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**Field visits**

## **Report of the field visit by members of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to Haiti, 25-29 June 2018**

### **I. Introduction**

1. For the annual field visit of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, a delegation of six members visited the Republic of Haiti from 24 to 28 June 2018, with the purpose of enhancing members' understanding of the ways in which the United Nations is working with the Government of Haiti to deliver on national development priorities in the context of the wider United Nations reform agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in the transition of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH).
2. The delegation would like to thank the secretariats of the Executive Board for selecting Haiti as a destination for the 2018 field visit, and the United Nations country team for the wide-ranging and relevant nature of the projects presented and meetings arranged. In particular, the balance between more remote field visit locations and time in Port-au-Prince was particularly useful for seeing delivery of services in multiple country-specific environments. Warm appreciation is also extended to the country team for the well-prepared and organized joint field visit, as well as to the Executive Board secretariats for their continuous support, and all the partners that were available for the exchanges.
3. This report will cover the main reflections of the Executive Board delegation across the three central themes of the visit: (a) health; (b) poverty reduction and employment; and (c) post-disaster recovery, with cross-cutting references to gender, rule-of-law and governance priorities. Where relevant, references are made to the wider regional and global contexts, particularly with respect to United Nations reform priorities and the ever-increasing importance of joint collaboration and delivering as one United Nations. Finally, the report will offer some key observations and recommendations arising from the visit.

### **II. Background**

4. In recent years, Haiti has registered significant progress in consolidating its democracy after repeated failures since 2011 to hold elections within constitutional deadlines. The installation in 2016 and 2017 of democratically elected officials at all levels of the governance structure for the first time in over a decade has strengthened institutional stability at both the central and decentralized levels of government. The political outlook of the country has thereby improved, and there is a real opportunity to address the root causes of recurring political crises and other obstacles to sustainable development.

5. The President has reiterated his determination to transform and modernize the State to better serve the people and has taken initial steps to translate this overarching objective into deliverables, particularly through the flagship government strategy known as Caravane du changement (“Caravan of Change”). The initiative, launched a year ago and now expanded to all 10 departments across the country, seeks to enhance state delivery and revitalize the economy by increasing agricultural production and improving living conditions, especially in rural areas. The strategy entails key interventions in a broad range of sectors from institution-building to health, access to clean water and sanitation, education, job creation, agricultural development, environmental rehabilitation, and clean energy. Haiti has committed to integrating the 2030 Agenda into its national development strategy, exemplified by the Caravane strategy. Peace, justice and strong institutions are explicit goals of the 2030 Agenda, and this is the key focus of the mandated priorities of MINUJUSTH, working in partnership with the United Nations country team.

6. Gross development product growth will gradually pick up to 2.4 per cent over 2019-2020, supported by government consumption and investment. The Petrocaribe scheme has reached an end in Haiti, and with donor funding stagnating, external and fiscal financing is a burgeoning challenge.

7. The amount spent on energy subsidies (roughly 3.5 per cent of gross domestic product) is larger than combined social sector spending (including education, health, and social affairs). Social expenditures support mostly poorer households, while energy subsidies predominantly benefit wealthier ones. The staff-monitored programme signed between the International Monetary Fund and the Government is geared to support policy credibility, and will attract donor support if implemented adequately. Inflation started decelerating during the first quarter of 2018, but prices are expected to pick up again by the third quarter, the needed automatic adjustment mechanism for retail fuel prices having been fully implemented in June-July 2018. This had not yet taken place when the delegation left on 30 June, but followed a week later, leading to unrest and protests against the fuel price increases.

### **III. Primary themes of the field visit**

#### **A. Health**

8. Access to health services remains a challenge, and Haitian women often have minimal access to prenatal care. The fertility rate remains one of the highest in the region, at 3.1 children per woman. The use of modern family planning methods stands at 31.4 per cent among women in union aged 15-49 years, with a 35 per cent unmet need (50 per cent among girls aged 15-24 years). The lack of an integrated and functional logistics system hinders access to services locally, particularly in rural areas. In the Sud department, only 25 per cent of women give birth in hospitals, and there is a 35 per cent unmet need for modern family planning methods. A core output for UNFPA work is to increase national capacity to provide high-quality comprehensive maternal and newborn health services.

