duvalierism without Duvalier.” Instead of establishing mechanisms for control, defining a method of

organization and management of basic groups, as well as a new ideological orientation, as desired by their foreign bosses, they took advantage of this to enrich themselves” (Etienne, ibidem page 163).

The phenomenon of NGOs represents a complex field, which entails the subordination of operators to some classical processes for the symbolic and material capitalization of their respective positions. Interests, sometimes convergent, often divergent and at times frankly contradictory, motivate these interactions.¹⁴ Abuses are many and come from everywhere. Whether it involves diversion of funds by NGO officials or embezzlements by top government officials, this encompasses the exploitation of a “gray area” in international relations: the “aid for development.”

The experience of NGOs in the World, particularly in poor countries, seems to indicate that poverty is the result of a chain of historical shocks and political chaos leading to phenomena of structural poverty that cannot be only modified by some private and autonomous involvement. Sauveur Pierre Etienne acknowledged this when he explained:

“Therefore, under-development in Haiti, like in other countries of the Third World, is a product of colonial exploitation, relayed by neo-colonialism, that is to say a product of dependency” (Etienne ibidem p. 157).

2 – Typological elements of NGOs in Haiti.

NGOs do not have a single method of classification or unique typology. It is quite complex, though convenient, to attempt to classify them. If one takes into account their heterogeneous field of action and operation, their financial weight, their geographical location (urban versus rural areas) of the headquarters etc, it is possible to present indefinite typologies according to the criteria chosen. We will, in this example, present a brief table of a few NGOs operating in their field of activities. Instead of maintaining the criterion of NGOs’ geographical origin (international or national), we will divide them, on an arbitrary basis, into two major categories representing “humanitarian assistance” and “sustainable development.”

¹⁴ See Bierschenk T. Chauveau J. P and Vliwer de Sardan J. P., in “Courtiers du développement. Les villages africains en quête de projets”, Paris, Karthala, 2000.

TABLE 1

Summary Typology of NGOs in Haiti

Type of NGO	Humanitarian assistance.	Community development.	Reforms of North-South relationships Political, Economic; Cooperation North-South.
Fields of Activities	Basic need aid: Health – Education – Nutrition.	Training in management and animation – Agriculture – Livestock – Health-Education (legal).	
Objectives	Food assistance- Distribution of drugs and seeds Sanitation drinking water.	Regrouping the target-populations Financing micro-projects of Community development.	Influencing in favor of the countries of the South cooperation Policies from Countries of the North financing projects.
Strategies	Conception and implementation of Projects by NGOs Without the participation of "basic groups".	Causing Basic groups to take part in the conception and implementation of locally economic development projects (Villages, rural areas). Catholic Assistance; SCH; HRDF.	Idem.
Example	Food assistance financed by USAID: For CRS (25%) for CARE (50%) SCH (12,5%) World Adventist Assistance (12,5%) Health: CDS. AOPS; Education: FONHEP	Lambi fund.	

Source: Table drawn by us from data compiled by S.P. Etienne (1997:161-175)

Public aid for development (PAD), channeled through NGOs by Haitian partners (States and international organizations), became more substantial considering the institutional deficiencies of the State of Haiti. Relations between the Haitian State and NGOs were quite typical of the legal deficiencies governing the functioning of NGOs, at the same time as they reflected the weaknesses of the State itself, which today, develops tactics for controlling these NGOs.

II – NGOs in Haiti versus the State: Tensions, attractions, and repulsions.

1 – NGOs and the State: From indifference to interference?

Two major historical phases marked the evolution of relations between the State and NGOs in Haiti. The first, the latent phase, starts from the inception of the first NGOs in the country, at the end of the 1970's. The second, the critical phase, starts from the 1980's up to the present day.

The latent phase

The inception phase for NGOs in Haiti took place in a climate of relative reciprocal indifference between the State and NGOs. It was more a question of humanitarian assistance to the poorest population of the Western hemisphere. The State of Haiti saw no danger from the NGOs and considered their contribution with relative indifference. The carelessness of the Duvalier regime in the realm of health, nutrition and education amply justified such a palliative. In addition, no political criticism was made against the presence of NGOs, which was seemingly attributed to Christian charity. These NGOs, mostly of religious origin, did not pay attention to the causes of the problems they were out to solve. They merely acted, as much as possible, to alleviate the misery of the poor of the Haitian society.

