

2011

# Haiti's Post-earthquake Development Paradigm: Is There Potential for Vulnerability Reduction?

Guy Metayer

*Florida International University*

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## Recommended Citation

Metayer, G. (2011). Haiti's post-earthquake development paradigm: is there potential for vulnerability reduction? Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Program, Florida International University.

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**Haiti's Post-earthquake Development Paradigm: Is There Potential for Vulnerability  
Reduction?**

Guy Metayer

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Program  
Florida International University

Submitted to:  
Dr. Richard S. Olson  
Dr. Juan Pablo Sarmiento  
Dr. Gabriela Hoberman

## Introduction

The January 12, 2010 earthquake is the most tragic natural disaster to strike Haiti and one of the most disastrous events in the history of humanity. According to the Haitian government, more than 300,000 people were killed, as many as 300,000 were injured, and nearly 1 million were left homeless as a result of the January earthquake. It is estimated that losses and damages caused by the earthquake amount to nearly US\$ 7.9 billion, representing approximately 120 percent of Haiti's 2009 GDP<sup>1</sup>. Among other effects, these sad statistics have called upon Haitians and the international community to address not only the urgency created by the earthquake, but also the long-term needs associated with building a new country. Receptive to this call, the Haitian government and its international partners have vowed to turn this tragedy into "a window of opportunity," an opportunity to implement a new development strategy in Haiti. This development strategy, entitled the *Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti* (Action Plan), was officially revealed at the Conference of International Donors held at UN headquarters in New York on March 31, 2010. This study is an inquiry into the extent to which the Action Plan's development framework departs from previous development paradigms, assumed to have contributed to the January 2010 catastrophe. More specifically, I will look at the difference, if any, between the post-earthquake development framework and the 1980s/1990s development strategy, which has been blamed for exacerbating the problem of massive rural migration to Port-au-Prince and increasing the vulnerability of the capital city to natural disasters. First, I will explore the theoretical link between the concepts of migration and vulnerability. Second, I will present the essence of the 1980s/1990s development strategy. Third,

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<sup>1</sup> These statistics are provided by the Haitian government in the official document entitled "Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti," the framework to be used for Haiti's rebuilding process. This document can be found at the US State Department website: [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)

I will summarize the post-earthquake development paradigm. Fourth, I will look at the extent to which the new paradigm departs from the 1980s/1990s development strategy.

### **Theoretical Link between Migration and Vulnerability**

It is generally assumed that migration, either national or international, is primarily explained by push-pull factors. International migration, for instance, tends to be conceived as the result of “a series of push factors that lead individuals to decide to leave underdeveloped nations and pull factors that attract them to settle in nations with more advanced economies” (DeWind & Kinley 1988, p. 138). Nevertheless, the push-pull factors are numerous. In other words, people migrate for several reasons. They migrate due to “injustice, exclusion, environmental degradation, competition for scarce resources and economic hardship caused by dysfunctional states. Some leave voluntarily, some flee because there is no other choice, and some may make the decision to move before they have no other choice but to flee” (EU Parliamentary Assembly 2008, p. 2). The increasingly globalized world has been characterized as giving rise to more extensive labor migration. It is contended that “wealth disparities created by our globalized economy have fed increased intra-and transnational labor migration as livelihood options disappear in less wealthy countries and communities” (Janie 2006, p. 140).

The relationship between migration and vulnerability is reciprocal. On the one hand, the increased vulnerability of some communities may force individuals to migrate to more resilient communities. From this standpoint, “migration [is] not just a problem, it is also a solution. Migration is not just a failure of adaptation, but can itself be an adaptation strategy” (Swing 2008, p. 1). On the other hand, massive migration to an area may increase the vulnerability of this area. It may increase the level of *social vulnerability*, which refers to “the characteristics of a person or group in terms of their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from the

impact of a natural hazard” (Myers & al. 2008, p. 273). Overall, it can be said that migration has the potential to be “a positive and proactive diversification and development strategy that households, individuals, and sometimes whole communities adopt to improve their lives and reduce vulnerability, but, mass migration can have negative impacts, including escalating humanitarian crisis, rapid urbanization, associated slum growth, and stagnated development” (EU Parliamentary Assembly p. 2). In other words, migration is seen as both a “social protection<sup>2</sup> strategy and a leading factor of vulnerabilities that require specific social protection instruments” (Sabates-Wheeler & Waite 2003, p. 4).

