Plan Stratégique de Sauvetage National

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English summary below

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Members of the Haitian democratic intelligentsia propose a Haitian-led reconstruction bank with wide powers and international support to fund the rebuilding from the earthquake, and couple that short-term proposal with a detailed plan to substantially modernize Haiti over twenty-five years, raising it to the level of its Caribbean neighbors. The planning process began at the August 2009 Conference for a Strategy of National Salvation held in Santo Domingo, bringing together some sixty Haitian intellectuals, former officials, and politicians. After the earthquake the drafting committee added the reconstruction bank and trimmed the ambitious development goals.

The plan is termed "an inter-generational pact for progress and shared prosperity, 2010-2035." Its slogan is "Together We Will Build a Country for All on a New Foundation."

In the words of the authors, "After the nightmarish day of January 12, 2010 we must think of how to rebuild the country and put it on the rails of development, modernization, and democratic governance." After the earthquake, the population would need to be more rationally spread around the country. With the lack of domestic resources, enormous foreign aid and investments of all types would be needed—a veritable Marshall Plan.

In any such plan, the authors propose, it would be as much in the foreigners' interest as Haiti's that the Haitian side proceed from a concerted long-term plan of its own devising, such as the Strategic Plan for National Salvation. Trying to manage it on an ad hoc basis, the method used to date, would be both expensive and ineffective. Ad hoc management has not improved the situation of the population despite the enormous amounts spent. The international community should review its strategy and make good the rhetoric of President Obama proposing a strategic partnership with Haiti. Haitians do not want to be dependent on humanitarian aid; they want to develop and stand on their own. The Strategic Plan is a tool to enable the aid donors to get tangible and visible results.

Reconstruction Bank

Given that 50 percent of Haitian businesses were knocked out in the earthquake, and that the government is incapable, the reconstruction bank, or International Bank of Development and Reconstruction of Haiti, would add capable Haitian management to what would otherwise necessarily be a foreign-dominated process. The bank would have full control over its internal operations which would apply professional banking norms. The board would be run by the investing multilateral development banks. It would have absolute protection from disruptive Haitian politics. The president of the bank would be a competent and experienced Haitian.

The bank's portfolio would lean toward development projects. It would be deeply involved in road and residential construction, airports, and coastal navigation. Emergency reconstruction to recover from the earthquake is estimated at five years and is confined to the three hardest-hit departments. The situation calls for decentralization so that the people in the other departments can get on with their lives without waiting for decisions from the disabled capital. To demarcate the emergency area is also important to limit the portion of aid that is strictly for charity. The backbone of the economy cannot be built by charity however well-meaning. The plan for national salvation posits a new bank with wide powers and international support to fund the rebuilding process.

Plan's zeal to change Haiti

The plan in its zeal to change Haiti is based on the values of democracy, progress and humanity. It bills itself as a realistic intellectual effort to conceptualize the modernization of Haiti. It lays out the choices to make and routes to follow to restructure the society, re-found the state, clean up the country, promote economic growth, restore the environment, manage demographic pressure, fight poverty and exclusion, integrate the whole territory, and respect human rights including those of women and their access to public policy.

The plan puts the comprehensive development of Haiti above such traditional divisions as right/left, black/mulatto, bourgeois/proletarian, rich/poor, intellectuals/illiterates, or peasants/city dwellers, as well as above the quarrels of politicians. The plan is conceived as an intellectual representation of Haiti’s future guided by the general interest. The new team of political leaders who would put this vision into effect would have to think of how to rebuild the country and put it on the rails of modernity and democratic governance. After the nightmarish day of January 12, 2010 we must think of how to rebuild the country and put it on the rails of development, modernization, and democratic governance. After the earthquake, the population would need to be more rationally spread around the country. With the lack of domestic resources, enormous foreign aid and investments of all types would be needed—a veritable Marshall Plan.