"It can even be said," as Sauveur Pierre Etienne wrote, "that the State and NGOs were mutually ignorant of one another and shared or cultivated an attitude of mutual indifference. Despite the creation of the Ministry of Planning, which was theoretically responsible for coordinating all development activities in the country, whatever their origin, NGOs never submitted their programs to this state agency, which, for its part, was ignorant of the existence of many active NGOs in the country" (Sauveur, op. cit p. 184).

The second phase started in the 1980's when accelerated politico-economical problems were echoed by the international mass media.

The Critical phase: Tensions, interferences.

During the 1980's, Haiti experienced the advent and inception of NGOs referred to as "second generation." The promotion of the "civil society" and the "empowerment" process aimed at increasing and reinforcing the action of social groups, referred to as "subordinates" (women, youths, farmers etc), were

now added to the list of those receiving humanitarian assistance. As a matter of fact, these second generations of NGOs gave rise to and entertained critical opinions of the political causes for Haiti's dramatic economic situation. As a result, the NGOs whose objectives were the promotion and defense of human rights, more and more, criticized the State of Haiti.

From the perspective of the Americans, the election of Ronald Reagan to the White House accelerated the option of giving priority to relations with private institutions such as NGOs. Inside the country, new church officials less indifferent to the political life, stirred up tensions with the incumbent regime. The Roman Catholic Church and the "theology of liberation" from Latin America contributed to publicly expressing the discontent of the people of Haiti for their government. The government responded, and decided to better control these organizations. On December 27, 1982, a decree bearing the rules and regulations of NGOs was made public. In its article 12 (2), this decree laid down certain conditions in order to be granted the status of NGO within the territory of Haiti:

"(...) Submitting a support letter of warranty by a Bank or two national or international non-governmental Organizations operating in Haiti, or a bilateral or multilateral institution having their head office in the country" (Quoted by Etienne op. cit. p 186). Sub-section seven (7) stipulates that these NGOs officials must "show proof of the existence of a national, international or combined funding source" (idem p. 186).

This decree clearly indicated that one of the major interests for the state concerning NGOs was their financial assets. This was a way to not only exercise control over NGOs but also to exclude many non-profit initiatives, which could be politically harmful to them. NGOs immediately reacted to and denounced this decree through the association of NGOs:

"The excessive government control and the loss of independence by NGOs as well as the possibility of repression, not only against NGOs but also, and above all, against all that may interfere with their activities" (quoted by Etienne op. cit. p 186).

Lack of power by the State to really exercise control over the activities of hundreds of NGOs operating in Haiti actually caused this decree to be considered as a piece of paper without follow-up which lacked enforcement. The fall of Baby Doc in February 1986 was the source and one of the consequences for

tensions within the populations who granted popular support to the military. The successive leaders of Haiti relentlessly tried to bring the activities of NGOs under their control, since they served as resource and conceptual entities for civil protest. NGOs and their funding institutions irritate, disturb and harass Haitian officials. On October 5, 1989, General Prosper Avril who had just overthrown General Henry Namphy published an aggressive text which *“was not only severely disapproved by NGOs but also caused displeasure from the “bosses” of funding institutions like USAID and ACDI¹⁵”* (Etienne *op. cit.* p 187).

The fundamental question regarding the NGO's concerned their degree of contribution to real development. In any case, this is a cause for concern for Haitians, in particular in intellectual circles where the question of “the Invasion of NGOs” is raised. This question can neither be addressed theoretically nor practically, without raising the issue of the State and its lack of regulation.

2 – Activities and mission of NGOs: a Haitian debate

“L’Invasion des ONG”, a book by Sauveur Pierre Etienne, has revived discussions on the issue of NGOs in Haiti. It addresses essential questions relating to the activities and missions of NGOs in the country. Such questions are also meant to indicate to what extent the presence of these organizations fulfill the needs and expectations, as well as offer new fields of action (civil and political) within the Haitian society. The central issue for the people of Haiti is the institutional weakness of their State, which would like to control the NGOs, and dictate its *desiderata* over them. However, it is impossible for NGOs to be able to perform their global mission without coordination. Such coordination is presently lacking due to the weakness of the Haitian State.

