

Canadian Fact-Finding Delegation Reports on Post-Earthquake Haiti

**** August 4, 2011****

Introduction

Three Canadians conducted a ten-day fact-finding and solidarity mission to Haiti from June 20 to 30. The delegation, organized by Haiti Solidarity BC, the Vancouver affiliate of the Canada Haiti Action Network, traveled throughout the earthquake zone, including Port-au-Prince, Leogane and Jacmel.

We visited neighbourhoods, camps of displaced people, medical centers, and human rights and social organizations there to gain an overview of the most pressing needs in Haiti. During some of our visits and interviews, we were joined by other Canadians working on aid projects.

We witnessed the dedication and hard work of the Haitian people and authorities and international agencies and volunteers, notwithstanding the immense scale of the recovery that is required and the shortages of resources. But we also witnessed incredible suffering and hardship of poor and displaced Haitians. Many Haitians and Haitian civil society organizations are seriously questioning the shortcomings or failings of the relief and reconstruction effort.

What follows is a 17-page report of our visits and observations, including recommendations. We hope that our findings will convince Canadians, their government and their aid agencies to provide ongoing and substantial assistance to the Haitian people, and, additionally, to reflect on what can be improved going forward.

The delegation will report on its visit to Haiti at public meetings across Canada in the weeks to come. To see details, go to this web link: <http://canadahaitiaction.ca/events>.

Signed,

Roger Annis (Vancouver BC), retired aerospace worker and coordinator of Haiti
Solidarity BC and the Canada Haiti Action Network

Sandra Gessler (Winnipeg MB), Professor of Nursing, University of Manitoba

Rosena Joseph (Toronto ON), learning coach and member of Local 3393 of the Canadian
Union of Public Employees

Overall impressions

The earthquake zone in Haiti in June 2011 tells a troubling tale. More than 600,000 people are still living in harsh conditions in displaced-persons camps. There are some 1,000 camps, varying in population from a few score to 50,000. Services in all of them are lacking. Some have enough school facilities for children, most do not. Some have medical services, many do not. Income-earning prospects for residents are few. Large numbers of female camp residents suffer acts or threats of sexual violence.

The earthquake destroyed or seriously damaged fully half of the buildings in the zone where it struck. Some of the government buildings that collapsed have been rebuilt; others have been repaired. Homes are being repaired, but the scale and pace is limited. New home construction has barely begun.

It is especially difficult to observe the evident absence of a robust national plan to get people housed. Many camp residents face a grim choice between staying put or returning to live in buildings in danger of future collapse. Tens of thousands of people have opted for the latter.

Rubble has been removed from most roads. But traffic is terribly congested, a serious impediment to economic activity. The most visible evidence of economic activity is the vast number of small vendors that line every major and secondary street.

Street sanitation is a major problem in many areas. In the district of Carrefour, home to approximately a half million people, rubbish and waste is left in the streets uncollected for long periods. The air throughout Port-au-Prince is filled with dust whipped up by constant winds, exhaust fumes from vehicles, and smoke generated by cooking fires and the burning of garbage.

Everywhere, Haitians told us they await a more robust relief and reconstruction effort. They want a plan to move the country forward. They want to build safe and sturdy housing for their families. They want to create public education and health services. They want the foundations laid for productive jobs in agriculture, industry, tourism and social services. This was the future for Haiti that the international aid effort promised in the weeks and months following the earthquake.

Emergency shelter and housing

Our delegation visited six displaced-persons camps:

Camp Jean Marie Vincent (visited on June 24) is the largest camp in Port-au-Prince with some 50,000 residents. It is beset with a host of problems. Toilets have been constructed in large numbers, but facilities for washing are limited. Food and water provision is inadequate. Violence within the camp, especially sexual violence against women, is a very serious problem. Security provision is entirely inadequate.

Although the camp is located in the centre of Port-au-Prince, there are few job opportunities. Care for children and youth is seriously lacking. The camp committee with which we met estimates there are 1,500 children in the camp without adult care or

supervision. An orphanage created by the committee (but lacking funding) can only care for 100 children, none under the age of five. Medical service is good, provided by **Partners In Health (PIH)**. This camp is one of several large camps in the metropolitan area in which PIH has assumed leading medical responsibility.

