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**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON UNESCO'S
COOPERATION WITH HAITI**

SUMMARY

This document is presented by the Director-General at the request of the Chairman of the Executive Board and the Government of Haiti.

It has no financial or administrative implications.

Action expected by the Executive Board: decision proposed in paragraph 26.

INTRODUCTION

1. On the occasion of a visit to Haiti from 12 to 13 August 2009, the national authorities requested the Chairman of the Executive Board to transmit to the Director-General their desire for stronger cooperation between Haiti and UNESCO. To that end, they suggested that a multidisciplinary mission be dispatched there in order to identify with the Haitian authorities those sectoral areas that could be strengthened.

2. Developments relating to such cooperation will be consistent with priorities set by the Haitian Government in the national strategy paper for growth and poverty reduction (DSNCRP, 2008-2010) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2009-2011, which have set the goals of supporting the Haitian Government's priority activities in three fields: democratic governance, sustainable human development and environmental and natural hazards management.

I. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

3. For nearly two decades now, Haiti has faced deep-seated political crises that have weakened the State and given rise to insecurity and a serious degradation of its people's living conditions.

4. Against that troubled background, in March 2004 the United Nations Security Council voted to authorize the deployment of a stabilization mission (MINUSTAH) in order to restore security, promote the political process, build public institutions, primarily in the judicial system, and protect human rights.

5. After a transitional period of nearly two years, the restoration of the political process enabled elections to be held, bringing President René Garcia Prével to power in May 2006.

6. Progress has been recorded on the security and stability fronts, as noted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his September 2009 report,¹ referring to the conduct of the 2009 senatorial elections, the adoption of key legislation and the pursuit of an inclusive political dialogue. The Secretary-General noted nonetheless that, although the security situation had improved, it was still fragile and threatened by gang violence, criminal activity and corruption.

7. Such political instability, insecurity and violence, albeit in decline, have made it difficult to improve the living conditions of the Haitian people, who are still the poorest in the Latin America and Caribbean region. The facts show that roughly 54% of Haitian people live below the extreme-poverty threshold (US \$1 per day per inhabitant) and nearly four fifths of the population are below the poverty line (\$2 per day per inhabitant).

8. The Republic of Haiti is struck regularly by natural disasters wrought by tropical hurricanes in a highly degraded and very fragile environment. In 2008 alone, four storms or hurricanes struck Haiti, killing 800 people and leaving one million homeless.

9. In view of this difficult situation and the many and varied challenges, in May 2009 the Secretary-General of the United Nations appointed the former President of the United States of America, Mr William Clinton, special envoy to Haiti in order to assist the Government and people of Haiti in the fields of job creation and improvement of basic services and infrastructure.

¹ Ref. S/2009/439.

II. STATE OF COOPERATION WITH UNESCO

Education

10. The Haitian education system is characterized by high exclusion and considerable structural difficulties. The cost of education remains very high in relation to family income and educational provision is insufficient, especially in rural areas. The enrolment rate is estimated at 56% for pre-school and 49% for primary education. Most of the school infrastructure is unsuitable and in poor condition. The standard of teaching is low because of the shortage of qualified teachers, the unsuitability of curricula and the lack of textbooks.

11. UNESCO's assistance to Haiti is primarily concentrated on support to the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (MNEVT), and concerns projects in basic and non-formal education, and also in secondary, higher, technical and vocational education.

12. As part of this comprehensive action, UNESCO plays a coordination role for the **Education Sector Group** (ESG), which meets regularly with MNEVT and about 15 technical and financial partners around five thematic working groups (TWGs) (basic education, vocational training, information and statistics, higher education, the new school year).

13. **The Education for All programme.** As part of the follow-up to the recommendations of the Dakar Forum on Education for All (EFA), UNESCO alerted the Haitian Government to the need to introduce a national EFA strategy. This strategy, drawn up by a national team with UNESCO's support, with funding from Japan and the World Bank, was adopted by a national forum in May 2007. An operational implementation plan was approved in 2008. Haiti was recognized as being eligible for the EFA Fast-Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) in April 2008. A first tranche of \$22 million was approved under the Catalytic Fund on 2 September 2009. This financing will enable the enrolment of 600,000 schoolchildren from underprivileged families. This new, encouraging source of support for the development of the enrolment of Haitian children in school points to the crucial role of the Education Sector Group under the leadership of UNESCO.