The relationship between migration and vulnerability has often been looked at from the environmental or climate change perspective. From this perspective, it is asserted that there are a growing number of environmental migrants<sup>3</sup> in the world. More precisely, “every year 30 million people worldwide are forced to move because of serious degradation of environmental conditions, natural disasters and depletion of natural resources, and that this figure is expected to soar by the middle of this century” (EU Parliamentary Assembly p. 1). Given the complexity of the connection between environmental change and migration, scholars advocate that policymakers work to better understand this relationship in order to “make informed decisions” (Warner & al. 2009, p. iv). They argue that “a better understanding of specific migration dynamics and its causal factors is needed to improve the formulation of social policies and coping strategies for environmental refugees” (Rozdilsky & Schultink 2008, p. 1). This argument is based on the fact that “the impacts of climate change on the environment and human mobility

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of social protection is defined as “an agenda primarily for reducing vulnerability and managing the risk of low-income individuals, households and communities with regard to basic consumption and social services” (Sabates-Wheeler & Waite p. 4).

<sup>3</sup> Environmental migrants are defined as “people who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporarily or permanently, because of a marked environmental disruption....that jeopardized their existence and/or seriously affected the quality of their life” ( Afifi & Warner 2008. p. 1).

are becoming increasingly worrying and that the number of natural disasters has doubled over the past two decades” (EU Parliamentary Assembly p. 1).

Despite the role that climate change and environmental issues have played in increasing the vulnerabilities of communities and migration in general, scholars tend to agree that economic and political factors remain “the dominant drivers of displacement and migration” (Warner & al. p. iv). This is true, as the paper will show, in the case of Haiti, and particularly its capital city, Port-au-Prince. Economic hardship amongst the Haitian peasantry, mostly due to unsound development policies, has contributed to massive rural migration, considerably increasing the vulnerability of the capital city and largely explaining the sheer magnitude of the January 2010 disaster.

By calling for the implementation of a new development framework in Haiti, national and international stakeholders are implicitly agreeing that past development policies have an explanatory power when it comes to understanding the January 2010 disaster. More specifically, they tend to concur that the 1980s/1990s development paradigm implemented in Haiti has worsened the country’s demographic problem and increased, as a result, its vulnerability to natural disasters. Before establishing the difference, if any, between the new post-earthquake development framework and the 1980s/1990s development strategy, it is methodologically sound to present the essence of the latter development strategy.

### **The 1980s/1990s Development Strategy**

The 1980s development strategy, promoted in Haiti by major international donor agencies (including the World Bank *WB*, the International Monetary Fund *IMF*, and the U.S. Agency for International Development *USAID*), basically consisted of bypassing the Haitian state and shifting Haitian production away from local consumption and towards export. The

1980s development strategy “emphasized the fostering of market-oriented approaches to development as a major initiative [...] and the development of non-traditional exports” (USAID/Haiti: Country Development Strategy Statement FY 86, January 1984 p. 24). The strategy was based on the premise that Haiti’s economic growth could be brought about by “strengthening the private sector and promoting exports” (USAID/Haiti: Revised Strategy Paper for FY 89/90, November 1989, p. 17). This development strategy had two essential components: the development of agro-industry and the promotion of the assembly industry. While the agro-industrial plants were established to process export crops, the assembly industry, located in Port-au-Prince, aimed to perform two main functions: to “provide employment and facilitate the absorption of the displaced rural population into urban Port-au-Prince, and provide foreign exchange earnings needed to pay for imported foods no longer produced within the country” (DeWind & Kinley p. 59). According to the international donor agencies, the export-led development strategy was to be structured around what was presumed to be Haiti’s comparative advantage, its hard-working and cheap labor force, to make it “the Taiwan of the Caribbean” (p. 61). The strategy assumes that “U.S. and other foreign markets can absorb Haiti’s production and yield earnings that will sustain Haiti’s economic growth” (p. 57).

However, the 1980s development strategy has had disastrous impacts on the Haitian peasantry, exacerbating the problem of massive rural migration to Port-au-Prince and increasing, as a result, the vulnerability of the capital city.