This camp, like all the others we visited, has committees of delegated representatives to organize and oversee the delivery of services—food and water, schooling, sanitation, health care, etc. But the committees work in exceptionally difficult conditions because the basic necessities are in short supply or non-existent.



Camp Jean Marie Vincent, largest in Port-au-Prince. Photo : delegation.

Camp Corail Cesselesse ('Camp Corail') (visited on June 28), was established by major international agencies more than one year ago in order to move people out of the dangerous geographic conditions at the huge camp on the Petionville golf course. Tens of thousands were to move there. Schools and factories were to be built. But the camp is located outside the northern edge of metropolitan Port-au-Prince, far from the city centre.

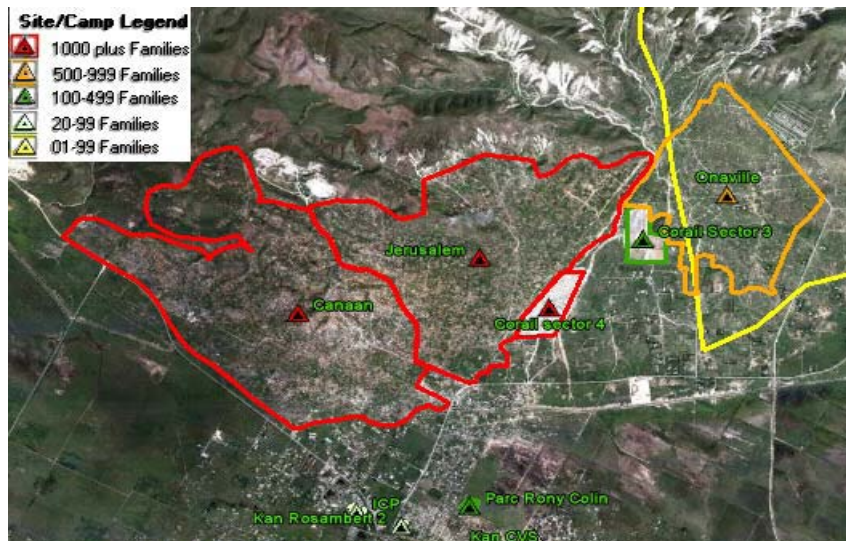
Much of the original plan for Corail appears stalled. Only a few of the original projected factory openings are proceeding. Approximately 7,500 residents are living in t-shelters (temporary shelters) or tent structures contributed by international agencies, including World Vision and the International Organization for Migration. School buildings have been built and were in session until the summer break.

According to the camp committee, residents are concerned with the sparse health care facility (no doctor or nurse), inadequate toilets and showers, not enough education spaces for children, and the uncertain future. The camp sits on a very hot, dry, plain with no vegetation or protection from the sun. The ground floods in heavy rain, despite the landscaping preparations intended to prevent that from happening.

Meanwhile, informal camps have been established in the area bordering Corail to its north, including **Camp Jerusalem** (20,000-plus residents), **Camp Source Pyante** (5,000-plus) and **Camp Canaan** (20,000-plus). The presence of these camps was one the

biggest surprises of our visit to Haiti. Only a year ago, this area was a barren, unpopulated plain. Now it is a vast, unplanned settlement.

Tens of thousands of people have claimed small plots of land and built temporary or more permanent shelters. There are no services provided by relief agencies. International organizations are directed by Haitian government and UN agencies to refrain from providing any. (The sellers of construction supplies, on the other hand, are doing a brisk business along the edge of the highway that borders the area).



Google Earth image overlaid with border lines by UN agencies shows unplanned camps dwarf the two, formal Corail camps. This Google image dates from November 2010; informal camps continue to grow.

Haitians are determined to get on with forging a new life and increasingly impatient with the absence of an overall housing plan and slow pace of constructing houses. These ‘unauthorized’ camps are a testament to that. Those taking matters into their own hands can hardly be faulted. Unfortunately, these unplanned settlements are a likely source of conflict in the future between residents and governing authorities over land tenure and provision of services.

