Chapter 7. Haiti: The Society and Its Environment

Figure from a painting by Prosper Pierrelouis

IN 1804 HAITI EMERGED FROM thirteen years of revolution as the New World's second republic, having attained independence from France. Sharply defined social distinctions in the colonial system set the stage for Haiti's evolution as an independent but deeply divided society—a majority of peasant freeholders, formerly slaves, dominated by a small ruling class, formerly free men of color. These social distinctions fostered the creation of contrasting cultural and linguistic forms.

Peasant society emerged as largely self-regulating and defensive in response to military rule in rural areas and the absence of a voice in government. The exclusion of peasants from national institutions created the opportunity for a flowering of local cultural forms, including the Creole language and the voodoo religion. A rich Haitian tradition of cultural innovation has long coexisted with the French language and the Roman Catholic Church favored by the urban elite.

As a post-colonial state in 1804, Haiti was ahead of its time and was treated by the outside world as a pariah state. Consequently, Haiti went its own distinctive way far more than other countries in the region. Culturally, it continues to be marked far more than other New World societies by African cultural influences as well as its Franco-Haitian heritage, and by linguistic and cultural isolation from its neighbors. Haiti's remarkable cultural heritage includes a sophisticated repertoire of traditional dance, music, religion, oral literature, and artistic expression.

In the early nineteenth century, small yeoman farmers supplanted the plantation system as the dominant mode of production. Haitian agriculture shifted rapidly from large-scale monocropping for export to a diverse mix of food and cash crops produced on thousands of dispersed plots. Haiti's emergent elite moved from plantation production into mercantile pursuits based on agricultural exports and industrial imports. The economically powerful also gained control of the apparatus of state. Newly independent Haiti maintained a sizable standing army inherited from the revolutionary period, and up to the 1990s the Haitian army consistently exercised a powerful political role.

With a total population of around 7.6 million, Haiti in 1998 was the most rural, the poorest, and the most densely popu-

lated country in the hemisphere. Most Haitians continue to be small peasant farmers. Intense class stratification persists despite the growth of intermediary classes since the 1950s, significant out-migration, and a phenomenal rate of urban growth centered on Port-au-Prince, a metropolitan area of around 2 million people. Despite a high rate of rural out-migration, the rural population continues to expand. Demographic pressures exert acute stress on the country's natural resource base.

By international standards, the majority of Haitians are very poor. This alarming level of poverty reflects the poor distribution of national wealth, the precipitous decline of agriculture in the past few decades, acute land scarcity, a highly degraded environment, weak institutions of government, and prolonged political and economic crisis since the mid-1980s. Efforts in the 1990s to decentralize and democratize the state have yet to make a palpable difference in the daily lives of most people.

In the late 1990s, even the most remote rural areas of the country have significant contact with the outside world. This contact is the result of the growth of influence of foreign missionaries and nongovernmental agencies since the 1950s, significant out-migration since the 1970s, rapid growth of Creole-language radio programs and stations since the early 1980s, turbulent political struggles since the mid-1980s, and international political and military intervention in Haiti in the mid-1990s (see Multinational Security Assistance, ch. 10).

Geography

Haiti occupies the mountainous western third of Hispaniola (La Isla Española), the second largest island of the Greater Antilles. The island is divided between Haiti and the Dominican Republic (see fig. 1). The two countries share a 388-kilometer border established in a series of treaties, the most recent being the 1936 Protocol of Revision of the Frontier Treaty of 1929. Haiti's eastern border runs along mountain ranges and the Pedernales River in the south and the Massacre River in the north. The Atlantic Ocean borders Haiti to the north, and the Caribbean Sea borders it on the west and south. The Windward Passage separates Haiti from Cuba. Haiti's close neighbors also include Jamaica and Puerto Rico.

Haiti occupies an area of about 27,750 square kilometers, about the size of Maryland. Two large peninsulas in the north and south dominate Haiti's mainland. The country has around

1,300 kilometers of coastline. The land area includes numerous small islands and four large islands: Île de la Gonâve (680 square kilometers) adjoining the Baie de Port-au-Prince, Île de la Tortue (180 square kilometers) off the north coast, and Île à Vache (fifty-two square kilometers) and Grande Cayemite (forty-five square kilometers) off the southern peninsula.

Haiti has very few plains; they make up only 22 percent of the national territory. Slopes in excess of 20 percent cover 63 percent of this rugged, mountainous land, and only 29 percent of the country has less than a 10 percent slope. The northern tier of the country includes the Plaine du Nord—the country's largest coastal plain—an area of 2,000 square kilometers, and the smaller Plaine des Moustiques and Plaine de l'Arbre in the arid northwestern peninsula. The northern mountain range, the Massif du Nord, is an extension of the Cordillera Central of the Dominican Republic. It varies in elevation from 600 to 1,100 meters and extends from Haiti's eastern border into the northwestern peninsula.

Haiti's geographic center includes the Central Plateau, around eighty-five kilometers long and thirty kilometers wide. To the southwest of the plateau lies the range of Montagnes Noires with a maximum elevation of 1,400 meters, and the lower Artibonite River Valley measuring around 800 square kilometers. The Artibonite delta is the country's major rice-producing area. Other important lowland areas include the Plaine de l'Estère and Plaine des Gonaïves. South of the Artibonite Valley are the mountains of the Chaîne des Matheux and Chaîne du Trou d'Eau—an extension of the Sierra de Neiba range of the Dominican Republic.

The southern tier of Haiti includes the Plaine du Cul-de-Sac and the Plaine de Léogane near Port-au-Prince, the Plaine des Cayes, other small coastal plains, and the high mountain ranges of the southern peninsula. The Plaine du Cul-de-Sac is a natural depression twelve kilometers wide that extends thirty-two kilometers from the Dominican border to the coast of the Baie de Port-au-Prince. The mountains of the Massif de la Selle are an extension of the Sierra de Baoruco range in the neighboring republic and run in an east-west direction in the upland interior of the southern peninsula. The Morne de la Selle (Montagne Terrible) is the highest point in Haiti with an elevation of 2,684 meters. In the southwestern portion of the peninsula, the steep and rugged Massif de la Hotte rises to 2,347 meters on Pic de Macaya.

Haiti has a large number of streams that carry torrential flows during the wet season and slow to a trickle in the dry season. Streams tend to be short and swift flowing because of the narrow peninsulas and numerous mountain ridges. Five rivers generate most of the country's water catchment: the Artibonite, Grande-Anse, L'Estère, Trois Rivières, and Cavaillon. The Artibonite is the largest drainage system in the country. Its headwaters are the Libon River in the foothills of the Massif du Nord. The Libon crosses the border into the Dominican Republic and then forms part of the border before reentering Haiti as the Artibonite River. At the border, the river expands into the Lac de Péligre formed by a dam in the southern part of the Central Plateau. Péligre Dam, constructed in 1956, is the country's major hydroelectric facility. The Artibonite drains some 10,000 square kilometers, including 6,570 square kilometers in Haiti. The 400-kilometer river is only one meter deep during the dry season and may dry up completely in certain spots. During the wet season, it is more than three meters deep and subject to flooding.

The 150-kilometer Trois Rivières is the most important river in the northern region. It has an average width of sixty meters, and is three to four meters deep. The ninety-five-kilometer Guayamouco River flowing through the Central Plateau is one of the principal tributaries of the Artibonite River. It has an average width of sixty meters and a depth of three to four meters. The most prominent body of water in the southern tier of the country is the Étang Saumâtre in the Plaine du Cul-de-Sac. A brackish lake that is gradually becoming less salty, it has an elevation sixteen meters above sea level and is twenty kilometers long and six to fourteen kilometers wide.

Haiti lies within the Low Subtropical Region at 18 to 20 degrees North latitude. The Holdridge Life Zone Classification System identifies nine subtropical life zones in Haiti: Thorn Woodlands, Dry Forest, Moist Forest, Wet Forest, Rain Forest, Lower Montane Moist Forest, Lower Montane Wet Forest, Lower Montane Rain Forest, and Montane Wet Forest. The Moist Forest, filled by growths of mahogany and tropical oaks, is the most commonly represented natural life zone. Temperatures are almost always high in lowland areas, ranging from 15°C to 25°C in the winter months and 25°C to 35°C during the summer.

The period from December through February is generally a dry season with little or no rainfall. Most of the country has a

major rainy season in the spring and minor rains in the fall. Northeast trade winds and mountainous terrain create extreme weather conditions and highly variable temperatures. Tropical storms, drought, floods, and hurricanes are common. Rainfall patterns range from 300 millimeters in the northwest to more than 3,000 millimeters on Pic de Macaya in the high mountains of the southwest. One-fourth of the country has annual precipitation less than 1,200 millimeters. Most areas have at least 1,000 millimeters of annual precipitation, and a substantial percentage of the country receives 1,500 millimeters or more.

Geologists hold that Hispaniola was formed by three distinct land masses that collided over geologic time and were formed by the uplifting of oceanic crust. Exposed rock formations are sedimentary, metamorphic, or igneous; in Hispaniola sedimentary limestone deposits are by far the most abundant (80 percent). These limestone-based soils are more fertile than igneous-derived soils; the most fertile soils are alluvial deposits in river valleys and coastal plains. The permanent rise in sea level over geologic time has given rise to a notable degree of local endemism, resulting in a number of plant species peculiar to the region.

Natural Resources

Land Use and Water

The amount of arable land is small in relation to the size of the population. The rich soil tends to be found in small, noncontiguous areas and is concentrated along the coast or valley bottoms. Four large parcels of contiguous good land dwarf all others: the Plaine du Nord, the river basins of the lower Artibonite and of L'Estère, and the Plaine des Cayes and the Plaine du Cul-de-Sac.

By agronomic standards, 63 percent of all land in Haiti is too steep for sustainable agricultural production; however, land-use data indicate that two-thirds of all cultivated land is on mountain slopes and that the bulk of production on mountain slopes takes the form of erosion-intensive, annual food crops. Therefore, the scale of mountain cultivation is double that considered suitable even for perennial crops.

Land-use studies show roughly 80 percent of the country occupied by an agricultural landscape, including land actively farmed, fallow lands, farmhouses and compounds, pastures,

and wood lots. Experts classify at most 11 percent of the land, and perhaps only 7 percent, suitable for crop production under present techniques of cultivation. This analysis further suggests that no more than 28 percent of the land should be cultivated if using optimum techniques for soil and water conservation. These numbers are remarkable since survey national data from 1995 show 48 percent of total land area under active cultivation. Assuming a total population of 7,630,997 in 1998, the overall population density is 581 individuals per square kilometer of cultivated land, or 989 per square kilometer of land deemed cultivable.

This situation is clearly untenable and has catastrophic consequences for the environment and for rural livelihood. Data from the 1980s show a pattern of negative growth in agricultural production combined with ongoing population increase in the rural sector. Agriculture's share of total exports fell from around 90 percent in the 1950s to less than 10 percent in the late 1990s (see Agriculture, ch. 8). In terms of food consumption, the data also show a decline of 33 percent in the number of calories consumed per person per day since 1980.

Haiti's most acute environmental problem is undoubtedly soil erosion. A high proportion of cultivated land is farmed far beyond its carrying capacity, and forest cover has been largely decimated for agricultural use. By deforesting the landscape and degrading the land, agricultural forces have imposed acute pressure on the resource base. By some estimates, the equivalent of 6,000 hectares or more of arable land is lost annually because of erosion. Perhaps 88 percent of erosion stems from the cultivation of slopes that exceed 50 percent incline. Furthermore, the application of landscape-wide conservation techniques is complicated by the fragmentation of holdings. Recent data suggest that average farm size is 1.8 hectares divided into 3.7 noncontiguous plots.

The productive potential of irrigated land is significantly underused in Haiti; irrigated land is estimated to be less than 40,000 hectares. Technically, an additional 22,000 hectares could be rehabilitated and brought back into production. By some estimates, new investment in this sector could develop an additional 80,000 hectares. A limiting factor is a decrease in the quantity of surface water available for irrigation as a result of the effects of reduced vegetative cover on river discharge. There is evidence that base flows in Haiti's rivers and streams are diminishing. Aside from its use in irrigation, surface water

is also the primary source of water used by most Haitians for domestic household needs. In general, groundwater is significantly underused for both household use and irrigation. The use of groundwater for irrigation is mostly limited to the Plaine du Cul-de-Sac.

Forestry and Fuelwood

There is a paucity of current data on forest cover. The most reliable national data are based on aerial photographs dating back to 1978. However, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has made some estimates based on the rate of deforestation prevalent in the late 1980s (see Forestry, ch. 8). In general, Haiti's forest cover is fast disappearing because of the press of people on the land, the clearing of land for food production, growth in the demand for construction material, and the harvest of fuelwood. In the case of many tree species, only a few relic stands of natural forest remain.

Several important stands of mangrove forest can be found in Haiti's coastal areas and estuaries. The most notable pine tract is the pine forest of the Massif de la Selle, a 28,000-hectare tract of state land that has been severely disturbed by illicit wood harvest and agricultural incursions. Much of Haiti was originally covered by broadleafed forest. Important stands remain in the northern region of Le Borgne-Anse-à-Foleur and around Pic de Macaya. Semi-arid forest, indicated by natural stands of mesquite, is found near the Étang Saumâtre and around Grand Gosier and Côtes de Fer. Natural stands of arid-land scrub, characterized by cactus, succulents, and thorny shrubs, are found between in the Savane Désolée between Gonaïves and Anse Rouge.

In the sixteenth century, forests of various types covered much of the island of Hispaniola although some observers estimate that less than half of Haiti was then covered by merchantable forest. Haiti exported precious woods throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was for a time the largest exporter of logwood in the hemisphere. In addition, Haiti exported considerable quantities of mahogany, Spanish cedar, and lignum vitae. Since at least the 1940s, significant wood product shortages and growing wood imports have been reported. Perhaps 8 percent of the territory was covered by natural forest in 1954.

Reliable national data from 1978 indicated that only 6.4 percent of the country was covered by forest—roughly one-third

dense forest canopy and two-thirds open forest. Between 1978 and 1984, monitoring of three representative sites characterized as degraded, open, and closed forest showed rates of deforestation ranging from 1.0 to 3.4 percent. It is clear that the process of deforestation has continued unabated since 1978; it was thought in 1993 that forests represented as little as 2.2 percent of the land. In general, the remaining parcels of forest today are highly fragmented and concentrated along watershed divides and on steep slopes vulnerable to erosion.

The primary cause of deforestation is the sheer scale of agricultural occupation of the landscape; however, demand for woodfuels is another significant contributor to deforestation. Per capita consumption of fossil fuels is the lowest in the hemisphere. Haiti is currently 80 percent self-sufficient in energy—based on wood as the primary cooking fuel in rural areas and wood charcoal in urban areas.

Fuelwood alone constitutes 70 percent of the national supply of energy. Residential consumption makes up more than 50 percent of total energy demand. Fuelwood, bagasse, and wood charcoal also supply 63 percent of industrial demand. Two-thirds of national charcoal consumption is attributed solely to Port-au-Prince. Ninety percent of Port-au-Prince households use wood charcoal for cooking. To a certain extent, growing national demand for charcoal parallels the growth of Port-au-Prince as an urban center.

Charcoal production is an important source of off-season employment for an estimated 67,000 small farmers. Its production is decentralized and produced by traditional methods. Since the 1970s, production has shifted from traditional supply zones of the arid northwest and Île de la Gonâve to a much broader range of production sites in all nine administrative departments of the country. Charcoal is generally acquired at prices far below its actual replacement cost. This fact significantly limits market incentive to manage wood as a renewable resource base for charcoal production. The mining of wood resources therefore contributes to degradation of the environment.

Mining

There is little mining activity in Haiti except for construction materials. Deposits of bauxite on the Rochelois Plateau near Miragoâne and copper near Terre Neuve were mined in the past; the bauxite mine closed in 1982 and the copper mine in

1971. Some copper can be found in Vallières, some gold in Faille-Perches, and some lignite with a high sulfur content on the Central Plateau and Azile. Salt flats exist in Gonaïves and Caracol. High-grade calcium carbonate has been identified at Miragoâne and Dufort, and marble has been found in the Artibonite, Camp Perrin, Jacmel, and Margot. Deposits of clay in Hinche and the Plaine du Nord have good characteristics for pottery and tile manufacture. There are also numerous sites where gravel, limestone, and river sands are extracted for use as construction material for roads and buildings. Such mining, which is virtually unregulated, disfigures the landscape and creates a high risk of erosion and landslides.

Coastal and Marine Resource

Haiti's impressive coastal and marine habitats include mangrove wetlands, seagrass meadows, coral reefs, and numerous protected bays and estuaries. The diverse coastal system has white coral sand beaches, limestone cliffs, and rocky shorelines. Haiti's near-shore underwater landscapes are considered to be spectacular. These habitats are well developed and could potentially be managed as renewable resources for fishing and tourism.

The country's insular shelf (0–200 meters in depth) is quite narrow and covers an area of 5,000 square kilometers. This sedimentary platform generally extends no more than 300 meters offshore, then drops abruptly to the ocean floor to depths of 300 to 4,000 meters. The waters surrounding Haiti are not naturally productive because of the narrowness of the insular shelf, the unusual depth of the adjoining Caribbean, the warmth of surface waters, and the limited supply of nutrients. There is relatively higher production of fish stocks off the western tip of the southern peninsula.

An estimated 180 square kilometers of coastal areas are covered by mangrove forests. The mangroves are valued for their wood products and serve an extremely important role as reservoirs of plant and animal species. Significant stands of mangroves are found along the north coast between the Baie de l'Acul and Fort Liberté, the Artibonite estuary, and the offshore islands of Île de la Gonâve, Grande Cayemite, and Île à Vache. The mangroves are largely unaffected by coastal development but are subject to growing pressures as a result of unregulated harvest for polewood and charcoal.

In general, the mangroves are a critical habitat for threatened or endangered animal species, including the American crocodile, green sea turtle, hawksbill turtle, loggerhead turtle, American flamingo, roseate spoonbill, reddish egret, West Indian tree duck, masked duck, white-crowned pigeon, Hispaniolan trogon, peregrine falcon, and West Indian manatee. Critical marine and coastal habitats deserving of special protection include the following: Les Arcadins, a group of small islands and reefs in the Baie de Port-au-Prince; the Baie de Baradères and the Cayemites archipelago, including 1,200 hectares of mangroves; Île à Vache, an island south of Les Cayes with mangroves, reefs, crocodiles, and numerous shorebirds; and the small bays of Labadie and Cadrasses on Haiti's Atlantic coast in the north.

An estimated 8,000 to 10,000 fishermen practice small-scale traditional fishing using small boats. A fleet of some 3,000 sailboats and rowboats operates within a radius of about five kilometers from shore; there is widespread over-fishing in nearshore areas and underuse of other resources at a greater distance (see Agriculture, ch. 8). Most fishermen are oriented primarily to consumption needs. The major species found in local markets are snapper, spiny lobster, conch, shrimp, and parrot fish. Haiti exports significant quantities of coral, sea turtles, aquarium fish, and shells.

Biodiversity

Haiti's ecological diversity has created a rich and varied flora. Some 5,000 species of plants have been identified, including more than 3,000 woody plants, trees, and shrubs; 600 species of fern, and 160 orchids. Thirty-six percent of all plants are endemic. Plant species have adapted to a broad diversity of life zones, including dry desert and high mountain rainforest. Selecting for species utility, adaptability, and tradition, peasant farmers have retained a diverse range of tree and shrub species within the densely occupied agricultural landscape.

Haiti also has a rich fauna, especially the more than 220 bird species including seventy-five resident species and endemics such as the La Selle thrush, Hispaniolan trogon, Hispaniolan parrot and parakeet, chat tanager, palmchat, black-crowned palm tanager, and the gray-crowned palm tanager—a species unique to Haiti. The country is also home to significant numbers of water birds, including American flamingos, frigate birds, white-tailed tropicbirds, and the nearly extinct black-

capped petrel, a seabird that nests in the high cliffs of La Selle and the Massif de la Hotte.

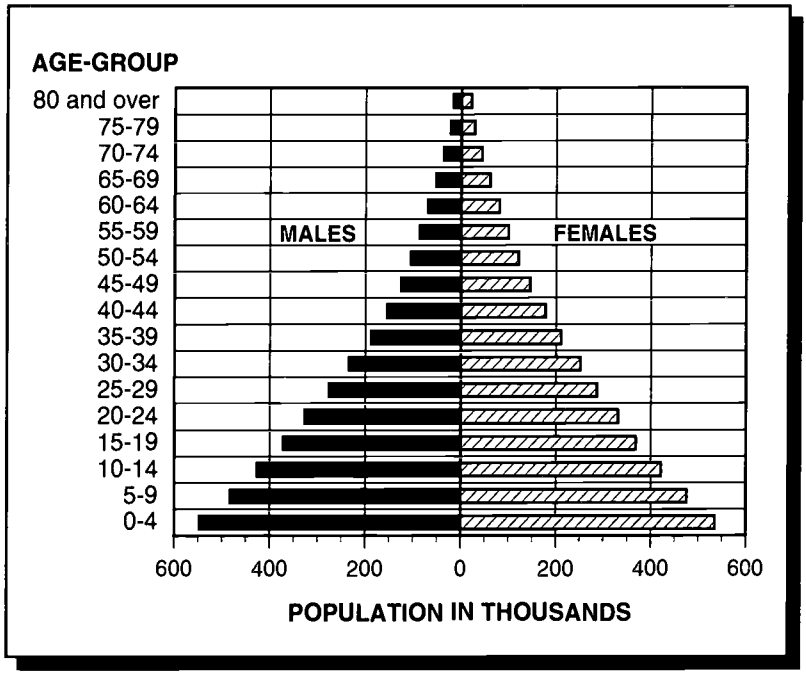
The island has few remaining endemic mammals. There are relic populations of two unusual rodents, the hutia and the long-nosed solenodonte. A small population of manatees survives in coastal waters. Reptiles include significant numbers of the American crocodile, iguanas, and a variety of unusual boas and other snakes.