One of the impacts of the development-oriented strategy on the Haitian peasantry was “a concentration of land holdings and expansion of plantation[s] to attain economies of scale sufficient to supply the new processing plants” (p. 58). More specifically, the export-oriented

development strategy contributed to a systematic dispossession of peasant lands in order to promote large-scale production for export.

Another impact of this development strategy on Haiti's peasantry was the invasion of foreign rice into the Haitian market. As a result of the economic liberalization of the 1980s development strategy, "the Haitian market soon became flooded with subsidized Miami rice that sold for less than the rice produced in Haiti" (Knight & Martinez-Vergne 2005, p. 55). This liberalization policy, while enriching a sector of the Haitian elite, was damaging to national production and, particularly, poor Haitian rice farmers who could not compete. Because of this policy, "household rice consumption doubled and domestic rice production fell steadily to the point that by 1995 Haitian farmers produced only about 50 percent of domestic needs. Rice imported from the United States made up the difference" (p. 55). Haiti became more and more dependent on the United States for its rice consumption. "In 1984, Haiti imported 5,000 metric tons of rice from the United States, but by 1995 the level reached nearly 200,000 metric tons, thereby making Haiti the highest per capita consumer of rice in the Western Hemisphere" (p. 55). In such an economic environment, Haitian-produced rice simply "could not compete with its highly capitalized and high-yield U.S. counterpart, produced on large farms that took advantage of economies of scale, favorable government policies, and inexpensive inputs derived from fossil fuels to plant, fertilize, control pests, harvest, dry, and ship the product to such far-flung markets as Haiti" (Maguire 2009, p. 6).

The food policies adopted by the international donor agencies to compensate for the adverse effects of the export-oriented strategy were equally as damaging to Haitian small producers and peasants. While USAID considered its food aid program in Haiti a "basis for



replication of successful programs<sup>4</sup>,” it also asserted that “the importation of foodstuffs as rice, cooking oil, soya, and mild powder were undermining the peasantry’s production of corn, millet and rice from the Artibonite valley because of their inability to compete with the cheaper imports” (Dupuy 1989, p. 181). It is further argued that “peasant rearers and producers of cow and goat meats were also being displaced by the importation of cheaper chicken meat from Miami” (p. 181).

Among other factors, the dispossession of peasant lands and the inability of Haitian farmers to compete with foreign imports have caused massive rural migration to the capital city, Port-au-Prince. As the capital became perceived as the only place of opportunity in the country, peasants have migrated there en masse in a quest for jobs in the assembly industry in order to survive. Migration from the rural areas of Haiti has caused the population of the capital city “to grow more quickly than that of any other part of the nation” (DeWind & Kinley p. 104). It is highlighted that “between 1971 and 1976, Haiti’s rural population grew at an annual rate of only 0.8 percent, while the population of Port-au-Prince expanded at a rate of 5.6 percent a year. By 1981, the population of Port-au-Prince, which had been 506 thousand in 1971, reached 852 thousand and its annual rate of growth reached nearly 7 percent” (p. 104). According to the World Bank, “among the 1.97 million people added to urban areas between 1982 and 2003, 1.3, or two-thirds, went to the West region” where Port-au-Prince is located (World Bank 2007, p. 10). Built to absorb only approximately half a million people, today Port-au-Prince has a population that far exceeds this estimate. According to the 2003 Haitian census, the most recent census, the current population of Port-au-Prince is 2,109,516 compared to the general population of Haiti, which is 9,923,243 (Institut Haitien de Statistique et d’Informatique (IHSI),

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<sup>4</sup> (USAID/Bureau for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance May 1986, p. 47)

www.ihsi.ht). At this point, Port-au-Prince has become overpopulated and, as a result, extremely vulnerable to natural disasters.

The 1980s export-oriented development strategy can be considered a contributing factor to the massive rural migration to Port-au-Prince and the overpopulation of the capital city. It is a development strategy that has failed not only Port-au-Prince, in terms of increasing its vulnerability, but also the entire country in terms of weakening the Haitian state and disastrously affecting the agricultural basis of Haiti's economy. Curiously, the failure of this development strategy has been acknowledged by one of its key promoters, the World Bank. Indeed, in its 2002 *Country Assistance Evaluation* (CAE) for Haiti, the World Bank concludes that the US\$ 300 million it disbursed to Haiti during the 1970s and 1980s had "little recorded impact on poverty or economic growth, and had caused no improvement of governance" (World Bank-CAE/Haiti, 2002, p. 15).