The camp committees that we met there are demanding that the informal settlements be incorporated into reconstruction plans. They want access to humanitarian and other services. The longer the national government ignores these demands, the larger the problem will become.

Camp Simon Bolivar in Leogâne (visited on June 25) was established with assistance from the government of Venezuela immediately following the earthquake. A model camp at its inception, the number of camp residents has dwindled, but not because they have found housing. Rather, life in the best of tent communities is very difficult and stressful. Some residents have acquired t-shelters; others have opted to move back into damaged homes or into crowded or other unsuitable shelter. The camp committee as well as residents expressed to us their great frustration and impatience with the slow pace of building permanent housing.



Residents of Camp Bolivar are angry that so little housing is being built. Photo: delegation.

We attended a press conference that dozens of residents of **Camp Django** (app. 100 families in Delmas 17, central Port-au-Prince) held at the office of the Bureau des avocats internationaux on June 28 to denounce threats to dismantle their camp coming from the office of the mayor of Delmas (more on the threats of forced dislocations from camps later in this report).

Shelter and housing crisis

The lack of progress in building shelter and housing is critically examined in three recent reports--by the International Crisis Group (June 28)¹, Haiti Grassroots Watch (June 9)², and the Building Assessment and Rubble Removal Study (BARR Study; completed in March, and released in late May).³

In the BARR Study, we read that most of Port-au-Prince's buildings were surveyed for damage in the months following the earthquake. The following figures emerged from that survey:

- * 382,256 building structures in Port-au-Prince (out of app. 425,000 buildings in the city in total) were coded for damage by the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communication (MTPTC) with the participation of Miyamoto International. Of these:
- * 20 percent are red-coded (damaged beyond repair)
- * 26 percent are yellow-coded (unsafe for habitation, requiring structural repair)
- * 54 percent green-coded (safe to inhabit).

The BARR Study is the first report to quantify the large number of people who have moved back into damaged homes. As of the time of its surveys, early 2011, an estimated 54,314 of greater Port-au-Prince's 84,866 red-coded buildings, 64 percent, were re-inhabited. For yellow coded buildings, the reoccupation rate was 85 percent.

Here is what Kit Miyamoto, the director of the building damage survey, stated on February 28, 2011 about the reoccupation phenomenon: "Occupied yellow and red houses are extremely dangerous since many are a collapse hazard. People occupy these

houses despite communications and warnings from MTPTC engineers since they have nowhere to go but the camps.”



This house on the left is marked with a red code just above the street number “46”. It is extremely dangerous to inhabit. Photo: delegation.

The BARR study also quantified the number of people still displaced by the earthquake. It estimates 258,000 (March, 2011).

The number of people resident in camps is estimated by the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM) of UN and other agencies (including the International Organization for Migration–IOM) at 630,000 residents in May, down from 680,000 in March. It is increasingly apparent that many people are in the camps not only because they lost their homes or were otherwise displaced by the earthquake. For many, camp life is deemed preferable to their previous circumstances, or it holds greater hope for the future. In other words, the camps reveal not only the impact of the earthquake but also *the shelter crisis in Haiti that existed prior to the earthquake*.

The BARR Study’s most controversial finding is its estimate of 65,000 (median) fatalities from the earthquake, which is app. 20 to 25 percent of the ‘official’ fatality figure. Unfortunately, most of the attention on the study was focused on this finding. Regardless of the exact numbers of deceased victims, Haiti’s 2010 earthquake was a humanitarian catastrophe of immense proportion.

