Day of Destruction

Survival and Stewardship in the Haiti Earthquake

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Overview

In 1697, Spain ceded the western third of the island of Hispaniola to France.

The colony of Haiti, based on forestry and sugar, became the wealthiest in the Caribbean through the brutal exploitation of African slaves and environmental degradation.
Haiti was the first independent nation in Latin America and first black-led republic in the world following a bloody slave rebellion in 1804.

Since then Haiti has had 50 presidents.

Nine served full terms - the remainder were overthrown, executed, assassinated, or died in office.
Area 27,751 km² (10,714 mi²)
Population 10,033,000 (2009 est.)
Government by elected President, appointed Prime Minister, and bicameral National Assembly
GDP $6.952 bil.; Per Capita $570 (2008 est.)
Currency Gourde (HTG)
   HTG 40 = approx. US $ 1
Median age 20.2 yrs.
Population growth 1.8%
Birth rate 29.1/1,000 pop.
Death rate 8.65/1,000
Infant mortality 59.69/1,000 live births
Child mortality (thru age 5) 120/1000
Life expectancy 60.8 yrs.
Urban population 47%; growth 4.5% yr.
Literacy 52.9%
Poverty 80%; 54% abject poverty
Haiti (left)/Dominican Republic Border
Haiti suffers with poor infrastructure

- 80% of energy use is wood or charcoal
- Only 10% on the electric grid
- Water and sewer facilities lacking
- Poor urban and rural roads
- Inadequate and expensive harbor facilities
- Limited airport capacity
Erosion is pervasive...
... but not without hope
Haiti’s river basins and coastal delta areas have the highest hazard risk, mostly as a result of flooding from heavy rains, tropical storms, and hurricanes. Deforestation and erosion exacerbates the risk of landslides associated with floods and heavy rains.
HAITI EARTHQUAKE
230,000 killed
196,595 injured
1,200,000 to 1,280,000 displaced
3,000,000 affected
*All figures are approximate. Commune population figures as of 2003.
SOURCES: OCHA/G/H 02.22.10
Villa Creole Hotel
Haiti’s Heroes
Parking lot became a triage clinic
At dusk the injured began to arrive
We cared for hundreds
using hotel furniture...
...whatever else we could find...
...or just the ground
the parking lot filled
Medical supplies were exhausted after 18 hours. Supplies were reduced to water and torn sheets for bandages.
Hope For Haiti

Just after dark on the second evening Hope For Haiti, a Florida based NGO, arrived with a truckload of supplies and a doctor.

They were miracle workers - with drugs, morphine, IVs, antibiotics and skills I lacked.

They stayed for 12 hours then went on to help others.
Lessons Re-learned

• When we are called, we can perform
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• When we must, we will perform at levels above our capability
• When we are called, we can perform
• When we must, we will perform at levels above our capability
• Spontaneous actions reinvigorate humanity
• When we are called, we can perform
• When we must, we will perform at levels above our capability
• Spontaneous actions reinvigorate humanity
• Individually and collectively, we will do the right thing...
...because it’s the right thing to do