Despite the failure of the 1980s export-oriented development strategy, international donor agencies pursued the same development policies in Haiti during the 1990s. In the context of President Jean Bertrand Aristide's return to power after being overthrown by a military coup in September 1991, international agencies, mostly the WB and the IMF, reached an agreement with the Aristide government on the continuation of the 1980s export-oriented development strategy. This agreement or development paradigm is basically summarized in a document entitled the *Strategy for Social and Economic Reconstruction* (SSER), officially discussed at a meeting held in Paris (in August 22, 1994) between Aristide advisers and international donor agencies.

Under the SSER agreement, the Aristide government committed to "eliminating the jobs of half of the country's public servants, massively privatizing public services, drastically slashing

tariffs and import restrictions, eschewing price and foreign exchange controls, granting emergency aid to the export sector, enforcing an open foreign investment policy, creating special corporate business courts where the judges are more aware of the implications of their decisions for economic efficiency, rewriting corporate laws, limiting the scope of state activity and regulation” (Aristide Banks on Austerity p. 1).

The SSER basically assigns to the private sector and NGOs the key role of promoting economic development in Haiti. It considers these entities the engines of Haiti’s economic development. In fact, the SSER requires that the Haitian government call upon the private sector and NGOs for “both the design and the execution of the relevant programs and economic and social policies” (p. 2). To emphasize the predominant role the private sector is to play in development, the SSER points out that “the renovated state must focus on an economic strategy centered on the energy and initiative of Civil Society, especially the private sector, both national and foreign” (p. 4). The SSER requires, in other words, that the Haitian state take the back seat and follow the lead of not only the Haitian private sector, but also that of foreign businesses. From this standpoint, it is plausible to argue that the SSER was tailored, not only to the interests of the Haitian private sector, but also to transnational interests.

In addition to unequivocally assigning the driver’s seat to the private sector, in terms of Haiti’s development process, the SSER recommends the same development policies of the 1980s, shifting production from local consumption to exportation, essentially déjà-vu. To implement this strategy, the SSER asserts that “as a result of the turmoil of the last three years, the private sector is virtually bankrupt and thus requires emergency assistance, especially for the export sector. Yet, the solid and appropriate policy determinants of long-term growth should be

put in place. Haiti is a small, open economy; it should not be a ghetto; it needs to export to prosper” (p. 4).

Basically, the 1990s SSER represents the same 1980s neoliberal recipe and has, as such, produced the same results. Consistent with the 1980s export-oriented development strategy, the SSER has discouraged any serious investment in Haiti’s rural economy and has undermined, as a result, the productivity of the agricultural sector. According to OECD data, “between 1995 and 2006, only 7 percent of donor allocations went toward agriculture. In 2007, this dropped to 2 percent, representing only \$12 million out of \$624 million of donor support” (Maguire p. 5). One of the consequences of this lack of investment in the agricultural sector has been a substantial reduction in the amount of food produced by Haitian farmers and peasants. In fact, in 1980 “Haitian farmers provided from 80 to 90 percent of national food needs, but today they produce only about 45 percent of what Haiti eats” (p. 5). Conforming to the 1980s export-led development strategy, the 1990s SSER has reinforced the trend of rural migration to Port-au-Prince as the incomes of Haitian peasants plummeted considerably and poor farmers could no longer survive the hostile economic environment. In an attempt to ensure their survival, Haitian peasants have massively migrated to Port-au-Prince and have dramatically increased the vulnerability of the capital city, which largely explains the disaster of January 12, 2010. In fact, Haitian farmers and peasants reacted to the adverse effects of the export-oriented development strategy, implemented since the 1980s/1990s, by seeking opportunities elsewhere, particularly in Port-au-Prince. It is argued that “declining prosperity in the countryside juxtaposed with the prospect of factory jobs in Port-au-Prince sparked a considerable movement from the land to the capital city in the early 1980s. As the exodus continued, the population of the metropolitan area exploded, growing from an estimated 763,000 in 1982 to more than 2.5 million today, with

75,000 new migrants arriving each year” (p. 6). From this standpoint, the January 2010 disaster cannot be explained only by the magnitude of the earthquake. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the January disaster, one has to take into account the vulnerability level of the city of Port-au-Prince, which is, in large measure, the result of the implementation of the 1980s/1990s development strategy. In other words, the development paradigm implemented in the country during the 1980s and 1990s represents a critical explanatory factor in understanding the catastrophic event that occurred in Haiti on January 12, 2010.

