

## International Donors Face Quandary in Haiti

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International donors agreed Monday to a decade-long commitment to help rebuild Haiti following its devastating 7.0-magnitude earthquake. These donors face major challenges, working with an already weak government and an impoverished population. Economist Jeffrey Sachs and other experts discuss how to approach this many-layered dilemma.

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NEAL CONAN, host:

This is TALK OF THE NATION. Im Neal Conan, in Washington.

The scale of destruction in Port-au-Prince after a massive earthquake two weeks ago is difficult for many of us to comprehend. The country's largest city, its port, its government and much of its already weak infrastructure lie in ruins.

Hundreds of thousands are dead, injured or homeless. Schools, hospitals, churches and markets have all crumbled. At a meeting for international donors in Montreal this week, Haiti's prime minister said his country lost 60 percent of its GDP in 30 seconds.

Over the next several weeks, attention will focus on immediate needs: food, water, shelter. But recovery and reconstruction will be the work of decades in a country that already suffers from desperate poverty, ineffectual government and rampant corruption.

If you have experience in post-disaster reconstruction and development, call and tell us what works. Our phone number: 800-989-8255. Email: [talk@npr.org](mailto:talk@npr.org). You can also join the conversation on our Web site. Go to [npr.org](http://npr.org). Click on TALK OF THE NATION.

Later in the program, an in-depth look at Yemen and al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. But first, reconstructing Haiti. And we begin with economist Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University and special advisor to U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. He joins us now from a studio at Columbia in New York City, and it's nice to have you with us on TALK OF THE NATION today.

Professor JEFFREY SACHS (Director, Earth Institute, Columbia University): Thank you so much. Good to be with you.

CONAN: And yesterday in Montreal, Secretary of State Clinton said that Haiti's government has to take the lead in reconstruction. Critics, though, say if the government's in charge, much of the money that's provided might be wasted or stolen. How can donors have confidence their money will be well-spent?

Prof. SACHS: I think taking the lead and being fully in charge are two different things. The Haitian government is in a state of complete crisis, of course. They've lost countless members of the parliament, and all of the ministries have crumbled. The presidential palace, as we've all seen, was crushed. So this is a government that itself is going to be rebuilding, and it was a government that had very limited capacity to begin with.

All of this means that from a moral, ethical, political point of view, Haiti has to point the way to recovery, but it's going to need partners. And it's going to need systems that will engage international expertise and international financing mechanisms to help get the job done.

Now, we're not so good at it on the outside, and that's part of the problem. The international system, sometimes called the international community, isn't all that much of a community. We tend to get tied up in knots, but now we have an urgent problem. We're - spending and reconstruction are at the stake of life and death of countless people right now.

CONAN: And as you look at it - and again, we're not talking about this emergency phase, which is going to last a month or two or three, but rather further down the road when people's attention is not so focused on the immediate crisis. But what's the first priority? Is it power? Is it roads? Is it - where do you begin?

Prof. SACHS: At first, it's still stabilizing the population, with more than a million displaced people, the problem of food, water, shelter and - in Haiti's context - safety from what will be torrential rain starting in a couple of months and one of the most dangerous hurricane lanes in the whole world is a major issue.

Simply putting people, even temporarily, in tent cities, as is the norm with displaced populations, could prove devastating just two or three months from now if the hurricanes come back in the way that they did in 2008. Haiti took four direct hurricane hits in a row in 2008. It was still rebuilding from that when this earthquake hit.

CONAN: Well, beyond that, again, beyond these immediate needs, do you begin with electrical power? Do you begin with trying to reconstruct roads? Rebuilding the port? Getting the airport to be more efficient?

Prof. SACHS: I think that there are a number of things that need to be done, and setting up specific task groups - Haitians and external experts - to get things done simultaneously is quite important.

For one thing, 60 maybe after this shock 65 or 70 percent of Haiti's population lives in the countryside. These are subsistence farm communities. Haiti has to feed itself. If we help with the planting season - which begins in either weeks - with something as simple as helping farmers get a bag of fertilizer and a little tin of improved seed, Haiti could, even this planting season, perhaps increase by 50 percent, even more, the food that it produces.