The major threats to wildlife are population pressure; habitat destruction; hunting; non-native species such as rats and mice, feral dogs and cats, and the mongoose; lack of government regulation; and weak national institutions for biodiversity protection and management. Inadequate regulation of biological exports also poses a risk to wildlife. Haiti exports live reptiles, amphibians, arachnids, and tortoise shell and has been the largest Caribbean supplier of raw coral and ornamental fish to the United States.

Government decrees of 1980 and 1983 created three major protected areas—the Pine Forest Reserve, La Visite National Park, and Pic de Macaya National Park—but the government does not effectively manage these resources. All three sites are located in the southern highlands of Massif de la Selle and Massif de la Hotte and include the nation's two highest points, Pic de Macaya and Morne de la Selle. All three have a high rate of species endemism. Collectively, these sites are by far the most significant remnants of high mountain forest habitats, including the rainforest of Pic de Macaya. In the mid-1990s, the government initiated new programs to protect the environment and launched a national system for direct management of protected areas. The Pine Forest is managed as a mixed-use facility, and the two parks are operated for protection of biological diversity and upper watersheds.

Environmental Crisis

Haiti's resource base is under acute stress. The Haitian peasantry is faced with overwhelming challenges to its way of life. Agricultural production per capita has dropped at least 33 percent since 1980 and produces a declining share of the gross national product (GNP—see Glossary). Recent broad-based surveys classify the vast majority of peasant farmers as indigent according to standards of the FAO. The anarchic growth of urban areas also reflects the crisis in rural livelihood and contributes to deterioration of the resource base.



Source: Haitian Institute for Statistics and Information Technology in Pan American Health Organization, *Health Situation Analysis: Haiti, 1996*, Port-au-Prince, 1996, 153.

Figure 12. Haiti: Population Distribution by Age and Sex, 1995

Sustainable agriculture in lowland areas requires vastly increased forest cover in Haiti's upper watersheds. From an environmental perspective, a significant portion of the highlands should be returned to forest and perennial crops, and existing forest cover should be protected and better managed. The decline in quality of water resources reflects the destruction of forest cover. According to one report, the volume of spring water in the Port-au-Prince area has declined by more than 50 percent within a five-year period. The decline of natural forest cover also has a serious impact on the remaining endemic species of flora and fauna.

Haiti is faced with a number of pollution problems. The two most pressing pollution-related problems are assuring safe water and the sanitary disposal of human waste. Contamination of surface and groundwater from human waste and other solid and liquid wastes is increasing. Water-related diseases are preva-

lent. An estimated 53 percent of the population of Port-au-Prince has access to safe water. Growing levels of air pollution in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area also pose a threat; the problem has been exacerbated by a dramatic increase in automobile imports since the mid-1990s.

Population

Demographic Profile

According to census-based projections, the estimated population of Haiti in 1998 was about 7.6 million with an average density of 282 people per square kilometer. Since 1985 Haiti's annual rate of population growth has been estimated to be around 2.2 percent. Life expectancy in the late 1990s was sixty-one years compared to an average of sixty-nine years in the Latin America region. The crude birthrate in the mid-1990s was estimated to be 44.5 per 1,000 and the crude death rate 12.2 per 1,000. Haiti's population pyramid shows 40 percent of the total population to be less than fifteen years of age (see fig. 12). Sex distribution data indicate a predominance of females because of higher male mortality and emigration rates.

Haiti has conducted only a few censuses throughout its history. At the time of independence in 1804, Haiti had a total population estimated to be well under 500,000, increasing to 780,000 in 1850 and to 1.6 million by 1900. A survey in 1918–19 reported 1.9 million people. In 1950 Haiti's first formal census indicated a total population of 3.1 million. In 1971 the second census estimated a population of 4.2 million, a figure that rose to 5.1 million in the country's third and most recent national census (1982). Critics have argued that Haiti's censuses are inadequate and tend to undercount the population. The country's census information is clearly out of date. Old geographic definitions of urban areas, for example, do not reflect the territorial expansion of urbanization in the 1980s and 1990s (see table 15, Appendix).

Port-au-Prince and other cities, including Cap-Haïtien, Saint-Marc, Gonaïves, and Les Cayes, report significant expansion in the 1990s (see table 16, Appendix). Assuming a redefined metropolitan area, an unprecedented 41 percent of the population may now be living in urban areas—primarily Port-au-Prince and its urbanized environs—and only 59 percent in rural areas. Despite rapid urbanization, Haiti still has one of the lowest urban-to-rural population ratios in the region. The

country's rural population has been estimated at 2.7 million in 1950, 3.4 million in 1971, 3.8 million in 1982, and 4.5 million in 1998.

Between 1980 and the late 1990s, annual growth rates of metropolitan Port-au-Prince averaged 4.4 percent—more than double the estimates of national growth and three times the average rate of rural growth (1.2 percent). Census-based projections indicate that some 66 percent of the country's urban population is concentrated in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince. In 1998 the city and its environs were estimated to have 2 million inhabitants. In 1995 the city of Cap-Haïtien had an estimated population of 108,294, Saint-Marc 75,507, Gonaïves 72,109, and Les Cayes 54,252. These projections are likely underestimated because they rely on 1982 data and exclude new urban agglomerations around the old city centers.

Migration

The rate of population growth in Haiti's rural areas is less than one-third that of urban areas despite a much higher rural fertility rate. The main reason for this disparity is out-migration. Some 29 percent of rural households reported out-migration of one or more household members in a recent comprehensive survey of rural Haitians. The most common destinations are urban areas or other countries.

In the 1990s, the Haitian diaspora is estimated to number around 1.5 million people residing primarily in the United States, the Dominican Republic, and Canada. Census surveys of the 1980s identified the United States as the primary destination between 1950 and 1985, with the United States receiving 68 percent of Haitian emigrants during this period. There were also significant levels of emigration to the Dominican Republic, Canada, the Bahamas, Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, and France.

Haitian emigrants in the 1950s and 1960s were commonly urban middle- and upper-class opponents of the François Duvalier government (see François Duvalier, 1957–71, ch.6). In the 1970s, the profile of emigrants to the United States shifted to include growing numbers of lower-class Haitians from both rural and urban areas. By the mid-1980s, there were sizable numbers of Haitians in New York, Miami, Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia, including an estimated 20 percent with illegal immigration status. Census data from 1990 indicate that although small numbers of Haitians live in widely dispersed

areas of the United States, most live in only four states. According to the 1990 census, nearly three-fourths of immigrant Haitians and Haitian-Americans lived in New York and Florida and most of the rest in Massachusetts and New Jersey. The vast majority immigrated to the United States after 1970, and the largest number entered between 1980 and 1986. In the 1980s, the primary United States destination shifted away from New York to Florida; during this period immigrants were more commonly single, female, and less well-educated compared to earlier immigrants.

Since the early 1970s, thousands of Haitians have sought to emigrate to the United States in small boats and without documentation. Between 1972 and 1981, the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) reported more than 55,000 Haitian "boat people" arriving in Florida. The INS estimated that up to 50 percent of the arrivals escaped detection. About 85 percent of "boat people" from this period settled in Miami.

Small-craft departures from Haiti continued throughout the 1980s and early 1990s but declined after 1992. In September 1981, the United States entered into an agreement with Haiti to interdict Haitian boats and return prospective immigrants to Haiti. Between 1981 and 1992, some 54,000 Haitians were picked up at sea under the interdiction program. During the first eight months of the Raoul Cédras military regime (1991–94), some 34,000 Haitians were interdicted at sea. Thousands made application for refugee status and were held at the United States military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, pending resolution of their status. This period also saw an immense rate of internal displacement within Haiti as a result of army repression and the extended political crisis.

Haiti has a longstanding history of temporary and seasonal migration of workers to neighboring countries. Between 1915 and 1929, an estimated 220,000 Haitians migrated to Cuba and thousands more to the Dominican Republic for seasonal employment in sugarcane fields. In the late 1950s and 1960s, the government of François Duvalier recruited 30,000 Haitian canecutters annually for the Dominican sugar harvest. The Dominican Republic continues to be an important destination for temporary and permanent Haitian migrants. Much of this migration is undocumented. In the late 1990s, an estimated 800,000 Haitians and Dominico-Haitians resided in the Dominican Republic. Americas Watch and other observers report that

Haitian workers in the Dominican Republic are subject to abusive working conditions and forced labor practices.

Out-migration tends to moderate Haiti's population growth. Internal rural-urban migration, for example, softens the impact of the high fertility rate in rural areas but also imposes acute stress on Haiti's urban communities and public services. An estimated 70 percent of Haiti's internal migrants are between ten and twenty-nine years of age. Migration is clearly an escape valve and has an overall moderating effect on Haitian poverty. At the same time, emigration causes heavy loss of professional and skilled personnel from both urban and rural areas. Remittances from abroad, however, do support thousands of poor families and inject a massive infusion of capital into the Haitian economy. Overseas remittances are estimated to be between US$350 million and US$500 million annually—some 12 to 15 percent of Haiti's GNP. Urban households are more likely to benefit from overseas remittances than rural households. Migration studies suggest that women are more likely to migrate to cities and men to go abroad.

The large number of Haitians living abroad is playing a growing role in domestic cultural, social, and political trends. Emigration creates greater latitude for upward social mobility. Hence emigration has an impact on social relations within Haiti, a society traditionally marked by rigid social distinctions. The use of English as a second language has also expanded considerably because of the preponderance of United States influence and its role as the primary destination for emigrants. Emigration also tends to increase the number of female-headed households in Haiti. In the 1990s, the Haitian diaspora has been a notable factor in domestic Haitian politics. As early as 1990, presidential candidate Jean-Bertrand Aristide referred to the Haitian diaspora as Haiti's "Tenth Department." After the return of constitutional government in late 1994, the Aristide government created a new ministry devoted to the Haitian diaspora.

Social Structure

The indigenous population of Haiti first came into contact with Europeans when Christopher Columbus landed in the country in 1492. The encounters with Europeans, first the Spanish and then the French, proved disastrous for the inhabitants; by the first decade of the seventeenth century, the Amerindian population was extinct (see Spanish Discovery and

Colonization, 1492–1697, ch. 6). As a result, the social structure implanted in colonial Saint-Domingue was determined primarily by French colonial policy, slave labor, and the highly stratified plantation system. Major planters and government officials dominated the colonial ruling class and carefully controlled all segments of the population, especially African slaves and their descendants. Society was structured around the rapid production of wealth for the planters and French investors.

The French imposed a three-tiered social structure in Saint-Domingue. A small European elite (*grands blancs*) controlled the top of the social pyramid, and African slaves (*noirs*) and their descendants occupied the lowest rung of society. An intermediary class of free men and women of color (*affranchis*) emerged as a result of sexual unions between slaves and slave owners and also from ex-slaves who purchased their freedom or were given their freedom by former slave owners. Some mulatto freedmen inherited land, became relatively wealthy, and owned slaves. Perhaps one-fourth of all slaves in Saint-Domingue belonged to freedmen. Nevertheless, racial codes kept the *affranchis* socially and politically inferior to Europeans. Another intermediary class was made up of poor whites (*petits blancs*), who considered themselves socially superior to mulattoes although they were generally inferior in economic terms. In 1791 the total population of Saint-Domingue was 519,000—87 percent slaves, 8 percent white, and 5 percent free men and women of color. Because of the brutality of the slave regime and harsh working conditions, many slaves died, and new slaves were constantly imported. At the time of the slave rebellion in 1791, most slaves had been born in Africa rather than Saint-Domingue.

The Haitian Revolution changed the country's social structure. The colonial ruling class and white population were eliminated, and the plantation system was largely destroyed. The earliest black and mulatto leaders attempted to restore a plantation system based on free labor under strict military control, but the system collapsed under the presidency of Alexandre Pétion (1807–18) (see Early Years of Independence, 1804–43, ch. 6). The newly independent state confiscated old colonial estates and distributed land to former slaves, revolutionary soldiers, and army officers. In this process, the new Haitian upper class lost control over agricultural land and labor, the economic base during colonial times. To maintain its economic and social position, the new Haitian upper class turned away

from agricultural pursuits in favor of urban-based activities, particularly government, the professions, and the export trade.

The nineteenth-century Haitian ruling class consisted of two groups, the urban elite and the military leadership. The urban elite was primarily a closed group of educated, comparatively wealthy, French-speaking mulattoes. Birth was an important determinant of elite social position; intermarriage and shared values reinforced class solidarity. The military was an avenue of social mobility for disadvantaged black Haitians. In a shifting, uneasy alliance with the military, the urban elite ruled the country and isolated the peasantry from national affairs. The urban elite promoted French norms and models as a means of separating itself from the peasantry. French language and manners, orthodox Roman Catholicism, and light skin were important criteria of high social position. The elite disdained manual labor, industry, and local commerce in favor of genteel professions such as law and medicine.

A small, politically important middle class emerged during the twentieth century. Opportunity for social mobility increased slightly, but the traditional elite retained its social and economic preeminence. François Duvalier presided over an expanding black middle class based in part on increased access to government patronage and corruption. Since the 1980s and 1990s, peasants have been somewhat less isolated from national politics. Economic hardship in rural areas has heightened rural-urban migration and expanded the lower and middle classes of urban areas. Despite these changes, the peasantry as a social sector continues to be dominated by urban political and economic interests.

The Upper Class

By some estimates, Haiti's upper class constitutes 4 percent of the total population and controls 67 percent of national income in contrast to the poor majority—70 percent of the population with control over 20 percent of the nation's resources. The upper class includes the traditional elite and others who have gained wealth and power through the political system. Others have moved into upper ranks through wealth accrued in industry or export-import businesses.

Members of the traditional elite hold key positions in trade, industry, real estate, and the professions. They are identified by membership in "good families" with recognized status over a period of generations. Elite membership generally entails a

knowledge of European cultural refinements and French language and customs. Light skin and straight hair are important characteristics of this group although there are important phenotypical exceptions, particularly among old elite families originating in the northern region. French surnames are common among the mulatto elite, but increased immigration from Europe and the Middle East in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries introduced names of other national origins to the roster, including German, English, Danish, and Arabic.

To a certain extent, people of Arab origins in Haiti are identified as an ethnic minority; these people include descendants of Syrian, Lebanese, and Palestinian traders who first arrived in the late nineteenth century. From their beginnings as itinerant peddlers of fabrics and other dry goods, Arab merchants moved into the export-import sector, engendering the hostility of Haitians and foreign rivals. Many have Haitian citizenship and use French and Creole as their preferred languages. Formerly spurned by elite mulatto families, families of Arab origins in the 1990s commonly intermarry with Haitians and take part in all aspects of upper-class life, including the professions and industry.

The Middle Class

The middle class was essentially nonexistent during the nineteenth century. It became somewhat more sharply defined around the time of the United States occupation (1915–34). Occupation policies fostered the growth of intermediary classes, including the creation of a professional military and expansion of government, urban growth, and increased centralization of economic and political power in Port-au-Prince. Educational reform in the 1920s, an upsurge in nationalism and black consciousness, and the wave of economic prosperity after World War II also fostered the emergence of an expanded middle class. The mulatto elite dominated government in the 1930s and the early 1940s, however, and thwarted the political aspirations of the black middle class. Under Dumarsais Estimé (1946–50) and François Duvalier (1957–71), an active member of the negritude movement, and his son Jean-Claude Duvalier (1971–86), the black middle class grew in size and political influence. Since the 1970s, broad-based emigration has tended to expand the Haitian middle class as a result of upward mobility, overseas remittances, and a stream of return migration in

the 1980s and 1990s. Nevertheless, the middle class remains a small minority in the late 1990s, perhaps 15 percent of the population.

Despite greater access to political power, the middle class tends to be insecure in its social position and culturally ambivalent, subject to conflict between Franco-Haitian and Afro-Haitian cultural traditions. Social characteristics of members of the middle class include a moderate income, literacy, knowledge of French, a preference for occupations that do not require manual labor, and upward mobility through education and urban residence. Despite their emulation of the upper class, middle-class Haitians resent the social preeminence and class and color prejudice of the elite.

Peasants

Since 1950 the population of rural Haiti has increased by an estimated 167 percent to a total of 4.5 million people, mostly small peasant farmers. During this period, rural areas dropped proportionally from 88 percent to only 59 percent of the population. Current evidence indicates that rural poverty is more severe than urban poverty. The majority of rural households are highly vulnerable to food shortages, and more than 80 percent fall below the poverty line according to FAO standards.

Peasant occupation of the agricultural landscape is based on widely dispersed homesteads and several noncontiguous plots within each farm unit (see Natural Resources, this ch.). Most farms include productive activity on sites the farmer does not own. Farmers are simultaneously owner-operators, landlords, and tenants, depending on the plot. Many are land poor, but the number of landless farmers who rely solely on wage labor is relatively small. Landless peasants are likely to migrate to urban areas.

Unlike peasants in much of Latin America, most of Haiti's peasants have owned land since the early nineteenth century. Land is the most valuable rural commodity, and peasant families go to great lengths to retain it and to increase their holdings.

Peasants in general have control over their landholdings, but many lack clear title to their plots. Haiti has never conducted a cadastral survey, but it is likely that many families have passed on land over generations without updating land titles. Division of land equally among male and female heirs has resulted in farm plots that are too small to warrant the high

A house-raising
Courtesy Inter-American Foundation
Haitian peasants
Courtesy Pan-American Development Foundation

costs of a surveyor. Heirs occasionally survey land before taking possession of it, but more frequently heirs divide plots among themselves in the presence of community witnesses and often a notary. Undivided plots are often used for grazing or farmed on a rotating basis. Families commonly sell land to raise cash for such contingencies as funerals or to pay the expenses of emigration. Purchasers often hold land with a notarized receipt rather than formal registration and transfer of title.

Peasants have a strong sense of identity as Haitians and cultivators of the land. However, they have little or no sense of class solidarity, and rivalries among peasant families and local factions are common. Since the 1940s, small rotating labor groups have tended to replace large labor societies more common earlier in the century. Peasants organize work parties and exchange labor to supplement family labor and meet the intensive labor requirements of peasant agriculture. Peasants also buy and sell daily wage labor.

Rural social arrangements are firmly rooted in kin ties, fictive kinship, patron-client relations, other special ties and obligations, and competing factions. Community solidarity is weakly developed. In the late 1950s, outside development agencies began to organize peasant councils as a self-help strategy to promote community development. By the 1980s, such councils had been organized in most of rural Haiti. In the early 1980s, the government of Jean-Claude Duvalier sought to politicize and control this widespread network of rural councils. Despite rhetoric of local autonomy and democratic representation, peasant councils came to be dominated by traditional power holders and outside interests.

In the 1960s and 1970s, church leaders and other reformers promoted small pre-cooperative groups called *gwoupman* in lieu of the old community councils. The most successful of these groups were built on indigenous sociocultural forms oriented to kinship, labor exchange, or traditional rotating credit groups. In the period since 1986, the *gwoupman* movement and other peasant organizations have been severely persecuted under various military regimes, especially under the de facto government of Raoul Cédras (1991–94). With the return of constitutional rule in late 1994, this persecution ceased. In the latter 1990s, few of the older community councils remained active, and the small group movement has expanded into many areas of rural Haiti. In a distinct break with the past, numerous members of local peasant organizations have been elected to

public office as parliamentarians, mayors, and members of new rural governing councils in keeping with the constitution of 1987.

For most of Haiti's history, the Haitian peasantry has been notably isolated from national institutions, excluded from a voice in government, and subject to unfair taxation and urban domination. In the late twentieth century, especially in the period since 1986, peasants have become highly politicized. Rural areas have civilian local government bodies for the first time in history. Peasants have unprecedented contact with the outside world for a variety of reasons, including radio, the Creole media, severe economic crisis in rural Haiti leading to high rates of out-migration to Port-au-Prince and abroad, political turbulence for more than a decade, and the presence of international civilian and military personnel.

Urban Lower Class

The urban lower class is concentrated in Port-au-Prince and the sprawling slums of major coastal towns, especially Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, and Les Cayes. An estimated two-thirds of Port-au-Prince is concentrated in slum districts, some dating back to colonial times and others dispersed more recently into ravines and lowland flood plains. High rates of rural-urban migration feed the growth of high-density neighborhoods. As early as 1976, field research found the average density of Port-au-Prince slums to be 890 inhabitants per hectare, with a quarter of this population exceeding 1,200 persons per hectare. In contrast, high-income neighborhoods of the city averaged 100 persons per hectare.

Urban slums are composed largely of displaced peasants, primarily young people. Many residents maintain contact with home communities in rural Haiti. Rural points of reference influence urban social organization in low-income districts. Studies of Cité Soleil—the capital's well-known coastal slum district—found only 9 percent of residents native to the district, 67 percent rural born, 50 percent single young people, and 33 percent made up of households headed by single-parent females. There is evidence of high demand for education in slum districts, and a much higher than average rate of literacy—75 percent—compared to the nation as a whole (at most 50 percent). In the politically turbulent period since 1986, pressure groups have emerged in urban slum neighborhoods. Despite problems of internal disunity and fragmentation, these

groups have successfully organized mass demonstrations and exercised a degree of political influence.

The urban lower class operates primarily within the informal sector. Access to water and electricity is controlled privately rather than by official utilities. Fewer than 40 percent of Port-au-Prince residents have access to potable water. In the 1990s, many unoccupied lands of the city were taken over for housing; however, studies of Cité Soleil suggest that most residents are renters not squatters. Sixty-seven percent of the housing is rented or built on rented sites; however, rents are paid to a class of speculative landlords who acquire land by taking over unoccupied state land or other lands left vacant because of exile, political looting, or theft.