Perhaps the most important study on housing and shelter to date is the June 28, 2011 study by the **International Crisis Group**. It is a damning account of the Haitian and international reconstruction effort to date. A few quotations from it will suffice to underline the gravity of its findings:

Eighteen months after the earthquake, Haiti’s future and their own remain uncertain to most citizens, in part because they have not been sufficiently included in decisions. Forced evictions from camps have caused further disruption in the lives of the displaced. *page 18*

Beyond a planned but not yet built industrial park in Cap-Haïtien (actually, to the east of Cap-Haïtien—ed.), there are few signs that Haiti is building back better since donors pledged to contribute more than \$5.7 billion over eighteen months and \$10 billion over ten years to finance recovery. *p 1*

The housing office (Entreprise publique de promotion des logements sociaux, EPPLS) still is without a comprehensive policy and effective authority to consolidate peace and order by improving urban housing. Nor does it have ministerial status or the capacity to bring together the core resources to respond to more than one million displaced. *p 9*

Although efforts to develop a shelter and resettlement policy began in May 2010, it is still being debated because there is no government interlocutor at a technical or policy level who can sign off on an option. *p 9*



One of the 1,000 displaced persons camps in the earthquake zone. Photo: delegation.

As the report states, protection of camp residents from forced dislocations by government authorities or landowners is a serious concern today. So much so that the **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations** visited Haiti in June 2011 and issued a statement of concern on June 24, noting, in particular, forced dislocations perpetrated by the mayor of Delmas (district of Port-au-Prince) at the end of May. The Commissioner reminded the Haitian government of its responsibility to protect the human rights of displaced persons.

Despite that statement and similar ones preceding it by UN and other international and Haitian agencies, forced dislocations continue. The Haitian government is taking little or no action to prevent them. The most recent one occurred during the week of July 18 on the grounds of Sylvio Castor Stadium, carried out by the mayor of Port-au-Prince and affecting 450 families. The Office of the High Commissioner issued another statement, criticizing the mayor's action and again reminding the national government of its duties. . Other human rights agencies condemned the mayor. One statement asked the Haitian government its priorities, "Football or families?"

In many of the cases of forced displacements, camp residents are fighting back. They obtain support from the Haitian and international human rights and social agencies. We cannot stress enough the importance of supporting the work of the effective human rights organizations (see several later sections of this report). Their resources and their knowledge play a vital role in allowing the marginalized to stand up for their rights.

The aforementioned ICG report spells out the elements of the required response to the housing and shelter crisis in its section titled, “The Way Forward.”

Health care

Provision of health care has been one of the more successful post-earthquake stories. This is due in no small part to the fact that at least three large agencies had robust, pre-earthquake services already in place with a good record of partnership with Haiti’s Ministry of Health. These are the government of Cuba, Partners In Health and Doctors Without Borders. All have significantly boosted their assistance since the earthquake.

As well, Cuba and Partners In Health have trained thousands of Haitian health professionals over the years, a priceless national acquisition in today’s circumstances.

Yet Haiti’s public health system remains chronically feeble. We saw this firsthand in two areas. In Léogâne, two thirds of the floor space and facilities of the *Hôpital Sainte Croix* are shut down due to lack of funding. The one third that operates depends on funding from the Episcopalean Church in the United States. This hospital serves a population of some 300,000 to 400,000 in the city and surrounding province.



Hôpital Sainte Croix in Léogâne, June 25: Dr. Necence André Hudson explains to the delegation that two thirds of the hospital’s wards are closed for lack of funding. Photo: delegation.

In Carrefour, a district of Port-au-Prince of at least one half million people, there is no public hospital. Patients requiring serious treatment must be referred to the *Hôpital Général*, Haiti’s largest public hospital, located in central Port-au-Prince. It is chronically underfunded and understaffed. (The ongoing challenges at that institution are documented in Paul Farmer’s new book, *Haiti After The Earthquake*. And in disturbing recent news, the support staff of the hospital have been on strike since July 18, 2011,

accusing the hospital administrator of incompetence and abusive conduct and demanding her firing.)

All of this should raise concerns among Canadians, for Léogâne and then Carrefour are areas where Canada established a medical presence following the earthquake. In Léogâne, Canada established a ‘field hospital’ attached to the large, military mission it dispatched to Haiti within 24 hours of the earthquake. It was closed less than two months later.

In Carrefour, the Canadian Red Cross established a cholera treatment center in early December 2010. It was then closed in April. (The CRC’s website describes this closing as a transfer of resources to the Haitian Red Cross.⁴) Why have CIDA and other Canadian agencies seemingly provided so little, lasting medical infrastructure to Haiti?