So one thing that should be done immediately but with long-term beneficial consequence is help a successful planting season in the countryside that is now absorbing people from Port-au-Prince and that was left intact by the earthquake. And that's where two-thirds of the population lives.

Then, of course, it is going to be clearing rubble, and it's going to be rebuilding basic services, getting electricity, water, sanitation turned back on, making sure that the port is working and that other ports are equipped with the cranes and the loading equipment so that they can become receivers of what will be massive inflows of heavy machinery and other heavy building materials.

Within a few months, actual physical construction of homes, something more than tents, should start. There will be a nascent Haitian construction industry that will, in fact, provide jobs and incomes for hundreds of thousands of people - that is the workers and their dependents - who have been displaced. And so there will be a boom of construction, if there's appropriate international assistance.

So I would say the rural area to produce enough food, the urban area on the basics of reconstruction and on the stabilization of infrastructure - ports, power, water, sanitation, connectivity - and on the basics of public services: getting schools operating, and, of course, getting clinics and hospitals working.

They are not working right now. Thousands of people continue to die from injuries that were suffered in the earthquake but are not being properly attended to still today.

CONAN: We're talking about reconstructing Haiti. Our guest is Jeffrey Sachs of the Earth Institute at Columbia University. 800-989-8255 if you have direct experience with reconstruction in disaster areas, or email us: talk@npr.org. Jeff's calling us from Portland.

JEFF (Caller): Hey - hello, Neal. Thank you.

CONAN: Sure.

JEFF: I have - the question that I have is seeing that the military needs to be involved, apparently, for stability and security - and those are concerns for the future - and the rubble removal alone, the demolition industry is going to have to employ locals. Nonetheless, the military with its history of private contractors and the U.S. government with its participation and corporate interests in place like Haiti, to what extent is there going to be a political game played with private contractors, and to what extent can it be managed in a transparent way as to avoid the idea that money is going to be sucked out of a disaster? Because the last thing we want is someone to get wealthy on this horrid, horrid situation. Thank you.

CONAN: Thank you. Jeffrey Sachs?

Prof. SACHS: One thing to keep in mind, despite the utter tragedy that the U.N. incurred with the collapse of the headquarters of the U.N. peacekeeping mission, there still is a very large U.N. peacekeeping force, and that should remain. It should be rebuilt. There's a wonderful leader that has come in to take over because of the death in the earthquake of the former head of MINUSTAH. And I believe, in general, that the U.S. should aim to multilateralize its help. And by that I mean if the U.S. views this as a mainly U.S. activity, we're not going to succeed on many counts.

First, the U.S. loses interest quickly in Haiti. This has been shown, decades and decades of sad reality. Second, if we want to leverage our help, which we need to do to get other countries to participate, we want to put our money into a common pot that others can join. Third, we do not want to politicize this

operation in the way that the gentleman suggested, but in many other ways, as well.

So my recommendation is that we find an effective way to multilateralize or internationalize the way that we are assisting, putting a lot of emphasis on the U.N. peacekeeping operation, but then finding other means for the other dimensions that I mentioned: the agriculture, the reconstruction in the public services. So it's not a U.S.-only effort. That would be a huge mistake.

CONAN: And the military has already started talking about phasing out its part of this in a couple or three months and turning over to civilian agencies as they become more capable.

But let's turn now to another voice. Joining us is Katleen Felix. She's Haitian diaspora liaison for Fonkoze, Haiti's largest microfinance organization, and joins us today by phone from Montreal in Canada. Thank you very much for being with us today on TALK OF THE NATION.

Ms. KATLEEN FELIX (Haitian Diaspora Liaison, Fonkoze): Thank you for having me.

CONAN: And I know you work closely in villages throughout Haiti, beyond the area directly affected by the earthquake. Of course, many people are returning to those places, to the countryside from Port-au-Prince. Will those villages be able to support the influx of people?