A large percentage of the active labor force is self-employed, working part-time, or working in the services sector—traditionally the largest employment sector in the city. Perhaps 25 percent of workers in Port-au-Prince are employed in domestic service. Reports in the latter half of the 1990s indicate that 35 to 45 percent of actively employed slum residents are engaged in commerce. An estimated 67 percent of the population lives on less than US$25 a month. In the 1980s, a high percentage of residents in the St. Martin slum district borrowed money at interest rates ranging from 15 to 95 percent per month.

Gender Roles and Marriage

Haiti's population is disproportionately young and female. Demographic data suggest a shortage of men in most age-groups older than age ten—a tendency more pronounced in urban than in rural areas. Females are economically active at a young age, including an estimated 10 percent of all girls between the ages of five and nine years old and 33 percent of ten- to fourteen-year-old girls. Rural-urban migrants are far more likely to be women than men. Female heads of household are much more common in urban areas. Official 1996 data indicate that 26 percent of rural households and 46 percent of urban households are headed by women. By some estimates, 50 to 70 percent of households in Port-au-Prince are headed by women responsible for their own livelihood. In any case, Haitian women are the central figures in sustaining families under the prevailing conditions of economic decline and poverty.

In general, Haitian women participate in the labor force to a far greater extent than is the case in other countries in the

Boats arriving for market day in Restel, southern Haiti

region. Women dominate Haiti's internal market system. Some women specialize as market intermediaries, buying and selling produce and serving as links between local markets and regional or urban markets. Women with enough capital to be full-time market traders are often economically independent of men. An estimated 70 percent of women in the services sector are employed as servants, especially in Port-au-Prince. In the assembly industry, more than 50 percent and perhaps as much as 75 percent of factory workers are women, according to various estimates.

In rural areas, men and women play complementary roles. Men assume primary responsibility for farming, especially the heavy field labor. Women commonly assist in weeding and harvesting. Women assume primary responsibility for selling household agricultural produce in local markets. In peasant farming, the income generated through agricultural production belongs to both husband and wife. Women may own or inherit land, but men usually control land transactions and the primary land base for peasant farming. Women are responsible for most household tasks, including cooking, laundry, gathering wood, and carrying water. Haitian families are patriarchal, but women play a key economic role—ultimately the pivotal role in day-to-day operations of the household economy.

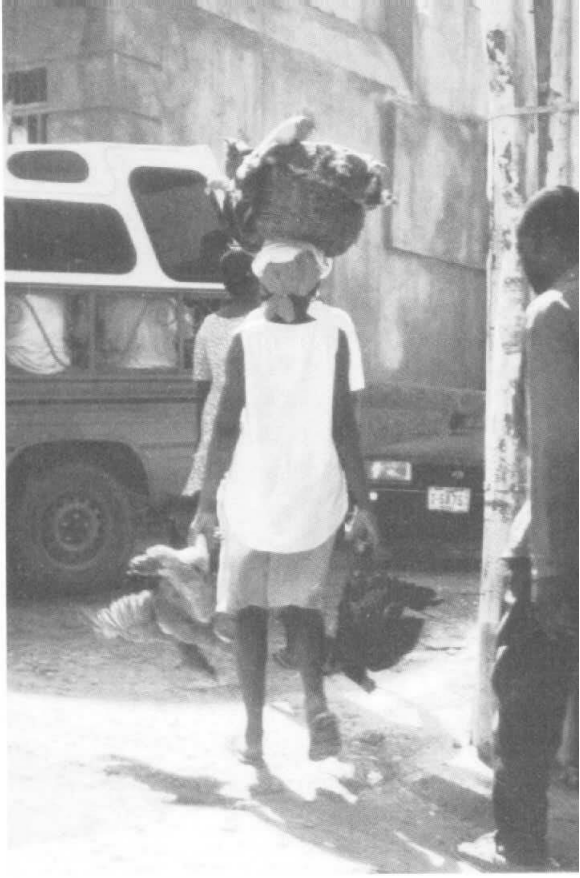
The most common marital relationship is based in *plasaj*, a form of customary marriage. Such relationships are considered normal and proper in peasant families and the urban lower class. Spouses generally have an explicit economic agreement at the beginning of either legal or customary marriage. In rural Haiti, this understanding is negotiated, oftentimes between the families of the two parties to a marital union, and usually requires the husband to provide a house and cultivate at least one plot of land for his new wife.

For the most part, lower-class men and women undertake legal marriage primarily for social prestige. Given the significant expense of weddings, many couples in *plasaj* unions delay legal marriage for many years. In the 1960s, this pattern began to change among Protestant families who belonged to churches that strongly promote legal marriage and provided affordable weddings. It is not unusual for men to have extramarital relationships. Some enter into polygamous marriages by custom, although most men cannot afford the expense. Men and women both value children and contribute to childcare, but women bear most of the burden.

Women's rights are not the equal of men's in a court of law. Women do not inherit from their partners' *plasaj*. In addition, legal sanctions for adultery are far greater for women than for men. Women are also subject to physical abuse. According to one study, 29 percent of women reported that their first sexual experience was non-consensual. A legal reform in 1983 accorded adult rights to married women for the first time, and the constitution of 1987 expanded legal protection for all families whether or not based on legal marriage.

Among the traditional elite, civil and religious marriages are the norm. Divorce was once rare, but has become more acceptable. Upper-class wives have entered the labor force in growing numbers since the 1970s. In general, social trends, rapid urbanization, and out-migration have extracted a severe toll on marital unions and family life across class boundaries.

There have been associations of urban women since the 1930s. A number of women's organizations were established in the 1960s and 1970s. Since 1986 there has been dynamic growth in women's groups, greater media interest in women's issues, and somewhat greater participation of women in politics and government. After the return of constitutional government in 1994, the Aristide administration created a new government ministry devoted to women's issues. The ministry acts



Woman going to market,
Port-au-Prince
Courtesy Anne Greene

primarily as an advocacy and policy-making institution. Women's groups are playing a growing role within grassroots peasant organizations and rural savings and loan associations.

The Language Question

French and Creole

Two languages are spoken in Haiti: Creole and French. The social relationship between these languages is complex. Perhaps nine out of ten Haitians speak only Creole—the everyday language for the entire population. Only about one in twenty is fluent in both French and Creole. Thus, Haiti is neither francophone nor bilingual. Rather, two separate speech communities exist: the monolingual majority and the bilingual middle and upper classes.

All classes value verbal facility. Public speaking plays an important role in political life; the style of a speech is often more important than its content. Repartee enlivens the daily parlance of monolingual peasant and bilingual urbanite alike.

Small groups gather regularly to listen to storytellers. The social status of French and Creole helps define the Haitian social and cultural dilemma.

Language serves as a complicating factor in interactions between members of the elite and the masses. Haitians of all classes take pride in Creole as the national language. Nevertheless, some Haitians regard Creole as a non-language, claiming that "it has no rules" in contrast to the high-status mystique of French. At the same time, most bilingual Haitians harbor ambivalent feelings about French. In Creole the phrase "to speak French" means "to be a hypocrite."

Fluency in French is more important than skin color as an indicator of elite social status. Public use of French tends to exclude the Creole-speaking majority from political discourse, government, legal documents, the judicial system, and intellectual life. Bilingual families use French primarily on formal and public occasions. Creole is a language of open self-expression, informal gatherings, storytelling, slang, and jokes. Haitian French generally lacks these relaxed, informal qualities. Monolingual Creole speakers avoid formal situations requiring the use of French. In certain social contexts, some monolingual Creole speakers use French-sounding phrases to impress their audience. Middle-class bilinguals in Port-au-Prince frequently encounter social situations where French would be appropriate, but imperfect mastery of the language may betray lower-class origins. Because of the defining social role of language, middle-class use of French is often stiff and self-conscious in comparison to its use by upper-class speakers.

The origins of Creole are still debated. Some scholars believe it arose from a pidgin used for communications between French colonists and African slaves. Others believe that Creole came to the colony of Saint-Domingue as a fully developed language that originated as a maritime trade language. Whatever its origins, Creole is linguistically a distinct language, not a French dialect. The Creole lexicon is derived primarily from French, but Creole grammar is not like French, and the two languages are not mutually comprehensible.

There are regional and class variations in Creole. Regional variations include lexical items and sound shifts, but the grammatical structure is consistent throughout the country. Bilingual speakers tend to use French phonemes in their Creole speech. The Port-au-Prince variant has attained special status and influence as the emerging standard form of the language.

The use of French and Creole during the colonial era set speech patterns for the postindependence period. During the colonial period, French was spoken mainly by whites and mulatto freedmen. With the collapse of slavery and the plantation system, French became a status marker distinguishing those who had attained personal freedom before the revolution (*anciens libres*) and those who achieved freedom during the revolution. After independence French became the language of government, commerce, culture, and refinement. Even the most ardent nationalists of the nineteenth century placed little value on Creole.

In the twentieth century, attitudes toward Creole began to change, especially after the United States occupation in 1915. The occupation forced Haitian intellectuals to confront their non-European heritage. A growing black consciousness and nationalism led many Haitians to consider Creole as the nation's "authentic" language. Written Creole first appeared in 1925, and the first Creole newspaper was published in 1943.

In the 1950s, a movement to give Creole official status began to evolve. The constitution of 1957 reaffirmed French as the official language but permitted Creole in certain public functions. In 1969 Creole attained limited legal status; the language could be used in the legislature, the courts, and clubs, but it was not allowed in accredited educational institutions. In 1979 a decree permitted Creole to be used as the language of instruction in classrooms. The constitution of 1983 declared both Creole and French to be national languages but specified that French would be the official language. Creole attained full status as a national language in the constitution of 1987.

Changes in Language Use

Since the 1970s, use of Creole in public has greatly increased even on formal occasions. Conversations at elite dinner tables, once held strictly in French, now switch fluidly between French and Creole mid-sentence. Use of Creole by radio and television media increased rapidly as advertisers learned the value of marketing products in the native tongue of growing numbers of consumers in the Port-au-Prince region. In 1986 Creole newscasts played an important political role in the fall of Jean-Claude Duvalier. Creole was the primary vehicle for political campaigns in the Haitian elections of the 1980s and 1990s. Since the mid-1990s, a rapidly growing network of local and regional radio stations has broadcast entirely in Creole.

English has become far more important than ever before and competes in some respects with French as the high-status language. It is the key language for international trade in an island economy dependent on exports, imports, light industry based on United States contracts, and overseas remittances from the United States. The sheer scale of Haitian emigration to the United States promotes the use of English, as does a smaller stream of return migration. Members of the elite now commonly send their children to study in United States institutions of higher education.

Use of English cuts across class lines. Hundreds of French-speaking elite families spent years of exile in the United States during the Duvalier period and returned to Haiti fluent in English. Most migrants to the United States have settled there permanently; however, there has been significant travel back and forth and a small stream of permanent migration back to Haiti since 1986. Monolingual Creole speakers emigrated to the United States and returned to Haiti as literate speakers of English with little or no knowledge of French. The presence of so many Haitians in the United States has deeply marked the Creole lexicon with new words and expressions. For Creole monolinguals, learning English may seem more practical than learning French, and English poses fewer social and psychological obstacles. English-language television programs are now readily available on Haiti's private cable service and have helped familiarize Haitians with the language. In addition to English, Spanish is a common second or third language in Haiti, largely because of seasonal Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic and some return migration to Haiti of long-term residents.

Creole, Literacy, and Education

Haiti's national language policy has been inconsistent as a result of conflicting political interests. Former governments that claimed to represent the masses hesitated to give Creole and French equal legal status. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, the government approved the use of Creole in education, the National Pedagogic Institute announced an official orthography for Creole, and the Ministry of National Education, Youth, and Sports announced national reforms in education (see Education, this ch.).

The most controversial aspect of these reforms was the introduction of Creole as a medium of instruction in primary

schools. In many rural and urban schools, textbooks were in French, but classroom discussion took place in Creole. The education reform was intended to boost performance through instruction in the native language, but many opposed the use of Creole. Bilingual families believed the use of Creole would erode their linguistic advantage in society by de-emphasizing French. Elements of the upper class opposed Creole instruction since they did not support mass popular education. Many poor people also opposed the reform because they preferred the social status of French rather than Creole. The government eventually declared that students would initially study in Creole and shift to French when they entered the fifth grade. Most private schools simply ignored the curriculum reforms. As of the late 1990s, the education reforms of the late 1970s and early 1980s had never really been implemented as national policy.

In 1996 the Ministry of National Education, Youth, and Sports completed a draft National Education Plan and held a national conference to plan for the future of education in Haiti. The draft plan proposed to expand access to education, especially in rural areas, and to implement curriculum reform in keeping with the education reform of 1982.

Adult literacy programs in Haiti have generally emphasized Creole rather than French. Catholic and Protestant missionaries first promoted adult Creole literacy in the 1930s and 1940s. In the 1960s, the government established adult literacy programs in Creole, and in the mid-1980s the Roman Catholic Church sponsored nationwide literacy programs. In the late 1990s, grassroots peasant organizations continued to sponsor adult literacy training in Creole. Community leaders and development workers use the language in recording the minutes of meetings and project reports. Growing numbers of monolingual speakers regularly use Creole to write letters and personal notes.

There is a small but growing written literature in Creole. Earlier, most Creole texts were produced by church groups or community development organizations. Many of these texts were training materials or church newsletters. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are available in Creole. Publications in Creole now include a broader range of topics, including news, history, sociopolitical analysis, and sophisticated literary works, poetry, and novels by well known authors such as Frank Étienne and Félix Morisseau-Leroy.

Religious Life

Roman Catholicism is the official religion of Haiti, but voodoo may be considered the country's national religion. Most Haitians believe in and practice at least some aspects of voodoo. Most voodooists believe that their religion can coexist with Catholicism. Most Protestants, however, strongly oppose voodoo.

Voodoo

Misconceptions about voodoo have given Haiti a reputation for sorcery and zombies. Popular images of voodoo ignore the religion's basic character as a domestic cult of family spirits intimately linked to sickness, health, and well-being. Adherents of voodoo do not perceive themselves as members of a separate religion; most consider themselves Roman Catholics. In fact, there is no word for the voodoo religion in the Creole language of rural Haiti. The Creole word *vodoun* refers to a kind of dance and in some areas to a category of spirits. Roman Catholics who are active voodooists say that they "serve the spirits," and they do not consider that practice to be inconsistent with Roman Catholicism. Haitians also distinguish between the service of family spirits and the practice of magic and sorcery. The belief system of voodoo revolves around family spirits (often called *loua* or *mistè*) who are inherited through maternal and paternal lines. The *loua* protect their "children" from misfortune. In return, families must "feed" the *loua* through periodic rituals in which food, drink, and other gifts are offered to the spirits. There are two basic kinds of services for the *loua*. The first is held once a year; the second is conducted much less frequently, usually only once a generation. To save money, many poor families wait until they feel a need to restore their relationship with their spirits before they conduct a service. Services are usually held at a sanctuary on family land.

In voodoo, there are many *loua*. Although there is considerable variation among families and regions, there are generally two groups of *loua*: the *rada* and the *petro*. The *rada* spirits are mostly seen as "sweet" *loua*, while the *petro* are seen as "bitter" because they are more demanding of their "children." *Rada* spirits appear to be of African origin while *petro* spirits appear to be Haitian.

Loua are usually anthropomorphic and have distinct identities. They can be good, evil, capricious, or demanding. Because

loua most commonly show their displeasure by making people sick, voodoo is used to diagnose and treat illnesses. *Loua* are not nature spirits, and they do not make crops grow or bring rain. The *loua* of one family have no claim over members of other families, and they cannot protect or harm them. Voodooists are therefore not interested in the *loua* of other families.

Loua appear to family members in dreams, and more dramatically through trances. Many Haitians believe that *loua* are capable of temporarily taking over the bodies of their "children." In voodoo men and women enter trances during which they assume the traits of particular *loua*. People in such a trance feel giddy and usually remember nothing after they return to a normal state of consciousness. Voodooists say that the spirit temporarily replaces the human personality. Possession trances usually occur during rituals such as services for *loua* or a *vodoun* dance in honor of the *loua*. When *loua* appear to entranced people, they may bring warnings or explanations for the causes of illnesses or misfortune. *Loua* often engage the crowd around them through flirtation, jokes, or accusations.

Ancestors (*lèmò*) rank with the family *loua* as the most important spiritual entities in voodoo. Elaborate funeral and mourning rites reflect the important role of the dead. Ornate tombs throughout the countryside also reveal how much attention Haiti gives to its dead. Voodooists believe the dead are capable of forcing their survivors to construct tombs and sell land. In these cases, the dead act like family *loua* that "hold" family members to make them ill or bring other misfortune. The dead also appear in dreams to provide their survivors with advice or warnings.

Voodooists make a strong distinction between inherited family spirits and purchased spirits. They believe that *loua* can be paid to bring good fortune or protection from evil and that dead souls can be paid to attack enemies by making them ill. The "purchase" of spirits in this manner has an instrumental or manipulative character. People view this type of transaction as dangerous and antisocial.

Folk belief includes zombies and witchcraft. Zombies are either spirits or people whose souls have been partially withdrawn from their bodies. Some Haitians resort to *bòkò* specialists in sorcery and magic. Secret societies whose members practice sorcery can also be found in Haiti. Witchcraft and charges of witchcraft are rooted in social relationships, and reflect the real-life conflicts between people. In this sense,

witchcraft is a kind of social leveler and is used to protect personal or property rights.

Witchcraft is also important in diagnosing illness and performing healing rites. Voodoo specialists, male *houngan* and female *mambo*, mediate between humans and spirits through divination and trance. They diagnose illness and reveal the origins of other misfortunes. They can also perform rituals to appease spirits or ancestors or to repel magic. In addition, many voodoo specialists are accomplished herbalists who treat a variety of illnesses.

Unlike Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, voodoo lacks a fixed theology and organized hierarchy. Each specialist develops his or her own reputation for helping people. Former president François Duvalier recruited voodoo specialists to help him control all aspects of Haitian life. Although Duvalier indicated that he retained power through sorcery, voodoo is essentially a decentralized, family-based cult, and Duvalier failed to politicize the religion to any great extent.

Roman Catholicism

Before the Haitian Revolution, the church played a minor role in colonial life. Plantation owners feared that religious education for slaves could undermine their basis for control, and they expelled the education-oriented Jesuits in 1764. Roman Catholicism gained official status in several postindependence Haitian constitutions, but there was no official Roman Catholic presence in the country until the signing of a concordat with the Vatican in 1860. The Vatican had previously refused to recognize the Haitian government. The concordat provided for the appointment of an archbishop in Port-au-Prince, designated dioceses, and established an annual government subsidy for the church. An amendment to the concordat in 1862 assigned the Roman Catholic Church an important role in secular education.

Initially, a small number of priests and members of religious orders ministered primarily to the urban elite. Until the mid-twentieth century, the majority of priests were francophone Europeans, particularly Bretons, who were culturally distant from their rural parishioners. Roman Catholic clergy were generally hostile toward voodoo, and they led two major campaigns against the religion in 1896 and 1941. During these campaigns, the government outlawed voodoo services, and Catholics destroyed voodoo religious objects and persecuted

practitioners. Catholic clergy have not been consistently militant in opposing voodoo, and they have not been successful in eradicating or diminishing the popular religious practices of the rural and urban poor. The clergy have generally directed their energies more toward educating the urban population than eradicating voodoo. Since the 1970s, the use of drum music has become common in Roman Catholic services. Incorporating folk elements into the liturgy, however, did not mean the Roman Catholic Church's attitude toward voodoo had changed.

Nationalists and others came to resent the Roman Catholic Church in the 1940s and 1950s because of its European orientation and alliance with the mulatto elite. François Duvalier opposed the church more than any other Haitian president. Between 1959 and 1961, he expelled the archbishop of Port-au-Prince, the Jesuit order, and numerous priests. In response to these moves, the Vatican excommunicated Duvalier. When relations with the church were restored in 1966, Duvalier prevailed. He succeeded for the first time in having a Haitian named an archbishop and also gained the right to nominate bishops.

The mid-1980s marked a profound change in the church's stance on issues related to peasants and the urban poor. Reflecting this change was the statement by Pope John Paul II during a visit to Haiti in 1983 that "things must change here." Galvanized by the Vatican's concern, Roman Catholic clergy and lay workers called for improved human rights. Lay workers fostered an emerging peasant rights movement. The Roman Catholic radio station, Radio Soleil, played a key role in disseminating news in Creole about government actions during the 1985–86 crisis and encouraged opponents of the Duvalier government. The bishops, particularly in Jérémie and Cap-Haïtien, actively denounced Duvalierist repression and human-rights violations.

In the aftermath of Jean-Claude Duvalier's departure in 1986, the church took a less active role in Haitian politics. The church hierarchy, however, strongly supported the 1987 constitution that granted official status to Creole and guaranteed basic human rights, including the right to practice voodoo. The alliance with the lower classes in the 1980s left the Roman Catholic Church internally divided in the late 1990s. These divisions reflect in part the church hierarchy's ambivalent relationship to the political movement it supported in the 1980s,

including the dramatic role of a former priest, ex-president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who continues to play an active role in Haitian politics (see Aristide Presidency, February 7, 1991–September 30, 1991, and Democracy Restored, 1994–96, ch. 6).

Protestantism

Protestantism has existed in Haiti since the earliest days of the republic. By the mid-nineteenth century, there were small numbers of Protestant missions in the country, principally Baptist, Methodist, and Episcopalian. Protestant churches, mostly from North America, have sent many foreign missions to Haiti. Almost half of Haiti's Protestants are Baptists; pentecostals are the second largest group. A range of Protestant denominations includes Nazarenes, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Salvation Army, Mennonites, and Presbyterians. Protestantism in Haiti has grown rapidly since the 1950s. By some estimates, around 25 percent of the population are Protestant. The number of Protestant adherents, especially pentecostals, continues to grow.