In calling for the promotion of a new development strategy in the aftermath of the January earthquake, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has effectively pointed out the adverse effects of the 1980s/1990s development paradigm implemented in Haiti. UNCTAD correctly argues that the 1980s/1990s development strategy, which consisted of opening the Haitian market to ferocious foreign competition, was damaging to Haiti. This development strategy, according to UNCTAD, has destroyed Haiti’s national production and undermined the Haitian state. By the same token, the UN agency has called for the implementation of a new development paradigm in Haiti. UNCTAD (2010) invites national and international stakeholders to look at not only the devastating effects of the earthquake on Haiti, but also at thirty years of slow development that preceded the earthquake.

From UNCTAD’s perspective, the occurrence of the earthquake should be used as an opportunity to correct the mistakes of the past and to implement a comprehensive development strategy with the potential to promote sustainable economic growth. UNCTAD basically advocates a new development approach that aims at rebuilding the capacity of the Haitian state. The agency argues that the Haitian state should be the leader of the post-earthquake development process and that the new development strategy takes into consideration the capacities and the

weaknesses of local communities. More importantly, UNCTAD (2010) asserts that the rebuilding process of Haiti should involve a new approach to international cooperation, which entails investment in the productive sectors of the country, mobilization of domestic resources, and increased agricultural production. This new approach to international cooperation, UNCTAD points out, should be all-encompassing in order to allow for job creation and poverty reduction.

In addition to UNCTAD, major international donor agencies have also called for the implementation of a new development strategy in Haiti. In the aftermath of the January disaster, many national and international stakeholders have emphasized the necessity of promoting a new development paradigm for the construction of a new country. In fact, the Haitian government and its international partners have come up with a development framework entitled the *Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti* (Action Plan), purported to be different from previous development strategies.

### **The Post-earthquake Development Framework (Action Plan)**

The *Action Plan* framework was officially presented by the Haitian government and approved by major international donor countries and agencies on March 31, 2010 at a conference of international donors held at UN headquarters in New York. The Action Plan represents the framework to be used for Haiti's rebuilding in the aftermath of the January 12 earthquake. The concept of rebuilding utilized in the framework refers to the necessity of addressing all the country's areas of vulnerability, so that "the vagaries of nature or natural disasters never again inflict such suffering or cause so much damage and loss" (Action Plan 2010, p. 5). For the Haitian government and its international partners, rebuilding does not mean returning Haiti to the pre-earthquake situation, but the implementation of a comprehensive strategy to address, once

and for all, the issue of under-development in Haiti. The architects of the post-earthquake development framework point out that the *2010 Action Plan* underlines a vision that “goes beyond a response to the losses and damages caused by the earthquake [...] It aims to launch a number of key initiatives to [...] tackle the structural causes of Haiti’s under-development” (p. 5). It is argued in this development framework that the earthquake has offered an opportunity “to unite Haitians of all classes and origins in a shared project to rebuild the country on new foundations” (p. 5). From the perspective of its designers, the framework underscores, not only a new development strategy for Haiti, but also a new vision for a new country.

### *Vision for a New Haiti*

The Haitian government and its international partners claim that the *Action Plan* lays out a new vision of development for Haiti in the context of the post-earthquake rebuilding process. This vision to rebuild Haiti “by turning the disaster of January 12, 2010 into an opportunity to make it an emerging country by 2030,” will involve:

*A fair, just, united and friendly society living in harmony with its environment and culture; a modern society characterized by the rule of law, freedom of association and expression and land management; a society with a modern, diversified, strong, dynamic, competitive, open and inclusive economy based on the land; a society in which people’s basic needs are met quantitatively and qualitative; a knowledge-based society with universal access to basic education, mastery of qualifications based on a relevant professional training system, and the capacity for scientific and technical innovation fed by a modern and efficient university system, in order to create the new type of citizen the country needs for reconstruction. All of this, under the supervision of a responsible,*