Ms. FELIX: No, of course not. The people have left those villages because they couldn't find jobs, and they couldn't find proper care. So that's why they had to migrate to Port-au-Prince. Now they're migrating back, the infrastructure is still not there for them. So those villages will need support.

The diaspora has been sending money a lot to support different hometown associations and groups that they've been in contact with. So we think that through the money transferred, the collective transfers to Fonkoze so we know, for example, Jean Rabel and Mirebalais are, like, severely flooded by people, and they need some assistance. And yet we don't see any assistance from the international community.

So that's something that we have to flag, and we've been telling our partners on the ground, but this is something that we have to watch carefully. And hopefully, they'll get some support.

CONAN: Would you agree and support the idea that Jeffrey Sachs mentioned a moment ago that we might begin by providing seed and fertilizer for small farmers in the countryside?

Ms. FELIX: I agree with that. I would add to that that we can also consider microenterprises, like to give them small loans to start businesses and start their life, get the livelihood, some livelihood program working.

There's some agencies that have programs. We have the microfinance program, but there's others also working on the ground that we can beef up their activity. So this way, you know, the people can start, you know, generating their own revenue and get their life back, and not thinking necessarily to go back to Port-au-Prince.

We don't want them necessarily to go back to Port-au-Prince, because only Port-au-Prince is getting the attention.

CONAN: We're talking about how to rebuild Haiti: who's in charge, who pays, what's the plan. If you have experience in post-disaster reconstruction and development, give us a call. Tell us what works: 800-989-8255. Email us: [talk@npr.org](mailto:talk@npr.org). More with Jeffrey Sachs of the Earth Institute. He's also a special advisor to the U.N. secretary-general - and with Katleen Felix, the project director, the Haitian diaspora liaison for Fonkoze, Haiti's largest microfinance organization, in just a moment when we come back from a short break. Stay with us. I'm Neal Conan. It's TALK OF THE NATION from NPR News.

(Soundbite of music)

CONAN: This is TALK OF THE NATION. I'm Neal Conan, in Washington. The focus in Haiti, now two weeks after the earthquake, continues to be on immediate needs: food, water, medical care, shelter. As attention, though, turns to longer-term questions, the country faces huge challenges, how to rebuild.

We'll talk with an architect from Haiti a bit later, but the rebuilding process will take more than bricks and mortar. If you have experience in post-disaster reconstruction and development, give us a call. Tell us what works. 800-989-8255 is the phone number. The email address is [talk@npr.org](mailto:talk@npr.org). You can also join the conversation on our Web site at [npr.org](http://npr.org). Just click on TALK OF THE NATION.

Our guests are Jeffrey Sachs, who directs the Earth Institute at Columbia and serves as special advisor to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Also with us, Katleen Felix, project director and Haitian diaspora liaison for Fonkoze, Haiti's largest microfinance organization.

Let's see if we can get another caller on the line. This is Ann, Ann with us from Mountain View in California.

ANN (Caller): Hi. I lost my home in a natural disaster a number of years ago, and I just wanted to make the point that as hard as this is, the immediate disaster, there's many organizations that do a great job dealing with the short-term disaster issues. But what there is really a need for is a much more longer-term view and disaster studies and disaster organizations to deal with a much longer-term.

In my opinion, we should really be looking at the long-term recovery as five to 10 years, not, you know, two years, like it is now. I think we don't recognize the long-term needs. And I think it's kind of like, you know, you're rescuing a drowning person, and some of those people, you just get them on the boat, you let go, and some of them will sink back down. And I think it's up to us to if we're going to rescue people, you get them on the boat, you dry them off, and you make sure that they get on with their lives.

I mean, just giving rendering the aid to some of these people will actually make them vulnerable to being stolen from, to being victims again. And at some point, the needs of people will diverge, but there are general categories that can be dealt with. And I think in order to really help this country recover, and any place where there's a big disaster, we need to start dealing with the long-term.

I want to tell one more story, if I may.

CONAN: Keep it quick, if you would.

