

ENVIRONMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Country Study

Haiti



JOINT UNEP/OCHA ENVIRONMENT UNIT

January 2016

Published in Switzerland, 2016 by the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit

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Cover photo: Uncontrolled waste pickers in the Port-au-Prince landfill, located in an area known as Truitier, at a short distance from the beach. The site was originally a swamp, with the water table at ground level. The scavengers routinely set solid waste piles on fire, creating a very unhealthy environment for themselves. (Credit: UNEP PCDMB, 2010)

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The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (JEU) assists Member States in preparing for and responding to environmental emergencies by coordinating international efforts and mobilizing partners to aid affected countries requesting assistance. By pairing the environmental expertise of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the humanitarian response network coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the JEU ensures an integrated approach in responding to environmental emergencies. The Environmental Emergencies Centre (EEC) (www.eecentre.org) is an online tool designed to build the capacity of national responders to environmental emergencies developed by the JEU.

Executive Summary

The Environment and Humanitarian Action (EHA) – Haiti country study is one in a series of country-level studies that assess the extent to which environmental concerns have been mainstreamed in humanitarian action. In addition, the study aims to provide operational guidance and advice to humanitarian actors, including government, and lessons learned to improve environmental mainstreaming. In April 2015, OCHA and UNEP, supported by Groupe URD, undertook a mission to Haiti to look at environmental mainstreaming in the humanitarian response to floods, tropical storms, hurricanes and mainly on the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake.

The study shows that immediately after the disaster, the environment was put under stress due to the procurement of material to construct emergency shelter, which exacerbated ongoing deforestation in Haiti. Eventually transitional shelter initiatives increased demand for gravel and sand and the expansion of often times unregulated quarrying which accelerated ongoing topsoil and river bank erosion increasing the likelihood of landslides. This illustrates that failing to include environmental considerations in humanitarian response undermines the main purposes of humanitarian action: to save lives and reduce vulnerability to disasters and increase resilience. However, positive changes were noted in Early Recovery and Shelter clusters. Environmental considerations were addressed in their consecutive initiatives focusing on debris management and procurement of certified timber from legal and sustainable sources for the construction of transitional shelters.

Four important lessons for improved environmental mainstreaming were identified:

- **The earlier, the better:** provision and deployment of dedicated resources at the early stages of a response pays its dividend throughout the response cycle. The timely funding and carrying out of rapid environmental assessments along with the deployment of environmental field advisors and dedicated UNEP presence are identified as good practices.
- **Commitment to continuous improvement:** undertaking and applying lessons from previous disasters were applied by partners and environmental experts, including the use of existing environmental mainstreaming tools and best practices.

- **Need for long term vision:** environmental considerations in the response phase should be linked to broader disaster risk reduction and environmental sustainability objectives. This will help to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development phases. The early recovery cluster can serve as a good starting and entry point for this.
- **Mainstream environment into humanitarian financing:** the Emergency Response Relief Fund for Haiti provided initial funding for the integration of environmental concerns into emergency relief response, however, a number of key clusters lacked the resources to employ dedicated environment expertise.

The disaster profile of Haiti provides, unfortunately, ample opportunity to continuously improve the performance of environmental mainstreaming in humanitarian response plans. It is hoped that this study contributes to the ultimate aim of both humanitarian and development actors to increase the resilience of the Haitian people to withstand the shocks they will continue to face, especially in the face of climate change.



*Cooperation for reforestation, Haiti:
Environmental considerations in the response should be linked to broader disaster risk reduction and environmental sustainability objectives.*

List of acronyms

CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCP	Department of Civil Protection
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
EFA	Environmental Field Advisor
EHA	Environment and Humanitarian Action
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ERP	Emergency response preparedness
ERRF	Haiti Emergency Response and Relief Fund
ES	Environmental sustainability
FOG	Field Operation Guidelines
GoH	Government of Haiti
GRRT	Reconstruction Training Toolkit
HC	Humanitarian Co-ordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HPC	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IARC	International Agency for Research on Cancer
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
IHRC	Haiti Recovery Commission
ISF	Integrated Strategic Framework
JEU	Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MIRA	Multi Cluster Initial Rapid Assessment
MSB	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations
OFDA	Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance of the United States of America
RC	Resident Coordinator of the United Nations
REA	Rapid Environmental Assessment
SAFE	Safe Access to Fuel and Energy
SBPP	Stand-by Partnership Programme
SMCRS	Service Métropolitain de Collecte de Résidus Solides
TAP	Haiti Transitional Appeal Process
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USG/ERC	Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator
WHO	World Health Organization
WWF GFTN	WWF Global Forest Trade Network

1. Background and context

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) sets out Nine Commitments for organisations and individuals involved in humanitarian response.¹ The third commitment seeks to ensure that *“Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action”* a key action listed under this commitment is to *“identify and act upon potential or actual unintended negative effects in a timely and systematic manner, including in the areas of [...] the environment”*.²

Since the 2005 Humanitarian Reform, “environment” as a cross-cutting issue should be considered a priority by humanitarian actors. The study “Environment and Humanitarian Action: Increasing Effectiveness, Sustainability and accountability” published in August 2014, called for the need for evidence-based advocacy. With financial support from the Government of Finland, the Joint OCHA/UNEP Environment Unit (JEU) responded to this call and has undertaken a number of country-level studies to explore the level of environment mainstreaming in selected humanitarian crisis. Haiti was selected as case study based on its widely documented environmental degradation, high vulnerability to geophysical and hydro-meteorological hazards, the presence of a wide range of humanitarian actors and donors who have been responding to floods, tropical storms hurricanes and earthquake. In addition, the cluster approach was applied for the first time in Haiti to respond to tropical storms and hurricanes in 2008. Finally, presence of UNEP and OCHA country offices has contributed to the selection of Haiti as case study.