Protestantism appealed initially to the middle and the upper classes, and has long played an important role in education. Protestant churches subsequently focused their attention on the poor and did so far earlier than the Roman Catholic Church. Protestant churches and clergy are found even in remote areas. Having long used Creole rather than French, Protestant clergy promote adult literacy in Creole. They have also established numerous schools and clinics in communities otherwise without access to these much-needed services. Protestant congregations encourage baptisms and marriages and generally perform them free.

Protestantism actively opposes voodoo and for many Haitians provides an alternative to serving voodoo spirits. Most Protestant denominations consider all *loua,* including family spirits, as demons. When people convert to Protestantism, they often come to view the folk religion as diabolical. Some Haitians convert to Protestantism when they reject family spirits that have failed to protect them. Others become Protestants as a way to gain new forms of protection from misfortune.

In his struggle with the Roman Catholic Church, François Duvalier welcomed Protestant missionaries, especially from the United States. Although Protestants tend to compete with the Roman Catholic Church and other Protestant churches for adherents, in 1986 in an unusual show of interreligious solidar-

ity Protestant leaders and radio media joined Roman Catholics in public opposition to the government during the political troubles leading to the fall of Jean-Claude Duvalier.

Education

Haiti's postcolonial leaders announced progressive education policies, and the constitution of 1805 called for free and compulsory primary education. Although policy goals were never fully implemented, early rulers Henry Christophe (1807–20) and Alexandre Pétion (1807–18) constructed schools. By 1820 there were nineteen primary schools and three secondary lycées. The Education Act of 1848 created rural primary schools with a more limited curriculum and established colleges of medicine and law. A comprehensive education system was never developed, however, and the emergent elite who could afford the cost sent their children to school in France. The signing of the concordat with the Vatican in 1860 resulted in the arrival of clerical teachers, further emphasizing the influence of the Roman Catholic Church within Haiti's best-educated social class. The Roman Catholic Church became a state church, and Catholic schools turned into public schools jointly funded by the Haitian government and the Vatican.

The new teachers, mainly French clergy, concentrated on developing the urban elite, especially in the excellent new secondary schools. In the classroom, they promoted an attachment to France and expounded on Haiti's backwardness. In the nineteenth century, few priests ventured to rural areas to educate peasants. In both urban and rural settings, the schools run by clergy followed a classical curriculum emphasizing literature and rote learning. The curriculum changed little over time except during the United States occupation, when authorities established vocational schools. The elite resisted these efforts, and the government restored the old system in 1934.

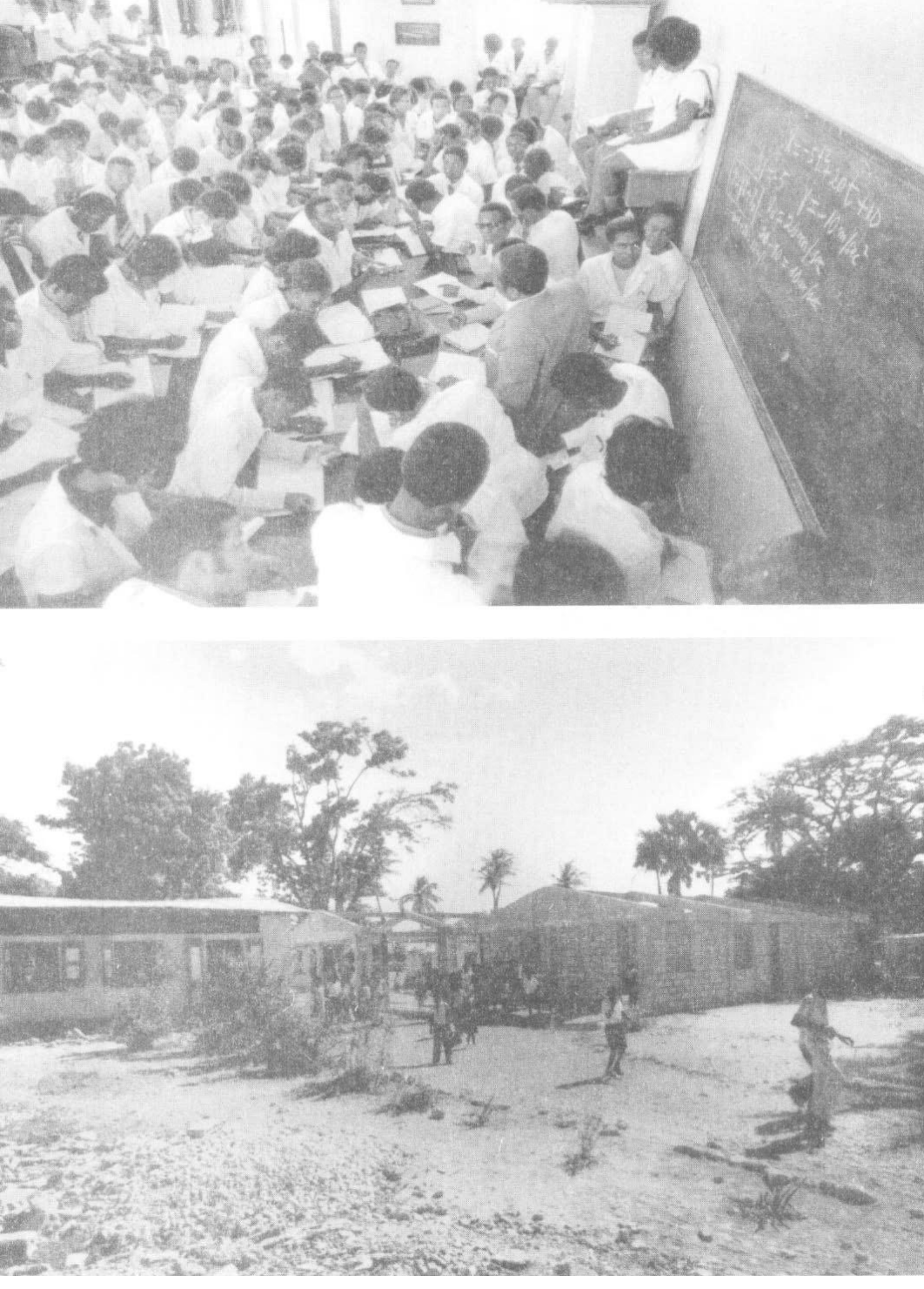
In the 1970s, the Haitian government, with support from the World Bank (see Glossary) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), began to reform its educational system, mostly at the primary level. In 1978 the government unified educational administration for the first time by putting rural schools under the same authority, the Department of National Education, as urban schools.

At the end of the nineteenth century, there were 350 public schools in Haiti. This number increased to 730 schools in 1917; the schools, however, served a mere 11 percent of the country's school-age children. The 1940s saw some expansion of public education. Public schools grew very slowly between 1960 and 1971, a trend that has continued to the present. To compensate, religious communities and private individuals have opened a growing number of schools. Private education represented 20 percent of enrollment in 1959–60 and 57 percent of primary school enrollment in 1979–80. By 1996–97, private schools accounted for more than 75 percent of primary and secondary school enrollment. Therefore, private education is the norm in Haiti today, and public schools cater to less than 10 percent of the school-age population.

More than 67 percent of Haiti's private schools are religious, including 10 percent Roman Catholic and some 59 percent Protestant and nondenominational. There are a number of secular community schools, and a rapidly growing number of schools that operate as commercial enterprises, mostly unlicensed and unmonitored. According to the 1996–97 school census, 42 percent of all primary schools and 64 percent of secondary schools are less than ten years old. An estimated 67 percent of private schools are affiliated with the Haitian Private School Foundation (Fondation Haïtienne d'Enseignement Privé—Fonhep), founded in the late 1980s with support from the United States Agency for International Development.

Access to quality education in Haiti runs parallel to the class-based structure of Haitian society. The best schools serve about 5 percent of total enrollment. These are mostly religious schools in urban areas, such as the venerable Collège St. Louis de Gonzague in Port-au-Prince. The public school system, an increasingly small proportion of all schools, constitutes a middle range in quality. The remaining vast majority of private schools fall into the bottom category, offering poor instruction and limited materials. As a result, the overall quality of education is low.

Parents and families—and most families are poor—bear the primary financial burden of getting an education in Haiti. According to figures from 1996–97, families cover a phenomenal 61 percent of all educational expenditures, compared to 7 percent from the national budget and 32 percent from nongovernmental organizations and large donor agencies.



Classroom, University of Haiti, Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, Port-au-Prince
Partially completed addition to an elementary school
Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank

More than 33 percent of this youthful country is of school age (five to eighteen years); the number is estimated at 2,460,160 for the year 1995. Statistics on enrollment show relatively little evidence of gender discrimination in enrollment; girls make up 48 percent of the enrollment in both primary and secondary schools. Some evidence exists of changing patterns in which families enroll all or nearly all of their children in school rather than sending just one or two as has been reported in the past.

There is a strong urban bias in both the quality of education and in access to schools. Only 23 percent of rural children have access to formal education compared to more than 90 percent of urban children of school age. Furthermore, only 20 percent of educational expenditures goes to rural areas where the vast majority of the population lives. At the secondary school level, 82 percent of schools are located in urban areas and 55 percent of all secondary school enrollment is in the Port-au-Prince area.

For more than a decade, Haiti's protracted political crisis caused sporadic disruption of school operations, especially during the years 1986–88 and 1991–94. Despite this turbulence, school enrollment has grown tremendously overall. Since 1988, primary school enrollment has increased by 39 percent in public schools and 103 percent in private schools. During this same period, secondary school enrollment increased by 198 percent in public schools and 93 percent in private schools; however, only 15 percent of those between the ages of twelve and eighteen were enrolled in school in 1996–97.

This growth in enrollment takes place in a context of high illiteracy and immense demand, especially by the poor majority, who invest heavily in education despite meager resources. Estimates of illiteracy range from 47 to 80 percent. Illiteracy in Haiti is far higher than in other countries in the region, which average 15 percent.

The Ministry of National Education, Youth, and Sports sponsors a program in supplementary education, including literacy training. Most non-formal training in Haiti is offered by nongovernmental organizations and focuses primarily on adult literacy, community organization skills, civic education, public health, and various types of community development.

Primary Schools

The school year begins in October and ends in July, with two-

week vacations at Christmas and Easter. Regular primary education consists of six grades, preceded by two years of kindergarten (*enfantin*). Primary education consists of preparatory, elementary, and intermediate cycles, each of which lasts two years. Promotion between grades depends on final examinations and class marks recorded in trimesters. At the end of the sixth year, students who pass final examinations receive a graduation certificate (*certificat d'études primaires*). After receiving the certificate, students can take examinations for entry into either secondary school (seven-year cycle) or higher-primary school (three-year cycle).

The Ministry of National Education, Youth, and Sports estimates that 64 percent of primary school-age children (six to twelve years old) were enrolled in school in 1996–97, compared to 25 percent in 1971 (ages six to eleven) and 40 percent in 1982. These figures show rapid expansion; however, Haiti still has the lowest rate of primary-school enrollment in the hemisphere. The Ministry of Education estimates a total enrollment of 1,429,280 primary-school students in 1996–97.

According to the National Education Plan, 43 percent of students entering first grade reach fifth grade, and only 38 out of 1,000 children who enter first grade finish secondary school. The overall dropout rate is 17 percent in primary schools and 10 percent in secondary schools. There is a high proportion of overage students, including 75 percent of primary school students, 80 percent of public secondary school, and 90 percent of private secondary school students.

Statistics from 1996–97 report 9,528 primary schools in Haiti and 41,170 primary school teachers (see table 17, Appendix). Private school teachers are generally less qualified than public school teachers. About 33 percent of public school teachers have diplomas from teacher training colleges, but only 5 percent of private school teachers hold such credentials. The tremendous growth of private schools has broadened general access to schooling, but the quality of this expanded education is generally poor. In addition to primary schools, in 1996–97 Haiti had 409 public preschools and 4,949 private preschools (see table 18, Appendix).

Secondary Schools

General secondary education consists of a three-year basic cycle and a four-year upper cycle that leads to a baccalaureate (*baccalauréat*) certificate and possible university matriculation.

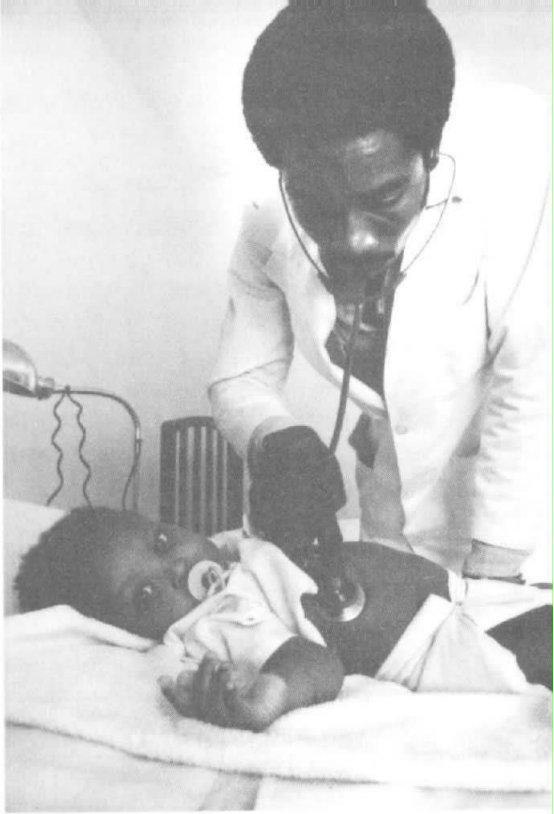
The curriculum emphasizes the classics and the arts to the detriment of the sciences. Despite these limitations, general secondary education is often of high quality. Secondary-school graduates usually qualify for admission to the University of Haiti or institutions of higher learning abroad.

In 1996–97, approximately 15 percent of twelve- to eighteen-year-olds, some 327,980 students, attended 1,170 secondary schools. In addition to general secondary schools, several vocational and business schools exist, most of them in metropolitan Port-au-Prince.

Higher Education

Unlike primary and secondary school, enrollment at the university level is primarily in public schools. Haiti's most important institution of higher education is the University of Haiti. Its origin dates to the 1820s, when colleges of medicine and law were established. In 1942 the various faculties merged into the University of Haiti. Enrollment at the state university has more than doubled since the early 1980s. In 1994–95 there were close to 10,000 students at the University of Haiti. About 25 percent of university students were enrolled in the Faculty of Law and Economics; 33 percent at the National Institute of Administration, Management, and International Studies; and the remainder in agriculture, education, ethnology, applied linguistics, medicine, pharmacy, science, and human sciences. Most professors work part-time, teach several courses at different institutions, and are paid on an hourly basis, leaving little time available for broader contact with students. The University of Haiti is an urban system dispersed into a number of small facilities. It has chronic shortages of books, equipment, and materials.

Since the 1980s, a new trend has developed in higher education, the establishment of small, private, multidisciplinary institutions. Such institutions include the Université Quisqueya in Port-au-Prince with 1,100 students (1995) and the Haitian Adventist University (Université Adventiste d'Haïti) with 500 students (1995). Several other smaller institutions have a combined enrollment under 1,300 (1995), including the Caribbean University (Université Caraïbe), American University of the Caribbean, Haitian Southern Baptist Evangelical Mission University (Université Mission Evangélique Baptiste du Sud d'Haïti), the University of King Christophe (Université du Roi Christophe) (Cap-Haïtien), and the Jean Price Mars University



Doctor examining infant, Miragoâne
Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank

(Université Jean Price Mars). In addition, Haiti has seven private law schools located in provincial towns, including Gonaïves, Les Cayes, Jacmel, Hinche, Fort Liberté, Saint-Marc, and Cap-Haïtien. Total enrollment in law schools in secondary cities is estimated to be around 800 students, including the Law School of Gonaïves with an enrollment of 524 in 1995. Ten small private schools offer training in engineering, and more than two dozen offer specialized training in religion (Catholic and Protestant seminaries), business and commerce, journalism and communications, medical programs, and education.

Health

Fertility and Family Planning

In view of intense population pressure, fertility and family planning are critical issues in Haiti. In the 1990s, studies show an overall decline in Haiti's fertility rate since the 1960s despite rising rates reported for the 1980s. The total fertility rate in 1996 was 4.8 percent—far higher than the regional average of 2.8 percent. In rural Haiti, the rate of fertility is 5.9 children per woman compared to 3.0 in Port-au-Prince. Studies show a

strong correlation among urban residence, literacy, and declining fertility. The reduced fertility rate in urban areas is closely tied to a lower rate of marital unions for urban women, and double the rate of unstable unions for urban women compared to rural women.

Rates of contraceptive use are up since the late 1980s. In the mid-1990s, reported rates of contraceptive use were 13 percent for women and 17 percent for men. Rates of contraceptive use are higher in urban than rural areas. Studies suggest that the demand for family planning services exceeds available programs and that many women lack access to modern contraceptives and birth-control information.

Nutrition and Disease

According to mid-1980s surveys, average daily nutritional consumption was estimated to be 1,788 calories per person, 80 percent of the FAO daily minimum requirements. An estimated 50 percent of Haitians consume less than 75 percent of recommended caloric intake. Cereals and vegetables supply more than 50 percent of food energy, and meat and dairy products supply about 5 percent. One study found that 25 percent of households had consumed no animal products in the preceding week. Millet and starchy roots are key sources of nutrition in low-income households, and bread is tending to replace other cereal foods in urban areas. Peasant households confronting chronic malnutrition are inclined to adopt agricultural strategies that limit risk and ensure short-term survival rather than long-term well-being. Witness the shift away from cereals into higher production of starchy root crops since 1950. Inadequate nutrition is an important factor in Haitian disease. Anemia, for example, is common among children and women.

Infant and child health is poor. Infant mortality in 1996 was seventy-two per 1,000 live births, about double the regional average. Although comparative data show evidence of a decline in infant mortality in recent decades, almost half of all deaths occur within the first five years. Children ages twelve to twenty-four months are at high risk for malnutrition because of increased vulnerability during weaning. The proportion of one-year-old children who die before reaching age five has increased somewhat since the late 1980s, a period that coincides with severe economic and political crisis.

For children ages one to five, the principal causes of death are diarrheal illnesses (37 percent), malnutrition (32 percent),

and acute respiratory illness (25 percent). In this age-group, the mortality rate of children born to women with no education is three times that of children born to women who have completed secondary school. Smaller family size and wider spacing between children correlate with lower child mortality rates.

Acute respiratory infections and diarrheal diseases are the most common illnesses treated at primary health care clinics. Other serious diseases are bronchopneumonia, malaria, syphilis, tetanus, typhoid, tuberculosis, parasitic diseases, meningococcemia, measles, and xerophthalmia. In addition to malnutrition, poor sanitation is a key contributor to poor health indicators. Investment in this area has not kept pace with urban growth. Access to safe water declined in the mid-1990s, going from 60 percent in 1985 to less than 30 percent of urban residents and 25 percent of rural residents. In 1984 less than 20 percent of the population had toilets or latrines. In the 1980s and 1990s, violence has been a major public health problem, especially political violence.

The earliest cases of Kaposi's sarcoma in Haiti, later identified as AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome), were diagnosed in Port-au-Prince in 1979 and the early 1980s. In response, Haitian physicians and scientists formed the Haitian Study Group on Kaposi's Sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections in 1982. Review of the evidence suggests that the virus was then new to Haiti, and that the emergent Haitian epidemic was closely related to an earlier North American epidemic of AIDS. In its early stages, the Haitian epidemic affected men more than women, and tended to be correlated with prostitution and contact with non-Haitians or returned Haitians.

The total number of confirmed cases of AIDS in Haiti is unknown at present because there has been no systematic reporting of AIDS diagnosis since 1992. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) studies were carried out in rural and urban zones in 1986 and 1992. Some monitoring of Red Cross blood transfusion centers has occurred. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) studied the incidence of HIV among Haitian refugees at Guantanamo in 1992. In the absence of systematic study of the broader population of Haiti, the best data on the incidence of HIV and AIDS stem from studies of pregnant women. Such data have been used as the basis for broader population projections.

According to projections for the year 2000, the national incidence of HIV is estimated at 5.4 percent to 7.7 percent (260,000 to 365,000 people), or 8.4 to 12 percent HIV positive in urban areas and 4.1 to 5.8 percent HIV positive in rural areas. The ratio of males to females with AIDS has shifted over time from five to one in 1982 to one to one in the late 1990s. Some 30 percent of children born to infected women contract the virus. AIDS is having a significant impact on the life expectancy of Haitians, estimated at 47.4 to fifty-one years as opposed to sixty-one years without the AIDS effect. Deaths resulting from AIDS are estimated at 125 persons per day. Cumulative deaths from AIDS may rise to 1 million by the year 2010. According to current estimates, Haiti has between 163,000 and 235,000 AIDS orphans. Tuberculosis is the primary cause of death for people who test positive for HIV; 40 to 50 percent of people who are HIV positive also have tuberculosis.

Health Services

Modern health services in Haiti are inadequate, mostly private, and largely urban. Some 660 facilities provide the nation's health services, including public facilities (30 percent), private nonprofit (30 percent), mixed public/private (30 percent), and for-profit facilities (10 percent) (see table 19, Appendix). Nongovernmental organizations provide about 70 percent of the health services in rural areas. There are some 400 dispensaries, 140 health centers providing outpatient services, sixty health centers with beds, and fifty departmental and national hospitals. Since the late 1980s, per capita spending on public health has dropped 50 percent.

In 1994 the country had 773 physicians, 785 nurses, and 1,844 auxiliary nurses; Haiti had a ratio of 1.6 physicians, 1.3 nurses, and 0.4 dentists for every 10,000 inhabitants. Health services are strongly concentrated in the area of the capital. About 52 percent of hospital beds, 73 percent of physicians, and 67 percent of the nation's nurses are concentrated in the region of the capital city. An estimated 50 percent of the population is served by modern health-care facilities. Some 80 percent of women give birth at home. Vaccination coverage affects about 25 percent of the population.