14. **Institutional strengthening of MNEVT** (\$226,000). The project, financed under Japanese funds-in-trust, is part of the EFA Programme. It was launched officially by MNEVT on 2 March 2009. The rehabilitation of the premises that will serve for the training of teachers began in August 2009.

15. **Literacy and basic training of young adults in the Sud-Est department of Haiti – LIFE HAITI** (\$1,074,847). Under the programme Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), this project, financed by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), supports the literacy campaign launched by the Haitian Government in September 2007 whose purpose is to bring literacy to 3 million people between 2008 and 2011. Given the means available, the project's specific objective is to provide literary instruction to 250,000 of them. More particularly, the project aims to: (i) increase the literacy rate in the Sud-Est department; (ii) improve the entry of young people into the world of work; and (iii) strengthen the operational capacities of the departmental coordinating authority for literacy training in Sud-Est. Since April 2009, this project has been in the phase of providing vocational training for new literates, in close cooperation with the National Institute for Vocational Training (NIVT), which has prepared the modules and practical teaching guides.

16. **HIV/AIDS prevention in teaching circles.** Under this project financed by Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), a teaching guide for teachers (in primary and secondary schools) was validated and the training of teacher-trainers will start in September 2009.

17. Under the United Nation Flash Appeal, launched in September 2008 after Haiti was struck by natural disasters, a contribution of \$100,000 was made by the Caribbean Insurance Company Facility (CICF) to finance the purchase of educational kits for pupils in the town of Jacmel in Sud-

Est department. The kits will be available for the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year. UNESCO is also working in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Training and other education partners in post-disaster response, the most significant being the Organization's support for two UNICEF-led United Nations Flash Appeal projects on "School Rehabilitation and Student Support" and "Education Support to Facilitate Enrolment of the Most Deprived".

18. **UNESCO Fellowships Programme (2000-2009).** A total amount of \$177,991 was granted to 22 Haitian nationals between 2000 and 2009.

Natural sciences

19. Natural science activities were carried out mainly under the **International Hydrological Programme (IHP)**. Haiti is a member of the IHP Intergovernmental Council until the 35th session of the General Conference in October 2009. The Haitian IHP National Committee has participated actively in the following initiatives during this biennium:

- **Artibonito-Masacre case study in the framework of the UNESCO/OAS ISARM Americas Programme.** This programme contributes to the conduct of case studies submitted as project proposals for financing under extrabudgetary funds, such as the Global Environment Fund (GEF).
- **Capacity-building in water management:** An itinerant course on integrated water resource management, with emphasis on ecohydrology, was organized at the University of Quisqueya in Port-au-Prince in January 2008.
- **Capacity-building in Ecohydrology.** The establishment of a regional ecohydrology graduate programme, in which the Universities of La Plata (Argentina), Queretaro (Mexico) and Quisqueya (Haiti) will participate, is under consideration.
- **Capacity-building in risk management and responses to floods.** Within the joint International Flood Initiative (IFI) between the WMO and UNESCO, a Hydrological Regionalization and Water Balances course was organized at the Laboratoire de Qualité de l'Eau et de l'Environnement of the Quisqueya University, Port-au-Prince, in November 2008.
- Water and Culture Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean reviews the complex interrelation between societies and water resources. Emphasis is placed on the human component, focusing on attitudes, behaviours, concepts and beliefs, in order to set guidelines for equitable, sustainable and ethic water resources management.
- UNESCO-IHP Programme on Water and Education for the Americas and the Caribbean: The main objective of this programme is to make children and youth aware of the importance of water and environmental protection.
- IHP Water and Gender Working Group for Latin America and the Caribbean was established in 2006 in order to foster gender equity mainstreaming in the development of water sciences and integrated water resources management. Within this framework, the Haitian Association "Women, Science and Technology" was created in 2008 to address gender themes in the academic and professional sectors, including water issues and carried out a study on "Haitian women and water".