1.1 Objectives and scope

The study overall objective is to provide an overview of the extent to which environmental considerations have been incorporated into humanitarian action and the initial recovery process. It provides recommendations to promote better integration of environmental issues in humanitarian response and emergency preparedness. The study is based on the findings of JEU mission carried out in April 2015 with the aim to:

- Assess the extent to which environmental concerns have been taken into consideration by humanitarian partners throughout past humanitarian response and the current Transitional Appeal Process.

- Provide recommendations and identify country specific measures for the provision of support to local authorities and their partners to promote environmental mainstreaming.

The research covers the immediate period from the 2008 humanitarian response to hurricanes and tropical storms, the humanitarian response following the 2010 earthquake and concludes with the launch of the Transitional Appeal Process in March 2015.

The scope of the present study is limited to assessing the level of environmental mainstreaming and/or integration in humanitarian action within the first 6 months after cyclones and the 2010-earthquake. However, issues related to the longer term environmental impacts of post-earthquake resettlements and reconstruction are highlighted.

The study is based on literature review and the findings of the JEU mission to Haiti carried out between the 19 and 30 of April 2015. Interviews complemented the above two methods.

1.2 Humanitarian context of Haiti

Despite recent progress, Haiti remains the poorest country in the Americas and one of the poorest in the world with significant needs in basic services. More than 6 million out of 10.4 million Haitians live under the national poverty line of \$2.44 per day. Remittances make up more than a quarter of the Haitian economy.³ The substantial decrease in donor financing is expected to continue and will be a major challenge for Haiti. Meanwhile, the country’s future is faced with alarming trends: population increase, socio-economic vulnerabilities, environmental degradation and eroded natural resource capital.

Deforestation, poor land, water management, and inadequate sanitation continue to plague Haiti. Deforestation trends⁴ are alarming and the cutting-down of trees continues today as nearly 80 per cent of the population relies on wood as a source of energy. The agriculture sector is the main source of revenue for rural households and is heavily dependent on rainfall and particularly exposed to the effects of climate change which has likely affected the frequency and intensity of hurricanes and tropical storms exacerbating the risk of flooding and erosion.

3. Manuel Orozco, “ Understanding the Remittance Economy in Haiti”, Inter-American Dialogue, March 15, 2006

4. Indiscriminate tree cutting started as early as “the beginning of the XIX century in order to allow Haiti to pay the fee imposed by France in recognition of its independence. The country had to sell huge quantities of wood, especially mahogany, to pay this debt” in GEO HAITI 2010, UNEP.

1. Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability: <http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org>
2. Ibid

About 96 per cent of the Haitian population is living in areas exposed to two or more hazards including hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, landslides and droughts. Mangrove swamps and aquatic resources are in an advanced state of decline due to over-exploitation, reducing the country's natural capacity to protect itself from hurricanes.⁵ In addition, uncontrolled urban expansion has pushed the poorest population to live in areas prone to disasters.

The country has made considerable progress to recover from the 2010 earthquake and aftershocks. It is estimated that 89 per cent of the internally displaced population left the camps as of March 2015.⁶ Progress made in controlling the Cholera epidemic since the 2010 outbreak have been steady, with reported case numbers decreasing from a monthly average of more than 35,000 in 2011, to about 2,200 cases per month in 2014.

However, Haiti continues to be a fragile state characterized by high vulnerability and low resilience. Haiti's national contingency plan worst case scenario assumes that 600,000 people could be affected by any hydro meteorological hazard. International partners can cover immediate basic needs in shelter, protection, health, food, education and WASH, for approximately 100,000 of these potentially affected people for two weeks. Drought is currently affecting the country and prompted initial responses by both humanitarian and development actors. Following the launch of the Transitional Appeal Process in March 2015, humanitarian partners are focusing on residual humanitarian needs related to cholera, internally displaced people (IDPs) and the ongoing crisis affecting Haitian being expelled from the Dominican Republic.



Liquid and solid waste management issues further increased the risk and spread of infectious and vector borne disease, Haiti

5. CHF Rapid Environmental Impact Assessment – Haiti. Obtained from: www.alnap.org/pool/files/haiti-rea-final-report-march-17,-2010.pdf
6. IOM, DTM, March 2015

2. Key Findings

This chapter provides an analysis of the extent to which environment as cross-cutting issue within humanitarian action has been mainstreamed and/or integrated in response to the 2008 cyclones and the 2010 earthquake. It highlights key environmental issues, challenges and obstacles to environmental mainstreaming and best practices in environmental integration.