ANN: Okay. About three to five years after our disaster, and there were thousands of home that were burned this is the Oakland firestorm. I noticed that many - a disproportionate number of our elderly neighbors seemed to be dying. and it could have been a coincidence, but I just wanted to know if it was that was actually probably the most stressful time, and I wanted to know if there was any relationship.

And there was nobody could answer my questions. There was nobody studying it. The person who had done the groundbreaking research on long-term follow-up, it was like six months, and he actually kind of yelled at me and said, you know, who would believe that anything that long after, you know, an event could be related?

And nobody's looking at that question. And I really, I worry about the people who survive the tsunami, and I worry about this country of Haiti, how stressful it's going to be three to five years out and six years out.

CONAN: Well, Ann, we're going to follow up on that in a few minutes, but let me get back to your first point, which is a very good one. Jeffrey, Sachs, is she right that this is going to be taking we need to be thinking in terms of five to 10, or maybe 20 years?

Prof. SACHS: Of course Ann is right. And the point is that quickly, rescue turned into relief, which turns into reconstruction, which turns into long-term development, and they're all a seamless part of this great challenge.

Now, this is an impoverished country, but it's interesting to compare with the other side of Hispaniola, the other side of the island that Haiti shares with Dominican Republic.

Haiti and Dominican Republic were roughly equal income levels, Haiti a bit poorer, maybe 25 percent poorer, in 1960. Then these two halves of the island diverged. Dominican Republic achieved lots of economic growth. It rose in income about four times from then, whereas Haiti actually declined by half - a lot of complicated reasons, some of which came from the outside. The U.S. inadvertently destabilized the country. At some points, it advertently destabilized the country. But the point is that Haiti can achieve what its neighbor has achieved. It means building up agriculture. It means rebuilding tourism. It means rebuilding a nascent industry.

Now to do that, it already starts now. It starts with a proper planting season. It starts with the microenterprise that Katleen Felix mentioned. It starts with building, finally, at least a minimum infrastructure for the country: roads, a power grid, water and sanitation that can support economic growth.

So as an economist speaking to this medium-term issue, indeed we have a 10-year horizon to not only achieve basic reconstruction - because you don't want to just reconstruct. It was an impoverished place. You want to achieve economic development, and in a place like Haiti, that does mean rural and urban. It means industry and services and food production. It means setting a foundation in place.

It can all be done. It's going to cost money, and it's going to require stamina. And unfortunately, Haiti's international partners, starting with the United States, have rarely shown that kind of stamina to be a good partner in a process like this.

CONAN: And let me turn to Katleen Felix and ask, yes, I'm sure you also believe this is a long-term project that's going to stretch out for many years to come, but I wanted to turn to the other side of what our caller was asking about, the stress.

Here's an email we have from Molly in Cincinnati: What role do mental health services play in disaster recovery? Are any mental health services being organized or offered in Haiti, or is that something that's outside the can of the health services that are available now?

Ms. □FELIX: Well, it's not yet I didn't hear yet that there's any health services being done. It was already poor in the country before. But I know that the Association of Haitian Psychiatrists has been talking a lot with the Clinton Global Initiative Partners about that and see how they could maybe provide some services and give some training.

So it's something that people are thinking about, but now since it's a crisis and there's so many parts to be I mean, so many things to be done, we this is not yet an emergency, but soon it will be one. And, of course, it's big trauma. What we see on TV is nothing compared with what's on the ground. So definitely, they'll need some support in the long run, yes.

CONAN: Five, 10, 15, 20 years down the road, Haiti's future lies with education. An education system that was not functioning well is now in ruins in many parts of the country. What can be done there, do you think, Katleen?

Ms. □FELIX: There's many things to be done. I think another view I would say the livelihood programs, beef up what exists, and what exists already, we don't have reinvent anything, invent the wheel. There's programs that are existing and working that are proven. Everybody has a part of the puzzle. I think that's something that we have to acknowledge, whether it's from the grass-roots organization, local NGOs, international NGOs. People have to start to talk together, and I saw that yesterday at the conference. As Dr. □Sachs says, it's not the community - the international community is not a community. There's lack of communication. But I did see improvement yesterday at the conference, you know, they lay down some principle. They agree on, you know, giving the government some leadership, not to take over.