Beyond the reconstruction bank, the plan is "inter-generational," for twenty-five years, because in the words of the economist Louis Dupont, long-term planning is essential to a developing country because increases in productivity depend in good part on human capital, on improving the education of the workforce by establishment of centers of scientific and technical training which in the best of cases requires a generation.

Building on Predecessors

The Strategic Plan for National Salvation builds on a series of previous plans:
All of these reports contain positive elements for reorganizing Haiti socially, economically and financially, even if none could be expected to anticipate a disaster of the magnitude that occurred. Certain of them such as Marc Bazin’s (a major participant in the originating Conference for a Strategy of National Salvation) explicitly address the political problem of state reform. This is the first subject tackled by the present Strategic Plan for National Salvation. The plan defines a clearly-articulated state structure that could not be manipulated by a president’s whim. Most importantly, Haiti has alternative, capable political forces both internally and in its diaspora. We are not starting from zero.

**State Reform**

The plan is divided into two parts: reform of the state, and development of the economy and society. Under state reform the plan begins with an exhaustive overhaul of the legal structure, retaining, however, the constitution of 1987. Far from disposing of the constitution the plan calls for finally enacting the laws it foresees. From the powers of the president to those of local government a thorough-going modernization of the code and regulations is proposed: “Pas de loi, pas de progrès!” Special emphasis is given to promoting decentralization by giving local government dedicated revenue sources and a defined legal framework.

As the plan notes, the 1987 constitution with its call for a strong and stable state as the legal foundation for reform A consolidation of executive departments is proposed in which five of seventeen would be eliminated. 

Professional development would become the criterion for government recruitment. Men and women would have parity. Pointedly, preference should be given to “risk-takers” with a sense of public service in hiring for government jobs. The administration must be responsive to the public. An administrative hotline would enable members of the public to track their cases. One official would be clearly identified with each case and would be available for personal meetings; institutions would have to put in place plans to handle periods of heavy demand. Internet log-in sites would be created to facilitate access to the public administration in the most remote parts of the country.

The document lays stress on the dissemination of what it calls “republican values,” attempting to instill “principles and values” into state offices. Government officials would have to learn a new sense of responsibility. Their efficiency would be compared to their counterparts in private enterprise. They would learn from good practices elsewhere in Haiti and the Caribbean. They would also be invited to government seminars on decentralization.

**The Police**

The Haitian National Police would be overhauled with a view to matching authority with accountability and so improving the image of the police among the population. A clear demarcation of areas of responsibility was needed between police headquarters, district stations, and individual officers. The police would use networks in the society to gather information and improve intelligence capabilities. “They would open regular channels of communication between the police and the people so that each citizen could become an informer in the service of stability and social peace.” There would be a regular dialogue with public-opinion leaders, religious leaders, school principals, and advocacy groups to foster responsible social behavior and a culture of tolerance among the population. There would be instilled in the police a structure of participation without destroying the chain of command in order to integrate the police psychologically and socially, create a sense of solidarity and respect for the law which would better equip them to carry out their mission.

**Opening to the Diaspora**

In the new, more vigorous diplomacy proposed by the document, dual citizenship of Haitians living abroad would be recognized. At the same time, the unity of the diaspora would be promoted as would their patriotism and love of Haiti. The capital, technological skills, and expertise of the diaspora would be tapped for Haiti’s internal development and expansion of markets abroad. Haitians retaining high positions and professional experience in Western companies and laboratories would be encouraged to return to update Haitian technology and organize Haiti to compete for foreign sales.

Haitians abroad could vote in Haitian elections and participate in politics. They would also be put in touch with Haitian embassies and consulates and formed into pressure groups to influence foreigners’ policy toward Haiti. Haitians returning would be reinserted into society and encouraged to start businesses.