9. On 25 June, the delegation visited the only nationally accredited midwifery school in Haiti, a strong example of joint work between UNOPS and UNFPA in partnership with the Government. The UNFPA Executive Director, who was also travelling in Haiti, was able to attend alongside the Executive Board delegation. In their presence, the Executive Director launched two multi-year programmes in support of reproductive health: one, an inter-agency project with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, and the World Health Organization (WHO); and the other, to expand the curriculum of the Higher Institute of Midwifery to include humanitarian response and leadership skills. Discussions are under way to extend the certified midwifery training to two more sites located in more rural areas, improving access to professional midwifery services. The work is an example of trilateral cooperation between the United Nations system

(UNFPA and UNOPS), the Haitian government, and donors – in this case Canada and Mexico. The Higher Institute of Midwifery represents an important opportunity to overcome obstacles to eradicating maternal deaths, which increased from 359 to 530 per 100,000 between 2016 and 2017, according to the Demographic and Health Surveys programme. Most pregnant women in Haiti are still delivering at home, typically without professional support. The institute embodies and demonstrates the importance of two elements relevant to long-term development: education and infrastructure. It is crucial that this work continues to scale up, as the current number of midwifery graduates from the Institute deployed in the system stands at 425, far short of the 2,200 target recommended by WHO.

10. Other key health projects were UNOPS site visits to the national ambulance centre in Port-au Prince, the Saint-Antoine Hospital, and a vaccine storage facility, the latter two in Jérémie. All highlighted the challenges of gaps in services and logistics networks, as well the fundamental lack of human resources, particularly trained surgeons. The national ambulance centre in Port-au-Prince, which was shut down in July 2017 as part of a broad effort by the Ministry of Health to reform the institution, demonstrates how important it is to address the dual challenges of human resources and functioning assets. To that end, UNOPS has rehabilitated the new facility, procured 10 new ambulances, and renovated the existing fleet donated by Brazil in 2012, while simultaneously training the personnel.

11. However, it is clear that operations and maintenance are key issues for both this project and that of the Jérémie vaccine storage facility, where three of the five refrigerators for the vaccines donated by UNICEF were non-functional due to missing replacement parts (the facility director had placed a request for the parts with the Ministry of Public Health).

12. An illustrative example of the limitations of new infrastructure without the corresponding human resources was the Saint-Antoine Hospital in Jérémie, which serves 468,000 people a year. Here, at the request of the Government of Haiti and with funding from the Government of Brazil, UNOPS renovated two operating theatres, including the installation of a B-class steam sterilizer and high-quality medical equipment procured by UNOPS. While they are primarily used for obstetrical procedures such as C-sections, without specialized Haitian surgeons to staff them there is a substantial backlog of general surgical procedures. American volunteer doctors were flown in on a rotational basis to support the hospital on a pro-bono basis, but this is not a permanent solution for the district.

13. These two situations are a reflection of the structural challenges that arise due to the limited budget allocated to the Ministry of Health, while most public health care faces similar challenges.

## **B. Poverty reduction and employment**

14. Under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, poverty reduction focuses on equitable access to livelihoods, particularly for the most vulnerable, and on inclusive and sustainable growth. These goals link with the President's seven strategic development priorities, particularly those on strengthened agricultural production, infrastructure, and stability through social projects.

15. While gross domestic product growth will gradually pick up to 2.4 per cent over 2019-2020, supported by government consumption and investment, in 2012, 58.5 per cent of individuals lived below the national poverty line of \$2.42 per day. The estimated poverty rate has increased to 60 per cent since 2013, while extreme poverty stood at 25.1 per cent in 2017.

16. The delegation visited several projects that focused on this area of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which intersects with the wider work of the United Nations country team on disaster risk reduction, targeting employment for the most vulnerable and those most affected by the hurricane. A pilot UNDP community enterprise, project known as 'OFAGDEM', supported 50 micro entrepreneurs – 74 per cent of whom are women – and provided sustained employment for earlier UNDP cash-for-work initiatives started a few days after Hurricane Matthew in 2016. The project targeted three communes in the Grand'Anse department, which is one of the areas most affected by the hurricane. UNDP

worked closely with national and local partners (the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the three municipalities), production associations, and community leaders. The women are producing a range of branded products and have undergone several rounds of training to improve their management, accounting and commercial branding skills so as to increase their competitiveness in the market. Women-owned enterprises were especially targeted, in an effort to address socio-economic gender inequalities and to strengthen women's economic leadership.

17. The importance of focusing on gender-equitable employment solutions was clear across other income-generating projects, most notably in the rehabilitation of roads in the Sud and Grand'Anse Departments, which is funded by the World Bank and managed by UNOPS. Women working on these projects are now skilled in ironwork construction, and 70 per cent of the trainees are women from the local community.