2.1 Response to hurricanes

The hurricane season of 2008 was one of the worst natural disasters ever experienced in Haiti prior to the 2010 earthquake. Two hurricanes, Fay and Gustave, and two tropical storms, Hanna and Ike, hit the country in August and September. Formally introduced in Haiti in August 2006⁷ the cluster system was officially activated in Port au Prince and Gonaives in 2008 following the dramatic sequence of hurricanes and tropical storms. The IASC cluster approach evaluation of 2009⁸ highlights several challenges for all clusters operating in Haiti in 2008 including the lack of dedicated coordination capacity and participation in activities by affected population and the GoH. Moreover, the IASC evaluation⁹ indicates, *inter alia*, weak accountability of clusters, weak inter-clusters coordination for multisector and cross-cutting issues, including the environment.

Generally, environment as a cross-cutting issue was neglected. However, the Emergency Shelter cluster benefitted from an Environmental Field Advisor (EFA), deployed for two weeks.



10 million cubic meters of debris generated by the earthquake, collapsed supermarket, Haiti.

7. The cluster system was introduced in Haiti before the establishment of an OCHA office

8. Andrea Binder and Francois Grunewald, "IASC cluster approach evaluation, 2nd phase, Haiti Country Study", April 2010

9. Ibid.

The EFA reviewed the use of environment tools and procedures by the cluster and found that these were hardly used by cluster partners. The EFA produced practical recommendations and tested tools developed by the Global Emergency Shelter Cluster to minimize immediate and long term negative environmental impacts. However, no continued attention was given to the implementation of the recommendation after the departure of the EFA.

The 2009 emergency preparedness efforts saw the active involvement of the Ministry of the Environment. The IASC evaluation team of 2009 found that the national contingency plan for the 2009 hurricane season addressed the environment as cross-cutting issue.¹⁰ The IASC evaluation team also recommended the identification of environmental focal points within the UN country team.

2.2 Response to the 2010 earthquake

Following the 2010 earthquake, UN agencies, international and local NGOs, multilateral and bilateral donors, the Red Cross Movement and the Government of Haiti engaged in a massive humanitarian operation. Four months after the earthquake the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission was established to help strengthen coordination of the recovery efforts. The Commission had key functions including planning and coordination of recovery efforts. A UN Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) 2010-2011¹¹ for Haiti was launched in November 2010 and articulated the joint strategy of MINUSTAH and the UN Country Team in support of the Government's stability and reconstruction efforts after the earthquake.

Activities to address the environmental consequences of the earthquake and potential negative impacts of humanitarian operations received little financial support. Only the Government of Ireland provided initial funding to UNEP for an environmental assessment while the United States also commissioned a Rapid Environmental Assessment (REA) to support its contractors and grantees to follow environmental due diligence. However, "*insufficient monitoring and the unsystematic uptake of REAs recommendations, made it impossible to evaluate the extent of actual environmental impacts of humanitarian and early recovery actions*".¹²

10. Ibid. page 28

11. The ISF replaced the UNDAF 2009-11 and was approved by the United Nations System in Haiti on 25 November 2010 and the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation for the Government of Haiti on 4 February 2011. It was also validated by the UN Integrated Mission Task Force for Haiti in New York on 17 January 2011

12. Interview with Charles Kelly, USAID Haiti REA environmental expert

The absence of systematic monitoring of the REA recommendations' implementation was due to the lack of dedicated capacity for monitoring and commitment to follow-up. Key areas of concern highlighted by both environmental assessments are summarized in the table below.

Environmental issues/Impact on Natural Resources	Description
Disposal of medical waste	Medical waste was disposed of through open-sky incineration. The toxicity of the smoke from burning waste, along with associated levels of pollution, added to the already serious public health risks.
Sewage and Sanitation	Lack of acceptable solutions for disposal or treatment of human waste taken from camps and urban areas, resulting in large-scale open-air dumping of human waste near crowded slum areas. Frequently solid waste was unloaded at a disposal site in Truitier landfill, in Port-au-Prince, as well as at improvised dump sites. The uncontrolled burning waste at dump sites caused air pollution
Disaster debris	Disaster debris was often not segregated
Post-disaster resettlement and reconstruction	Major reconstruction projects approved and funded without any real form of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
Impacts on deforestation and increased likelihood of landslides and topsoil and river bank erosion	Unsustainable procurement of aggregate, uncontrolled extraction of sand from mountains and rivers, use of stumps for emergency and transitional shelter and of timber for construction and for fuel wood and charcoal
Livelihood and food security impacts on charcoal production	Household losing productive assets resulting in livelihoods and food security options which can have a negative impact on the environment (e.g. increased charcoal production)
Geophysical and Hydro-Meteorological Hazards	The seismic impacts of the earthquake triggering the risk of landslides which increases the potential for flooding. An initial assessment of flood and landslide risk to shelter sites in Port au Prince was carried out ¹³

Source: UNEP Mission Report January 2010 and USAID REA, March 2010

The US-funded REA reported: “No Cluster has yet dedicated internal environmental support. Some Clusters do not recognize the environment as a critical issue in their objective statements. There is no systematic screening of relief assistance for negative environmental impacts, even when such negative impacts are highly likely and have already begun to occur. There is a general lack of accessible information on environmental lessons learned and environmental good practice from previous disaster relief efforts.”¹⁴

During the post-earthquake emergency phase, shelter, waste management, water and sanitation were among the key environmental challenges. During the transition phase, relocation, resettlements, housing, solid waste management, water and sanitation, continued to present environmental challenges.