So those are a sign that, you know, they're going to try to apply some lessons that they learned from other countries, other disasters. So I'm hopeful.

CONAN: Another idea that's emerged, Secretary of State Clinton was talking about a donor conference to be held in a couple of months at the U.N. headquarters in New York, but before that, to hold a to try to figure out what the needs are. Nobody's come up with how much money they even begin to think they're going to need.

Ms. □FELIX: Yes. This is something that everybody's trying to figure out, how much it's going to cost. USAID put together a portal where - I think it's called Rebuild Haiti. This portal is to put - you can put what you need and try to find, you know, matching grants or donors who would be willing to support in cash or in kind. So they're trying to figure out, like, what's going on and who needs what. Again, the grass-roots organization, the people in rural Haiti are not hurt yet. So we have to find a way to figure out what they're doing and how we can help them and support their relief effort on their side.

Prof. SACHS: Neal, maybe I could, if I might...

CONAN: Go ahead, Jeffrey Sachs, yes.

Prof. SACHS: ...just to give some indication of the dollars and cents involved in this. Of course, nobody knows precisely. When the prime minister spoke of losing 60 percent of GNP in the physical infrastructure, that is a number around four-and-a-half billion dollars. That's not a bad very first estimate of direct recovery reconstruction costs.

It's going to be probably one to two billion dollars for the housing, another billion dollars or so for the roads, another billion dollars or so for various core infrastructure of the ports, the power and so forth. There's a major buildings, the hospitals, schools, government, ministries and so forth that will need to be rebuilt. When I've tried to do a rough estimate, of course, not grounded in detailed engineering reports, but a rough economic estimate, I come to somewhere between five and \$10 billion distributed over a period of five to 10 years. And I think a rough estimate for the direct reconstruction is therefore by the billion. But you have to add on several things on top of that, keeping people alive. That's the UN emergency support. That's roughly estimated about a billion dollars for this year.

And then, development support, something that was needed even before the earthquake, comes out to about the same number, again, another billion. So we're looking at something on the order, I believe, of about \$3 billion per year for the next few years - of which the U.S. part might be one billion of that. That's not a lot of money in the context of a disaster like this. It's about \$3 per year from each

American. And I sure hope we do this.

Now, our track record's not good. The cameras go off. The money doesn't flow, and that's why it's suggested that the U.S. and Europe and Japan and Latin American countries pool their money into one single account at the Inter-American Development Bank, which is the trusted partner institution for this kind of capital investment. And then, it would fund exactly the kinds of operations, NGOs, reconstruction that Katleen has been talking about.

CONAN: Mm-hmm. Okay. Well, Katleen Felix, thanks very much for your time today. We appreciate it.

Ms. FELIX: Well, thank you for inviting us and hello to Dr. Sachs. I hope to see you soon.

CONAN: Okay.

Prof. SACHS: I'm looking forward.

Ms. FELIX: Okay. Thank you.

CONAN: Katleen Felix, project director and Haitian Diaspora liaison for Fonkoze, Haiti's largest microfinance organization, with us today on the phone from Montreal, where she attended yesterday's international conference. Jeffrey Sachs is still with us. He's director of The Earth Institute at Columbia University and special adviser to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

If you'd like to join the conversation, if you have direct experience in reconstruction after a disaster, give us a call: 800-989-8255. Our email is [talk@npr.org](mailto:talk@npr.org).

And you're listening to TALK OF THE NATION coming to you from NPR News.

And with us now, to talk about physical reconstruction in Port-au-Prince is Lawrence Vale, professor of Urban Design and Planning at MIT, co-author, or co-editor of "The Resilient City: How Modern Cities Recover from Disaster." He's with us today from member station WBUR in Boston. Nice to have you with us.

Professor LAWRENCE VALE (Urban Design and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Co-editor, "The Resilient City: How Modern Cities Recover from Disaster"): Good to be with you.