Cholera remains a serious and deadly threat in Haiti and will require ongoing, international funding and other treatment resources for the foreseeable future. Medical agencies in Haiti and internationally are calling for a comprehensive vaccination program in Haiti against cholera.⁵ To our knowledge, no Canadian medical agencies have lent their voices to that call. (The vaccines to do this exist; world production would need to be ramped up accordingly.)

In our view, the focus of Canadian government assistance to Haiti should be the creation of public health and other human development infrastructure, rather than the prioritized funding of police and prisons.

Women’s rights/human rights

The delegation met with **KOFAVIV**,⁶ (Komisyon Fanm Viktim pou Viktim–Commission of Women Victims for Victims). This is a grassroots women’s organization that was founded in 2004 and advocates on behalf of women victimized by violence. Since the earthquake, its attentions and resources have been focused on women residing in the survivor camps.



Leaders of KOFAVIV meet with delegation at their offices on June 21, 2011, including founder Eramithe Delva (left) and Malya Villard. Photo: delegation.

KOFAVIV works with the **Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI--Office of International Lawyers)** and its **Rape Accountability and Prevention Project (RAPP)**.⁷ RAPP combines legal representation with advocacy and capacity-building of grassroots groups to push for greater responsiveness and accountability on the part of the Haitian police and justice system as well as MINUSTAH, the international police/military mission that maintains a policing presence in some of the internally displaced persons camps.

There is a network of women's rights organizations very actively defending women victims of violence, including KOFAVIV, **FAVILEK, KONAMAVID, FEMCADH and GCFV**. They work with the aforementioned RAPP.

A year-end 2010 report by the Inter American Commission on Human Rights (an office of the OAS) gave serious attention to issues of women's rights.⁸ Women's rights will also be a focus of submissions to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva this October.

The UPR is a human rights review process in which member-state governments appear before the UNHRC to explain their human rights records. Each member state of the UN is evaluated every four years. Haiti is one of the countries to be examined this year.

A submission consisting of 12 reports on key aspects of human rights in Haiti has been submitted to this year's UPR and is available for study.⁹ The reports are authored or endorsed by differing combinations of international human rights organizations and a total of 57 Haitian grassroots groups.

There are many ways in which donors and legal professionals in Canada can assist in human rights protection of women and other displaced victims of the earthquake. One of the most effective ways is to support or participate in the work of the **Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti**.¹⁰ The IJDH is the BAI's U.S.-based partner. It helps build capacity and create bridges between the international community and local Haitian human rights groups. The IJDH and the BAI are among the authors and endorsers of many of the aforementioned UPR submissions.

Of particular interest for legal professionals is the **Lawyers Earthquake Relief Network**, an organization of some 400 international legal professionals sponsored by the IJDH and providing legal and human rights assistance to Haitians.¹¹

Prisons and human rights

Our delegation was unable to investigate prison conditions due to time constraints. We did, however, speak on this subject with the lawyers and legal interns working at the Bureau des avocats internationaux as well as to residents of camps.

Haiti's justice system is chronically underfunded and understaffed. As a result, prisons are grossly overcrowded. Prisoners live in subhuman conditions (as one of our delegation members observed during a prison visit in 2007). An estimated 80 per cent of prisoners are in preventive detention, that is, with no charges or convictions against them (a recent

report by the International Center for Prison Studies puts the figure at 68%). Many spend months, even years, in prison without ever seeing a judge.



Attorney Mario Joseph, Director of the Bureau des avocats internationaux in Port-au-Prince, speaking in Montreal in January 2010. Photo: Darren Ell.

Since 2004, the Canadian government says it has focused aid funding to Haiti on the justice system. But the funding prioritizes policing and prisons. In a recent AP news report on prisons in Haiti, Brian Concannon, Director of the IJDH said, “New prisons will reduce crowding, but the real solution is to tackle deficiencies in the justice system that cause overcrowding in the first place.”

By all evidence, Canadian funding has produced little meaningful improvement in the delivery of justice to ordinary Haitians. What’s more, Canada supported the illegal and unconstitutional regime that ruled Haiti for two years following the overthrow of elected government in February 2004. That regime was marked by widespread human rights violations.