Riverbank erosion due to flooding, Haiti

13. Haiti Flood and Landslide Risk for IDP Camps

14. USAID Haiti REA

2.2.1 Cluster specific environmental considerations

a) Shelter Cluster

Impacts on deforestation and excessive rock extraction due to the emergency and transitional shelter needs following the earthquake were considerable. The provision of Emergency Shelters called for over 700,000 plastic sheeting (tarpaulins) and a 100,000 tents distribution. Between 2 to 3 million timber poles, sourced from local forests, were utilized for establishing emergency shelter following the earthquake amounting to the destruction of “approximately 5,000 hectares of plantation forest cover or 5% of Haiti’s present forest cover”.¹⁵ The majority of these wooden poles were procured by displaced individuals from existing markets. Eventually agency supported shelter activities picked up and included simple timber frames covered by tarps. The majority of this wood was procured outside of Haiti simply because there was an insufficient domestic timber supply to meet demand.¹⁶

Under the IFRC and WWF strategic partnership, the Shelter cluster benefitted from the presence of an Environmental Field Adviser (EFA) and a Debris Management Adviser for a six month period from April to September 2010. Building on the rapid environmental assessments, the deployed EFA introduced principles of Environmental Sustainability (ES) in shelter design and construction. This practice followed as a lesson learnt from the 2004 East Indian Ocean Tsunami. The EFA shared with cluster members various guidelines, including the Green Recovery and Reconstruction Training Toolkit (GRRT).¹⁷

The EFA furthermore introduced principles of Environmental Sustainability in shelter design and construction and disseminated analysis of environmental issues related to emergency and transitional shelter. A Timber Position Paper on green procurement was disseminated amongst cluster partners who greatly helped to mainstream good procurement practises. The EFA conducted community consultations to ascertain the level of tarpaulin’s reutilisations and approached *Haiti Recycling* -the largest recycler operator in Haiti in 2010- and developed a guidance note for agencies on reuse, recycle and disposal of plastic sheeting.¹⁸

15. Ibid, all timber poles utilized have been from local forest resources, with the types of trees used being Mong, Kanpech, Frenn and Bayoronne

16. Shelter members noted that in previous large emergencies, international responders in countries such as Indonesia accessed locally available timber – Ache 2004 – which had environmental consequences.

17. <http://green-recovery.org>. The GRRT was originally pilot tested in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, and has since be used in Chile, Haiti, India, and Pakistan.

18. WWF, Environmental Advisor Report, IASC Haiti Shelter Cluster, 2010

A debris management advisor provided guidance adapted to the Haiti post-earthquake context on recycling and reusing debris for construction thereby reducing the impacts on landslide risks and soil erosion.



Solid waste management challenges in IDP camp, Haiti.

b) Early recovery Cluster

Initial rubble removal projects funded by USAID in partnership with the GoH and partners ensured that the debris removal and disposal was in line with the donor and national environmental guidelines. The UN launched the Joint Debris Management and Rehabilitation Programme to remove, recycle and reuse the estimated 10 million cubic meters of debris generated by the earthquake. More than 1 million cubic meters of debris were removed using 90 per cent of Haitian labour through cash and work projects.¹⁹ The debris Management Programme received an environmental review, and detailed guidelines on the proper handling of asbestos were circulated. UNEP provided advice on how to improve the positive environmental impact of Cash for Work programs which engaged affected urban communities in the construction of dams, culverts, roads and the cleaning of open canals to prevent flooding during hurricane season. In rural areas, recovery activities focused on revitalising agricultural land through canal improvement works, the management of river basins and watersheds, and the construction of agricultural roads.

19. UNDP Haiti website

c) WASH Cluster

Sanitation, sewage and solid waste management posed serious challenges for humanitarian responders – even into the transition phase- due to very poor pre-existing landfill and waste management practises and limited space for SPHERE recommended toilets and latrines in urban camps. Human waste was thus allowed to be dumped at an already dysfunctional landfill, posing additional risks of groundwater contamination. The use of collective chemical latrines, were indicative of the challenges posed: while the US-funded REA advised against their use²⁰, the WASH cluster supported them. One informant of this study highlighted the dilemma as follows: *“in terms of environmental impacts there are advantages and disadvantages of elevated traditional emergency latrines which are made of wood, plastic sheeting and plastic slabs, and chemical/portable latrines. It seems that chemical toilets were not a good choice, but if looking at environmental impact, what about emergency latrines using a huge quantity of wood in a country where deforestation is a big issue?”*²¹

Relief operations exacerbated pre-existing waste management problems. In interviews with local authorities, the generation of waste from relief operations was referred to as a *“second disaster”*²² with main issues being caused by plastic water bottles (US military reporting the distribution of 2.6 million bottles) and styrofoam (polystyrene) food packaging.