**Judiciary**

The Haitian judiciary, the document notes, has been the subject of foreign reform efforts since 1994 with indifferent results. For Haiti’s modernization nothing was more important than to have a state of law, truly-functioning courts, and equal justice for all. Starting from the top, the vacant post of chief justice of the supreme court should be filled. Judges’ remuneration should be adequate and transparent. Corruption should be countered by expanded powers for an inspector-general and simplification of procedures for citizens’ complaints, while retaining penalties for false accusation.

**Economy**

The Haitian economy grew 5 percent annually between 1970 and 1979, only to falter in the 1980s and completely collapse in the 1990s. The earlier success rested on the price of coffee, massive foreign aid, tourism, remittances, and the assembly industry. Then came hurricanes, the slaughter of the Haitian pig, military coups, economic embargo, and another decade and a half of political instability. Per-capita GDP dropped by half. Poverty spread everywhere.

To change this reality one had to change economic policy. The new team would have to reduce the deficit, encourage savings, control inflation, stimulate private investment, modernize state corporations and increase jobs.

The action would begin in parliament with a law setting out a strategy of accelerated growth. The government’s discretionary funds would be put under strict control. Each department would publish accounts. The fiscal year would be made the same as the calendar year. There would be special surveillance for the pension and retirement funds and insurance plans.

Fiscal policy would permit the state to find the means to finance its activities. Tax collection would be strengthened and exemptions reduced or eliminated. The informal sector would begin to be taxed. The state would get in the lottery business. Customs collection would tightened up. Fraud and corruption in the state enterprises would be prosecuted.

Monetary policy would counter inflation. The law requiring transactions to be in the national currency would be enforced. Foreign-exchange vendors would be required to be certified and submit reports. To boost the balance of payments export markets would be pursued, diaspora remittances would be as much as possible directed to growth enterprises and job creation, retirement communities for diaspora of means would be promoted, and foreign direct investment would be courted.

There would be a crackdown on fraud and economic crimes. Payments to government officials would be traceable. Accountants would be certified. Magistrates would be trained on economic topics. Real-estate sales procedures would be improved.

Businesses would be made easier to start. Sole proprietorships would be added. Infrastructure improvements in electricity, potable water, ports, airports, and roads would make it easier to do business. Remote rural localities would be connected to the main roads.

The goal would be investments at 30 percent of GDP creating an annual growth of 6 percent. Other instruments, covered below, such as a national development bank and an investment fund would finance infrastructure. Measures would be taken to liberalize credit. An insurance fund would cover 50
percent of innovative projects undertaken by youth.

Transportation companies on land, sea and air would be encouraged. Engineers from the diaspora and low-wage countries such as Russia and Eastern Europe would be used in industry. Special economic zones would be created for boat-building, mechanical industries, and vehicles. Mining would be rationalized.

Unemployment would be tackled by major infrastructure projects including railroads, housing, highways, and regional ports and airports. Labor-intensive industries would be encouraged. Employment agencies would be helped. The unemployed would be encouraged to start their own businesses. Incentives for retail employment with public-sector financing would be created.

**Tourism**

The Strategic Plan singles out tourism as a priority sector for the new governing team. It once generated $50 million a year for Haiti, more than 20 percent of all exports. Tourism would contribute much to helping the nation meet the challenge of social and economic development, and in the area of creating income and reducing unemployment and poverty.

Haitian youth would learn tourism and the hotel industry. Professionals in the field would share their skills. Professional certification would be developed.Statistical gathering would be improved to track trends in the industry.

For financing tourism, strategies would be pursued to attract foreign and domestic investment in hotel chains, theme parks, and retirement communities. To increase volume, affordable tour packages in Haiti would be marketed to the middle class of developed countries. Historical sites and monuments would be rehabilitated. Local governments would be involved. A tourist police would be set up. Eco-tourism would be developed. Aggressive marketing would be carried out abroad including via tourism agencies and facilities. Information would be placed on the Internet. Cultural festivals would be organized. Tourism information centers would be placed in the major tourist sites. “Haiti” as a distinct destination in the Caribbean would be promoted. Haiti would be represented at international exhibitions. Contracts would be signed with advertising agencies. The media would be included in campaigns for “Destination Haiti.” The diaspora, the intellectuals, the youth and the artists would all be encouraged to promote Haiti’s image. Positive reports in the media would be reprinted and distributed.