The IJDH and BAI have several pilot projects aiming to reduce the number of people in preventive detention. One of these is the **Health and Human Rights in Prisons Project (HHRPP)**, operated in conjunction with three health care providers, including Zanmi Lasante. These projects provide health care in pilot prisons and have reduced overcrowding by winning releases of prisoners illegally detained.

One area in urgent need of assistance is the lagging prosecution of Jean Claude Duvalier. The former dictator was permitted by France to return to Haiti in January of this year after a 25-year exile, following his overthrow in a popular rebellion in 1986. Since then, human rights organizations have gathered testimony from the victims of the Duvalier tyranny and have pressured the Haitian justice system to prosecute under international and Haitian human rights legislation.

But prosecution is lagging and no support is forthcoming from the governments of the U.S., Canada or Europe.¹² An appeal for Canadian assistance was delivered to the foreign

affairs committee of Canada's Parliament on March 6 in the form of testimony by the special adviser to Haiti on legal affairs for then-president René Préval.¹³

Food sovereignty and the future of agriculture

In the aftermath of the earthquake, much international attention was focused on the excessive political centralization in Port-au-Prince and the over-population of Haiti's cities. Agriculture, said most voices in Haiti, must become the focus of the country's economic development.

Haitian and international voices condemned the past practices of foreign governments against Haitian agriculture, notably of the United States. These have blocked national production and promoted subsidized food imports. In a remarkable admission in March 2010, Bill Clinton criticized the agricultural trade practices of the administration he headed as president for eight years, saying they contributed to the destruction of rice production in Haiti.

Our delegation met with representatives of Haiti's largest peasant organization, Tet Kole Ti Payizan Ayitien, and we heard that all the fine words have not amounted to much. Their organization, and the three other large peasant organizations of significance in Haiti, have not been included in any significant way in the discussions about the future of Haiti, including its economic plan.



Jean Jacques Henrilus and Rosnel Jean Baptiste of Tet Kole Ti Payizan Ayitien. Photo: delegation.

Jean Jacques Henrilus, head of the National Executive Committee of Tet Kole, and Rosnel Jean Baptiste, Secretary General, told us that agriculture production must be at the heart of Haiti's economic plan. "It should be the motor force of economic development," Henrilus told us, "but the state is not listening to the voice of the peasants."

The leaders spoke of the history of inattention or misunderstanding of the needs of Haiti's peasants on the part of the urban political movements of Haiti.

Echoing a common theme among the social organizations that we met, Henrilus and Rosnel said, "All the friends of Haiti internationally should join with us in fighting for

justice and for the independence of our country. We welcome any opportunity to work in common with friends abroad.”

To that end, Tet Kole is a member organization of Via Campesina, the international organization of small and medium size peasants that was founded in 1993 by peasant and farmer organizations in Europe and Latin America. Via Campesina fights for sustainable agriculture and food self sufficiency.

During our visit to Haiti, a mass demonstration of peasants affirming the goals of food self-sufficiency took place in the Central Plateau town of Hinche. The protest condemned agricultural land seizures by unlawful or unscrupulous landowners.

Trade unions

The delegation attended part of the three-day convention of the *Confédération autonome des travailleurs haïtiens* (CATH). Some 200 delegates were in attendance from across Haiti, along with international delegations from Brazil (the CUT), Guadeloupe (UGTG), Dominican Republic and Canada (our own).

The convention discussed and voted on reports and resolutions to guide the work of the union in the coming months. These focused on the challenges and difficulties of the reconstruction process. Convention decisions stressed that principles of social justice and national sovereignty for Haitians must be at the center of plans for the country’s future.



Convention of CATH union, June 23, 2011. Photo: delegation.

The delegation met with Dukens Raphael, leader of the *Confédération des travailleurs des secteurs publiques et privés* (CTSP). The CTSP represents workers at the state electrical company and in education, among others. Presently, it is rebuilding its headquarters destroyed by the earthquake, thanks to vital assistance from international unions, notably CUPE and PSAC in Canada.