Pre-existing waste management problems were exacerbated by relief items such as plastic water bottles. Polluted beach, Haiti.

20. In the USAID Haiti REA, OFDA ensured that USAID funding was not used to purchase chemical toilets
 21. Interview with Gregory Bult, UNICEF
 22. Interviews with the Civil protection Department

This surge in plastic waste, combined with poor disposal practises, contributed to many open drainage channels being blocked by packaging. The use of styrofoam is of particular concern as it has been classified as a possible human carcinogen by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).²³ Furthermore Styrofoam is not easily recyclable and some donors, such as Canada, explicitly banned the use of this material. In addition, *“the use of expanded polystyrene by international organisations and their employees also raises an ethical issue as this is prohibited by Haitian law”*.²⁴ Given the stress on medical facilities and the lack of adequate infrastructures for the management of healthcare waste, UNEP and the World Health Organisation requested the support of a waste management expert from Sweden to support the Government of Haiti to temporarily dispose of health care waste in the Titanye municipal landfill. The support also included the training of a government team in the proper handling of bio hazardous waste. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) was one of the first NGOs in Haiti to put in place measures to reduce the negative environmental impact of its programmes and in 2011 initiated a private sector partnership for the export and treatment of its hazardous waste in the USA.²⁵

d) Food Security Cluster

In Haiti, unrestricted importation of seeds with a complete disregard of phytosanitary requirements as well as unregulated importation and use of pesticides²⁶ has been raised by few informants.²⁷ For example, as a part of the relief-effort, a number of NGOs and foreign companies donated large quantities of seeds without undergoing an inspection or certification process in direct contravention of Haitian law, potentially allowing for the transportation of pathogens which could harm local crops. Often, seeds have been donated with little consideration of long term sustainability and impact on local food production systems, such as improved seed varieties not previously tested in Haiti. Relevant studies and reports advised against the introduction of new seed varieties in an emergency context. Yet, few humanitarian actors distributed improved seed varieties to farmers in post- earthquake response.²⁸

23. Polystyrene Foam Report in <http://www.earthresource.org/campaigns/capp/capp-styrofoam.html>
 24. Samantha Brangeon :“THE WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF AID ORGANISATIONS Case study: Haiti, February 2015, URD Observatoire Haiti, CEFREPADE
 25. Ibid
 26. Working Group on Human Rights and Environmental Justice Joint Submission obtained from <http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/session12/HT/JS5-JointSubmission5-eng.pdf>
 27. Interviews
 28. Hanna Garth and contributors “Food and Identity in the Caribbean”, 2013

MINUSTAH: the Greening the Blue Initiative in Haiti

In 2007, the UN launched the “Greening the Blue” campaign aiming at reaching a ‘zero impact’ target of UN activities. Since 2007, MINUSTAH has been among the first peace keeping missions to put in place an environmental policy supported by an action plan. Thanks to longer-term programme cycles and funding MINUSTAH constitutes the best environmental practice by UN Organization in Haiti. Since 2012, MINUSTAH has launched a recycling program for hazardous and non-hazardous waste in collaboration with the private sector. MINUSTAH also set up a wastewater treatment facility in all the camps and the environment unit carries out a vast awareness raising campaign for troops and civilians. For more information <http://www.greeningtheblue.org>



Post earthquake Eco-DRR activities on the coast of Port-Salut, Haiti

2.3 Accountability

A number of actors, such as the Haitian Ministry of Environment, OCHA and UNEP have an important role in mainstreaming environment through coordination, provision of technical advice and information sharing. In addition, the humanitarian donor community has a role to play in requiring environmental due diligence of their funded projects.

Except for the 2009 contingency planning process, the Ministry of Environment has not been involved in national disaster preparedness and disaster response efforts. Local authorities recognized shortcomings in the enforcement of environmental protection laws and their integration into strategic and policy frameworks. The Department of Civil Protection (DCP) is in charge of the coordination of stakeholders supporting risk and disaster management activities, however, environmental mainstreaming tools are not used for now in strategic documents such as the 2015 Contingency Plan and the National Plan for Disaster Risk Management did not include provisions for mainstreaming environment into humanitarian action, climate change and environmental emergencies.

UNEP has a project office in Haiti focusing on sustainable environmental development since 2008. Many humanitarian workers were willing to consider environmental issues in their response; however, a lack of technical expertise within humanitarian organizations greatly hindered these efforts.²⁹ The UNEP project office supported environmental integration in key post-earthquake recovery planning documents and activities including the March 2010 Action Plan for National Recovery and Development (PARDN) and the distribution of operational guidance to cluster partners and advice on environmental safeguards in the Multi-Donor Trust Fund and the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC). UNEP observed that while in the planning phase environmental concerns were factored in discussions and inserted in key documents, however, in practice recovery efforts by all stakeholders-including the private sector- did not fully reflect the integration of environmental concerns. UNEP early engagement ensured environmental issues were given consideration at the technical level within the clusters, but unfortunately UNEP engagement with the clusters could not be sustained due to lack of dedicated resources.