18. The delegation visited an adaptation to climate change and vulnerability reduction project in Aquin, financed by the Global Environment Facility and Canada. UNDP worked with the Ministry of the Environment and Agriculture to develop climate change adaption strategies among local communities. UNDP supported the community in its implementation of reforestation, watershed and natural resource management practices. The community has established a watershed and natural resources management committee to monitor reforestation activities and manage the consumption of water from two natural springs.

19. While it is clear that sustainable employment projects are gender-sensitive and focused on generating sustainable livelihoods for those involved, the United Nations country team should consider the scale of the projects and how the Government could support increasing and scaling them up in a sustainable manner.

### **C. Post-disaster recovery**

20. Two years after Hurricane Matthew severely affected Haiti, particularly the south-western region, the country is still resolving some of its most pressing humanitarian challenges, which include a lack of proper housing, infrastructure, basic services and sources of income, as well as high numbers of internally displaced persons. These challenges are often complicated by underfunding, limited access to remote areas due to mountainous terrain, and persistent natural calamities such as heavy rains and earthquakes. The majority of the population continues to live in extreme poverty because of low employment and minimal government activity in the area.

21. Casualties from the hurricane were minimized thanks to a range of preparatory measures implemented by United Nations country team, including risk-mapping, installation of early warning systems, and training for local authorities, civil society, and community organizations in order to strengthen local capabilities.

22. To observe advances in national emergency preparedness, the delegation visited the National Emergency Operation Centre. The briefing included an overview of the main challenges faced by Haiti with respect to disaster risk reduction, and the strategies developed at the central and local levels to strengthen preparation and response mechanisms. A comprehensive mapping of multiple disaster risks has been concluded with the support of UNDP. By increasing knowledge of risks and their impacts in different parts of the country, the risk-mapping has assisted the Government, with the support of the United Nations country team, to better prepare local authorities to respond to future natural disasters. Simulation exercises have been a key component of the preparatory measures taken. A simulation exercise was under preparation during the field visit.

23. Despite these efforts, the damage to local property appeared to be a serious setback for development in the region. First-response measures undertaken by the United Nations country team were aimed at clearing and sorting the debris, cleaning and re-opening access roads, and providing initial assistance to affected population. Current recovery activities are designed to have both short- and long-term impact – examples of which were demonstrated

to the delegation – making the link between humanitarian aid, early recovery, and development.

24. In particular, in the town of Dame-Marie, which was heavily devastated, local authorities managed to avoid casualties entirely thanks to prior UNDP projects for capacity-building and strengthening governance mechanisms at all levels to improve the coordination, planning and implementation of recovery actions, promote better knowledge of risks, and optimize the management of those risks.

25. As part of the first phase of its multi-dimensional strategy to support post-disaster recovery, UNDP is providing cash-for-work activities, creating temporary jobs to quickly inject money into the local economy through 12,900 beneficiaries (in the Grand’Anse, Sud, Nippes and Nord-Ouest departments). UNDP supports 150 microenterprises with short-term training, and 50 with technical and personalized assistance to improve their management skills and step up the delivery of equipment to increase their production levels. In Dame-Marie, 900 people identified as ‘most affected’ or ‘most vulnerable’ now benefit from cash-for-work activities. These activities have resulted in a significant recovery of agriculture and the creation of sustainable sources of income for 15 microenterprises, enabling the town to return to early-stage development.

26. Another locality, Lahaie, a fishermen’s village that was entirely destroyed and suffered massive casualties due to flooding, was a good example of longer-term recovery efforts, creating greater resilience to economic shocks and climate and disaster risk. The project, still in the initial stages of implementation, is aimed at maximizing the chances of people’s sustainable return through the provision of local government support, recovery of livelihoods and access to housing, and is strongly supported by the community. To ensure sustainability, safe building techniques (anti-seismic and anti-cyclonic) will be used, as well as local housing models and construction materials that conform with risk-mapping exercises.

27. Although United Nations country team efforts have had a considerable impact on the recovery of the area and risk reduction, exertions have been by necessity selective, with a large investment in community outreach to ensure that the community buys into relocation, and many localities still require increased attention. The Executive Board recommends improving the effectiveness of resource mobilization for transition from relief to development, and urges donors to consider providing additional coordinated, predictable and flexible funding.