Another trade union group that we met was the **Plateforme des employés victimes des entreprises publiques** (Employees Victimized by Public Enterprises). The group is fighting for compensation for those workers that have been unjustly fired or inadequately

compensated for loss of their jobs due to the ongoing privatizations of public enterprises. We attended a press conference that it held to condemn the government's inaction on their cause.

Unions in Haiti are facing a disastrous economic situation, with an estimated rate of unemployment of 80 percent. State enterprises have been privatized in recent years, weakening union representation. Unionized public services such as health care and education are weak and underfunded. The laws that protect the right of workers to join unions are not respected in the factory zones across the country, including in the SONAPI zone adjacent to the national airport in Port-au-Prince where some 27,500 workers are employed.

Facing such incredible barriers, union organizations strive to fight on behalf of workers. But Haitian unions have not been able to build an effective, common voice. This has weakened efforts to organize workers in the factory zones, and it was noticeable in 2008 when there was a popular movement to raise the factory minimum wage to US\$5 per day. Unions did not mobilize in large, united protests, and some supported then-President Rene Prével's decision under international pressure to limit the rise in factories to \$3 per day.¹⁴

It remains to be seen what representation workers will have in the new industrial zone projected for the northeast of Haiti and touted by the U.S. government and the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission as an example of the road forward for Haiti's post-earthquake economy. The Korean clothing company, Sae-A Trading, is the main investor there and as many as 40,000 jobs are projected.

Building change in Haiti

The delegation met with **Build Change**, one of the international organizations providing training and expertise to engineers and builders in Haiti. The organization specializes in teaching engineering and building techniques that are suited to Haiti's social and economic conditions. We toured one of the model sites where Build Change and the builders it trained are assisting a homeowner to repair his home and make it safe from future winds, rains and earthquakes. The home was located in particularly perilous geographic conditions, so the need for safe and reliable building methods was very evident.

Build Change does not finance house construction in Haiti. Its mission is to provide lasting skills to Haitian builders and homeowners. It also provides technical assistance to material suppliers to strengthen their concrete building blocks.

Improvements to the quality of building blocks is a huge challenge for Haiti, including the ability to test their strength. If the means to test blocks locally are not available, the testing has to be done abroad, an expensive and prohibitive option. An engineering partner of Build Change has designed a back-of-truck rig that can be brought on site to test block quality. It is now being field-tested in Haiti as part of a joint initiative to improve the production systems for quality building materials and have producers certified by MTPTC (Haiti's ministry of public works).



A home repair underway using the training and building guidelines taught by Build Change, June 22, 2011. Photo delegation.

We encourage donors, architects and engineers in Canada to get to know this organization's work and support it.¹⁵

Governance in Haiti

The Canada Haiti Action Network was one of many international organizations that criticized the timing and the conditions of the two-round national election that took place in Haiti in November 2010/March 2011. It noted the formal exclusion of political parties, notably that of Fanmi Lavalas; the failure to provide sufficient registration and balloting resources; and the heavy-handed role of the OAS and international governments in the financing and staging of the process. The latter pressured Haiti's electoral commission on several occasions to change its rulings, including the one that said Michel Martelly had finished third, not second, in the first round of presidential voting.

The group's concerns were voiced to members of Parliament in several letters sent in November and December 2010.¹⁶

In the end, less than 25 per cent of Haitian voted in each of the two rounds, in a country that normally records very high voter participation.

Nearly four months after the second-round vote, concerns remain. The elected president has failed to constitute a government. Instead of conciliating, he has engaged in confrontation with Haiti's legislature by nominating candidates to be prime minister whose credentials were unacceptable to the legislature, including most lately Bernard Gousse.

Gousse resigned in disgrace from the foreign-appointed, "interim government" that followed the overthrow of Haiti's elected government in February 2004. As an appointed official responsible for 'security' under the post-coup regime, he discredited himself because of his predilection to illegally imprison supporters of the ousted government, including then-Prime Minister Yvon Neptune.¹⁷

The extent of foreign interference in Haiti's political affairs is revealed in considerable detail by U.S. diplomatic cables that were released by the WikiLeaks organization this year and extensively reported in *The Nation* magazine and the weekly *Haiti Liberté*.¹⁸

The consequences of the failure to constitute a government are felt most harshly by the poorest. These are the people for whom a strong and effective national government is needed to tackle the pressing issues of housing, health care, education and economic development.