CONAN: And also joining us from member station WBFO in Buffalo, New York, is Pierre Fouche, a Haitian citizen, currently a doctoral student in earthquake engineering at the University of Buffalo. And thank you very much for being with us too.

Mr. PIERRE FOUCHE (Student, University of Buffalo): And thank you for inviting me.

CONAN: And Lawrence Vale, much of Port-au-Prince is in rubble, any talk of reconstruction? I guess, really, needs to begin there.

Prof. VALE: Yes. But we always have to think about what we mean by reconstruction or rebuilding, because it's not simply the physical rebuilding that has to be taken on its own, but how that interrelates with the socioeconomic rebuilding and what might - one might call an emotional rebuilding. The caller a few minutes ago, and talking about the Oakland fires, was very clear about how long the effects of this kind of thing can be. And as one thinks about the physicality, one has to think about the jobs that go with the buildings and the social networks and the emotional needs of the people that are all tied up with it. And sometimes, we separate these things out too dramatically.

CONAN: And Pierre Fouche, let me turn to you and ask, obviously, one thing we need to be concerning ourselves with is what kind of construction, if people are going to be - start rebuilding well, some, they started building two weeks ago. They started putting together these tent cities and these bare huts. But they're going to start building things that are more substantial, but things that are no better protected against an earthquake than what was there before.

Mr. FOUCHE: I think at this level, there's one important thing that has to be done right from the beginning, and this is something that we didn't think of in the years past. I think we need to think in terms like urban planning. What is the global picture here? Because if we just let the people do the - start doing things the way that they were doing before, the consequences are going to be the same.

And this being said, is that - one of the steps that the government can take, actually, is to adopt some sort of like, building codes, which is going - at least going to give the standards for the new construction that are going to appear in the years to come. And if - a new building code will mean also to add an enforcement of those - of these building codes.

CONAN: Exactly. Gotta have your government inspector come around and say, wait a minute, that's

not the code.

Mr. FOUCHÉ: Exactly. So we need enforcement. But at the same time, we have to remember that we have lost a lot of human resources too, because many of the universities have collapsed. So now, there would be a need for training - of training of, like, engineers, architects in order, like, to design according to the code that will be adopted.

Now, in terms of like type of construction, what is important to remark at this level is that we enforce concrete constructions, steel construction, they can be designed so that they can withstand the effects of an earthquake.

Now, the country is going to need to, like, (unintelligible) resources. We are in an impoverished-like country. And this is at this level that we are going to need to ask help, like from the - from outside of the country. And we are talking about, like, investing - I mean, the international level, they are thinking about investing a lot of money inside the country for reconstruction process and quite likely, the NGOs are going to be part of this now.

But what can we do in order to bringing our part like to the equation is that we need to get the private sector inside the country to invest in the reconstruction process. Maybe the people would not have the money to build and design concrete construction or steel construction, but at least with the help of the private sector. Some investment can be done at that level to have the some sort of affordable housing projects, for instance.

CONAN: Well, we're gonna have to take a short break. We're going to ask all of our guests to stay with us. Pierre Fouché, who we just heard from, Lawrence Vale, from MIT, and Jeffrey Sachs from Columbia University: 800-989-8255. Email us: talk@npr.org. So, more about the challenge of rebuilding Haiti in just a moment. Plus, we'll talk about the growing threat from al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. A Washington Post correspondent has just returned from a couple of months in Yemen, so stay with us.

I'm Neal Conan. It's the TALK OF THE NATION from NPR News.

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CONAN: We're to continue our conversation about reconstructing Haiti. Our guests are Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, special adviser to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Also with us, Lawrence Vale, professor of urban design and planning at MIT, co-editor of, "The Resilient City: How Modern Cities Recover from Disaster." He's with us from WBUR in Boston. Pierre Fouché, a Haitian citizen and a doctoral student in earthquake engineering at the University of Buffalo, joins us today from member station, WBFO.

And we're going to just turn to a number of very interesting and provocative emails. This one is from Mike Spence(ph) in Flagstaff: Haiti needs food security, that means support for farmers right now and emergency road construction, so they can get their produce to market. But they should discard the notion that they aren't there to improve roads.