## **D. Cross-cutting issues**

### *The census*

28. Work on the fifth national census, a project implemented by the National Statistics Office and led by UNFPA, is highlighted separately here because its outputs will affect health and education planning and spending, and disaster risk reduction mapping in particular, by demonstrating where some of the most vulnerable populations are located. Innovative elements in the census, such as the use of gender indicators, will enable policymakers to better understand causes of inequalities between men and women. The President of the Executive Board and the UNFPA director met with the Minister of State for Finance to underscore that the success of the census was vital to shaping future policy, including development planning.

29. A pilot test of the 2018-2019 census was conducted in four of the 10 departments in Haiti during June and July, covering a cross-section of urban and rural populations. The census purports to provide the statistical data necessary for policymakers and civil society actors to better plan for the development of the country. The census project is an area where it will be crucial for the entire United Nations country team to collaborate on maximizing the results and data usage for their development project planning.

30. The \$29.8 million census project, funded by the Government of Haiti, Canada, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank, has a shortfall of approximately \$3 million due to the imperative to have high-quality information and technology equipment for this

tablet-based census; the need to increase security measures following the departure of MINUJUSTH; and the importance of a solid communications strategy. When last raised with partners (prior to the resignation of the prime minister), the Government had indicated a willingness to cover part of the shortfall. Potential for cooperation with private sector has been considered, and certain practicalities, such as communication of census benefits, are accomplished with the support of private sector actors. The consequences of the investment gap range from technical issues to potential shortfalls in public outreach sufficient to secure an acceptable response rate. There is also a security challenge for the personnel involved, given the current volatility. Lessons learned from other censuses show it is important to have a strong social media strategy as well as a strong physical communications/visibility presence to counteract political forces that may manipulate audiences to negatively influence census outcomes.

31. The results of the census – the first since 2003 – will feed into reporting for the Sustainable Development Goals, providing a much-needed baseline for development efforts in the country.

#### *Inter-agency work*

32. The United Nations country team is an impressive group, with an inspiring commitment to improving livelihoods and governance outcomes in Haiti. They clearly work closely and well together. However, it was evident from the projects and from discussions with various organizations that more could be done jointly. The programme itself need not necessarily be joint, but the work of various organization should be integrated so as to maximize outcomes. Health, for example, is an area where there are substantial shared areas of priority across WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNOPS-UNDP. The Joint Rule of Law Programme is an example of strong inter-agency work, including leveraging assessed funding to bring in other donors and pooling expertise to improve access to justice, police and corrections. The programme thus acts as an important platform to bring organizations together. The sustainability of this work will depend upon the sustainability of political engagement and leadership under the Government.

33. These collaborations are fundamental to achieving the wider United Nations reform agenda, particularly shared common services, for a new generation of United Nations country teams where the comparative advantages of organizations are maximized and the target is to allocate 15 per cent of non-core resources to joint activities.

34. Since there is a substantial civil society presence in Haiti, it would have been useful to discuss those partnerships with a selection of non-governmental organizations as part of the visit.

#### *Transition planning*

35. The crucial work United Nations organizations and government partners are doing on rule of law, human rights, access to justice and governance priorities is fundamental to the joint transition planning under way between MINUJUSTH, the Government, and the United Nations country team, and extends well beyond the transition period, particularly in the overarching area of rule of law.

36. As the benchmarked exit strategy of the mission is now closely aligned with a majority of United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcomes, it will be crucial to track progress clearly against these, set in the wider context of the security situation in the country to ensure resource mobilization, joint programming and transition of responsibilities and roles to the United Nations country team and the Government in the next critical 15 months.

37. In particular, given previous UNDP and UNOPS work on 2015-2016 elections and the security provisions of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti at the time, it will be crucial to reflect on successes and lessons learned from that period so as to prepare well in advance for the 2019 elections, which will occur after the MINUJUSTH transition date.

## IV. Main recommendation/observations

38. The delegation would like to recognize the people of Haiti, who have a strong and impressive commitment to the future of their country. The success of these projects would be impossible without their dedication and resolve.

39. *Government interaction.* The delegation notes that it was unfortunate that no national government ministers were able to meet with the delegation, particularly given the opportunity to frankly discuss areas of shared priorities and to highlight key elements of United Nations country team work. There was, however, substantial representation at the local level. The delegation notes in particular the commitment of the mayors of Grand'Anse, Dame-Marie and Moron. Since ministerial engagement would have been key, the Board should reflect on the timing of field visits to ensure that this occurs.

40. *Delivering as one United Nations.* The coordination of the United Nations country team in Haiti was impressive, and it was encouraging to hear commitment across the entire country team on strengthening their joint work, particularly in health and rule of law. The delegation would recommend that the country team and MINUJUSTH continue to increase and scale up that work, particularly as MINUJUSTH winds down in the coming months, and to work jointly to maximize the results of the census project. In addition, it will be critical, as projects are considered for expansion, that the United Nations country team continue strong outreach to local communities and explore opportunities to strengthen South-South and trilateral cooperation within such projects.