The Terms of Reference of the Inter-Cluster Coordination in Haiti has as one of its core tasks to “*identify cross-cluster synergies and gaps and maintain humanitarian operational planning and priorities including cross cutting issues*”.

29. UNEP GEO HAITI 2010

OCHA chairs the Inter Cluster Coordination group. The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) “ensures that a common strategic plan for realising this vision is articulated, based on documented needs and integrating cross-cutting issues (for example age, gender, diversity, human rights, HIV/AIDS, and the environment) and activities in support of early recovery, by leading and coordinating its development”. It is noteworthy that an IASC Gender Advisor was deployed, though no similar mechanism was available back then for the deployment of an Environmental Field Advisor through UNEP or through OCHA’s Stand-by Partnerships Programme. Despite UNEP’s participation in selected clusters meetings, the inter-cluster coordination function did not provide sufficient effort to coordinate environmental mainstreaming. The IASC Real Time Evaluation team -three months into the response- stated that the inter cluster coordination “got off to a slow start and lead agencies lacked the leadership and the capacity to mainstream gender, early recovery, protection and the environment into their response”.³⁰

Humanitarian donors and pooled funding mechanisms can play an important role in the allocation of humanitarian funding, in particular by making environmental considerations explicit in their decision-making and funding allocations. For example, the Emergency Response Relief Fund (ERRF) is a fast and flexible funding mechanism to address short-term humanitarian emergency needs which acknowledged the integration of environmental concerns into the response effort as an integral part of humanitarian response: UNEP’s project office was able to benefit from an allocation accordingly.

USAID is by far the largest donor in Haiti. In terms of environmental screening practices applicable to humanitarian and reconstruction project, USAID applies pre-planning standards. For instance, the Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance does not accept donations of bottled water in lieu of water treatment facilities and jerry cans that can be reused. Operational guidance during the relief scenario also includes the use of SPHERE which is complemented by internal field operation guidelines. In USAID, environmental protection is built within these procedures.



The sustainable use of trees for charcoal can slow rampant deforestation, Haiti

30. Andre Binder, Francois Grunewald, Yvio Georges « Inter-agency real time evaluation in Haiti : 3 months after the earthquake » URD and GPPI.

Despite the US funding a Rapid Environmental Assessment for its activities, its implementation was not adequately carried out, and resulted in a “*scattered unsystematic uptake of the recommendations*”³¹ along with a “*lack of clear link between the assessment and decision making, with responsibilities not been assigned on specific actions*”. Equally, there was nobody tasked with follow-up on the recommendations provided by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) carried out on the Corail temporary relocation site.³²

The American Red Cross (ARC) in Haiti applies environmental screening at the project proposal phase and follows up on the recommendations made.³³ However, environmental mainstreaming is not applied at all levels of the institution with clear and specific policies on how to mainstream environment though strides have been made through the development of Green Recovery and Reconstruction Toolkit (GRRT) developed with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in response to the great Tsunami of 2004. In Haiti, environment is systematically integrated into ARC programmes from the initial planning phase. Each project or programme is analysed from an environmental perspective and approved by a steering committee. Please see GRRT box for further information on the tools available for integrating environment.

ECHO does not conduct environmental screening of projects and does not have the capacity, at country and regional levels, to conduct such a screening and to follow-up. Nevertheless, ECHO has introduced a “resilience marker” (about four questions) that takes selected environmental considerations into account. ECHO Haiti expressed interest in the environmental marker.

To improve operationalisation of its programmes principles, the UNDP Social and Environmental standards procedures were developed and applied.³⁴ For project above 500,000 USD, an Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) is carried out to appraise the extent of environmental concerns. In case the IEE indicates negative impacts by the project, a comprehensive Environmental Assessment is mandated. For example, the Debris management programme in Haiti underwent an environmental review after which a full EIA was deemed unnecessary.³⁵

The Green Recovery and Reconstruction Toolkit (GRRT)

The rebuilding efforts that follow a disaster represent a significant and important opportunity to restore communities in a more environmentally and socially sustainable way. Soon after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the American Red Cross and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) formed an innovative, five-year partnership to help ensure that the recovery efforts of the American Red Cross did not have unintended negative effects on the environment. Combining the environmental expertise of WWF with the humanitarian aid expertise of the American Red Cross, the partnership has worked across the tsunami-affected region to make sure that the recovery programs include environmentally sustainable considerations, which are critical to ensuring a long-lasting recovery for communities. The Green Recovery and Reconstruction Toolkit (GRRT) is a training program designed to increase awareness and knowledge of environmentally sustainable disaster response approaches. Participating organizations include International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Oxfam, World Vision, RedR, United Nations Environment Programme, International Union for Conservation of Nature, CARE, Danish Refugee Council, U.S. Agency for International Development, Save the Children, Sphere, and Tearfund among others. The GRRT was originally pilot tested in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, and has since been used in Chile, Haiti, India, and Pakistan.