After Hurricane Mitch in Honduras, I documented the human benefit of a USAID emergency road construction effort that had a huge short-term benefit, but the roads deteriorated with the first rainy season, and the local national government - their promises notwithstanding - did not maintain them. Much of the important benefit was lost within two years. Pave the roads so they can survive a rainy season.

And Lawrence Vale, does he have a good point?

Prof. VALE: Certainly. Anything that can be done that is a longer term solution, drawing upon the best examples of what has worked under similar climate change climate circumstances or similar political circumstances is really worth implementing if at all possible.

CONAN: As you look at the again, another regional example perhaps, Managua, there are large parts of that city that have never been reconstructed after the earthquake.

Prof. VALE: Yes. I think that's somewhat of an exception, but it's nearly 40 years and there has not been full reconstruction of that city.

CONAN: Let's see go to another email, this from Gabrielle(ph): The discipline of permaculture addresses water, food, sanitation and shelter in ways that are interactive and locally adapted. Low-tech sanitation, low-input agro-forestry projects, water catchment and management, seed saving, locally adapted emergency structures and other elements all serve immediate and long-term resilience - thoughts on this.

And Jeffrey Sachs, if you tell us first, what permaculture is.

Prof. SACHS: Well, I think just to say that we need an agro-ecology in general whether its a forest cover, which Haiti desperately needs; whether its a tree cropping, whether it's more efficient staple crops. Haiti's countryside, as everybody knows, is profoundly degraded. It's been that way for decades. Indeed one could argue for more than a century that which gotten tremendously worse over time.

But I think the remarkable point is that in all of the aid efforts for years, which never amounted to all that much, I should emphasize, the countryside was chronically neglected. So aid did come in, did drabs and drabs, almost always to the cities. And this means that there's a tremendous potential right now, a huge potential for raising productivity in the countryside, where still, two-thirds of the population lives.

And just to give one number, Haiti produces about 800 kilograms per hectare of cereal production. In other words, when they grow grains, it's a little bit less than one ton per hectare. But across the boarder in the Dominican Republic, the farmers there are getting four and half tons per hectare. The difference is, that in on the Haitian side, the farmers are so impoverished, they don't use improved seed, they don't use fertilizer, they can't afford it. They don't have even the most basic irrigation equipment, so 90-plus percent of the farming is rain fed and highly variable.

These are areas where huge improvements and quality of life in income levels, in food security and ability to feed the urban population could occur in a short period of time if finally the international help and the domestic focus is properly directed at a sustainable agriculture.

CONAN: And this email from Andrew(ph) in Clive, Iowa: In all the reports about Haiti, I've seen nobody has explained what type of housing there was in Haiti before the quake. Did most people live in small houses that they owned or rented? Did they live in apartment buildings? Unless we know that, we can't talk about what we need to replace. Is the land on the city owned by lots of individuals or a few rich landlords, or companies? Do you need to replace all those houses? Do you need to build large complexes? If people are renters, will some of them not come back, as renters did not return to New Orleans? And lets turn to Pierre Fouché for that.

Mr. FOUCHÉ: Okay. About the types of construction that we had in the country before the quake, most of them they were reinforced concrete construction, masonry buildings, and sometimes they use some sort of (unintelligible) to construct the houses. You know...

CONAN: Adobe, yes.

Mr. FOUCHÉ: Yes. And you know the problem back home also is with the number of towns that have developed around Port-au-Prince, around the city, in areas where the people were not supposed to build to start with. Now, in terms of ownership of those construction, most of the time you have many (unintelligible) you do not have like just one big company owning, like, several apartments or several buildings where you have renters coming like to rent an apartment. This is not actually the case.

So - and the reason for that is simple. Its just because the people, they were doing according to what they wanted to do because there was (unintelligible) control. There was no control like in terms of like delivering construction permit or inspecting the site of construction.

CONAN: So anybody could build pretty much whatever they wanted to. Yeah.