The majority of people use traditional religious practices and healers to diagnose and treat illness. Herbal medicine is widely used, especially in rural areas, although environmental deterioration has made some herbs more difficult to obtain. In

addition to home remedies, herbal specialists (*doktè fey*) provide massage and remedies. Many voodoo specialists and diviners (*houngan*) are also experts in herbal remedies. An estimated 11,000 traditional midwives attend most rural births. Some midwives receive training in modern methods from public and private community health programs. Home remedies and traditional healers provide important services in the absence of modern medical facilities for the majority of rural people.

Welfare

Social security and welfare services are very limited. The government provides pensions to some retired public officials, but there are no guaranteed pensions for civil servants. A social-insurance system for employees of industrial, commercial, and agricultural firms provides pensions at age fifty-five after twenty years of service and compensation for total incapacity after fifteen years of service. A system of work-injury benefits also covers private and public employees for partial or total disability. The Ministry of Social Affairs administers these programs.

The dearth of government social programs forces most Haitians to rely on their families. Individuals without kin or land in rural areas are truly destitute. A large number of international donors and nongovernmental organizations provide public goods and services in the absence of state services. In general, Haitians cultivate personalized networks of kinship and other traditional ties and obligations in order to cope with hardship, scarcity, and the limited availability of public services.

* * *

Classic works on Haiti in English include James G. Leyburn's *The Haitian People*, an excellent social history, especially the 1966 edition with a forward by anthropologist Sidney Mintz; *Life in a Haitian Valley* by Melville J. Herskovits, detailing the life of peasants and townspeople in the 1930s; Harold Courlander's interesting study of Haitian folklore in *The Drum and the Hoe: Life and Lore of the Haitian People*; Alfred Métraux's landmark study, *Voodoo in Haiti*; and the pioneering work of Haitian ethnologist Jean Price-Mars, *Thus Spoke the Uncle (Ainsi parla l'oncle)*, which appeared in 1928 and was published in English in 1983.

The work of David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour, and National Independence in Haiti*, is an insightful history of Haitian political and social ideologies since the early nineteenth century. The volume of essays edited by Charles R. Foster and Albert Valdman, *Haiti—Today and Tomorrow: An Interdisciplinary Study*, continues to be a useful source for various aspects of Haitian society especially the sections devoted to cultural perspectives, language and education, and rural development. Mats Lundahls's *Peasants and Poverty: A Study of Haiti* is an important general work that views Haitian economic decline in terms of overpopulation, environmental degradation, and government passivity. Simon Fass's *Political Economy in Haiti: The Drama of Survival* is the first detailed examination of the urban lower class and remains current.

In the 1990s, several authors have treated contemporary themes. Some examples are physician-anthropologist Paul Farmer, who wrote a social analysis of acquired immune deficiency syndrome, *AIDS and Accusation: Haiti and the Geography of Blame*; Alex Dupuy's *Haiti in the World Economy: Class, Race, and Underdevelopment since 1700*; former United States Ambassador Ernest H. Preeg's *The Haitian Dilemma: A Case Study in Demographics, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy*; and the treatment of Haitian migration and poverty by Anthony Catanese in *Haitians: Migration and Diaspora.*

Recent works also include medical anthropologist Paul Brodwin's *Medicine and Morality in Haiti: The Contest for Healing Power*, examining the role of Haitian religion in defining strategies for dealing with sickness and healing; a theological treatment of Haiti's popular religion by Leslie Desmangles, *The Faces of the Gods: Vodoun and Roman Catholicism in Haiti*; a collection of articles on Haitian religion and artistic expression, *The Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou*, edited by Donald Consentino; and a literary treatment of Haitian history and religion, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, by Joan Dayan.

The best synthesis of information on the Haitian natural environment is still the *Haiti Country Environmental Profile: A Field Study* prepared by Marko Ehrlich and other authors for the United States Agency for International Development. Joel Timyan's recent *Bwa Yo: Important Trees of Haiti* amasses a considerable amount of information on useful tree species of Haiti. The World Bank has published a series of technical papers with current information on Haitian poverty, health, education, and governance, *Haiti: The Challenges of Poverty*

Reduction. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 8. Haiti: The Economy

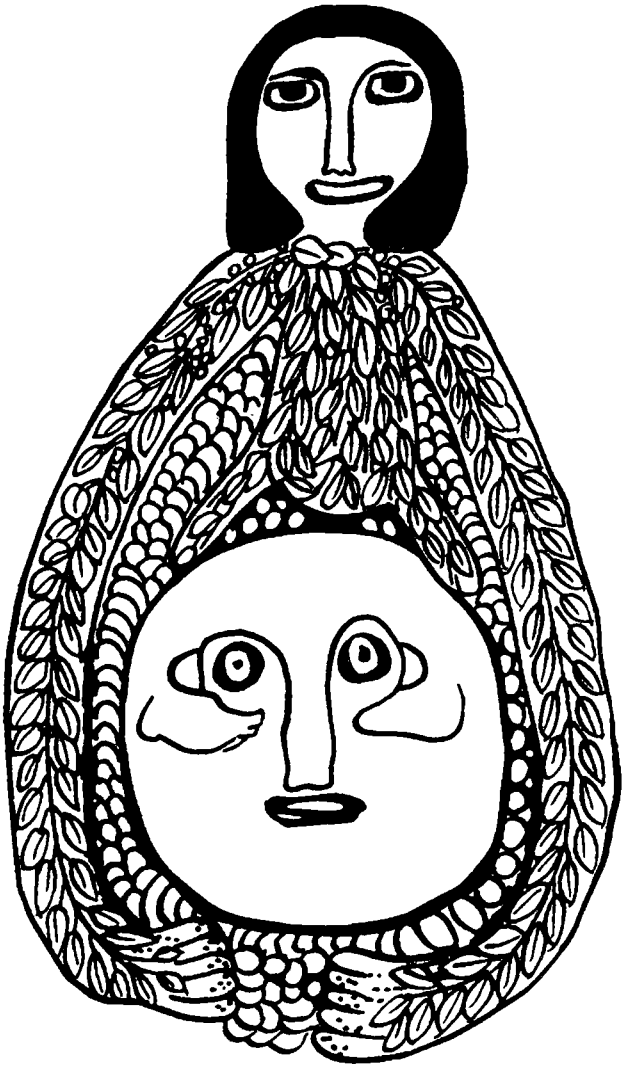


Figure from a painting by Prosper Pierrelouis

ONLY ONE YEAR AFTER Christopher Columbus landed on Hispaniola in 1492, the Spanish established themselves as the dominant European colonial presence on the Caribbean island. With the decline of Spain as a colonial power in the late seventeenth century, however, the French moved in and started their colonization of the western part of Hispaniola, sustaining themselves by curing the meat and tanning the hides of wild game. What is now known as Haiti was used by French buccaneers to harass British and Spanish ships until Spain ceded the western third of the mountainous island to France and agreed to the borders delineated by the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697.

As piracy was gradually suppressed, more and more Frenchmen became planters and made Saint-Domingue—as the French portion of the island was called then—one of the richest colonies of the eighteenth-century French empire. Another factor contributing to this success was the large number of African slaves being imported to work the sugarcane and coffee plantations. But it was this same slave population, led by Toussaint Louverture (also seen as L'Ouverture), Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and Henry Christophe, that revolted in 1791 and gained control of the northern part of Saint-Domingue.

After a bloody, twelve-year rebellion by descendants of African slaves, Haiti became the world's first independent black republic on January 1, 1804. It is also the second oldest republic in the Western Hemisphere, after the United States. It occupies an area about the size of Maryland—27,750 square kilometers—with a population variously estimated at between 7 and 8 million. The World Bank (see Glossary) estimated in mid-1997 that approximately 80 percent of the rural population lives below the poverty level. The majority of these people do not have ready access to safe drinking water, adequate medical care, or sufficient food. With a gross domestic product (GDP—see Glossary) per capita of US$225, in the late 1990s Haiti had the dubious distinction of being the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and the fourteenth poorest nation in the world.

Stages of Development

The Haitian Revolution (1791–1803) devastated agricultural

output. The leadership of the new nation faced the daunting task of reviving economic activity without relying on slavery. After the 1806 assassination of Haiti's first national leader, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Haiti operated under a dual economy, with forced labor on large plantations in the north and small-scale farming in partitioned land in the south. The 1820 unification of the nation entailed the abandonment of plantation agriculture and the establishment of a peasant-based agricultural economy. Although policies of land redistribution and limited social and economic reform improved the lives of the former slaves, the policies also produced a severe and ultimately irreversible decline in agricultural production.

Haiti's slave-based plantation economy, which had made the island France's most lucrative overseas possession, with thousands of profitable large plantations producing massive amounts of sugar, coffee, and cotton, was badly shattered by the dismantling of the large estates. The products produced on these estates accounted for almost 65 percent of French commercial interests abroad and about 40 percent of foreign trade. They also accounted for 60 percent of the world's coffee and 40 percent of the sugar imported by Britain and France. The sharp decline in economic productivity was largely caused by the fact that small landholders lacked the motivation to produce export crops instead of subsistence crops. Although coffee dominated agriculture in the south because of its relative ease of cultivation, the level of production was too low to generate worthwhile quantities of exports. Sugar production, which was primarily in the north, also dropped off, and when sugar was no longer exported in substantial quantities, the cultivation of cane ceased and sugar mills were closed.

Despite the lowered productivity, this system lasted until plantation agriculture was replaced by a peasant-based agriculture economy. The shift took place after the rival regimes of Henry Christophe's kingdom north of the Artibonite River and Alexandre Pétion's republic in the south were unified in 1820 (see Early Years of Independence, 1804–43, ch. 6). Land redistribution policies and limited social and economic reform improved the lot of the peasantry, but these same policies also resulted in a severe and irreversible decline in agricultural production.

In 1825 Haiti's economy was crippled when its leaders agreed to pay France a staggering indemnity of 150 million francs in exchange for recognition. United States recognition

occurred in 1862 during the American Civil War. Meanwhile, social conditions deteriorated seriously, and heightened conflicts between the black majority and the ruling mulattoes produced severe economic disorders and alarming political instability. The ensuing government chaos and the steady decline of the economy led to gradual involvement in Haiti's affairs by European and United States interests. In 1915, concerned about European—especially German—economic competition and political rivalry in the Caribbean, the United States used the opportunity of an internal crisis and numerous government changes during a particularly unstable period of Haiti's history to intervene militarily and occupy the Caribbean island nation. The immediate pretext for the intervention was the execution on July 27 of more than 150 political prisoners, provoking an angry mob to parade the dismembered corpse of the president through the streets of Port-au-Prince. This shocking spectacle prompted the United States to land military forces in Haiti's capital exactly one day later, on July 28, 1915 (see United States Involvement in Haiti, 1915–34, ch. 6).

The nineteen-year occupation ended in 1934, when United States forces were withdrawn at the request of the elected government of Haiti. That the occupation's impact was of a lasting—and significant—nature, was evidenced by the fact that within only six weeks of the landing, Marine Corps commanders were serving as administrators in the provinces. Civilian United States representatives also were in control of Haitian customs and other administrative institutions. However, United States occupation forces aroused sharp resistance and strong nationalist sentiments among black intellectuals, who resented the entrenchment of the mulatto minority in power by what they perceived to be United States connivance.

On the government-to-government front, nevertheless, a treaty passed by the Haitian legislature in November 1915 gave the United States authority to appoint financial advisers and receivers and to run the country's public works and public health programs. Among the positive economic aspects of the occupation were major infrastructure projects carried out by United States forces, occasionally employing forced labor. The forces concentrated on constructing hospitals, schools, roads, bridges, wharves, and lighthouses, and creating clean water facilities and telephone systems. United States financial advisers and receivers also managed to keep Haiti current on its foreign debt payments at a time when default by other borrowers

was common. The administration of the country's fiscal and monetary policies was considered such a success that United States economic advisers continued to manage the national treasury for seven years after the withdrawal of United States troops.

Haiti's mulatto ruling class made a special effort during the following decade to strengthen its position: a new professional military establishment was created and dominated by mulatto officers, and successive governments were run almost totally by mulatto ministers. The mulattoes' entrenchment in power, however, ended in 1946, when president Elie Lescot (1941–45) was overthrown by Dumarsais Estimé (1946–50), a black leader who resented the stranglehold of the mulatto minority on the economy and who aroused nationalist and leftist sentiments among disaffected black intellectuals. The brief hold on power of Estimé and his liberal trade unions was terminated by a military coup on May 10, 1950, amid deteriorating domestic conditions.

The same junta that had taken over from Lescot reinstated itself, and one of its members, Paul E. Magloire, won the country's first direct elections and assumed office in December. He managed to make some infrastructure improvements and to establish a good working relationship with the business community, while allowing labor unions to function. But when he tried to dispute the termination date of his presidential term in 1956, labor leaders and thousands of other Haitians took to the streets and forced him to flee to Jamaica, leaving the task of restoring order to the army.

In 1957, a year of turmoil in Haiti's history during which six different governments held power, another black nationalist and a former labor minister in Estimé's cabinet, François Duvalier, was elected president. One of his declared objectives was to undermine the mulattoes' political influence and limit their economic dominance. A small black middle class emerged, but the country suffered from economic stagnation, domestic political tension, and severe repression under Duvalier. After a seven-year period of dynastic rule, Duvalier extended his tenure in office by amending the constitution in 1964 and declaring himself president for life. All economic and military assistance from the United States was suspended in 1963 after Duvalier expelled the United States ambassador. Aid was not resumed until 1973.

Shortly before his death in April 1971, Duvalier bequeathed power to his nineteen-year-old son, Jean-Claude, also making him president for life. "Baby Doc" continued many of his father's economic development policies. Although these projects were intended in most instances to contribute to his personal enrichment, the country experienced a brief period of economic recovery. But Jean-Claude ultimately failed to provide the leadership necessary for Haiti's sustained development. The country was precipitously plunged into economic stagnation, with famine spreading in rural areas and thousands of "boat people" fleeing to the United States. As popular demands for reform aimed at alleviating the suffering of the vast majority of the population living in poverty were ignored by the government, public discontent kept mounting until the first antigovernment riots in twenty years broke out, and food warehouses were looted. The ensuing and heightened civil disorder, which lasted for months without letup, finally forced Jean-Claude Duvalier into exile in France (arranged by the United States) on February 7, 1986.

Political turmoil following the demise of the twenty-nine-year dictatorship of the Duvaliers caused the economy to decline sharply, with devastating effects on the poorest segments of the population. A constitution providing for an elected two-chamber parliament, as well as an elected president and prime minister, was adopted in 1987. But when Duvalierist gangs attacked polling stations on election day, November 29, the election was canceled. Most major aid donors, including France, Canada, and the United States, suspended their assistance and investment programs in protest. The United States and the Organization of American States (OAS) brought pressure for another election, which occurred in 1988, and resulted in the election of Leslie Manigat, a professor. Manigat, who had been elected in a low turnout, was overthrown four months later, and during the next two years, a series of military leaders played musical chairs.

In elections held in December 1990, a Roman Catholic priest and long-time opponent of the Duvalier regimes, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, won 67 percent of the vote (see Aristide Presidency, February 7, 1991–September 30, 1991, ch. 6). The installation of Haiti's first freely elected president on February 7, 1991, prompted a group of Western countries to promise more than US$400 million in aid. Aristide responded by initiating a reform program aimed at collecting more taxes and

reducing inflation, corruption, and smuggling. When he was overthrown by dissatisfied elements of the military only seven months later, on September 30, 1991, he left his homeland first for Venezuela, then for the United States. Almost immediately upon his departure, Haiti's foreign assets were frozen and an international trade embargo was imposed on all items, with the exception of basic food and medical supplies.

The impact of the trade embargo on the country's economy was very severe. More than 100,000 jobs were lost. Starvation spread through most rural areas and into provincial towns. The flight of approximately 300,000 people from Port-au-Prince to the countryside worsened poverty and health conditions. Thousands of boat people managed to flee the country. Smuggling and evasion of sanctions continued to increase to an alarming degree.

From October 1991 to October 1994, Haiti was ruled by a succession of military-backed regimes of which Raoul Cédras was the principal figure (see Military Coup Overthrows Aristide, October 1991–October 1994, ch. 6). They perpetuated repression and terror, tolerated human rights violations, and sanctioned widespread assassinations in open defiance of the international community's condemnation. The international embargo and suspension of most external aid caused inflation to rise from 15 percent to 50 percent. A dramatic drop in exports and investment also took a toll on the country's industrial productivity and further damaged its already weak infrastructure.

Economic Policies

At the time of the military coup in 1991, Haiti's per capita GDP had fallen steadily by 2 percent a year since 1980. The country's economic stagnation was caused by permissive policies that tolerated massive corruption and inefficiency in the public sector, and by social polarization, mismanagement, and total neglect of human resources. From 1991 to 1994, real GDP fell 30 percent and per capita GDP dropped from US$320 to US$260.

Aristide's return to power on October 15, 1994, after a complex process that included threats of military intervention by the United States and a coalition of multinational forces, raised the hope of economic revival. With the situation gradually stabilizing, a conference of international donors held in Paris in August 1994 produced approximately US$2 billion—including

US$425 million from the United States—in pledges of assistance by 1999 in exchange for a commitment from the Haitian government to adhere to a program of economic reform, trade/tariff liberalization, privatization, macroeconomic stabilization, and decentralization. But implementation of these programs was slowed down by parliamentary bickering, opposition to structural reform, and public dissatisfaction with the lack of progress in the stagnating economy. Negotiating an International Monetary Fund (IMF—see Glossary) offer of US$1 billion in aid, with stringent conditions relating to structural adjustment and privatization of nine major state enterprises, proved to be tortuous. Other attempts at economic and social reform, such as implementing an increase in the minimum wage, also proved to be futile.

Faced with popular demonstrations against the controversial concept of privatization while he was trying to tackle the daunting challenge of rebuilding his country's crumbling physical infrastructure, Aristide decided in October 1995 not to proceed with the privatization of a state-owned cement plant and a flour mill. As a result, no further progress on privatization was possible during his term. Moreover, lack of commitment to civil service reform and other structural reforms tied to loans from the World Bank and IMF derailed the signing of two credit agreements with those international organizations and prompted Aristide's prime minister to resign in October 1995.

Structural Policy

When President René Garcia Préval took office in February 1996, he vowed to implement the structural adjustment program that had been suggested to Aristide. His government initiated a program to reduce expenditures and eliminate thousands of civil service jobs occupied by "ghost employees." Another acute problem was the huge budget deficit caused by central government support for inefficient state-owned enterprises and a bloated public sector in general. Parliament eventually enacted economic reform legislation authorizing the executive branch to proceed with privatization. The new legislation allowed the granting of management contracts for forming joint ventures with private investors through partial divestiture of state-owned enterprises.

The government also put in motion an Emergency Economic Recovery Plan (EERP) whose main objective was to achieve rapid macroeconomic stabilization and to attend to the

most pressing needs in health, nutrition, sanitation, and infrastructure. A medium-term strategy to address the country's urgent needs for rehabilitation and economic development also was supported by an IMF stand-by agreement. Economic performance improved significantly under the EERP: real GDP grew by 4.5 percent in fiscal year (FY—see Glossary) 1994–95 and the twelve-month rate of consumer price increases declined to 30 percent from 40 percent in FY 1993–94. In spite of a stronger than projected revenue performance, however, the government deficit for FY 1994–95 was higher than contemplated. The deficit may have resulted, however, from higher expenditures on a job-training program and larger than anticipated wage adjustments in the priority Ministry of Public Health and Population and Ministry of National Education, Youth, and Sports. As the government started to improve its historically poor record of tax collection and exercise better control over expenditures, it also managed to meet IMF requirements to sign an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) agreement in October 1996.

The government's role in the country's market-oriented economy has been sharply reduced since 1987, when government attempts to control prices or supplies were undercut by contraband or overwhelmed by the great number of retailers. Even when the government sets prices for such basic items as flour and cement, consumer prices are governed by supply and demand. Gasoline prices and utility rates, which are more effectively regulated, are the exception to the rule—perhaps because gasoline prices are required by law to be adjusted to reflect changes in world petroleum prices and exchange rate movements.

Because Haiti's tax system is inefficient, direct taxes amount to only about 13 percent of government receipts. Tax evasion is so rampant and so few taxpayers are registered with the tax bureau (Direction Générale des Impôts—DGI) that the government has made improved revenue collection a top priority. The DGI has a large taxpayers' unit that focuses on identifying and collecting the tax liabilities of the 200 largest taxpayers in the Port-au-Prince area, which are estimated to account for more than 80 percent of potential income tax revenue. Efforts are also being made to identify and register other taxpayers. In addition, the value-added tax has been extended to include sectors previously exempt, such as banking services, agribusiness, and the supply of water and electricity. Collection remains

weak and inefficient, and the DGI is frequently forced to physically collect payments.

Otherwise, the role of the government in the economy continues to be minimal. There are few government subsidies, and goods are traded at market prices. Indeed, the government has made a special effort to reduce tariff and nontariff barriers and has reiterated its commitment to further trade liberalization. During the three years of the international embargo following the military coup of 1991, the country's imports dropped from US$449 million to US$141 million, declining more than 65 percent in 1994 alone. By the late 1990s, the government had eliminated many of the steps formerly involved in importing goods and simplified the import process to such an extent that more than 70 percent of all goods on the Haitian market were imported. Pent-up demand also may have contributed to the steady rise in imports.

Inducing private-sector participation in state-owned enterprises was another policy issue the government had to tackle. A presidential commission of seven government officials and fifteen private-sector representatives was established in 1994 to recommend measures for "modernization of the economic and financial infrastructure" of the country. The law on the modernization of public enterprises, as proposed by the Council for the Modernization of Public Enterprises (Conseil de Modernisation des Entreprises Publiques—CMEP), prompted the government in 1997 to target nine of Haiti's inefficient parastatals for privatization, including the telephone company (Télécommunications d'Haïti—Teleco), electric company (Électricité d'Haïti—EdH), airport authority, and two commercial banks.

The original aim was to complete the privatization process by March 1998. However, by mid-1998, even such a small company as Cimenterie d'Haïti, which was to be one of the first to be privatized, had not been sold. Claims by about 42,000 state employees and some members of the governing Lavalas coalition that the government's plan was tantamount to "putting the country up for sale" seemed to send another signal to slow down implementation of the privatization process.

In mid-1999, hundreds of striking longshoremen shut down the Haitian capital's port for three days running in protest against the government's plan to put the port authority up for sale by the end of 1999. They also accused the port director of mismanagement and demanded an audit of his accounts. The airport union membership, who feared they would lose their

jobs, accused the airport authority director of incompetence and demanded his resignation. Most of the street demonstrations that followed, which involved setting fire to tire barricades—and cost millions of dollars in lost business and customs duties—were led by supporters of former President Aristide, who reportedly remains opposed to the government's privatization program.

Despite these protests, Prime Minister Jacques Édouard Alexis decided in mid-1999 to resume the privatization process after a two-year hiatus. He transferred majority ownership of the Cimenterie d'Haïti to private hands for US$15 million. The cement company was the second enterprise to be privatized. The first was La Minoterie flour mill, which was turned over to private ownership in September 1997. It had been closed, and hundreds of its workers, who were not hired back when it reopened, blocked the entrance to the mill with flaming tires and demanded compensation for their toil and lost income.

Lack of progress on the privatization front was only one of the many concerns of the international community trying to help Haiti. The international community, including the United States, repeatedly voiced impatience with the slow pace of both economic and political reforms. United States displeasure at Haiti's sluggish pace of reform was bluntly expressed by then-Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Larry Summers at the annual meeting of the Inter-American Development Bank in March 1998. Former chairman of the United States National Security Council, Anthony Lake, also visited the island nation several times in 1998, trying to energize Haitian reform efforts. On the congressional side, many Republican members showed no enthusiasm for approving administration requests for more assistance to Haiti. On the contrary, most members strongly criticized the lack of progress on judicial reform, the continuing corruption of the police force, and the increasing amounts of drugs entering the United States through Haiti.

Fiscal Policy

The banks mentioned on the privatization list did not include the Bank of the Republic of Haiti (Banque de la République d'Haïti—BRH), which was founded in 1880 as a public-sector institution and which started functioning as a central bank in 1934, when it became known as the National Republic Bank of Haiti (hereafter Central Bank). The other two state-owned commercial banks are the National Credit

Bank (Banque Nationale de Crédit) and the Haitian People's Bank (Banque Populaire Haïtienne). Other commercial banks operating in Port-au-Prince include two from the United States (Citibank and First National Bank of Boston), one Canadian (Bank of Nova Scotia), and France's National Bank of Paris (Banque Nationale de Paris). After a new banking law issued in 1979 empowered the Central Bank with monetary-management responsibilities, it became involved in controlling credit, setting interest rates, assessing reserve ratios, restraining inflation, and issuing Haiti's national currency, the gourde (G; for value of the gourde—see Glossary).

The gourde has been pegged to the United States dollar since 1919 at the rate of five gourdes to the dollar. The value of this fixed exchange remained strong for decades, fluctuating only with the movement of the dollar. No black market existed for gourdes until the early 1980s, when unusually high inflation and large budget deficits eroded the value of the gourde and brought premiums of up to 25 percent for black-market transactions. The political crises of the early 1990s and the ensuing uncertainty, however, exerted heavy downward pressure on the gourde, despite the Central Bank's efforts to halt the decline. The effects of the international embargo and the sharp drop in government revenues reduced the value of the currency by about 80 percent by 1994. In the year after Aristide's return in October 1994, the gourde fluctuated between G14 and G15.5 to US$1. Although the Central Bank pumped more than US$37 million into the foreign exchange market in 1996, the gourde fell from 15 gourdes to the United States dollar in September of that year to 16.9 gourdes to the United States dollar in August 1997. The effects of the depreciation, together with rising food prices, raised the inflation rate from 15.6 percent in December 1996 to 17.2 percent in July 1997.

In an effort to reduce the rate of inflation and to protect the stability of the gourde without trying to fix the nominal exchange rate, the government decided to embark on a stringent fiscal policy and an aggressive tax collection program. The government took a number of measures relating to the fiscal program for FY 1996–97. To cite one example: an important piece of legislation provided for broadening the base of the sales tax and unifying its rates, reducing tax evasion among larger companies, minimizing the number of tax and customs exemptions, and introducing new mechanisms to help control public expenditures. Although statistical data in Haiti are, in

general, of poor quality, there are reliable Central Bank statistics showing that tax revenues rose by 58 percent from G2.25 billion in October 1996 to G3.54 billion in June 1997. (The ESAF agreement signed in October 1996 calls for enacting a new law to strengthen the role and effectiveness of the Haitian Statistical Institute and the Central Bank.)

The constantly diminishing external budgetary support—especially with US$150 million being frozen pending resolution of political squabbles—made the Central Bank resort to a tight monetary policy to counteract the destabilizing effect of fiscal imbalances caused by high-interest bonds issued earlier. The salutary outcome was a 3.8 percent drop in the inflation rate to 11.8 percent by mid-1998 (from 15.6 percent the previous year). The IMF anticipated a further drop to 9 percent in 1999.

Restructuring the country's tax system to increase government revenues and reduce reliance on external aid is only one ingredient in the government's fiscal reform agenda. A second key element is that the growth in current expenditures be consistent with available domestic and external resources and be allocated mainly to priority sector programs. Realizing that the unusually high level of external support for the budget in the immediate post-crisis period of the early 1990s could not be expected to be sustained indefinitely, the government feels that its budgetary savings would need to be increased considerably from their level of -3.4 percent of GDP in FY 1995–96. Third, the country's civil service system needs to be restructured, not only to improve the efficiency of the public administration but also to reduce its burden on the budget. Civil service reform legislation proposing a 16 percent reduction of 7,000 jobs from a total of 42,000 jobs was approved at the end of 1996, but political resistance has stalled implementation. (The IMF estimate of the needed reduction in civil service jobs goes as high as 22 percent: "In FY 1996/97 government employment will be reduced by at least 7,500 persons, plus 3,500 'ghost workers,' from a total of some 50,000 by means of attrition, voluntary separation, and early retirement.") Fourth, public investment, which dropped to negligible levels during the army's three-year rule in the early 1990s, needs to be raised to a level high enough to rebuild the infrastructure and encourage private investment. International financial institution estimates suggest that public investment would need to total about 6 to 7 percent of GDP.

Another problem facing the government in FY 1996–97 was the proliferation over the years of tax and customs duty exemptions given nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other humanitarian and religious organizations. Although recognizing the valuable contributions of these organizations in addressing the country's dire social needs, tax authorities have expressed concern about the effect of the many exemptions on their revenue. To ascertain that requests for tax exemption from these organizations are legitimate and that exempt items are not traded commercially, tax authorities have instituted a recertification procedure to ensure that only bona fide organizations are granted exemptions. To ensure the transparency of the process, the Ministry of Economy and Finance has been publishing monthly information on exemptions and the resultant loss of revenue.

Finance

All these revenue-generating programs notwithstanding, as of 1999 Haiti's budget had failed to reverse a historical trend of very large deficits—even after adding external assistance as a source of revenue. As far back as the Duvalier era, public finances were openly used for the benefit of the president and his family and friends, without regard to their negative impact on the economy. In the early 1980s, when Jean-Claude Duvalier expanded public-sector investments in poorly managed flour mills, sugar factories, and oil processing plants, these investment decisions were based mainly on how much they would benefit him and his entourage. Such gross misallocations of public finances had a negative impact on the flow of external assistance, which dropped further after the November 1987 election massacre (see Post-Duvalier Era, 1986–90, ch. 6). As a result, the government was forced to try to curtail deficit spending and to reduce further its meager allocations for economic and social development. But the continuing need to finance large public-sector deficits and to allocate more resources to military spending forced the government to increase its domestic borrowing, thereby adding to the deficit.

The revenue-deficit picture in the 1990s may have been caused by a different set of circumstances, but it did not differ significantly. The budget process remained cumbersome and continued to suffer from poor management and lack of effective controls. Expenditure control procedures were constantly being circumvented through the use of at least 250 discretion-

ary ministerial spending accounts. In addition, the lack of oversight controls in the form of audits and accountability was bound to result in the misappropriation and misallocation of public funds. Although the government had agreed to the IMF structural adjustment program in 1996, Haiti lacked the cash to implement the program. In view of Haiti's bad financial situation, the United States advanced it US$10 million in budget support in 1997. Lack of funding from other foreign sources, as well as rapidly growing public expenditures, added considerably to the budget deficit and compelled Haitian authorities to resort to Central Bank funding. By the end of FY 1995–96, internal debt was G9.2 billion, about 21 percent of GDP.

In early 1996 at the behest of international financial institutions, the Haitian government instituted tight controls over the budget, trying to turn it into a policy instrument. The budget was under the jurisdiction of two different ministries and was not treated as a consolidated central government budget. The Ministry of Economy and Finance was charged with preparing the operational budget, relying on domestic resources. However, investment outlays financed from external sources were not included in the operational budget but rather were the responsibility of the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation. Hence, in order to verify all expenditures, especially those from the various ministries' discretionary accounts (*comptes courants*), the government introduced strict expenditure control procedures. The verification procedure led to the closing of two-thirds of such accounts. Another policy decision—to freeze for three years the government wage bill calling for pay-scale raises—was designed to divert more funds to higher priority social programs. The government also started to seriously implement a fiscal reform agenda that would further restructure the tax administration system and simplify it in such a way as not only to raise tax revenues substantially but also to reduce reliance on external donors.

In an effort to raise the revenue-to-GDP ratio, the government decided to reduce exemptions from taxes and customs duties. By the end of 1996, the rates of the sales tax (*taxe sur le chiffre d'affaires*—TCA) were unified at 10 percent, and the base of this tax was extended to cover most goods. (According to IMF estimates, TCA-related measures would amount to almost 1 percent of GDP annually.) Other taxes and fees were raised, including airport taxes, car registration fees, and passport fees. The government failed in 1998 to introduce scheduled legisla-

tion to tighten the eligibility criteria for fiscal incentives under the investment code. Nor did action occur with regard to initiating a plan to energize provincial revenue collections. The intent was not only to broaden the tax base but also to strengthen public-service delivery in the interior of the country outside Port-au-Prince, which had been long neglected. Strengthening local administrations and expanding public services beyond the capital and a few other major urban areas remained an objective of the government's decentralization efforts. Problems related to relocating personnel to rural areas and scarcity of resources generated locally, however, continued to present almost insurmountable obstacles as late as 1999.

Balance of Payments

Foreign trade as such has not constituted a major factor in the Haitian economy in recent decades. However, foreign trade deficits represent a significant element in Haiti's balance of payments and will be considered in that context here. Haiti has traditionally registered substantial trade deficits, a trend that dates back to the mid-1960s, lasted through the 1980s, and has continued into the late 1990s. The deficits were partially offset by generous remittances from the many Haitians working abroad and by official aid. But such inflows tend to dry up sporadically, as was the case after the 1987 election violence and in the wake of the 1991 military coup and the ensuing international trade embargo. During the three-year embargo, the public deficit was financed mainly by Central Bank credit and the accumulation of arrears. Net Central Bank credit to the public sector rose by an average of 65 percent annually from 1992 to 1994. According to data from the IMF, Haitian exports in 1997 were valued at 1,995 million gourdes, whereas imports cost 10,792 million gourdes, indicating a very unfavorable trade balance (see table 20, Appendix).

Haiti's balance of payments is particularly sensitive to changes in the rate of trade development, import prices, and the rate of export growth—more so than many other countries with similar economic problems. For example, if the country's export growth slows as a result of a decline in a major sector such as the assembly industry, the overall balance of payments would register a significant deficit. Similarly, if the terms of trade deteriorate one year because of lower prices for an export such as coffee and higher petroleum product prices, the overall balance of payments would be weaker. This scenario

played itself out in FY 1995–96 when the terms of trade deteriorated as a result of higher food and oil prices, adversely affecting the balance of payments.

The external current account deficit, which was estimated to be 19 percent of GDP in FY 1994–95, is projected to drop gradually until it reaches 10 percent of GDP by FY 1999–2000, a rate below its 1990 level. An anticipated sharp rise in exports from the light manufacturing assembly sector is expected to push total export receipts from their level of 4.2 percent of GDP in FY 1995–96 to 7.6 percent of GDP by FY 1998–99. Following a reversal of the initial surge related to restocking and rehabilitation needs in the wake of lifting the embargo, imports increased considerably in FY 1996–97, returning to 1990 levels.

External Debt

Haiti's foreign debt has fluctuated little over the years and has been relatively manageable, especially when compared to that of neighboring countries. The country's total external debt was about US$726 million in 1991, almost US$770 million in 1993, and US$778 million in 1995 (see table 21, Appendix). Haiti's sluggish economy may be the reason why most of Haiti's debt has been in the form of concessional loans—favorable interest rates and long grace periods. Private loans have accounted for a negligible percentage of the debt. However, debt-service payments, as a percentage of exports, have been rather high and continued to be so in the late 1990s, depending on the performance of the economy.

When Aristide was elected in 1990, most bilateral official creditors decided to cancel Haiti's debts. But three years after the military coup, the debt-service payments were so far behind that arrears to multilateral commercial lenders alone amounted to more than US$82 million. At the end of 1994, after the restoration of the legitimate government, the United States and nine other countries paid off the arrears. In May 1995, Haiti reached a debt rescheduling agreement with its Paris Club (see Glossary) creditors on concessional terms, whereby the Paris Club canceled two-thirds of Haiti's debt, about US$75 million, and rescheduled the other third over twenty-three years.

Haiti's external debt stood at 34 percent of GDP in FY 1995–96 and was projected to rise to about 40 percent of GDP in FY 1998–99. However, since most of the debt is to multinational institutions mainly on concessional terms and future external

Unloading flour, Port-au-Prince harbor
Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank
Section of National Highway Two near Miragoâne
Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank

assistance is expected to be provided as grants or concessional loans, the country's debt-service payments were projected to drop from 26 percent of exports of goods and services in FY 1995–96 to 18 percent in FY 1998–99 and to about 13 percent in FY 1999–2000 (see table 22, Appendix).

Foreign Aid

Haiti's history of chronic political instability, ill-advised economic policy, and constant environmental deterioration, as well as its lack of good arable land, has made it heavily dependent on external assistance. Because the country's economic problems have been caused by a succession of unstable regimes, international assistance has—not surprisingly—paralleled the political situation. Although Haiti had received a considerable amount of development aid until 1991, external contributions dropped dramatically after the September coup of that year, when almost all economic aid ceased, except for limited shipments of humanitarian items (see table 23, Appendix).

The amount of humanitarian assistance rose from a total of US$65 million in 1992 to almost US$110 million for two years running. The United States contribution accounted for 66 percent of the total; the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) provided 13 percent each. Canada contributed about 4 percent, and France provided approximately 2 percent.

After the Aristide administration returned to power in 1994, most donors resumed aid to Haiti; 45 percent of the country's operating budget for 1994–95 came from foreign sources. The World Bank provided an emergency loan of US$400 million. At a meeting held in Paris in January 1995, fourteen countries and nineteen multinational institutions pledged a US$1.2 billion aid package over an eighteen-month period. The international community also promised US$500 million of assistance annually through the year 2000.

Because of its keen interest in shoring up Haiti's fragile stability, the United States has been the largest single bilateral donor, providing US$100 million in aid in FY 1995 and US$135 million in FY 1996. The World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the EU are the major multilateral donors. In addition to financial support, United States efforts to strengthen the Haitian economy have included restarting the Peace Corps program in 1996 (the Corps had first entered

Haiti in 1983), and establishing the United States-Haitian Business Development Council and an Overseas Private Investment Corporation commercial loan program.

Haiti's share of the FY 1998 appropriations for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) totaled US$140 million, consisting of US$72 million in Economic Support Funds, US$26 million in development assistance, and US$42 million in Public Law–480 (see Glossary) food aid. Channeled through NGOs to circumvent public-sector inefficiencies and vagaries, these funds are used to provide humanitarian aid, increase agricultural productivity, promote health projects, strengthen private-sector economic growth, redirect relief efforts toward developmental activities, and help Haiti pay its arrears to international institutions. Humanitarian assistance from NGOs has included food for approximately 1 million Haitians and help in upgrading the planning and management capabilities of the Ministry of Public Health and Population. Over and above sponsoring vaccination programs, the United States has financed basic health services for more than 2 million people.

As the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti has been the recipient of generous economic assistance from numerous multilateral and bilateral development agencies and financial institutions. However, historically, the United States has been the major aid source. United States aid, which began in 1944, three years after the last United States economic advisers of the occupation left Haiti, has, however, been punctuated by interruptions dictated by political developments. Because President John F. Kennedy terminated all but humanitarian aid to the François Duvalier government in 1963, Haiti did not participate in the Alliance for Progress development program for Latin America. United States assistance resumed ten years later during Jean-Claude Duvalier's regime, and it continued until January 1986, a month before the end of the Duvalier era. United States aid was restored in unprecedented amounts three weeks after Duvalier's exile, only to be suspended again when President Ronald Reagan stopped nonhumanitarian aid flows after the electoral violence of November 1987. Development assistance resumed in the late 1980s but was terminated after the 1991 military coup. The United States joined other major donors in resuming aid in 1994, when a constitutional government returned to Haiti.

As the only country that has maintained a resident aid mission in Haiti since the 1970s, the United States has made significant contributions to the country's economy through USAID. USAID's efforts have concentrated on such programs as nutrition, family planning, watershed management, agro-forestry, and improving rural conditions through soil conversion. USAID also has pursued narcotics interdiction, migration control, and political reform. United States assistance between 1982 and 1987 accounted for 35 percent of Haiti's total external aid and 60 percent of its bilateral aid.

USAID was credited in 1982 with setting a new trend of distributing larger amounts of its assistance through NGOs rather than through Haitian ministries. By the late 1980s, other donors followed suit, and more and more humanitarian aid was distributed through a network of NGOs. When Haitian officials complained about lack of coordination among these organizations, USAID financed the creation of the Haitian Association of Voluntary Agencies (HAVA), an umbrella NGO whose function is to coordinate all aspects of humanitarian aid and whose membership exceeds 100. As a result, in the late 1990s most aid continued to be distributed through NGOs.

Labor

Haiti's labor force was estimated to be 2.94 million in 1992, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. About two-thirds of the workers are engaged in agriculture, despite the shift to services and manufacturing over the past several decades. More than two-thirds of Haitians are still not part of the formal economy, however, and continue to live by subsistence farming. Assembly plants, most of which are concentrated in the Port-au-Prince area, provide the bulk of manufacturing employment. Approximately 150,000 manufacturing jobs were lost after the military coup of 1991. Although some thirty plants were reopened after Aristide's return to power in 1994, unemployment in the late 1990s was estimated at between 60 percent and 70 percent, compared with 49 percent in the late 1980s. As with other statistics, unemployment figures vary, depending on the methodologies used in gathering such data.

Figures vary widely as to the numbers of Haitians living and working in the Dominican Republic (see Haitians, ch. 2). Two United States analysts believe there were some 500,000 Haitians and Dominico-Haitians (Dominicans of Haitian ancestry)

Planting beans at Gallette Chambon in the Cul-de-Sac Plain Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank

in the Dominican Republic in 1995. Historically, more than 20,000 Haitians have worked annually in the Dominican sugarcane fields during the harvesting season, although the number of such workers has decreased in recent years. But in bad times, greater numbers of indigent Haitians travel to the Dominican Republic, imposing a heavy burden on their neighbor's social services. For this reason, periods of political tension between the two countries are occasionally punctuated by calls for more stringent immigration regulations; these occasions usually result in the forced expulsion of many undocumented Haitians from the Dominican Republic. Most of those expelled manage to return fairly quickly, however, mainly because of the lack of adequate controls on both sides of the border.

In fairness it should be noted that the Haitian community resident in the Dominican Republic makes significant contributions to the Dominican economy by performing many menial jobs that the average Dominican worker tends to shun. Indeed, the ambivalence of Dominicans toward their Haitian neighbors is seen in the stance of some senators representing Dominican frontier provinces who have expressed concern over a possible avalanche of illegal Haitian immigration (triggered by dire socioeconomic conditions); they have called on the international community to promote social and economic development in Haiti instead of concentrating only on institutionalizing democratic rule. Other Dominicans have gone so far as to suggest that their country might be wise to encourage more Dominican investment in Haiti. After all, the Dominican Republic's exports to Haiti exceed US$30 million a year, while its imports from Haiti fall short of US$1 million; moreover, Haiti buys 77 percent of all Dominican exports to the Caribbean.

Haiti established a labor code in 1961, but revised it in 1984 to bring legislation more in line with standards set by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Conformity with ILO guidelines was a prerequisite for certification under the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI—see Glossary) enacted by the United States Congress in 1983. The country's most fundamental labor law, the minimum wage, is the most controversial. Low wage rates have attracted foreign assembly operations. In 1989 the average minimum wage stood at the equivalent of US$3 a day, with small variations for different types of assembly work. The minimum wage in the late 1980s was below the 1970 level in real terms, but assembly manufacturers and government

officials refused to increase wages because they needed to remain competitive with other Caribbean countries. Although labor laws include an array of provisions protecting workers, the government does not enforce many of these provisions.

Haiti's constitution and its labor code guarantee the right of association and provide workers the right to form unions without prior government authorization. However, the law requires unions to register with the Ministry of Social Affairs within sixty days of their formation. Six labor federations represent about 5 percent of the total work force. The labor code protects trade union organizing activities and stipulates fines for those who interfere with this right. Organized labor activity is concentrated in the Port-au-Prince area, in state-owned public enterprises, the civil service, and the assembly sector. The high unemployment rate and anti-union sentiment among some factory workers have limited the success of union organizing efforts, however. Collective bargaining is nearly nonexistent, especially in the private sector, where employers can generally set wages unilaterally.

The minimum employment age in all sectors is fifteen years; fierce adult competition for jobs ensures that child labor is not a factor in the industrial sector. However, as in other developing countries, rural families in Haiti often rely on their children's contribution of labor to subsistence agriculture, and in urban environments children under the age of fifteen usually work at informal-sector jobs to supplement family income. Despite the labor code's prohibition of forced or compulsory labor, some children continue to be subjected to unremunerated labor as domestic servants. This situation appears to be true primarily for rural families. Because such families are often too large for adult members to support all family members, children are sometimes sent to work at informal-sector jobs to supplement family income. The ILO has criticized as inadequate the Ministry of Social Affairs' enforcement of child labor laws.

Agriculture

Much of Haiti's countryside is mountainous, and its soil fertility is low, mostly because of erosion and drought but partly because of population density. Perhaps 28 percent of the land is considered arable, but population pressure puts 48 percent of it under cultivation, mostly in small plots. Of a total arable area estimated at 771,500 hectares, about 142,000 hectares are

deemed suitable for irrigation, but only some 40,000 hectares are served by irrigation systems. Indeed, irrigation is rare, except in the main valley, the Artibonite, and the Port-au-Prince and Les Cayes plains in the southwest.

Nevertheless, agriculture remains the mainstay of the economy and continues to account for two-thirds of the total work force, followed by commerce and manufacturing. The significance of the agricultural sector in the 1980s and 1990s differed, however, from that in the 1950s, when it employed 80 percent of the labor force, represented 50 percent of GDP, and contributed 90 percent of exports. Agriculture in the mid-1980s accounted for 35 percent of GDP and for 24 percent of exports, compared with about 30 percent of GDP and less than 10 percent of exports in the late 1990s. In the late 1990s, the sector barely produced 20 percent of the country's domestic food requirements. The constantly deteriorating rural infrastructure, continuing fragmentation of land holdings, primitive farming techniques, migration out of rural areas, insecure land tenure, and deforestation as well as other ecological and natural disasters are among the problems that have taken a toll on the sector. Population pressure also has caused a shift from the production of cash crops such as coffee and sugar to the production of food crops such as rice and beans. Nevertheless, food production has not kept pace with the increase in population, and the situation has resulted in higher food-importing bills. Malnutrition is another problem facing the country. Malnutrition was so widespread in 1994 that relief organizations were feeding about 700,000 people daily.

The agriculture sector suffered a more devastating blow than originally thought when Hurricane Georges hit the island on September 22–23, 1998. The government estimated the number of deaths at no fewer than 400 and the cost of damage at more than US$300 million. Most of the losses were incurred through the destruction of crops and the indirect damage to supporting infrastructure, with the main problem being flooding in flat and low-lying areas. Irrigation and drainage systems of the important Artibonite area also were damaged, adversely affecting future production. Almost 70 percent of the second rice crop in this largest rice-growing valley was destroyed.

The United States committed US$12 million for the emergency reconstruction effort, and the IMF agreed to offer a US$20 million loan. The IDB could have offered additional badly needed disaster relief, but the lack of a prime minister

Cleaning drinkers at a chicken farm
Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank

and the refusal of parliament to ratify foreign loans prevented the IDB from disbursing any loans. The only silver lining in Hurricane Georges was that the reconstruction drive in its wake was expected to stimulate the island's construction sector.

Land Tenure

During the colonial period, runaway slaves, or maroons (*marrons*), had already established themselves as independent agriculturists in remote areas. After 1804 ex-slaves expanded this pattern and laid informal claim to unoccupied land as small peasant farmers. The newly independent Haitian state formally confiscated French colonial holdings and asserted state ownership of all unclaimed lands. Early rulers of Haiti distributed land to thousands of newly independent citizens, ex-soldiers, and former officers in the revolutionary army. Because of these early patterns of land reform and dispersion, landholdings in Haiti today are significantly more egalitarian than elsewhere in the Latin American region.

National census data on land distribution in 1950 and 1971 are unreliable and out of date. USAID has played a key role in generating more current information, including the Agricultural Development Support survey of 1,307,000 parcels (1988), a national survey of 5,000 households under the Interim Food Security Information System (1995), and a national baseline

survey of 4,026 households in 1994–96, including data on land tenure. The latter survey noted that 90 percent of farmers surveyed have access to land, they own two-thirds of the land they farm, average farm size is 1.7 hectares, and farms average 3.7 dispersed plots. The largest 1 percent of farms in the survey occupy 10 percent of the land.

In addition to private land, Haiti has large state holdings farmed by tenant farmers and squatters. By some estimates, there are around 35,000 leaseholders on state lands, including large and small holdings. Small farmers undertake most agricultural activity on state lands. Such activity amounts to perhaps 5 percent of rural households and 10 percent of all agricultural land. Estimates of state land vary from 100,000 to 300,000 hectares; there are, however, no reliable inventories of state land.

Community studies and surveys find that landholding in rural Haiti has the following characteristics. Private property is the rule. Peasant smallholdings predominate over large holdings and are made up of several distinct parcels. The vast majority of peasant farmers are owner-operators of their own land. Most peasant farmers are both landlords and tenants, and inherited land is divided equally among all children of the deceased. Land is readily bought and sold without updating title. Formal entitlement to land is commonly avoided or postponed, and land is most often held on the basis of customary arrangements.

There is immense pressure on the land as an agricultural resource. Agriculture is in decline while population pressures show marked increase. Overall population density has increased from about 207 people per square kilometer of arable land in 1900, to 401 people in 1950, and 989 people per square kilometer in 1998. Clearly, the cultivable land base has far surpassed its carrying capacity (see Land Use and Water, and Demographic Profile, ch. 7).

Since 1986 a series of highly politicized land disputes and land invasions have occurred in the aftermath of the Duvalier regime and subsequent military governments. In the 1990s, the rapid growth of Port-au-Prince and other urban areas has been marked by a notable increase in urban squatting. Land disputes in Haiti are generally not well served by the national system of justice. The traditional or customary system of land tenure continues to function fairly well, especially at the local level in most rural areas. Some grassroots peasant organiza-

tions have organized around land rights and dispute resolution. In 1995 the Aristide government created the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (Institut National de la Réforme Agraire—Inara), whose mission is policy reform and restructuring of the national land tenure system.

Cash Crops

Grown by some 380,000 peasants, coffee has had a prominent role in Haiti's agriculture since it was introduced by the French from Martinique in 1726. Production of the colony's main cash crop, which peaked in 1790, declined steadily after independence. It fell precipitously during the 1960s. After a boom in prices and in production in the late 1970s, output declined again from 42,900 tons in 1980 to 30,088 tons by 1987. Coffee trees covered an estimated 133,000 hectares in the 1980s, with an average annual yield of 35,900 tons. Haiti's coffee is sold through a system of intermediaries, speculators, and large-scale merchants. The high taxes involved in the system make production erratic and compel farmers to alternate between coffee and food crops, depending on price fluctuations and profit expectations. Although Haiti is a member of the International Coffee Organization (ICO), it was unable to fulfill its ICO export quota, which stood at 300,000 bags of 60 kilograms each (18,000 tons) in 1988. Total coffee production fell from 697,000 bags of 60 kilograms (41,820 tons) in 1982 to 359,000 bags (21,540 tons) in 1994, but it registered a rise to 496,000 bags (29,760 tons) in 1995. Coffee export earnings, however, amounted to only US$9.1 million in 1991–92 (latest figures available), which represented barely 10 percent of export revenue, compared with 35 percent five years earlier.

Soon after Columbus brought sugarcane to Haiti on his second voyage to Hispaniola, sugar became one of the island's most important cash crops. But after 1804, production never returned to pre-independence levels, perhaps because it was in the hands of small peasants rather than large plantations. The sugar harvest fell to under 4 million tons by the early 1970s, but a sharp increase in the world price of the commodity helped it rebound to nearly 6 million tons by the middle of the decade. Lower prices and structural problems combined to cause a drop in sugar output in the 1980s. By the end of the decade, sugarcane covered fewer than 114,000 hectares of the coastal plains, and sugarcane planting yielded fewer than 4.5 million tons annually. Only about 45,000 hectares were planted in the

late 1990s. The production cost of Haitian sugar was three times more than the world price in the 1980s.

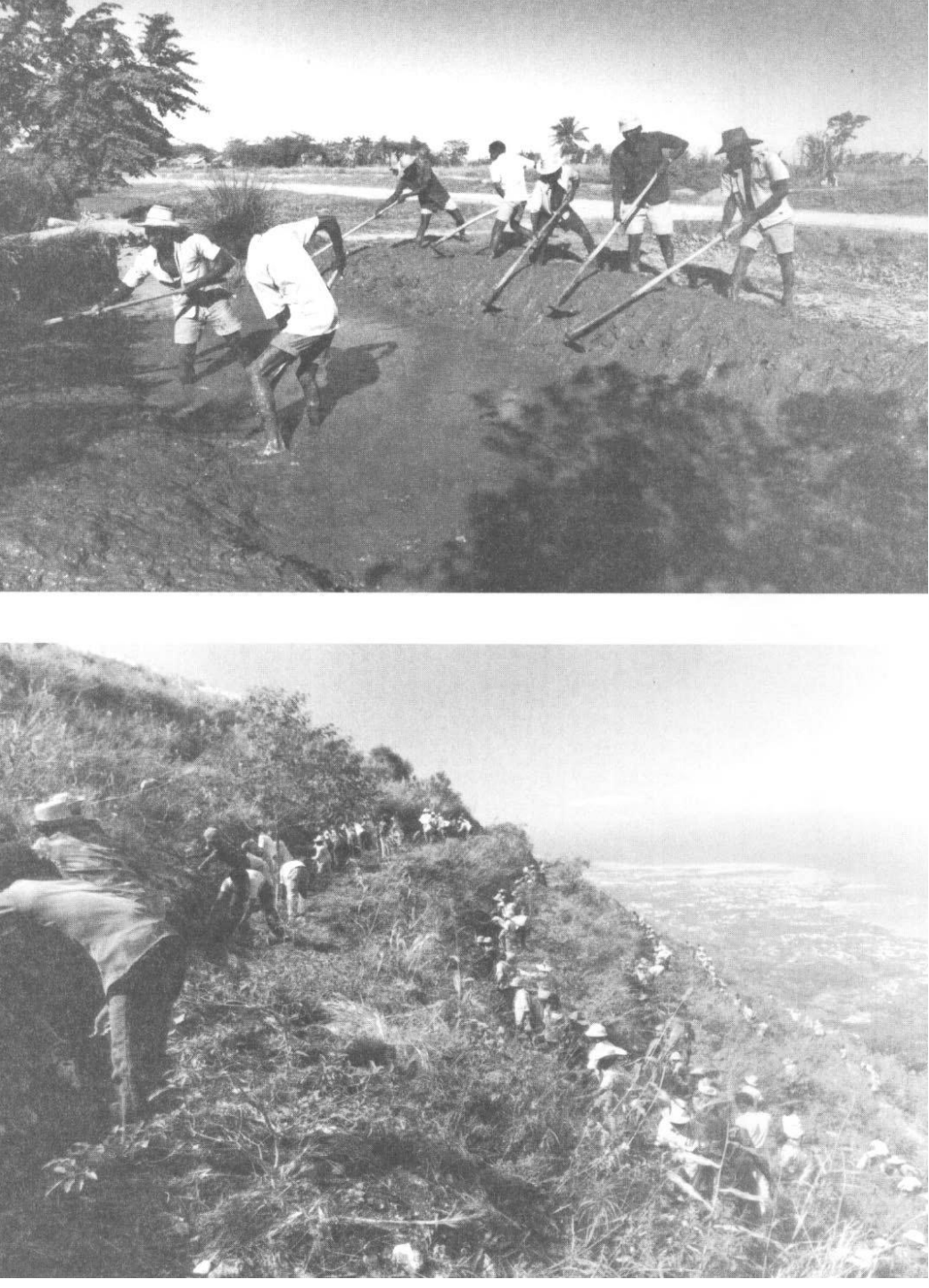
Shifts in the world sugar market, caused mainly by international substitution of corn-based fructose for sugarcane, exerted further pressure on Haitian producers, and production stagnated. Total sugar exports dropped from 19,200 tons in 1980 to 6,500 tons in 1987. In 1988 Haiti exported no sugar. The country's three major industrial sugar mills, including the oldest one, the Haitian American Sugar Company (HASCO) near Port-au-Prince, have ceased operations, citing losses caused by competition from cheap legal and illegal imports. Another industrial mill, the Centrale Dessalines, produced 20,000 tons of sugar in 1994. In addition, Haiti has almost 1,000 peasant-run mills. Total production of raw sugar in 1994 was estimated at 30,000 tons. Sugar export earnings fell from G22.7 million in 1986–87 to G2 million in 1990–91. Haiti is now a net importer of sugar.

Other cash crops include cocoa, cotton, sisal, and essential oils. Cacao plants covered an estimated 10,400 hectares in 1987 and yielded about 4,000 tons of cocoa a year. But cocoa has been declining in importance, as shown by the drop in its export earnings from US$4 million in 1987–88 to US$660,000 in 1995–96.

Cotton cultivation peaked in the 1930s, before Mexican boll weevil beetles ravaged the crop. In the 1960s, growers introduced a higher quality of cotton, which was processed in local cotton gins and then exported to Europe. But when cotton prices fell in the 1980s, cotton plantings shrank from 12,400 hectares in 1979 to under 8,000 hectares by 1986, and exports ceased.

Sisal, exported as a twine since the 1920s, peaked in the 1950s, when industries spawned by the Korean War used up much of the nation's 40,000-ton output. As the substitution of synthetic fibers for sisal reduced most large-scale growing of the plant in the 1980s, however, Haiti exported an average of only 6,500 tons a year, mainly to the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

The export of essential oils, derived from vetiver, lime, amyris, and bitter orange for the cosmetics and pharmaceutical industries, peaked in 1976 at 395 tons. Exports gradually leveled off at a little more than 200 tons, generating an average of US$5 million in foreign exchange.



Cleaning mud from an old irrigation canal in the Artibonite Valley
Making mountainside terraces at Dofourmi, above Port-au-Prince, for reforestation planting
Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank

Food Crops

The fall in prices for cash crops in the 1980s was accompanied by a rise in the output of food crops, such as corn, sorghum, rice, bananas, beans, and potatoes. Real per capita food production, however, declined, and Haiti continued to import millions of tons of grains. The trend toward increased production of food crops also has had negative ecological consequences because the planting of more tuber staples has accelerated soil erosion. But underfed farmers realistically could not be expected to grow tree crops in place of these badly needed staples.

Corn, the leading food crop, is sown on more hectares—about 220,000—than any other crop. It is grown separately in the south and interspersed with legumes in other areas. Sorghum often replaces corn during the second growing season as the leading crop, but total hectares planted average only 156,000. Rice became an increasingly common cereal beginning in the 1960s, and its production increased considerably in the 1980s as a result of improved irrigation schemes in the Artibonite Valley. Rice production, however, has fluctuated considerably and remains dependent on government subsidies. An estimated 60,000 hectares yielded an average of 123,000 tons, from 1980 to 1987 (latest data available). But the sharp reduction of protective tariffs in the mid-1990s led to increased imports of rice, mostly from the United States, and a corresponding decrease in production. The reopening of ports also led to large-scale smuggling of cheap rice and reductions in the planted area to less than 36,000 hectares.

Other food crops cultivated in Haiti include a variety of red and black beans, which provide the main source of protein in the diet of millions. As many as 129,000 hectares provided 67,000 tons of beans in 1987 (latest data available). Potatoes, one of the country's largest food crops, grow on an estimated 100,000 hectares and yielded 260,000 tons of produce a year in the 1980s. Banana palms are also common and provide, on the average, more than 500,000 tons of produce annually, almost entirely for domestic consumption. Although the flimsy trees are vulnerable to hurricanes and droughts, rapid replanting has helped sustain the crop. The significant lowering of import tariffs, decreed by IMF reforms in 1994, has increased smuggling of cheaper food products from the Dominican Republic, particularly bananas.

Forestry

Haiti has had a long and sad history of deforestation, which has had a devastating effect on the country's economy. The most direct effect of deforestation is soil erosion. In turn, soil erosion has lowered the productivity of the land, worsened droughts, and eventually led to desertification, all of which have increased the pressure on the remaining land and trees. As far back as the 1950s, it was becoming obvious that environmentally unsound agricultural practices, rapid population growth, and increased competition over scarce land were accelerating deforestation problems uncontrollably. Intensified demand for charcoal has worsened the situation by accelerating logging operations. The FAO estimated that deforestation was destroying 6,000 hectares of arable land a year in the 1980s. As a result, an impetus to act came from abroad. USAID's Agroforestry Outreach Program, Projè Pyebwa, was the country's major reforestation program in the 1980s. Between 1982 and 1991, the project distributed some 63 million trees to more than 250,000 small peasant farmers. Later efforts to save Haiti's trees—and thus its ecosystem—focused on intensifying reforestation programs, reducing waste in charcoal production, introducing more wood-efficient stoves, and importing wood under USAID's Food for Peace program. Much of the tree cover continued to be cut down indiscriminately for use as charcoal until the cutting reached alarming proportions in the 1990s. Only an estimated 60,000 hectares, 2.2 percent of the total land area, were forested in 1993.

Livestock and Fishing

Most peasants possess a few farm animals, usually goats, pigs, chickens, and cattle. Few holdings, however, are large, and few peasants raise only livestock. Many farm animals, serving as a kind of savings account, are sold or are slaughtered to pay for marriages, medical emergencies, schooling, seeds for crops, or a voodoo ceremony. Haiti had an estimated 200,000 pigs in 1994, compared with a record high of 1.2 million in the early 1980s. In the late 1970s, the island's pig stock became infected with the highly contagious African swine fever, which had spread from Spain to the Dominican Republic and then to Haiti via the Artibonite River. Panicked farmers first slaughtered their own infected animals, about one-third of the total pig population. Fear of further infection eliminated another

third. Then a government eradication program almost wiped out what remained of the 1.2 million pigs by 1982. Angry farmers complained about the government's inadequate compensation for their slaughtered livestock and about its restocking program using pigs imported from the United States. The large imported pink sentinel strain of pig offered as a replacement for the hardy creole breed was considered unsuitable for Haiti's environment. Farmers also complained that the United States variety required a level of upkeep they could not afford. To supplement the sentinel pigs, Jamaican creole pigs were added to Haiti's livestock population. After the swine-fever epidemic, chicken replaced pork as the most widely consumed meat in the Haitian diet.

Goats are one of the most plentiful farm animals in Haiti and, like the creole pigs, adapt well to the terrain and sparse vegetation. Their numbers increased from 400,000 in 1981 to more than 1 million by the end of the 1980s (latest figures available). Approximately 54 percent of all farmers own goats. Sheep are raised in some areas, but they are not particularly well adapted to the island's climate.

Some 8,000 to 10,000 Haitians fish the 1,500-kilometer coastline on a full-time or part-time basis, netting an average annual catch of 5,000 tons of fish. Although Haiti's immediate coastal waters are over-fished, deep-sea fishing is underdeveloped because most Haitian fishers lack the modern equipment required for profitable fishing on the high seas. Thus, fishing in general has remained undeveloped into the late 1990s, even though it potentially could have been a major source of badly needed protein in the population's diet. The country imports more than 12,000 tons of fish products a year to satisfy domestic demand.

Industry

Manufacturing

Like almost everything else in Haiti, manufacturing, which was the most dynamic sector of the economy in the 1980s and which accounted for more than 18 percent of GDP in 1980 (and almost 14 percent of GDP in 1991), suffered several crippling blows in the wake of Aristide's overthrow and the ensuing embargo imposed by both the UN and the OAS. Of 180 companies operating in four free zones, 130 closed their factories in the aftermath of the 1991 coup. However, almost thirty

Women making rugs at Fort Jacques, near Port-au-Prince
Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank

Plaiting banana tree bark for baskets at Port-au-Prince Industrial Park
Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank

plants reopened within a year after the reestablishment of constitutional government in October 1994. The sector managed to revive slowly; by mid-1997 (latest data available), it employed approximately 23,000 people—considerably fewer than the 100,000 employed prior to the miliary coup—and its contribution to GDP had reached 11 percent.

Manufacturing recorded strong growth that averaged about 10 percent per year in the 1970s and almost 12 percent per year by 1980. Manufactured goods replaced agricultural commodities as the country's leading exports during this decade. In 1991 manufacturing accounted for 14 percent of GDP. By the end of the 1980s, the manufacturing sector comprised 500 enterprises, most of which were family owned and small or medium-sized (latest available data). Major products include processed foods, electrical equipment, textiles, toys, sporting goods, clothing, and handicrafts. Most of these items are not destined for local consumption, however. Principal production for the local market is in the area of food and beverages.

Assembly Sector

In the late 1980s, attracted to Haiti by the prevalence of extremely low wages, more than 150 firms, mostly United States-controlled, set up operations on the edge of Port-au-Prince to assemble light industrial products for re-export. The factories generated about 60,000 jobs (two-thirds held by women) for workers assembling electronic components, toys, sporting goods, and clothing. Their contribution to government revenue was insignificant, however, since they were exempted from taxation for up to fifteen years and were free to repatriate profits. In its attempt to attract the assembly industry, Haiti had benefited from both its proximity to the United States and its access to such organizations as the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP—see Glossary) and the CBI. Its special position in assembly production was eventually eroded, however, as other countries in the region, such as the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Costa Rica, began to capitalize more aggressively on the advantages of the CBI. Haiti's prospects in the assembly industry were hampered by a combination of factors, including an underdeveloped infrastructure, an illiterate work force, scarce managerial personnel, and—perhaps most important—the highest utility costs in the Caribbean. The country's chronic political instability was another major factor that prompted many companies to relocate their

Twine factory
Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank

assembly operations to more stable countries in the Caribbean, mostly to the free zone in the neighboring Dominican Republic. By the late 1990s, Haiti's once-thriving assembly sector was operating at a fraction of its capacity.

Construction

It was not surprising that the demise of the assembly manufacturing subsector would deal Haiti's construction industry as devastating a blow as it did in the 1990s. Construction had depended heavily on industrial structures related to assembly manufacturing since the 1970s. It had also concentrated heavily on extravagant houses being built in the residential areas of Port-au-Prince and its exclusive suburb of Pétionville; these construction projects almost halted during the political instability and economic turmoil of the 1990s. Meanwhile, the country's disadvantaged majority continued to labor and build their own dwellings with a mixture of raw materials, mostly wood and palm thatch in rural areas and corrugated metal, cardboard, or wood in urban shantytowns.

Mining

Haiti has few natural resources; they include small amounts

of gold, silver, copper, iron, nickel, and marble. The country's insignificant mining sector, which accounted for less than 1 percent of GDP and employed less than 1 percent of the labor force in the early 1980s, all but vanished in 1983, when a United States firm, Reynolds Company, decided to close its bauxite mine at Miragoâne after forty years of operation. The plant produced an average of 500,000 tons of bauxite a year, but the declining metal content of the ore, coupled with high production costs and the oversupplied international bauxite market, made it a losing business venture.

A Canadian mining company, Sainte Genevieve, which started prospecting for gold in the northern part of the island in 1995, decided to relocate its operations to the Dominican Republic in late 1997. Although it had created more than 300 jobs, the local community expressed strong concerns about the adverse effects the mining operation could have on their agricultural output. Their demands that the company finance rehabilitation of irrigation systems, bridges, and dams in their region prompted the firm's decision to depart.

Energy

Haiti had limited energy resources in the late 1990s. The country has no petroleum resources, little hydroelectricity potential, and rapidly diminishing supplies of wood fuels. Local timber and charcoal account for 75 percent of the total energy used in the country, imported petroleum for 15 percent, bagasse (sugarcane residue) for 5 percent, and hydroelectric power for 5 percent. In addition, only a meager 10 percent of the country had access to electricity in 1995. Even in Port-au-Prince, where almost half the population has electricity, the supply is so limited that many industries must resort to private generators. Although most provincial towns have intermittent electricity, only 3 percent of the rural population has any.

The Haitian Electricity Company (Électricité d'Haïti—EdH), established in 1971, operates the Péligre hydroelectric plant above the Artibonite Valley, which provides approximately one-third of the island's public electricity. Four thermal plants in the Port-au-Prince area provide the other two-thirds. Tapping illegally into power lines has long been a fairly common practice, and almost half of the current produced by the EdH was stolen.

Haiti imports all of its petroleum. When a petroleum embargo was imposed in 1993, thousands of people made a liv-

ing smuggling gas across the border from the Dominican Republic. The fuel embargo also increased the population's need for timber and charcoal, the major household fuel, resulting in greater deforestation as well.

By the mid-1990s, the country's installed electric power capacity was approximately 210 megawatts. The power industry's performance is far below par, however, because of the dilapidated condition of production and transmission equipment, lack of maintenance, silting at the Péligre Dam, and low stream discharge during the dry season. Power interruptions resulting from generation and transmission equipment failures occur frequently. Blackouts are even more common in the provinces. The hydroelectric potential is estimated at 120 megawatts, of which fifty-four megawatts have been installed. Peak demand in Port-au-Prince is capped at 100 megawatts because that is all the supply that is available. But the potential demand from Port-au-Prince could be higher than 200 megawatts, if there were reliable supplies and adequate distribution systems. Generation capacity was largely rebuilt after 1995, which has enabled the EdH to supply eighteen to twenty-four hours a day of electric power to almost all of Port-au-Prince during the rainy season. Power supplies are usually unreliable between December and March, when production at the Péligre dam declines.

Transportation and Communications

Haiti's transportation system remains inadequate in the 1990s, in spite of the major infrastructural improvements that accompanied the growth period of the 1970s (see fig. 13). Poor transportation hinders economic growth, particularly in the agricultural sector. Like other services in the economy, transportation—when it is available—is prohibitively expensive for most citizens.

Roads are considered the most important part of the country's transportation system. Of a total of 4,050 kilometers of roads, 950 kilometers are paved, another 950 kilometers are gravel or otherwise improved, and 2,150 kilometers are unimproved and almost impassable during the torrential rainy season. Besides the paved streets in Port-au-Prince, Haiti has only two main highways. These highways, which were paved in 1973, link the northern and southern regions of the country. National Highway One extends north from the capital to Cap-Haïtien via the coastal towns of Montrouis and Gonaïves.

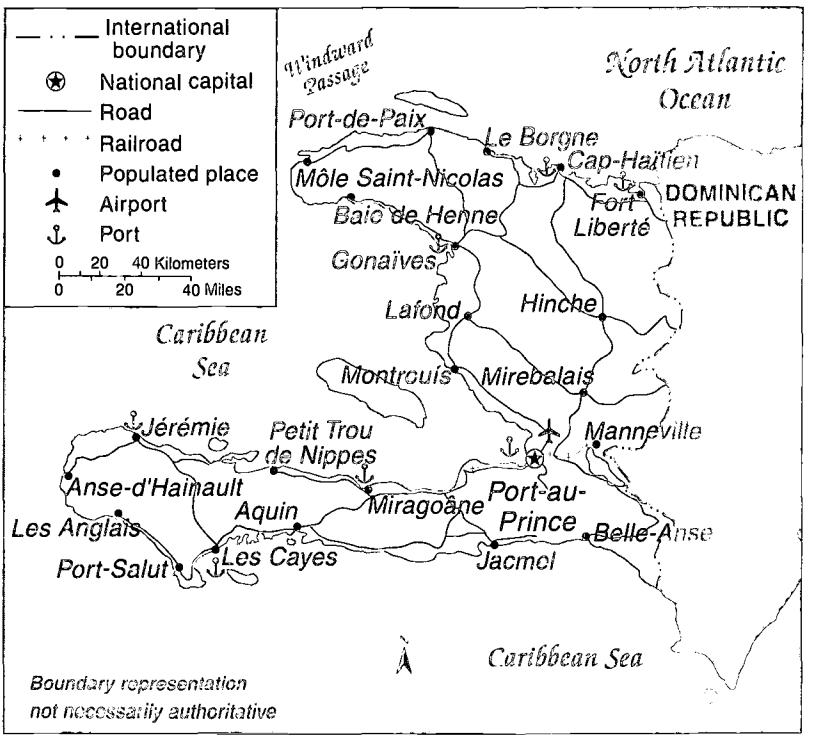


Figure 13. Haiti: Transportation System, 1999

National Highway Two proceeds south from Port-au-Prince to Les Cayes by way of Miragoâne with a spur to Jacmel. Road travel outside these two arteries, which themselves had badly deteriorated by the mid-1990s because of poor road maintenance and lack of repair, is quite difficult and requires four-wheel-drive vehicles that are equipped to travel on the washed-out roads that are especially common during the rainy season.

In view of the condition of Haiti's roads, the World Bank approved a US$50 million loan program for road construction. However, the loan program was suspended in late 1998 when auditors uncovered major irregularities in contract awards—but only after the Bank had disbursed almost US$23 million. Subsequently, in January 1999 the Bank decided to halt the program altogether because of mismanagement and suspected corruption. A spokeswoman for the Bank confirmed that at least a US$6 million portion of the loan was declared a "mis-

procurement," adding that the Bank was demanding repayment.

The government provides extremely limited and unreliable public transportation, leaving road transport in the hands of small operators who run trucks, vans, and taxis without much regard to safety concerns. In the late 1990s, most Haitians were continuing to use "tap-taps," brightly colored and overcrowded jitneys that service almost every corner of the island. Nearly all vehicles in Haiti are imported; an estimated 50,000 vehicles were in use in 1991, compared with 36,600 vehicles ten years earlier.

Ports are another major component of the country's transportation sector. Haiti has fourteen ports. Although most of these ports are provincial and small, they have turned into major centers of imported contraband, especially after the upheavals of the 1990s. Port-au-Prince remains the major port, and is equipped with container facilities and berths for large liners. It also remains the island's central shipping site for most registered imports and exports. Beside its container capability, it offers a roll-on/roll-off facility, a thirty-ton gantry crane, and a fifty-ton mobile crane in addition to its older mechanical handling equipment and two transit warehouses. Port fees are so expensive, however, that the port is underused. Wharfage costs are four times higher than those of the neighboring Dominican Republic. Also, most of the port's equipment is in very poor condition. Perhaps for this reason, legislation relating to the modernization of public enterprises had recommended that management of the port be turned over to a private operator. The legislation was still pending in parliament in late 1999.

Cap-Haïtien was the second major port until the end of the 1980s, handling most cruise-ship traffic as well as domestic and international merchant ships. In the 1990s, it was replaced by Miragoâne, which in 1999 remained a major export port. Lesser used ports include Les Cayes, Fort Liberté, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Montrouis, and Jérémie. They play a role in internal commerce, mainly as an alternative to the island's poor road system and as a conduit for contraband trade out of the Dominican Republic and Miami. Although smuggling may have stimulated economic activity at these small provincial ports, it has resulted in the loss of millions of dollars in import duties. The porous border with the Dominican Republic also continues to be a favorite route for imported contraband.

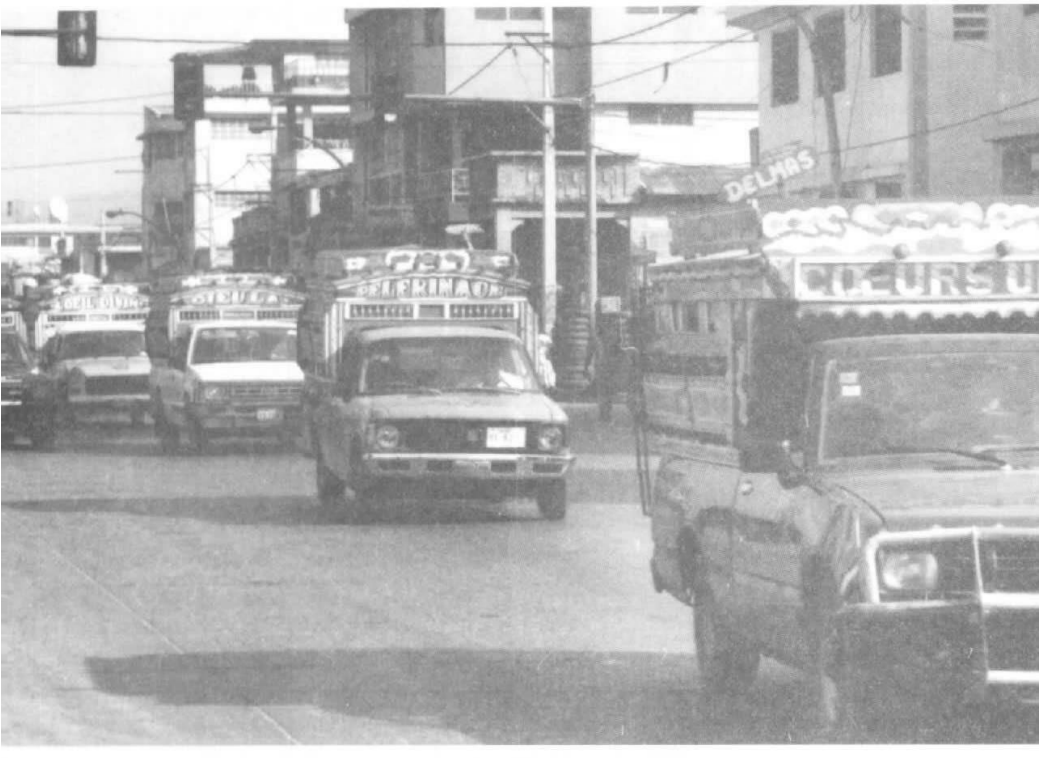
Haiti's main, and only international, airport is located about ten kilometers north of Port-au-Prince. Opened in 1965, it is equipped for international flights and handles most domestic flights as well, with the exception of Cap-Haïtien. The country's other airfields (about ten) are operational, but they are no more than grass strips. The government-owned Air Haiti is the only airline that services these provincial airports. Air Haiti operates under the control of the National Civil Aviation Office (Office National de l'Aviation Civile—ONAC). The National Airport Authority (Autorité Aéroportuaire Nationale—AAN) regulates the country's airports. Air links abroad were suspended in July 1994, as part of internationally imposed sanctions, but were restored before year's end. Some ten airlines from Europe, the Caribbean, and the Americas regularly schedule services to Port-au-Prince airport.

Haiti, with a 1998 ratio of six telephones per 1,000 people, the same as in the mid-1980s, ranks below some of Africa's poorer nations—eight telephones per 1,000 inhabitants. The 39,000 telephone lines of the 1980s increased to 64,000 in the late 1990s, but 80 percent of them remained concentrated in the Port-au-Prince area, where only about 25 percent of the total population live. Telephone service to provincial towns remains so unreliable that many rural areas must depend on two-way radios. By contrast, subscribers with international service (again, almost all in the capital area) can dial directly to the United States and Europe via a satellite station at Sabourin; rates are high, however. The country's telephone system is operated by Teleco, under the Ministry of Public Works, Transportation, and Communications. Teleco, 96 percent of which is owned by the government, is on the list of public enterprises to be privatized.

Approximately sixty amplitude modulation (AM) and frequency modulation (FM) stations and twenty television stations operated in Haiti in the late 1990s. In 1997 Haiti had some 38,000 television sets and some 415,000 radios. The only radio station whose signal covers the entire country is Radio Nationale d'Haïti, which is government-operated and located in the capital. Another radio station that also has a large audience is Radio Soleil, which is run by the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince and broadcasts in both Creole and French. Cable television service, carrying several United States channels, is a pay-cable station broadcasting on thirteen channels in French, Spanish, and English; it is owned by a private operator, Télé-Haïti. Télévision

Riders on a "tap-tap" (jitney) near Gonaïves
Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank

Colorful "tap-taps" on Avenue Dessalines, Port-au-Prince
Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank



Nationale d'Haïti is the state television station, broadcasting on four channels in Creole, French, and Spanish.

Tourism

A new international airport in 1965 and improved relations with the United States helped Haiti's tourism industry to flourish in the 1970s. Tourist arrivals (139,000 by air and 163,000 by sea) peaked in 1980, and net expenditures on tourism (US$44 million) reached their highest level in 1981 before a series of events made Haiti unpopular among tourists. One of these events was publicity surrounding Haiti as a possible origin of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and the high number of AIDS cases among Haitians. The former allegation proved false, but the portrait lingered along with television images of political violence, dire poverty, "boat people," and general instability. As political instability spread to many parts of the island, tour operators began to express concerns about their customers' security, and the number of cruise ships visiting Haiti declined considerably. The number of tourist arrivals fell sharply after the September 1991 coup. According to the Central Bank, the number of visitors in 1991–92 was down to 82,493 (latest figures available). The declining number of tourists forced many hotels to close. The number of hotel rooms available to tourists also dropped consistently, from 3,000 in 1981 to 1,500 in 1987 to 800 by mid-1996.

Trouble with the island's tourism continued into the late 1990s. Radio Galaxie announced in April 1999 that Haiti Club Med would close almost immediately. Although the closure was supposed to be "temporary," the government's quick response was to announce that it was taking steps to encourage more tourists to visit Haiti. The measures included the abolition of visa requirements, which raised concerns as to the degree this would facilitate illegal traffic from Haiti to the United States via the Bahamas.

Outlook

The critical situation in which Haiti finds itself stems mainly from its chronic political instability, which occasionally borders on chaos. This instability has scared away international donors and dried up the external aid on which the country has depended for decades. In turn, lack of aid has adversely affected an economy stagnant for some years and taken a

Market scene, Port-au-Prince
Courtesy Inter-American
Development Bank

severe toll on a population already living in abject poverty. Haiti also has other deep-rooted endemic problems: an unskilled population, lack of resources, maldistribution of wealth, marked disregard for social justice among traditional power holders, a dysfunctional judiciary, growing scarcity of productive land, lack of off-farm labor opportunities, paucity of investment in human and social capital, deficits in capital and credit markets, an ingrained tradition of corruption, unemployment and underemployment of unskilled labor, an entrenched and inefficient bureaucracy, and—perhaps most important—a lack of will on the part of the country's leaders to stop the political infighting and start implementing whatever reforms have been legislated.

Both the United Nations secretary general and the United States secretary of state have voiced on separate occasions their concern over the Haitian government's inaction, which caused the suspension of badly needed international aid. In urging Haiti's political leaders to "resolve their differences," the secretary of state said in April 1998 that the Haitian people "deserve the ability to have the fruits that the international community is trying to give them." Similarly, in early 1998 members of the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States House of Representatives warned that United States funding for Haiti

would be suspended if Haitian leaders did not make more serious efforts to reach a political solution. Meanwhile, substantial amounts of aid from other foreign donors were withheld for the same reason.

Important as it may be for any Haitian leader to renew the flow of external aid, it is far more important for Haiti to be committed to the concept that economic development must be based on trade and investment and institutional reforms. Such measures involve factors that include job creation and the improvement of social services for the disadvantaged, rather than a growing dependence on international assistance. R. Quentin Grafton of the University of Ottawa and Dane Rowlands of Carlton University make the point that Haiti's political instability is "symptomatic of its institutional arrangements where the powers of the state are viewed as a means to personal enrichment." Haiti's institutional structure is such that it has encouraged economic exploitation and intimidation, as well as political repression and stark inequities between the privileged and disadvantaged segments of the population. To reverse these tendencies, a leadership is needed that acknowledges that appropriate institutional reform is essential for Haiti's development. The country's social, economic, and political structure needs to be modified so as to assure the poor their fair share of resources and social services and to ensure the participation of the less advantaged communities in shaping their institutional environment.

The role of leadership need not be the government's exclusive domain. A good example of private initiative was a three-day economic conference held in April 1998 in Jacmel. A group of Haitian mayors and some forty Haitian-Americans, including ten businessmen from New York, met to discuss ways of energizing Haiti's development process. They chose to hold their encounter at some distance from the capital to show that private efforts can be mounted without state sponsorship. Bringing together elected officials of small provincial towns, who had been accustomed to obeying directives of the central government, with a group of potential investors and business leaders also made the point that thousands of Haitian emigrants living abroad could be tapped for financial assistance to development projects in rural communities. Haitians living in the United States alone reportedly send home an estimated US$3 million a day.

Two World Bank projects provide another example of a different approach to socioeconomic development in Haiti. When the country's gross domestic product fell by about 40 percent during the 1991–94 embargo years, and large numbers of jobs were lost, the World Bank initiated a two-year Employment Generation Project, which provided short-term jobs for 325,000 of Haiti's poorest. Another social safety-net program geared toward directly assisting the underprivileged and improving social services is known as the Basic Infrastructure Project, which involves the poor in its design and implementation. The project's goal is the rebuilding of critical infrastructure in serious disrepair (roads, sanitation facilities, and flood controls) in provincial towns. The objective is achieved through consultation with local communities and use of local labor in construction, thereby providing opportunities for more sustained employment.

Whatever approach the Haitians choose to reform their country's basic institutional structure and to embark on a coherent economic development program, their task is bound to be daunting. Dealing with an economy in ruins, a population in despair, an administrative system in shambles, and a government at a standstill will not be easy and may take years, even with substantial aid from the international donor community.

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Reliable statistical data on Haitian economics are hard to obtain. Most publications acknowledge that their figures are based largely on estimates. For example, despite the obvious breadth and depth of their research, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank note that they have little confidence in the statistical data provided on Haiti.

Perhaps the best source on Haiti's economy is the Economist Intelligence Unit, which publishes an annual country profile as well as four quarterly country reports on the island nation. The profile typically includes a comprehensive analysis of the country's economic developments, while providing an insightful political backdrop to put them in perspective. The quarterly updates furnish what is tantamount to a running chronicle of economic and political events as they unfold on the Haitian scene. It is also useful to consult publications by major donors such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development

Bank, and the United States Agency for International Development. These and other donors issue reports of surveys, policy research, and other current information on Haiti. A good recent collection of such reports is available from the World Bank, *Haiti: The Challenges of Poverty Reduction.*

Mats Lundahl, a Swedish economist, has written an economic history, *Peasants and Poverty: A Study of Haiti,* and other useful books and articles on Haiti; and Simon Fass has published an interesting study on the economics of survival and informal credit among the urban poor, *Political Economy in Haiti: The Drama of Survival.* Development initiatives are treated in a collection of articles edited by Derrick Brinkerhoff and Jean-Claude Garcia-Zamor, *Politics, Projects, and People: Institutional Development in Haiti.*

More recent works include *The Haitian Dilemma: A Case Study in Demographics, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy* by Ernest H. Preeg, an economist and former United States ambassador to Haiti. A conference on Haiti after the return of Aristide generated a collection of papers edited by Robert I. Rotberg, *Haiti Renewed: Political and Economic Prospects.* There is also a recent volume on political economy by Alex Dupuy, *Haiti in the New World Order: The Limits of the Democratic Revolution,* and an earlier volume entitled *Haiti in the World Economy: Class, Race, and Underdevelopment since 1700.* (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)