More information on the resources available for mainstreaming environment and integrating environment into specific sectors and programs can be found at <http://green-recovery.org>

During interviews, donors indicated that having policies, regulations and procedures to ensure that environmental issues are considered is not enough. Highly skilled technical expertise is necessary to support the immediate relief and recovery phases.

31. Interviews

32. Ibid

33. Ibid

34. The UN Country Programming Principles include three normative principles (human rights-based approach, gender equality, and environmental sustainability)

35. Ibid

2.4 Haiti Transitional Appeal Process

The Transitional Appeal Process serves as an integrated strategic and operational plan for humanitarian and resilience-building action by providing a framework for transition and coordination between humanitarian and development actors. Environmental issues (including climate change) are however not systematically mainstreamed into the Transitional Appeal Process, particularly within thematic tables. Similarly, emergency preparedness activities and the National Plan for Disaster Risk Management can benefit from further mainstreaming of environmental considerations.

Entry points for environment and climate change mainstreaming are found in the National Plan for Disaster Risk Management³⁶ which should be revised to include Climate Change, Environmental Emergencies and environment into humanitarian action.



Pre-existing deforestation was exacerbated in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake due to emergency shelter needs.”

36. As of September 2015, the PNGRD is under revision.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

Broadly speaking, environmental considerations were not systematically integrated into humanitarian responses to disasters in Haiti since 2008 and where efforts were made technical resources were often insufficient. In some instances, this led to an increase in deforestation – and thus increased risk of landslides and floods in already severely affected communities. Pre-existing problems of solid waste management were further exacerbated, including due to the increase of disposable packaging by humanitarian partners. The lack of systematic environmental mainstreaming – the integration of environment into all phases of humanitarian programme cycle – is due to the limited awareness of the importance of environment as a cross-cutting issue, the lack of expertise in addressing environmental issues within the humanitarian sector and to the lack of know-how and accountability of humanitarian partners to adhere to humanitarian principles and even national legislation. It was particularly striking that despite two IASC interagency evaluations highlighting critical gaps in the humanitarian coordination structure in addressing environment as cross-cutting issue, this did not lead to any fundamental changes in how environmental considerations were being integrated into humanitarian programming.

A similar lack of accountability was also visible in the recovery efforts, with attention being paid to environment in policy documents, but not being translated into visible action. Noteworthy is the efforts of few selected donors and UNEP that pursued environmental assessments at the onset of the disasters. This was, however, not followed by similar support to the implementation and monitoring.

Humanitarian and development partners should heed the call from national authorities to mainstream environment and climate change into all levels of humanitarian action. To this end, the Transitional Appeal Process, planned Humanitarian Response Plan, and National Plan for Disaster Risk Management provide entry points for environmental mainstreaming.

Haitian civil society organizations must be strengthened to support environmental sustainability initiatives which uphold the rights of affected people. Even though there are many environmentally focused local NGOs, very few are working at the national level to advocate on environmental issues. Similarly the Ministry of Environment could be supported to ensure environment considerations by Haitian authorities and institutions are strengthened.

Four positive enabling factors for environmental mainstreaming were identified:

- **The earlier, the better:** provision and deployment of dedicated resources at the early stages of a response pays its dividend throughout the response cycle. The funding of rapid environmental assessments and deployment of environmental field advisors or dedicated UNEP presence are identified as good practices. At the same time, dedicated environmental advisory and advocacy support is needed throughout the humanitarian programme cycle.
- **Commitment to continuous improvement:** undertaking and applying lessons from previous disasters, including use of existing environmental mainstreaming tools and best practices.
- **Need for long term vision:** environmental considerations in the response phase should be linked to broader disaster risk reduction and environmental sustainability objectives. This will help to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development phases. The early recovery cluster can serve as a good starting point for this.
- **Mainstream environment into humanitarian financing:** the Emergency Response Relief Fund for Haiti provided initial funding for the integration of environmental concerns into emergency relief response.

3.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

Funding should increasingly focus on emergency response preparedness efforts and disaster risk management.

Emergency Preparedness for disaster response in Haiti is critical. Humanitarian and development community in Haiti should shift from crisis response to crisis risk management focusing more on prevention and preparedness. Mainstreaming environmental considerations in the preparedness planning process increases the chances of a more sustainable response when disasters strike. This shift from “response-only” funding should be combined with greater investment in resilience and Eco-DRR projects. Given the high rate of deforestation and lack of available material in the country, humanitarian partners should procure certified timber poles for shelter construction for future emergencies. For example, stockpiling of certified sustainable wooden poles could be considered, as well as alternatives to polystyrene food packaging along with waste minimization practices.

Recommendation 2:

Capacities in the Department of Civil Protection and the Ministry of Environment should be strengthened to ensure environmental and climate change considerations can be mainstreamed into national emergency response preparedness and disaster risk reduction strategies and plans.

Similarly, the strategic objectives of these plans and policies should contain provisions for environmental and climate change mainstreaming and operationalised by the thematic tables working groups especially on DRR and Resilience and on Preventing and Responding to Cholera.