41. *Human resources and sustainability of projects.* Despite investments in infrastructure, marked gaps in trained staff to deliver services was a recurring theme across several projects. The vaccine storage facility and the ambulance centre exemplify the importance of ensuring the long-term sustainability of development aid projects, as gaps in asset maintenance have sometimes caused gaps in the delivery of services. The delegation encourages the United Nations country team, in collaboration with the Government, to ensure that these gaps are taken into consideration when planning and monitoring projects.

42. *Transition planning.* The delegation noted the extensive work undertaken jointly by MINUJUSTH, the country team and the Government on the two-year benchmarked exit strategy, and underscores the criticality of resource mobilization planning and the transfer of roles and responsibilities as the United Nations reconfigures its presence in the lead-up to October 2019. Close collaboration to drive progress on the critical benchmarks in the strategy will be key to this work, and it will be important for donors, together with the Government, to think collectively and collaborate in order to reduce fragmentation of funding.

43. *United Nations reform.* United Nations reform principles with respect to development and humanitarian and peacekeeping coordination are all present in Haiti. Coherence within the country team and a commitment to increased joint activities will be central components of the upcoming funding dialogue with the United Nations development system and those at the Board sessions of the respective organizations. Meanwhile, it is essential that all development actors in Haiti work hand in hand with peacekeeping missions to ensure a sustainable transition under national government leadership.

### Annex 1. Delegation for the field visit

1	H.E. Mr. Jagdish Koonjul Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations <i>President of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS</i>
2	H.E. Mr. Humberto Rivero Rosario Ambassador Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations
3	Mr. Aki Kauppinen First Secretary Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations
3	Mr. Konstantin Kulikov First Secretary Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations
4	Mr. Vilatsone Visonnavong First Secretary Permanent Mission of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations
5	Ms. Emily Braid Policy Advisor Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations <i>Lead rapporteur for the field visit</i>
7	Mr. Anthony Ngororano Chief, Executive Board Branch UNFPA
8	Ms. Dalita Balassanian Policy Specialist, Executive Board secretariat UNDP
9	Ms. Elle Y. Wang Partnerships Adviser, New York Liaison Office UNOPS



## Annex 2. Overview of project sites and meetings during the field visit

### Monday, 25 June 2018

- Visit to Higher Institute of Midwifery premises, with explanations from UNOPS and UNFPA, unveiling of plaque, official launch of Canadian midwifery project
- Presentation of census project (UNFPA)
- Meeting with Adviser to the President of Haiti
- Meeting with Minister of State for Finance
- Visit to the Centre d'opérations d'urgence national, led by Dr. Jerry Chandler, Director of Civil Protection; presentation on preparations for the hurricane season (UNDP)
- Visit to the National Ambulance Centre (UNOPS)

### Tuesday, 26 June 2018

- Meeting with Mayor of Dame-Marie; presentation of post-Matthew income-generating activities and the Lahaie project (UNDP)
- Visit to the Lahaie project of post-Matthew income-generating activities (UNDP)

### Wednesday, 27 June 2018

- Visit to Saint-Antoine Hospital (UNOPS)
- Meeting with mayors of Jérémie, Dame-Marie and Moron; presentation of the multi-risk mapping project (UNDP)
- Press conference in the UNDP office in Jérémie (UNDP, UNFPA UNOPS)
- Visit to the vaccine storage facility of the Ministry of Public Health and Population (UNOPS)
- Visit to the OFAGDEM community enterprise in Basse Voldrogye, Jérémie; presentation of post-Matthew income-generating activities (UNDP)

### Thursday, 28 June 2018

- Visit to road construction works project in Cybion, Port-Salut (UNOPS)
- Visit to construction training centre in Bergeau, Les Cayes (UNOPS)
- Visit to La Colline d'Aquin; observation of restored green spaces and plant nursery (UNDP)
- Meeting with Mayor of Grand Goave and visit to the rehabilitation works in Fauché – International Fund for Agricultural Development small-scale irrigation project managed by UNDP (UNDP)

### Friday, 29 June 2018

- Meeting with 19 heads of agencies and United Nations organizations participating with the United Nations country team
- Meeting with United Nations Volunteers serving in Haiti
- Visit to the UNDP office
- Visit to the UNOPS office
- Debriefing with representatives of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS