

# COUNTRY STUDY

HAITI

## Social Protection Monitoring

### Main recommendations for the National Indicative Programme to

- Have a stronger focus on **access to quality essential services** offered free of charge.
- Provide support to the **Government's plan of extending social insurance** to all workers, including the self-employed and informal sector workers. At the same time, the EU should support the development of a comprehensive **financing plan** which clearly outlines different funding sources and budgets for the different aspects of the social protection floor.
- Focus on **capacity building** and other support to civil society, to ensure that they can play their role in monitoring Government's initiatives in social protection and hold service providers accountable.
- Support the full **participation of civil society** actors in the development of the new national social protection policy to ensure that all voices are heard and included.

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## INTRODUCTION

The *Plan Stratégique de Développement d'Haïti* (PSDH), developed after the devastating earthquake of January 2010, is the country's main strategy document to transform the country into an emerging economy by 2030. It consists of four major projects for reconstruction and development, including infrastructure, the economy, social services, and institutions. For the period 2014-2016, the key priorities are: i) education and human and social development; ii) the environment and development of the land; iii) the economy and employment; iv) energy; and v) the rule of law and democracy. Social protection, in terms of social insurance for all workers, is given importance as one of the programmes under social development, and is based on the principles of universal and free access.

Haiti has ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and, by adopting the ILO Recommendation on National Floors of Social Protection (R 202), the country is engaged in the set-up of a national floor of social protection for all its residents with the aim of building a comprehensive and human rights-based national social protection system. Currently, there are significant challenges to achieving universal social protection in Haiti, to address which will require support from the development community.

In the framework of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), the EU's development cooperation priorities with Haiti are defined in the National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2014-2020<sup>1</sup>. The four priority areas for cooperation were agreed jointly by the EU and Government of Haiti, in consultation with other donors and civil society. These include: 1) **State reform and modernization of public administration**; 2) **Education**; 3) **Urban and infrastructural development**; and 4) **Food and nutrition security**.

<sup>1</sup> [ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/nip-haiti-20140718\\_fr.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/nip-haiti-20140718_fr.pdf)

The following report provides the views of SOLIDAR member Solidarité Laïque and its partners in the field on issues the NIP could tackle to better support the achievement of decent work and social protection for all in the country. This would be in line with the EU's commitments enshrined in the 2012 Communication on Social Protection in Development Cooperation, the 2015 EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy and the objectives and targets of Agenda 2030 adopted in September 2015.

In this respect, the forthcoming NIP Mid-Term Review could provide the space for these commitments to be better reflected in the 11th European Development Fund programmes.

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## HAITI

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### HAITI AT A GLANCE<sup>2</sup>

**Population**  
10.57 million

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**  
US \$8.713 billion

**Human Development Index (HDI) and ranking**  
0.483 (163rd out of 188 countries)

**Public spending on social protection including health**  
3.27% of GDP

**Total envelope of National Indicative Programme (NIP)**  
EUR 420 million

<sup>2</sup> World Bank: [www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti); UNDP Human Development Report 2015: [hdr.undp.org/en/countries](http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries); ILO World Social Protection Report 2014/15, Haiti National Indicative Programme 2014-2020.



## MAIN ISSUES TO BE TACKLED

- The **quality, availability, accessibility, and affordability of essential services**, including health and education, are worrying low and services are chronically under-staffed, underfunded and unaffordable for much of the population. Moreover, the vast majority of hospitals and health centres are concentrated in Port-au-Prince making access to health care difficult for people living in remote areas. Not all communities have schools, and some students are obliged to travel more than 10km to their nearest school.
- There are **very few income security** measures in place, and those that do exist only serve a very small proportion of workers who are employed in the formal economy.
- **Freedom of association**, while guaranteed under the Constitution, is not always respected. Violations against workers' rights are frequent and union power is weak.
- **Spending on social protection** is currently too low to achieve a national floor of social protection. There is no comprehensive financing plan in place to meet this need.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EU NATIONAL INDICATIVE PROGRAMME TO

- Have a stronger focus on **access to quality essential services** offered free of charge. This will require significant investment by both the Government and development partners. Particular attention should go to people living in rural areas.
- Provide support to the **Government's plan of extending social insurance** to all workers, including the self-employed and informal sector workers, in order for this to be fully operationalised. At the same time, the EU should

support the development of a comprehensive **financing plan** which clearly outlines different funding sources and budgets for the different aspects of the social protection floor (as defined by the ILO recommendation 202)<sup>3</sup>.

- Focus on **capacity building** and other support to civil society, to ensure that they can play their role in monitoring Government's initiatives in social protection and hold service providers accountable.
- Support the full **participation of civil society** actors in the development of the new national social protection policy to ensure that all voices are heard and included in line with the ILO recommendation 202 participatory principle.

## REPORT

### 1. Improving access to essential services

Access to healthcare is a huge challenge in Haiti, particularly following the shattering earthquake of 2010. According to the PSDH, the health system in Haiti is characterised by insufficient care coverage, aggravated by poor distribution of resources. More than 50 hospitals and health centres were either destroyed or rendered unusable by the earthquake. Much of the population suffers from acute or severe malnutrition, and **poor water and sanitation** are the cause of several deaths and diseases. There are also high infant and maternal mortality rates and only 37% births are attended by skilled personnel.<sup>4</sup> Almost 60% of children are not fully vaccinated and there is only 1 doctor per 10,000 inhabitants.<sup>5</sup>

The Government of Haiti recognises the need to dramatically improve the quality of healthcare, and it has outlined a multi-sectoral plan under the PSDH which includes improving the network of hospitals and health centres at all levels, increasing the number of trained medical professionals, providing capacity

<sup>3</sup> ILO Recommendation on Recommendation concerning National Floors of Social Protection, [www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:3065524](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:3065524)

<sup>4</sup> WHO, World Health Statistics 2015.

<sup>5</sup> PSDH.



development for health personnel, and introducing health education for the population.

**SOLIDAR members and partners in the field are concerned at the unaffordability of health care** for those on low incomes and the unemployed: according to 2010 WHO figures, out of pocket expenses represented 72% of total health expenditures between 1995 and 2008. At the same time, the fact that **the vast majority of hospitals and health centres are concentrated in Port-au-Prince, make access to health care difficult for people living in remote areas. They point out that informal sector workers do not benefit from health insurance**, and even for those formal sector employees who do have insurance, the lack of infrastructure and adequate human resources mean that the quality of care offered is far too low.

**Access to basic education** is another big challenge in Haiti, despite increases in the net enrolment rate in the past twenty years. **The majority of schools are private**, requiring the payment of fees, which are unaffordable for families that have to make the choice between educating or feeding their children. As the Government highlights in the PSDH, there is also an insufficient supply of schools compared to demand, with an uneven distribution of schools across the country. The quality of education is also a major concern, as there are very high dropout rates, and low levels of academic achievement. Part of the explanation for this includes poor classroom infrastructure, which is unsuitable for learning, large class sizes, and poor health and nutrition amongst students. Teachers, many of whom lack the required academic profile and who are using outdated teaching methods, are also unmotivated given the **very low wages they receive in the public sector**. Many also must teach in several schools, both public and private, in order to earn a decent living. Another concern is that the current curriculum for primary and secondary education, which is considerably out-of-date, does not prepare students for the job market.

Education is a key priority of the Government in the PSDH, which states the need to improve the quality of education at all levels, addressing the key constraints highlighted above. It also recognises the problems of sexism in the school curriculum, and the need to provide inclusive education for students with disabilities. **The Government has introduced a policy of universal and free basic education, supported by donors, but this programme does not address issues of quality or the efficiency of the entire system.**

Given these challenges, the second priority area of the NIP is education, with a total budget of EUR 90-100 million. The main objectives are to strengthen sectoral institutions, to improve the quality of education, with a particular focus on basic education, and to increase as well as improve the quality of professional training opportunities. It is expected that this support will improve the quality and standardisation of the school curriculum, as well as the professional development and training of school personnel and teachers.

While **SOLIDAR members and partners in the field welcome EU efforts to improve education in Haiti**, they have a number of concerns which they believe should be urgently addressed:

- Despite the fact that education should be the remit of both the State and the local authorities, the State is currently not providing local authorities with the means to take charge of education at the community level. Therefore not all communities have schools, and some students are obliged to travel more than 10km to their nearest school.
- In certain rural areas, religious and community groups have established schools which do not conform to national minimum standards, as the teachers are unqualified and there are no teaching and learning materials. To achieve quality education in Haiti, in their view, there is a **significant need to increase investment, to improve the working conditions of teachers, and**



to create a space for formal dialogue between the Ministry of Education and all the stakeholders involved in education.

- Professional training is not accessible to all young people. There are not many training schools in Haiti, and the vast majority are situated in urban areas and the capitals of the geographic provinces. The partners strongly believe that **training centres must be established in rural areas in order to address this need.**

## 2. Ensuring income security

Haiti is the poorest country in the northern hemisphere and 68% of the population was estimated to be living below the national poverty line before the earthquake in 2010. 47% of Haitians live in extreme poverty, the majority of which are in rural areas.<sup>6</sup> According to the NIP, around 60% of the active working population is un- or underemployed. Around 40% of the population is employed in smallholder agriculture, which is characterised by a lack of modern technology, basic infrastructure and technical assistance. Rural incomes are at high risk from environmental and other shocks. Social security is not currently available to those working in the informal economy, which accounts for 80% of all workers.<sup>7</sup> In 2014 the Government established a minimum wage that varies across different sectors, from 125 to 300 Haitian gourdes per day (US \$2.19 to \$5.26).<sup>8</sup>

In order to protect workers, the PSDH states that social insurance should be offered to all workers, including the self-employed and those in the informal economy, in accordance with international standards of decent work and ILO Convention 102 (which Haiti has not actually ratified). This would guarantee workers and their families against all work-related risks, including sickness, accidents, unemployment and retirement.

Haiti is highly vulnerable to climatic and other shocks,

6 ILO, *La Promotion du Travail Décent dans la reconstruction et le développement d'Haiti après le tremblement de terre de 2010*.

7 Ibidem.

8 [www.haitilibre.com/en/news-10972-haiti-economy-everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-new-minimum-wage.html](http://www.haitilibre.com/en/news-10972-haiti-economy-everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-new-minimum-wage.html)

which puts people's food security at risk. The fourth priority area of EU cooperation with Haiti is food and nutrition security, which aims to improve governance and the management of food security at the local and national levels, and to promote sustainable agriculture that is resilient to climate change, in order to increase food availability as well as rural incomes.

Income security is directly linked to **food security**. It can increase access to adequate food, through enabling individuals to purchase food from markets.<sup>9</sup> It can also increase the availability of food, as farmers are able to overcome credit constraints and thus take more risks, including investing in inputs and technology to produce higher yields. Utilisation of food can also be improved, as individuals are more able to diversify their diets and consume more nutrient-rich foods. Finally, social protection can provide food stability during times of crisis, smoothing consumption when there is a poor harvest, for example.<sup>10</sup>

SOLIDAR members and partners in the field also pointed out the problem of access to water, which, in their opinion, is a significant factor behind food insecurity in the country. Despite the large number of rivers and other water sources in the country, farmers' lack of access to these sources, and the lack of irrigation, has destroyed harvests.

## 3. Promoting a rights based approach to social protection

The 1987 Constitution of Haiti recognises the right of every citizen to decent housing, education, food and social security. Social protection is defined as a right for all in the PSDH, and the national social protection strategy is based on the principles of universal and free access. However, there are major challenges to the practical implementation of this policy and as an ECLAC report points out, the current system is

9 De Schutter and Sepúlveda 'Underwriting the Poor: A Global Fund for Social Protection.' Briefing Note 07, October 2012, p.6

10 HLPE (2012) '*Social protection for food security*.' A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security. Rome.



a “heterogeneous and fragmented system, where different institutions overlap and where projects on the same pillar (social security, social assistance, social promotion) or same sectorial area (food security, housing, employment) are dispersed.”<sup>11</sup> The Government is currently developing a new policy in order to tackle some of the challenges, which it acknowledges have held back the development of the country.

**SOLIDAR members and partners in the field echo the point that much work remains to be done to ensure that the right to social protection is realised, and to hold the Government to account.** There must be a formal dialogue between social partners and the Government on the new policy, to ensure that the voice of civil society can be heard and taken into account. A timeline for this process must be established with clearly defined and transparent objectives. There is a risk otherwise, according to the partners, that the new policy will be disconnected from the views and involvement of social partners.

#### 4. Promoting Freedom of Association and CSO participation

Freedom of assembly and association are guaranteed under article 31 of the Constitution but these rights are often not respected in practice. There have been several anti-government protests in response to delayed elections, corruption and persecution of government dissidents, and police violence has frequently been used on protesters. Human rights defenders in the country have experienced harassment, threats and illegal arrest. Unions are weak in Haiti, and lack collective bargaining power.<sup>12</sup> Haiti was given a rating of 4 in the International Trade Union Confederation Global Rights Index 2014.<sup>13</sup> This signifies systematic violations of rights, where the government and/or companies are engaged in serious efforts to crush the collective voice of workers.

11 ECLAC (2013) Social Protection Systems in Latin America and the Caribbean: Haiti.

12 [freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/haiti](http://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/haiti)

13 International Trade Union Confederation Global Rights Index 2014: The world's worst countries for workers.

Under the NIP, support to civil society is a cross-cutting issue, along with gender and the environment. A three-pronged approach is defined, which includes: i) the direct involvement of civil society in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the different focal areas under the NIP; ii) the implementation of a general support programme to civil society, to provide capacity and organisational development, as well as to facilitate dialogue between civil society and the State; and iii) through the thematic programme “Non state actors and local authorities”, support to civil society initiatives in areas not covered under the NIP.

The NIP priority areas were selected based on consultations with civil society in Haiti, which involved several meetings with several of the partner organisations, including unions and parent associations. This is a positive example of a consultation process that seriously considered the views of civil society and the partners believe that the EU should continue to prioritise this support, to enable them to advocate for universal social protection and to monitor Government initiatives.

#### 5. Mobilising financial resources for social protection

Economic growth has been weak and unstable in the last decade or so (1.8% per year on average), due to socio-political factors or natural disasters. This, together with high population growth, has led to a decline in GDP per capita (-0.89% per year), which has been a long-term trend since 1987.<sup>14</sup> The country imports more than 50% of its food needs, including 80% of rice, its main staple.<sup>15</sup> The main export is garments, which accounts for 90% of Haiti's total exports.<sup>16</sup> Public spending on social protection amounted to just 2.91% of GDP in 2013, two-thirds of which was spent on public health care.<sup>17</sup> According

14 ECLAC (2013) Social Protection Systems in Latin America and the Caribbean: Haiti.

15 WFP, [www.wfp.org/stories/10-facts-about-hunger-haiti](http://www.wfp.org/stories/10-facts-about-hunger-haiti)

16 [www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2013/dec/31/haiti-minimum-wage-increase-ignites-row-textile-industry](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2013/dec/31/haiti-minimum-wage-increase-ignites-row-textile-industry)

17 ILO, World Social Protection Report 2014/15.



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to the FSDH, social insurance should be financed by general taxation as well as contributions from employers and employees. However, there is no comprehensive financing plan to cover all aspects of a social protection floor.

Priority 1 of the NIP, which deals with reforming the state and modernising public administration, includes a key aspect of public financial management. Therefore there is significant scope for the EU to support the Government in ensuring that a sound financial plan is put in place to achieve a national floor of social protection.

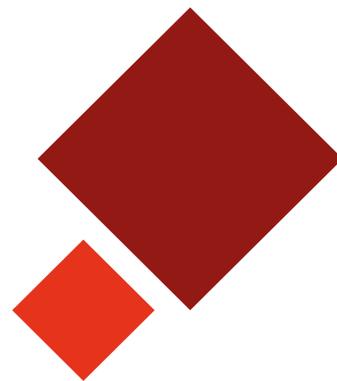




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This Social Protection Monitor Country Report was written by Dharini Bhuvanendra, based on the contributions of SOLIDAR member Solidarité Laïque and its partners in the field, including unions and parents' associations. These are: APROFH: Association des Professeurs de Français d'Haïti (Association of French Teachers), CNEH: Confédération nationale des éducatrices et éducateurs d'Haïti (National Confederation of Educators) FENATEC : La fédération nationale des travailleurs en éducation et en culture (The National Federation of workers in education and culture), UPEPH : Union des parents d'élèves progressistes Haïtiens (Union of progressive parents), and UNNOH : Union nationale des normaliens d'Haïti (National Union of Students).

The Social Protection Monitor is a tool developed by SOLIDAR, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Africa Platform for Social Protection to consult partner organisations on the priorities of the 11th European Development Fund's (EDF) National Indicative Programmes (NIPs).

SOLIDAR is a European network of membership based Civil Society Organisations who gather several millions of citizens throughout Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the values of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the three main policy sectors; social affairs, lifelong learning and international cooperation.