Recommendations

1. By all appearance, Canada's contributions to human development programs in Haiti are inadequate. We feel that a full-blown review by Parliament of Canada's policies in Haiti since the overthrow of elected government in 2004 is called for, including how Canada could assist Haiti in establishing a fairer and more effective system of justice.
2. Members of Parliament need to inform themselves more thoroughly on Haiti, including calling upon a wider range of sources for information. The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development has held two sessions on Haiti so far in 2011, but the range of guests invited to testify has been too limited.
3. In depth analysis and even routine news reporting has been seriously lacking in Canada's print and broadcast media since the one-year anniversary of the earthquake. Media should be regularly examining the progress of relief and reconstruction in Haiti, including how the funds that Canadians and their government donated are being spent. It should also examine the legality and efficacy of the international police and military force known as MINUSTAH, now into its eighth year in Haiti and in which Canada is a founding participant.
4. Organizations and professionals in the fields of health care, education, engineering and construction, agriculture, human and women's rights and trade union organization are encouraged to join with their Haitian counterparts in the tasks of relief, reconstruction and institution-building. The goal of international cooperation must be to assist Haitians in developing strong, effective national government and public institutions. It must avoid replicating the policies that have made Haiti into the so-called "Republic of NGO's."
5. Dr. Paul Farmer's new book, *Haiti After The Earthquake*, should be read by anyone concerned with Haiti. In it, he makes an informed plea to end the failed policies of intervention and interference by the big powers of the world that have marked Haiti's history.

For interviews with members of the Canadian Delegation to Haiti, or to invite a member of the delegation to speak on its visit, contact Roger Annis at rogerannis(at)hotmail.com, or phone 778 858 5179 (Vancouver).

Notes:

- ¹ <http://www.canadahaitiaction.ca/content/piercing-report-shelter-and-housing-international-crisis-group>
- ² <http://www.canadahaitiaction.ca/content/two-reports-shelter-crisis-haiti-grassroots-watch-ayiti-kale-je-june-2011>
- ³ <http://www.canadahaitiaction.ca/content/over-one-million-living-extremely-dangerous-houses-according-usaid-commissioned-report-barr->
- ⁴ <http://www.redcross.ca/haiti2010/hope/carrefourcentre.asp>
- ⁵ <http://canadahaitiaction.ca/content/vaccination-would-curb-haitian-cholera>
- ⁶ <http://kofaviv.org/>
- ⁷ <http://ijdh.org/projects/rapp>
- ⁸ <http://canadahaitiaction.ca/content/one-report-one-legal-decision-victims-sexual-violence-0>
- ⁹ <http://www.canadahaitiaction.ca/content/uns-universal-periodic-review-2011-coalition-58-haitian-groups-presents-13-reports-human-rig>
- ¹⁰ <http://ijdh.org/>
- ¹¹ <http://ijdh.org/projects/lern>
- ¹² <http://www.canadahaitiaction.ca/content/michel-martellys-presidential-power-cannot-waive-crimes-against-humanity>
- ¹³ <http://www.canadahaitiaction.ca/content/haitis-special-legal-adviser-seeks-canadian-support-prosecution-duvalier>
- ¹⁴ <http://canadahaitiaction.ca/content/wikileaks-washington-backed-famous-brand-name-contractors-fight-against-haitis-minimum-wage->
- ¹⁵ <http://www.buildchange.org/>
- ¹⁶ <http://www.canadahaitiaction.ca/content/follow-email-mps-concerning-haiti-election> and <http://www.canadahaitiaction.ca/content/letter-mps-dont-support-flawed-election-haiti>
- ¹⁷ <http://www.canadahaitiaction.ca/content/new-nominee-pm-bernard-gousse-2004-06-regime-rights-violator-three-articles>
- ¹⁸ <http://canadahaitiaction.ca/wikileaks>