Etienne and many Haitians questioned the NGOs role as far as “development” is concerned. The terms of this debate must be clarified. First of all, it is almost impossible for NGOs to “develop” a country, whether it is Haiti or another country. This is not the role of NGOs, and they do not possess the institutional capacity, although some NGOs budgets are superior to those of some government ministries.

The role of the State is essential as the organizer of public policies in which NGOs may play a contributing and stimulating part to social and political programs.

Since the actual “democratic transition” in Haiti appears to be deteriorating, NGOs attend to the most urgent needs. Lack of democracy prevents an atmosphere that would enable civil and political initiatives to be on the right track of a project for a free society, and endorsed by the majority. From this perspective, the second generation of NGOs and international organizations try to press on the State of Haiti to enable the emergence of an environment that is conducive both to competitive private initiative and to the implementation of public policies. The latter must serve as support and framework for fighting against disparities, and to provide access of the vital minimum to the greatest number of people, with the contribution of non-governmental organizations.

The legal framework, financial appeal, and symbolic stature brought about by NGOs in Haiti form a real forum of action and reflection within the society. In the meantime, NGOs operate in legal and political areas of uncertainty as well as in a process of social change. These may finally lead to a stronger and more effective synergy between the various parties at stake. In any case, NGOs in Haiti like anywhere are “social entities” among others in a world marked by the coexistence of the law of supply and demand coupled with humanitarian aid.

Nevertheless, as an optimistic standpoint, *“NGOs from the North and the South may constitute an important catalyst for challenging socio-economic norms to improve the living condition for many citizens in many countries”* (Hours, 1999: 45).

It is with the desire to improve living conditions for the citizens of Haiti that the NGO, the Haitian Resource Development Foundation (HRDF), was created. HRDF, which we will present in the next chapter, serves as an illustration of the development projects of an NGO as connected to the international network. HRDF also provides resources for Haiti, and its difficulties are similar to those faced by small NGOs in Haiti.

¹⁵ ACDI refers to the Canadian Agency for International Development.

I – Presentation of HRDF

The Haitian Resource Development Foundation (HRDF) operates under the statute of a Non-governmental Organization recognized by the Government of Haiti and registered in the archives of the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation. Doctor Aldy Castor founded HRDF in 1987 in the State of Louisiana; U.S.A. Doctor Jacques Bartoli operates the Foundation in Haiti. HRDF's mission is to initiate or provide assistance to projects and programs aimed at developing Haitian cultural, scientific, social, education, and economic resources.

As this initiative was founded in Louisiana and in Haiti, many of the projects show a dynamic relationship between Louisiana and Haiti.

HRDF falls under the category of “small NGOs,” whose operating funds principally derive from the founding members. The participation of HRDF members in all its projects is done on a voluntary basis.

HRDF's field of intervention is wide reaching. While aware of the need for scientific and social research, HRDF took it upon itself, as a priority, to carry out concrete actions in the fields of health, education and training, as well as local economic development.

The projects supported by HRDF, are qualified as “small projects.” Some of them are mentioned at the end of this chapter. Three of them will be presented, based the particular importance they have for us: a workshop for manufacturing school teaching equipment, the installation of HYDROPUR station used for purifying water and making it potable, and the creation of workshop classes for training in construction and electro-mechanics in Croix des Bouquets and Aquin.

The above three projects illustrate the positive aspects of how small NGOs operate in Haiti, while highlighting the difficulties encountered on the field and giving some necessary recommendations.

II – OBJECTIVES with regard to three projects.

1 – Manufacturing teaching equipment

Though education is one of the sectors that better resisted the declining situation of the country, nevertheless it remains a fact that general and technical education suffers from an obvious lack of teaching equipment for illustrating lessons. This considerable deficiency is detrimental to training. Under such circumstances, students are learning by memorizing their lessons without understanding their real meaning. In addition, a precarious economic situation causing the lack of audio-visual equipment and other teaching means prevents the teacher from presenting televised programs. Moreover, students lack access to museums and other forms of exhibits.