**Environment**

On paper, many initiatives for the environment have been taken. An environmental ministry was created in 1994. It has remained an empty shell. Again in 1999 many plans and projects arose. The impression was given that the government had made the environment a priority. In fact all the plans were abandoned. The second Préval administration did not make it any sort of a priority.

The spread of slums in residential neighborhoods, the building of houses in unsuitable locations, rapid deforestation and consequent erosion, forest fires, unsanitary conditions in the cities, pollution, devastating floods and hurricanes are commonplace in national life to the point of threatening our existence. The Strategic Plan for National Salvation envisages establishing a democratic state and a new team of government aware of the gravity of the situation and equal to the challenge. Environment must be a top priority.

The citizens who want change must take control of the levers of policy to stop the impending catastrophe. There is an emergency and it is time for action! René Préval, in power for a second time, we are faced with a catastrophe that threatens to swallow us all. It is the duty of the new authorities arising from the next elections to take control of the related issues of development and environment.

We propose as a strategic input making the environment an instrument in the fight against poverty. The environment must figure in every government policy. The ministry must be strengthened and public-private partnerships established.

Public-education campaigns must be introduced. Early-alarm facilities should be created and the public warned in a timely manner. National disaster-management capabilities must be upgraded.

The public needs to be persuaded to protect the forests. Education in replanting is a priority. State agencies must be empowered against illegal logging. Reforestation must be prioritized. Create alternative projects for the rural poor to counter logging. Develop alternative energies to reduce use of charcoal. An aggressive plan to replace charcoal and wood in bakeries, ironing, and cooking in the twenty-five most important towns over the next five years should be implemented. Wind, solar energy, and propane gas should be promoted.

The imbalance caused by centralization in Port-au-Prince and resultant vulnerability would be lessened by creating regional poles of development each with their distinct industries connected by main roads to the rest of the nation. Multi-mode transport, not just by road but by sea and air, would be promoted. A railroad should be built to the Dominican Republic.

**Agriculture**

The model followed in agriculture has proved more than counterproductive, it has been a disaster. Land productivity has plummeted and natural resources have been degraded. The ancient ecological equilibrium that kept the soil fertile has been disrupted by population pressure and climate change.

Agriculture is a vital sector to save. Despite its weak productivity compared to the Dominican Republic, it accounts for 23 percent of GDP. Sixty-six percent of the working population is in agriculture. Almost 60 percent of the population lives in the countryside. Not only does it afford work to such a large number but it also unites the peasant with his green space and self-identity, making it a social as well as economic priority.

Investment in agriculture is an investment in national security. It promotes internal security while stemming the outflow of migrants. It rescues the peasantry. It promotes tourism as a contributor to growth and economic development.

Haiti imports necessities and products to feed its inhabitants. The country has the assets to make agriculture a motor of development and an instrument in the fight against poverty. It can make agricultural profitable: a huge proportion of the rural population is young, most production is organic, there is considerable biodiversity, there are underused water resources and there is great eco-tourism potential. What is lacking is investment and political will. Higher world prices for agricultural products and the country’s food dependence equally argue for investment. Agriculture currently consists of 600,000 small lots averaging 1.8 hectare each. The subdividing and pressure on the land reduces productivity and hurts the prospects of an economically competitive agriculture able to feed the nation and remain ecologically viable.

Agriculture must be placed in a sustainable economic strategy aimed at recovering the nation’s ability to feed itself. Let Haiti make the best of what it has.

No political group that wishes to change the conditions of life of the Haitian population can disregard agriculture.