Culture

20. **Physical heritage.** In this field, UNESCO has cooperated with Haiti primarily to preserve the National History Park, a World Heritage Monument since 1982 which encompasses the Citadel, the Palace of Sans-Souci and the site at Ramiers and which was restored with UNESCO's

assistance. In March 2009, the Haitian Parliament ratified the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001).

21. In the area of **intangible heritage**, Haiti also ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). Two projects have been implemented:

- Safeguarding of the Sacred Songs of the Voodoo Cult of the lakou Dereal of the Community of Bizoton. Funded by the Japan-UNESCO funds-in-trust for the preservation and promotion of the intangible cultural heritage, this project for the safeguarding of the sacred songs also aims at promoting awareness, particularly among young people, of the importance of this form of expression for community identity.
- The Slave Route Project. As part of celebrations of the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, 23 August 2009, UNESCO organized an international symposium on the “Universality of Human Rights and the Haitian Revolution” (Port-au-Prince, Haiti, August 2009) in collaboration with the Government of Haiti. The objective of the symposium was to analyse Haiti’s contribution to the universality of human rights. The new strategy outlined for the Slave Route Project was presented in this context. A film entitled “Slave Routes: A Global Vision” was screened on this occasion.

22. **Crafts.** Craftwork is one of the essential forms of Haitian cultural expression. Since 2004, UNESCO has cooperated with several local partners, leading to Haiti’s participation in an international craft competition in 2006, at which Haitian craftworkers were awarded prizes. The UNESCO Office in Port-au-Prince also focused on training in the technical craft industries of marketing and design. UNESCO is a partner with the AfricAmerica Foundation (Haiti) in the creation of a community museum in the working-class neighbourhood of la *Croix-des-Bouquets*, where the majority of blacksmiths are located.

Communication and information

23. **Training of journalists.** UNESCO, in close collaboration with the MINUSTAH Bureau of Public Information and Communication, is working towards the promotion and strengthening of the multimedia centres opened by the Mission in all regions of the country, by organizing training courses for Haitian journalists. These courses currently focus on two themes: information in a post-conflict environment and sound and ethical use of the Internet.

24. **Memory of the World.** In 2008, as part of the Memory of the World Programme, the UNESCO Office in Port-au-Prince partially financed a documentary by film-maker Arnold Antonin on the life of Jacques Roumain, a Haitian writer who influenced the intellectual life of the country between 1940 and 1960. The documentary received a prize at the FESPACO Film Festival in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) in March 2009.

Cross-cutting activities

25. In the framework of the “Peace-building and Conflict Resolution” thematic window of the UNDP-Spain MDG Achievement Fund, UNESCO was granted \$208,871 as part of the joint United Nations project on “Conflict Prevention through Local Community Empowerment and Institutional Capacity Building in Haiti”. Working in partnership with MINUSTAH, UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM and IOM, the Organization’s activities in the country will include the strengthening of media outlets and initiatives targeting schools to promote peace education; support to youth organizations to undertake violence prevention activities; strengthening interventions for the prevention of gender-based violence, and analyses and dissemination of materials in support of the National Violence Observatory on Poverty and Exclusion.

Action Expected by the Executive Board

26. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 182 EX/65,
2. Emphasizing the need to strengthen UNESCO's cooperation with Haiti in support of the efforts of the Government to promote stability, peace and development through education, science, culture and communication,
3. Invites the Director-General to send a high-level intersectoral mission to Haiti to devise, in close cooperation with the Government of Haiti, a special cooperation programme addressing major priorities in the Organization's fields of competence and to report to it thereon at a future session as part of his general report under item 5 "Report by the Director-General on the follow-up to decisions and resolutions adopted by the Executive Board and the General Conference at their previous sessions";
4. Appeals to Member States to strengthen their bilateral cooperation with Haiti in UNESCO's fields of competence and to contribute to UNESCO's special cooperation programme for Haiti once it is finalized.