Many foreign companies have proposed experimentation kits in Haiti but they are generally very expensive and inappropriate for such a difficult environment (problems of electric power, books written in foreign languages, unavailable accessories, lack of consumable spare parts, etc). It is not a matter of reinventing the wheel, but rather of adapting to the Haitian reality. Furthermore, spare parts can only be bought at very expensive prices outside the country.

In collaboration with the company Altech s.c. HRDF has therefore endeavored to solve such a dilemma by establishing a workshop for manufacturing school teaching equipment for laboratory training, practical, and theoretical courses.

The local manufacturing aims to produce teaching equipment at a very competitive price while satisfying the official norms of Haiti. This workshop will also carry out repairs and adapt equipment according to demand and technical progress. Based on need, the management unit may rent expensive devices for specific projects (advanced equipment for conferences, seminars, exhibits, etc.).

The advantage of such a workshop is to avoid a recurrent dependency on foreign suppliers and to standardize the training of students. Local manufacturing and the general maintenance of equipment by trained locals offer a guarantee of longevity for equipment and also offers employment opportunities.

The European Community via the Belgian NGO Solidarité Socialiste Fondation Coopération et Développement, funded this project. In the long run, this structure will become autonomous through selling services. Lastly, the program could receive validity from the State.

The principle of assistance under the “one shot” module is easy to obtain by small NGOs from funding organizations because the state lacks the ability to independently manage these small projects. It is therefore important to give the educational sector sufficient flexibility to improve its quality and provide general access while the educational process continues to organize.

Education is one of the most important factors for sustaining development and ensuring the country's autonomy. This is why we consider this project a priority, and it helps justify the saying “build your future and don't be a victim of your destiny.”

2 – HYDROPUR

Difficult access to drinking water in rural areas of Haiti is a chronic situation that contributes to various health problems.

HRDF has offered a solution by supporting the manufacturing of the HYDROPUR machine in Haiti. HYDROPUR was conceived by the Belgian Company Altech s.c.

HYDROPUR provides drinking water to small rural and peri-urban communities where no water network is operating due to the excessive cost of establishing running water. HYDROPUR is also used to provide drinking water to localities where water sources are very often polluted.

The goal of HYDOPUR is to eradicate waterborne diseases in these areas. HYDROPUR has been in use since 1989, providing drinking water to the population of Poteno, Rossignol, Dauphine, and Bourdette P'tite Place, in the Estère District of the Valley of Artibonite, through a double filtering station. Crude water is collected from a principal irrigation channel situated near the site.

From the technical point of view, HYDROPUR rapidly and inexpensively transforms polluted water into drinking water. This machine only uses gravitational energy and is independent of any energy source. It's easy to use and comes with a system of automatic self-cleaning. Essential manipulation consists of

frequently adding tablets for chlorination and eventually flocculation. This system combines different tested techniques: chlorination, sand filtration, and dechlorination through activated charcoal. It may produce over 1,000 liters of drinking water per day and thus cover the daily needs of over one to two thousand persons.

The user's costs are very low: filtration costs (chlorine tablets) are 20 cents U.S. to purify 1,000 liters of water. In the long run, this appliance will be manufactured in Haiti at low cost with locally trained workers.

HRDF encourages the use of HYDROPUR. The Government of Haiti within the framework of development aid should encourage this type of appropriate transfer of technology. HYDROPUR was discussed as one of the models regarding the transfer of technology at the first joint committee of 1999 between the Belgian Walloon Region and the Republic of Haiti. HYDROPUR meets fundamental needs in the field of health and generates local socio-economic activities.

As a matter of fact, Haiti and “the less advanced countries” must start developing their own technology. We partially subscribe to the logic of Erhard Eppler, the Berlin Federal Minister. During the fourth UNIDO international meeting of development banks held in Berlin, he explained that only “*production processes for which the manpower factor is essential and which require a minimum of funds will be able to save these countries from crumbling.*” He went on to say that “*developing countries cannot afford the luxury of adopting production processes which breed unemployment instead of eradicating it. The jobless of 2010 have already been born. A technology for youths must be more standardized than it is now in developed countries; it must be spared from trend setting and must only be subject to modifications on established products in cases of real improvement.*”

A German enterprise conceived a small van of which only the engine, the gearbox, the front axle and the steering have to be imported from developed countries. The rest of the parts may be produced and assembled locally. This vehicle is so easy to assemble that any specialized workers having ordinary tools at his disposal may carry this out. The installation of an assembling plant would not require substantial capital: equipment would be simple, currencies exchange cheap, and the total costs very low. It can be considered that such a concept will give access to the manufacturing of solid, economical and reliable commercial vehicles particularly intended for those countries which do not

yet have their own automobile industry and where there are few spare parts suppliers.

*The needs are obvious but the market is reduced, that is to say those machines that produce less at lower prices, would be exactly what the demand and the market need. Such logic is practically contrary to what students reading economy are being taught, notably that only massive production with decisive capital factor and intended for an extended market may cause prices to be maintained low. Countries like Haiti are compelled to start defining their needs and analyzing beforehand the existing resources, the structures adapted to both production and consumption*¹ Extract from Mr. Erhard Eppler's speech entitled "a technology for the future"⁶."

This concept, modeled after certain Western schools of thought, should help motivate Haitians to begin to conceive and implement a technology appropriate to their own environment.

3 – Creation of construction and electromechanics Workshop-classes

Haitian youth constitutes a real socio-economic strength because of their demographic importance. Young people age 26 to 30, ready to enter the job market, represent 27.3% of the total population. But it must be noted that this section of the population is facing major difficulties as far as socio-economic integration is concerned. 65% of youths between the ages 20 and 30 are still dependent on their parents due to a lack of job opportunities.

From an economic perspective, there are practically no major enterprises operating in the country and SME (small and medium-size enterprises) are almost non-existent. The informal sector represents a substantial part of the economic activity. However, in the south of Haiti, there is a real economic development potential presently stimulated by the construction project of a seaport and an airport in the region of Aquin.

In parallel, vocational education is the sector that has been experiencing many difficulties in providing quality training. It is confronted with an obvious lack of resources, equipment, and qualified teachers.

Haiti is therefore suffering from a recurrent shortage of qualified manpower. For this reason, HRDF has decided to support and sustain a project for the socio-professional benefit of the youth of Aquin, based on the creation of workshop-classes in construction and electro-mechanics.

This project is supported by the Belgian Walloons Region through IFPME (Institut de Formation de Petites and Moyennes Entreprises). The Secretary for Youths and Sports administers it.

The purpose of such training is to allow young people to acquire skills and qualifications to access the formal market and ultimately create their own micro-enterprise to become professionally and financially independent.

The training consists of two components:
1) Companionship or hands-on training: the instructor and the trainee work together to perform practical and concrete tasks.

2) The instructor provides theoretical classes, conferences, and seminars. This consumes 20 percent of the training time, leaving the rest for real life experience. The student may also elect to visit other technical and professional centers in the region.

This project does not require over-qualified experts to provide the training. It's inappropriate to hire a foreign expert or an educational specialist to teach building construction in a rural area. Likewise, a public works engineer to help workers repair a dike or a road is not necessary. A skilled foreman with adequate field experience may effectively perform such tasks by instructing workers in clear and simple language. This type of approach is more efficient and cost-effective.

In order to improve the future prospects for youth in the job market, it is necessary to provide them with appropriate tools. HRDF is adhering to this idea in the fields of electro-mechanics or in beekeeping, for example.

Lastly, we must also take into consideration the importance of participation in cultural and sports programs to improve the living environment of youth. HRDF has built an athletic center in the town of Aquin and has organized several cultural and artistic activities in Haiti, Louisiana, and Florida to promote Haitian culture.

III – DIFFICULTIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS: HRDF experience

1 – Relationship with the state: Institutional obstacles

We have already mentioned in previous chapters that NGOs and the State of Haiti entertain ambiguous relationships. At times the relationship between organizations for humanitarian or development

assistance and the Haitian government is divergent. There are two major types of institutional obstacles: the State wanting to control the foreign currencies entering the country by way of NGOs, and some State agents using their position of authority to profit from the situation. The experience of HRDF is an illustration of this dilemma.

The Internet project: The aborted connection

HRDF began a project to connect Aquin students to the Internet network. This project has never succeeded. No financial contribution was requested from the State of Haiti. A francophone organization would provide all equipment and training. Only a simple letter of support was needed from the State. After three years of insistence and good will, the project was abandoned.

Poor people: A barter instrument

Another example will illustrate the kinds of problems some segments of the Haitian population are confronted with. Yves-Marie Chanel illustrates one example in a March 12, 2001, article written in the newspaper *le Nouvelliste*: *“88 cases of deaths due to Akee, a fruit-tree from West-Africa and known by the scientific name of Blighia Sapida (...) Intoxication due to Akee is endemic to Haiti. It generally occurs between January and April. Some information obtained on the spot indicates that drought leading to a shortage of food crops may urge the inhabitants of these localities to consume green fruits which contain a large quantity of hypoglycin.”* In the mean time, many containers of food for humanitarian assistance were “blocked” at the customs office in Port-au-Prince.

The above examples are typical of the dilemmas that NGOs face in Haiti.

At all levels of the administrative hierarchy, some employees with precarious financial means use and abuse their authority. This situation generally penalizes the poorest and the neediest. NGOs end up serving, against their will, as pawns between the donors, State officials and the receiver.

NGOs on occasion may face a difficult dilemma; those receiving the assistance at times respond in a suspicious manner as if the donor’s motivations are self-serving.

Additionally, some government officials create their own NGOs to receive funding, which is not accounted as part of Public Development Aid (PDA). Therefore,

they have control over different programs and become “double-agents,” half private, half public, and omnipresent in all international and national negotiations.

We must also mention the rivalries that exist among some NGOs that provide the same services and compete for the same target groups. These clashes between NGOs transform the poor into spoils of war: Is this war waged to eradicate poverty or to perpetuate it as a means for survival? This trend is very well stigmatized in the neologism “*miserocrats*,” the new lords of misery consecrated as leaders in the market of poverty.

In order to solve these problems, people must aspire to pragmatic attitudes, without which they would only resort to resignation or a call for revolution. Both solutions have already proven their limits in Haiti. Corruption is gangrene on Haiti’s hope for improvement. Change by force only maintains the country in a state of violence and victimizes the same people for whom the struggle originated.

2 – A few pragmatic recommendations: Between realism and hope.

Practical recommendations could not be made without considering the international agreements from the *Declaration of Paris*, which “lays down a practical action-oriented roadmap to improve the quality of aid and its impact on development. The commitments are organized around five principles: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual responsibility.

Twelve indicators of aid effectiveness were developed as a way of tracking and encouraging progress against the broader set of partnership commitments. Targets for the year 2010 have been set for eleven of the indicators and are designed to encourage progress at the global level among the countries and organizations adhering to the Paris Declaration.

The Paris Declaration creates stronger mechanisms of accountability, promotes a model of partnership that improves transparency and accountability on the use of development resources. It recognizes that for aid to become truly effective, stronger and more balanced, accountability mechanisms are required at different levels.

At the international level, the Paris Declaration constitutes a mechanism, which donors and recipients of aid are held mutually accountable to each other

and compliance in meeting the commitments be publicly monitored. At the country level, the Paris Declaration encourages donors and partners to jointly assess mutual progress in implementing agreed commitments on aid effectiveness by making best use of local mechanisms.

At present accountability, requirements are often harder on developing countries than donors, yet aid is more effective when partner countries exercise strong and effective leadership over their development policies and strategies. This is why ownership - developing countries exercising strong and effective leadership over their development policies and strategies - is the fundamental tenet underpinning the Paris Declaration.”

Cooperating with state agencies from the time projects are conceived

NGOs must cooperate with the State. They must work with state agencies from the time the project is conceived in order for approval to become official. This logic in practice would amount to reducing the participation of public servants to simple stamps of approval and would help decrease corruption.

Based on the experience of HRDF and other NGOs operating in Haiti, one cannot ignore the difficulties some officials can create as well as the help some of them can provide. Ignoring this reality could cause NGOs to face the difficult choice between corruption and failure.

Generally, when a project fails, the first reaction is to blame it either on the cynicism and the greed of the agents of the state or the inefficiency and indifference of the government.

NGOs are expected to have a pragmatic approach. NGOs must define their roles according to local needs in collaboration with the State. Moreover, the authorities must feel they have a stake in the projects and must get recognition as well.

CUSTOMS SERVICES

Tax relief on product intended for humanitarian assistance should be enforced according to Haitian fiscal laws. A report on October 2003 by the World Bank revealed that corruption is often the result of excessive government regulation. Haiti is among the countries with the most regulations and the highest levels of corruption, according to Transparency International, the Berlin based Anticorruption Group.

It is recommended that the Haitian government streamline their custom regulations as well as other's. Government should be a facilitator on development instead of an obstacle.

Relationships between NGOs: From rivalry to collaboration.

Many NGOs duplicate services, and thus reduce their effectiveness. It is therefore necessary for NGOs to be acquainted and familiarized with each other's work. Many attempts for regrouping NGOs have already been initiated in Haiti with few conclusive results. The concept of cooperation between NGOs, and the State is not a difficult one and should be encouraged.

Regardless of divergent interests, it is imperative to have similar objectives for helping the population. The interests of the recipients are often secondary to the interests of the givers for reasons that are structural, circumstantial or simply personal.

The State must assume its role as coordinator in collaboration with NGOs, international funding institutions, state representatives as well as local authorities. This way each field of activity would be operated in systematically organized and well-balanced pattern. However this objective is much easier said than done. It would involve the active participation of all concerned parties, however difficult the challenges may appear.

It is within this pattern that the international organizations and the partner states of the North and South can be convinced that embargoes against Haiti (Perrot D. 1999) only benefit certain sectors, which take advantage of the misfortunes of the country. “The Jewel of the West Indies” can only get out of this situation through a collective effort for a new beginning.

Codevelopment, a step toward the end of the assistance

President René Préval visited Paris in June 2006. He received a pledge from President Jacques Chirac stating that France will launch a **codevelopment program** in Haiti. This program permitted foreign nationals living on French territory to open a special bank account, called a “codevelopment saving account.” This saving account would allow these foreign nationals to invest in their country of origin to encourage economic development and prepare the ground for their home return. This decision, published in the French Official Newspaper, came after the vote on immigration and integration reform. This French

initiative was well received by African countries such as Mali and Senegal.

The Letter of Codevelopment, published under the direction of Mr. Christian Connan (French Ambassador delegated to the Codevelopment) states that “the central concept of codevelopment is to show that the migrants could, by their financial capabilities, acquire expertise and relation networks, participate in the development of their home country.” Mr. Connan, a codevelopment specialist and highly appreciated in Mali, has been the Ambassador of France in Haiti since January 2006.

Haiti should therefore take advantage of his knowledge to implement a codevelopment program. During a Diaspora’s Haitian forum in 2006, Mr. Connan went further by advocating “an active involvement of Haiti civil society that most often initiates these projects.”

Under the terms of this decree, the initial remittance of the codevelopment saving account ranges from a minimum of 50 euros to a maximum 50,000 euros. This personal saving account can be invested for duration of 1 to 6 years. Furthermore, the saving account holder benefits from fiscal exoneration in a country reputed and feared for its fiscal severity.

The French government allows every bank that offers the codevelopment saving account, the choice of the interest rate it pays its clients. The only setback for the saver comes from the fact that the codevelopment savings account is a long term investment, and cannot be accessed at a moment’s notice.

There are no doubts of the effectiveness of the Diaspora remittances to the Haitian economy. A well structured codevelopment program would at term, improve the living conditions of the Haitian people, by generating new jobs, reducing “brain drain,” and encouraging the return of expatriates along with their expertise, competence, and financial assets to Haiti.

Civil and humanitarian society: From freedom to the promotion of citizenship.