*unitary state guaranteeing the implementation of laws and the interests of the people with a strong commitment to deconcentration and decentralization (p. 8).*

This vision of a new Haiti will be carried out, according to the framework, by an international entity responsible for administering the rebuilding process. This entity, called the *Temporary Committee for Rebuilding Haiti* or the *Haitian Interim Reconstruction Commission* (HIRC), aims at becoming, according to the framework, the *Agency for the Development of Haiti* and a *Multiple Donor Fiduciary Fund*. The main functions of this international entity are to “enable the preparation of files, the formulation of programs and projects as well as their financing and execution” (p.5). In addition to expressing their post-earthquake development vision for Haiti, the stakeholders have also devised a rebuilding plan outlining deadlines to be met during the process.

### *The Rebuilding Plan*

The rebuilding plan is comprised of three phases: an emergency period, an implementation period (18 months), and a ten-year period.

The emergency period includes the “improvement of accommodation for the homeless; the return of pupils to school, students to university and vocational training centers; the preparation for the next hurricane season; the pursuit of efforts to restore a sense of normality to economic life, especially by creating large numbers of jobs through high-intensity work” (p. 9).

The implementation period (18 months) involves establishing “a framework of incentives and supervision for private investment on which Haiti’s economic growth will be founded [...] Private investment in the economy as well as in the social sector will form the backbone of the



country's reconstruction" (p. 9). This period will start with "the end of the emergency period and the preparation for projects to generate genuine renewal" (Action Plan 2010, p. 5).

The ten-year period is when "the reconstruction and recovery of Haiti will become a reality, in order to put the country back on the road to development, followed by another ten years to make it a real emerging country" (p. 9).

### *The Rebuilding Process*

According to the post-earthquake development framework, Haiti's rebuilding process will involve four key areas: social, institutional, territorial, and economic.

The social rebuilding entails the establishment of a system of education that "guarantees access to education for all children, offers vocational and university education to meet the demands of economic modernization, and a health system ensuring minimum coverage throughout the country and social protection for the most vulnerable workers" (p. 9).

In terms of institutional rebuilding, the framework emphasizes the necessity of focusing on "making state institutions operational again by prioritizing the most essential functions; redefining the Haitian legal and regulatory framework to better adapt it to the requirements of the Haitian state; implementing a structure that will have the power to manage reconstruction; and establishing a culture of transparency and accountability that deters corruption in the country" (p. 9).

When it comes to territorial rebuilding, the framework calls for the identification, planning, and management of new development centers. It also calls for "the stimulation of local

development, the reconstruction of affected areas, the implementation of economic infrastructure required for growth (roads, energy and communication), and the management of land tenure in order to protect property and facilitate the advancement of large projects” (p. 8).

Lastly, the economic rebuilding, according to the framework, consists of “modernizing the agricultural sector, developing an export potential in terms of fruits and tubers, livestock, farming, and fishing, in the interests of food security; developing the professional construction sector with laws and regulations relating to earthquake-resistant and hurricane-resistant materials and implementation and control structures; promoting manufacturing industries; and organizing the development of tourism” (p. 8).

It is worth noting that the Action Plan framework establishes an intimate link between the territorial rebuilding and the economic rebuilding of Haiti. It asserts that the two are related and simultaneous processes, in that a better redistribution of the population will be facilitated by a better redistribution of economic activities all over the country. The framework correctly asserts that one of the reasons for the overpopulation of Port-au-Prince, and by extension the catastrophe of January 12, is the fact that the capital city has been given disproportionate economic importance compared to the rest of the country. To address this issue, the framework calls for the promotion of regional development centers and “the construction and management of large facilities and infrastructures for production (industrial zones, business free zones, etc) or as an aid to production (ports, airports, energy and telecom infrastructure, etc)” (p. 17). The framework links the potential success of these regional centers to the development of different sectors of the Haitian economy, including the industrial, commercial, and tourist sectors. In this context, it

considers the HOPE II law<sup>5</sup> an important tool that has the potential to facilitate the development of regional centers. According to the framework, the HOPE II law offers the possibility of building upon Haiti's comparative advantages "its workforce, the proximity of the North American market, and the know-how of its private sector" (p. 17). In the same context, the framework promotes foreign direct investment and calls for a partnership between the public sector and both the Haitian and international private sectors. It argues that "facilities must be made available to international organizations to stimulate direct investments. [That] in addition to negotiations and legal and regulatory measures, the State of Haiti wants to encourage investments by supporting the development of industrial parks and free zones" (p. 17). The framework further argues that "bankable projects with internal profitability will be funded by private equity of national and foreign companies and bank loans with special conditions, and it is understood that the State will intervene directly whenever necessary to implement the necessary infrastructure and ensure more balanced geographical distribution for job creation" (p. 17).

In addition to rebuilding the aforementioned four areas, the framework calls for the implementation of disaster risk management (DRM) programs and the development of crisis management mechanisms throughout the country. More specifically, the framework argues that "it is necessary to reduce the vulnerability of the population areas in risk zones: protecting the population of areas such as Gonaives, Jacmel, and Cabaret that are traditionally hit by natural catastrophes; dredging and rerouting certain rivers and drainage canals; protecting and correcting the banks of certain rivers and ravines; building the civil engineering works necessary to cross risk zones [...] In seismic zones, it is essential to put into place works for preventive dredging of

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<sup>5</sup> HOPE II refers to Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act. It is a law passed by the U.S. Congress in 2008, which "gives preferential access to U.S. imports of Haitian apparel." HOPE II represents an extension of HOPE I Act, which was passed in 2006. HOPE II Act "extends the preferences for 10 years, expands coverage of duty-free treatment to more apparel products, particularly knit articles, and simplifies the rules, making them easier to use" (Congressional Research Reports for the People p. 1).

drainage, collection and treatment canals and works for stabilization of ravine banks in affected zones to prevent catastrophes and to safeguard the remaining private and public infrastructures” (p. 15).

By the same token, the framework calls for the reinforcement of local means of civil protection, the readiness of public authorities to face any national crisis, and the establishment of risk prevention policies.

The reinforcement of local means of civil protection involves “training, staff recruitment, equipping the community and department personnel, recruitment of a civil safety manager for each municipality, recruitment of a coordinator for each department to function under the department delegates. For events calling for a national response, the Ministry of the Interior and Territorial Communities is to be confirmed as the sole body in charge of operational crisis management” (p. 15).

Reinforcing the public authorities’ readiness involves building the capacity of public authorities to effectively handle any crisis that threatens the country whether natural, industrial, or technological. As a result of this need, the framework establishes a National Council for Civil Protection. This Council, according to the framework, comprises “ministers who are directly involved in crisis management [...] This will be the political structure for management of major crises and their follow-up until the situation returns to normal” (p. 16).

The risk prevention policies mentioned by the framework involve “delimitation of zones at risk, regulation of urban planning, prescription for construction (mainly quake resistant), standardization of construction procedures and material, pollution prevention rules, etc.” (p. 16).

Lastly, the framework proposes to revise the law on the State of Emergency to enable the government to effectively respond to national crises like the January 12, 2010 earthquake.

After presenting the post-earthquake development framework, it is curious to assess it in terms of the extent to which it departs from the 1980s and 1990s development paradigm.

### **Assessment of the Post-earthquake Development Framework**

The main strength of the post-earthquake development framework is its emphasis on the necessity of decentralizing public services in Haiti. The framework has the virtue of calling for the elimination of the “Republic of Port-au-Prince” and the empowerment of other cities. The establishment of regional development centers, as pointed out by the framework, is very critical to reducing the vulnerability of the capital city and promoting national development. The regional development centers would allow for a more equitable distribution of public services throughout the country. They would create other places of opportunity and reduce, as a result, the flow of rural migration to the capital city, Port-au-Prince.

Also, the post-earthquake development paradigm has the merit of establishing an intimate link between territorial rebuilding and economic rebuilding. Indeed, there can be no viable territorial rebuilding without economic rebuilding. A healthy distribution of the population throughout the country necessarily involves the creation of economic opportunities in different parts of the country. Past lessons teach us that Port-au-Prince had become overpopulated and extremely vulnerable to natural disasters mainly because the capital city had been perceived as the only place of economic opportunity in the country.

The *Action Plan* also has the virtue of prescribing a systematic incorporation of disaster risk management into all aspects of Haiti's rebuilding process. Given that risk management has the potential to reduce the probability of disaster, this prescription can help Haiti avoid numerous disasters and strengthen the resilience of its communities.