Recommendation 3:

Funding for rapid environmental assessments or evaluations should also include resources for implementation and monitoring of the recommendations.

Dedicated staff and funding to provide technical environmental advice should be available to humanitarian partners during planning and implementation of projects and programmes. Humanitarian projects and programmes should include sufficient budget to address their possible negative consequences. Donors should take special note of the need to mainstream environment at the earliest stages of a disaster.

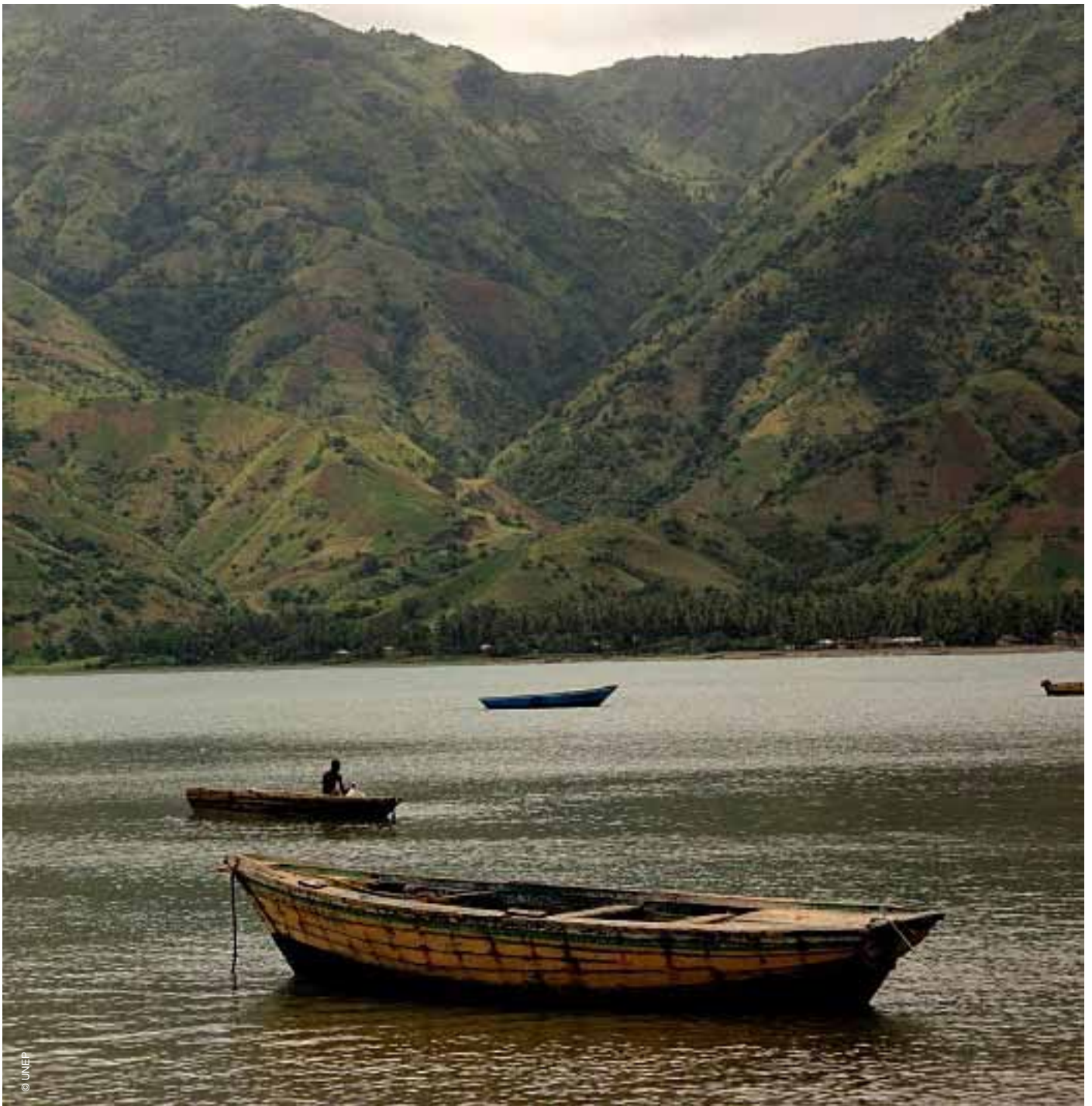
Recommendation 4:

Innovative solutions and partnerships should be pursued as a means to bridge the gaps between humanitarian and development programming.

By introducing resilient approaches in their programmes, humanitarian actors can contribute to longer-term sustainability of the environment and the survival of affected communities. Partnerships that focus on resilience building in any program whether it is DRR or livelihoods or WASH should be promoted. The use of cash for work projects to build and rehabilitate drainage canals, gabions for flood risk mitigation, watershed management using natural protective shields, and studies that contextualise climate change adaptation strategies are good examples. Partnerships between the WWF and the American Red Cross Society for green recovery and reconstruction, and between MSF and private sector partners to export hazardous waste are excellent examples of using complementary strengths to ensure environmentally sustainable humanitarian outcomes.

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The hills of Haiti reflect the cumulative toll of deforestation

www.unocha.org/unesp

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