The general activities carried out by NGOs in Haiti have helped to participate in the promotion of a civil society, which is a positive step toward establishing democracy and economic development. Let’s not forget that freedom is transcended through creation of wealth and financial autonomy. As the civil society becomes empowered, humanitarian assistance will eventually become a palliative and not the backbone of the Haitian society as it is today.

Over the years, NGOs have provided a new stimulus to Haiti’s anemic middle class. Alice Morton explained it this way: “NGO’s have in the past 15 years, constituted an attractive alternative for civil service, as they offer handsome salaries, better working conditions and political isolation. The above factors seem to prevail over the fact that, at least for Haitians, they have started providing real carrier opportunities” (MORTON, 1997: V). NGOs could facilitate the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) to encourage citizens to become self sufficient rather than depend on the State or the NGOs. This would put into question the Haitian proverb “After God, is the State,” changing it to, “After God, I am the master of my own destiny.”

It is obvious that Haiti has experienced a succession of interferences in public freedoms and fundamental rights, which have prevented the creation of jobs and production of wealth.

All sectors must work together to help Haiti recover its past dignity, integrity, and prosperity. As former French Prime Minister Raymond Barre said: “*people receiving assistance are not free.*” Haiti must aspire, among others and with others, to enjoy more freedom.

**Ministry of Cooperation and External Planning
(MPCE)
NGO Activities Cooperation Units (UCAONG)**

**September 14, 1989 Haiti Decree governing
The Creation, Implantation and Operation
Of Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) to
Assist the Development of Haiti**

The Ministry of Cooperation and External Planning (MPCE), a state entity in charge of the application of the September 14, 1989 decree governing in Haiti the creation, implantation and operation of Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) to assist the development of Haiti, publishes the following articles to people who intend to solicit the legal status of NGO in favor of their organizations. This decree indicates the procedures that are to be followed, and the support documents to be annexed in the application form to support the demand of recognition as NGO. This decree concerns articles 8, 11 and 12.

Article 8 :

To recognize any private organizations that assists the development of Haiti as NGO and to authorized them to function throughout the national territory; the authorized persons will have the obligation to fulfill the following formalities:

To submit in writing to the Ministry of Cooperation and External Planning (MPCE) a demand of recognition.

To be submitted :

Three notarized copies of the organization statutes in French or in Creole. Three original copies + (see article 11)

A guarantee letter (*letter of recommendation*) from two (2) recognized NGO that are operating in Haiti or by a bilateral or multilateral agency (One original + two copies) ;

An affidavit delivered by the local administration (*mayor's office*) from the area of intervention (one original + two copies, a permit for every commune)

Provide development programs and projects to be implemented in one or several counties and/or localities of the national territory that are susceptible to improve the living conditions of the populations of the chosen areas (one original + two copies), and see guide MPCE/UCAONG/SREPP/02

Provide first and last name, home address, nationality, and occupations of Board of Directors members, as well as their position + (NIF for Haitians, passport number for foreigners)

Certificates of good moral character for each member of the organization's Board of Directors, to be delivered by the Judicial Police Central Direction (DCPJ). (One original and two copies).

Fill and sign the commitment form prepared by the Ministry of Cooperation and External Planning (MPCE). (One original and two copies)

Produce three (3) guaranteed bank reference letters indicating a banking account superior to fifty thousand (50,000) gourds. This letter must be delivered by a bank operating in Haiti (account should be in the NGO name).

In the case of a foreign NGO, three (3) original certificates of the act of recognition, delivered by the authorities of the country of origin should be submitted, and they should be legalized by a Consulate of the Republic of Haiti.

Article 11 :

The statutes of an organization soliciting the recognition as NGO must include the following information:

The name and the address of the organization;

The intended goals;

The purpose and the nature of the activities that organization intends to implement;

The first and last name, home address, nationality of the founding members of the organization;

The responsibility of the Administrators;

The filing date of the organization, the causes, and the terms of dissolution.

Article 12 :

A third of the board of directors members (of the Haitian branch) of a foreign NGO established in Haiti must be of Haitian nationality.

N.B: The demand of recognition as an NGO presented by any foreign organizations should include, besides the information and support documents required by the legislation, a mandated letter derived from the main NGO office, enabling its delegates to represent their institution in Haiti.

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