However, one has to cast doubts on the framework's promise of building a better country. While the framework considers the private sector "the backbone of Haiti's reconstruction," it systematically ignores the role of the Haitian state in the reconstruction process. Despite the aforementioned virtues of the post-earthquake development framework, it runs the risk of committing the same mistakes of the past by weakening the Haitian state. Instead of reforming and, at the same time, increasing its capacity, the framework proposes to simply bypass the Haitian state. This has been the development strategy implemented in Haiti since the 1980s, a strategy responsible for considerably increasing the country's vulnerability to natural disasters. The past thirty years have proven that the private sector, whether national or international, has failed in its endeavors to develop Haiti without the direct involvement of a reformed Haitian state. It is certainly a fact that the Haitian state has historically been corrupt and ineffective. It is also a fact that the private sector, in collaboration with this corrupt state, has developed a system of crony capitalism<sup>6</sup> in which members of the political and economic elite enrich themselves at

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<sup>6</sup> Crony capitalism, in this study, refers to a corrupt alliance between Haitian political and economic elites in order to enrich themselves at the expense of the majority of the Haitian people. However, crony capitalism is a very broad concept. Scholars look at the concept from different perspectives and provide different insights. Hutchcroft (1991), for instance, defines crony capitalism as a way to achieve private accumulation through access to the state apparatus. Vaugirard (2005) considers crony capitalism as clientelism, "an economic system in which the allocation of resources and the adjudication of commercial disputes are generally made to favor those who have a close relationship with political leaders or government officials, by blood (nepotism) or by bribes (corruption)" (p. 77). To Femminis and Ruggerone (2004), crony capitalism is all about rescuing, bailing out, and favoring the business community by any means. They argue that "in a crony-capitalistic environment, a small fraction of the population, often exploiting personal relations with government officials, is able to influence the government's decisions on many important public matters (p. 1). Lastly, Kang (2003) argues that crony capitalism "refers to a number of related concepts: family and personal relations, bribery and corruption, patron-client relations, and collusion" (p. 441).

the expense of the majority of the Haitian people. I argue that the cure to the Haitian state's corruption does not reside in bypassing it. The cure is instead linked to a reform and capacity building process. The development paradigm applied to Haiti should empower the Haitian state to systematically reinvigorate Haiti's rural economy. More precisely, this development strategy should promote major investments in the agricultural sector, secure the land rights of poor farmers, and support innovations that increase the productivity of their lands. In brief, there is a need to strengthen the capacity of the Haitian state to empower poor Haitian farmers, persuading them, as a result, to forgo migrating to the urban centers, particularly Port-au-Prince, en masse.

More importantly, many of the useful prescriptions of the framework can hardly be executed without the direct involvement of the Haitian state. For instance, the framework's calls for decentralization and incorporation of disaster risk management into Haiti's development process can only become a reality through the power of the state. In other words, decentralization and systematic disaster risk management are fundamentally political processes whose successful implementation requires direct state involvement.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it can be argued that the 1980s/1990s development paradigm implemented in Haiti has considerably increased the country's vulnerability, particularly by encouraging massive rural migration to its capital city, Port-au-Prince. Among other effects, this development paradigm has contributed to the overpopulation of Port-au-Prince, a factor, in large measure,

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responsible for the scale of the January 2010 disaster. The post-earthquake development framework, adopted by the Haitian government and major international donor countries and agencies, has the virtue of addressing some of the flaws of the 1980s/1990s development paradigm. Contrary to the 1980s/1990s development policies, the post-earthquake framework accurately emphasizes the necessity of decentralizing public services, promoting economic opportunities in different regions of the country, and systematically incorporating disaster risk management into all aspects of the reconstruction process. Nevertheless, the post-earthquake framework, I argue, has the potential to be the main obstacle to the execution of its own prescriptions because it has failed to address the necessity of reforming the Haitian state and increasing its capacity. This argument is based on the fact that decentralization and systematic disaster risk management, two main prescriptions of the framework, are fundamentally political processes whose successful implementation requires direct state involvement. In choosing to bypass the Haitian state and assigning the driver's seat of Haiti's development process to the private sector, the post-earthquake development framework runs the risk of repeating the same mistakes of the past and perpetuating Haiti's "failed state" status.



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