The agricultural work force is aging. More than half are fifty or older. Without modernization and insertion of youth in the sector the country risks losing all of its agricultural know-how, as in the cultivation of cane after the closing of the sugar plants. There is high risk of losing this know-how!

The twin tasks are to guarantee the population’s food security and to find markets for agricultural exports. Agriculture must recover the internal market and export the surplus.

The goals are:

1. Assure production to feed the population
2. Sustain the small family farm
3. Support traditional small truck farming, orchards, and livestock without impeding economies of scale when conditions arise
4. Improve the standard of living of farmers while still bringing in foreign exchange
5. Assure agricultural credits
6. Extension agencies to upgrade farm and livestock quality
7. Assure quality inputs
8. Assure animal health
9. Preserve natural resources
10. Make agriculture an economic motor
11. Micro credit to poor women to augment production
12. Irrigation and farm roads
13. Social, sanitary, and economic facilities

Education

As of 2006, five hundred thousand Haitian children of school age were totally without schooling. Meanwhile, the extension of private and religious schools to make up the deficiencies of the state had not brought an increase in quality. Education is a profitable investment for the society and the individual.

In higher education, twenty thousand Haitian students were in universities in the Dominican Republic at a cost of $100 million a year. This sum could be gained for the Haitian university system. The state university of Haiti had a budget of only $12 million, with which it could not reach international standards. The practice of theoretically offering free education to all comers denies the university the revenue from middle-class and better-off families who could afford the cost of a state university.

Electricity

The electricity sector is a microcosm of the larger problem of poverty. Haiti sells only 45 percent of the electricity it produces. The rest is stolen or wasted. Only 25 percent of the population has access to electricity. Attempted solutions have wrestled with the question of whether to privatize the industry, but ideologically the society is not prepared to accept privatization. More recently it has become evident that public-private partnership is the way to go.

The Strategic Plan posits an annual growth of 5 percent increasing production from 550 Gwh before the earthquake to 2,200 Gwh in twenty years, an increase of 400 percent. This would require an investment of $1.2 billion over fifteen years. That would satisfy 90 percent of the industrial and commercial demand and 60 percent of the residential. The first fifteen years of investment could not be profitable to the electric company, it must be covered by the state. At that point the sector would enter into the black.

Finance

To finance the development of Haiti, the Strategic Plan calls for innovative, nontraditional approaches using Haiti’s own resources. It cites the success of South Africa and Mali with national development banks. Such a bank could handle the remittances of the diaspora to Haiti and attract part of the savings accounts of diaspora depositors. Haiti could look to South-South linkups with other national development banks and ethnic funds to finance large projects such as highways, airports, and housing developments.

Although the plan’s projections of diaspora investment are clearly optimistic, it is true that the advent of a new modern team to government in Haiti could transform diaspora attitudes creating a solidarity seen in other Third World countries.

At the original conference for a strategy of national salvation, former finance minister Marc Bazin said, “Haitians have a poor concept of foreign aid. Their method is to make an inventory of our needs and present the bill to the donors.”

The Strategic Plan emphatically avoids this mistake. It energetically seeks to maximize Haitian sources as well as attract foreign loans and investment.

Conclusion

Haiti after January 12, the day of the earthquake, must become a different country. The Strategic Plan offers a road map to coordinate the smaller plans, programs and projects the country will undertake in the coming years. The earthquake demands an intensive mobilization of the nation, diaspora, international lenders, and friendly countries. Haiti has great potential. It has the qualified men and women who in agreement with the international community can answer the challenge of underdevelopment. To help Haiti recover is to join with and recognize the dynamism of its people who have a sense of the common interest and have never given up their faith in democratic institutions. To help Haiti is to lend solidarity to the two-hundred-year struggle of the people against corrupt, authoritarian, obscurantist, incapable, and purposeless rulers. To help Haiti is to support its people in their effort to form a political and economic leadership that is enlightened, entrepreneurial and open-minded.

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