Mr. FOUCHÉ: Exactly. Exactly. So this is what happen. So now, moving forward, one of the things that can be done is to try to introduce this idea of having like apartment complexes. I know its going to be a little bit difficult because this is a new culture altogether, because before the quake, the idea was, I need to have my own house even if it is not according to any standard.

CONAN: Mm-hmm.

Mr. FOUCHÉ: Even if it is just one room, we have with everybody packed inside of it, but the idea was I have my own place. Now, introducing apartment complexes and to have like people rent apartment in them is going to be big challenge, but this is going to give us one security at least. Knowing that if from the government side, what is supposed to do in terms of like inspection of construction of those apartment complexes is done, at least we know that we have safer structures.

If we have safer structures, that means in the future, when the next earthquake hit or when the next hurricane season come, we are not we dont have like to deal with so much so many damages and so much (unintelligible).

CONAN: Well, next hurricane season too, of course, in the next summer. So thats going to be quick.

Mr. FOUCHÉ: Exactly.

CONAN: One more question and this is from Tom(ph) in St. Paul. A question: wont there be interest in the U.S. who prefer to send in U.S. grain paid for with aid funding rather than helping Haiti to grow its own food? Jeffrey Sachs?

Prof. SACHS: Well, this of course has been the mistake that the U.S. has made time and again. Theres a vested interest in selling our grain. It turns out, shipping that grain is as expensive as the grain itself and it deprives the local livelihoods. The estimates that weve made about food aid versus helping farmers grow their own food is that helping farmer grow their own food is about four times less costly than shipping U.S. food.

In the first days or weeks, you do need shipments of food aid. But we have a growing season starting in a couple of months, and it absolutely behooves us to help Haiti get a bumper crop on its own production. This is a country substantially of peasant farmers who, if they have the inputs, are going to produce a good crop for the whole country.

CONAN: Thanks to you all. Thats a subject to which I expect were going to return over the years to come. Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute in Columbia University. We also had Lawrence Vale with us, professor of urban design and planning at MIT. And Pierre Fouche, whos a Haitian citizen and a doctoral student in earthquake engineering at the University of Buffalo. Thanks to you all. Appreciate your time today.

Prof. SACHS: Thank you very much.

Prof. VALE: Thank you.

Mr. FOUCHE: Thank you,

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Recent First



**Barbara Scott (FinalEyes)** wrote:

PeaceTek: In the EU, there are requirements for membership, such as the country must have a market economy and be a functioning democracy. Becoming a U.S. state may not serve Haiti in the long run and almost certainly won't serve the United States, and of course the reason for that is that the U.S. have already exploited them so there's nothing left to take.

Tuesday, January 26, 2010 8:29:04 PM

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**Barbara Scott (FinalEyes)** wrote:

Good Andrew. And hire Haitians to construct them.

Tuesday, January 26, 2010 8:26:08 PM

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**andrew christie (ACCC)** wrote:

Shelter for Haitians, 8'X20' steel Box- shipping containers are the best "fast architecture",Terrace the hills, Storm proof,stackable, portable, Add doors or windows

etc,Millions are available. Andrew C. Art Metal 415.931.9409

Tuesday, January 26, 2010 2:41:27 PM

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**Sharon Caulfield (sharoncaulfield)** wrote:

For those who are specifically interested in providing assistance to those in nursing homes in Haiti, please see:

<http://www.helpageusa.org/index.html>

Also, I would like to commend to your readers our Colorado-based sustainable community development organization working on the southern peninsula. [www.coloradohaitiproject.org](http://www.coloradohaitiproject.org)

Tuesday, January 26, 2010 2:34:04 PM

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**Jeff Powell (PeaceTek)** wrote:

Has anyone even floated the idea of inviting countries like Haiti to become US States? Much like the EU, I think that having open borders [WAY beyond NAFTA] with States like Haiti would make for a better world - yes, they would get the IRS, but also WIC, the USDA, EPA, OSHA, Senators, a Congress person [or two], a stable currency, Medicaid/Medicare, etc. etc.

Tuesday, January 26, 2010 2:27:09 PM

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