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**Haiti after the Disaster –
Lessons learned from Evaluations, Consequences and Recommendations
for the Future of Swiss Humanitarian Aid**

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ABBREVIATIONS	3
TABLE OF FIGURES	4
1 INTRODUCTION	5
2 THE EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI	6
2.1 Socio-political and economic Context	6
2.2 The Impact of the Earthquake	7
3 THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE EARTHQUAKE	9
3.1 Humanitarian Actors	10
3.1.2 International	10
3.1.2 National	11
3.1.3 Regional	12
3.2 The Cluster Approach	13
3.3 Achievements	17
3.4 Challenges and Recommendations	20
3.4.1 Organizational Issues	20
3.4.2 Operational Issues	28
3.4.3 Conclusion	29
4 THE SDCS RESPONSE TO THE EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI	30
4.1 Response	30
4.2 Challenges and Problems	32
5 LESSONS LEARNED FOR THE SDC	33
5.1 General Recommendations regarding the Multilateral Aid System	35
5.1.1 Increase Influence in Multilateral Organizations	35
5.1.2 Assessment and Monitoring of Funded Partner Organizations	36
5.1.3 Internal Monitoring of the SDCs cooperation and activities	37
5.2 Specific Recommendations regarding the Involvement in the Cluster System	37
5.2.1 Focus on Selected Clusters	38
5.2.2 Offer Translation Services	38
5.2.3 Establish Multilateral Forums	38
5.2.4 Strengthen Public-Private Partnership	39
5.2.5 Offer Psychosocial Support	40
5.2.6 Raise Awareness	40
5.2.7 Support National and Local Ownership	40
6 CONCLUSION	41
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY	43

Abbreviations

CSO – Civil Society Organizations
ERC – Emergency Relief Coordinator
DPC – Direction de la Protection Civile
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
GPPI – Global Public Policy Institute
EU-MIC – European Civil Protection Mechanism
HCT – Humanitarian Country Team
HC – Humanitarian Coordinator
IASC – Inter Agency Standing Committee
ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP – Internally Displaced Persons
IFRC – International Federation of Red Cross
MINUSTAH – United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
NFI – Non-Food Items
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA – Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSOCC – Onsite Operation and Coordination Center
PDNA – Post-Disaster Needs Assessment
SAR – Search and Rescue
SDC – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
UN – United Nations
UNDAC – United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
USG – Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs
WASH – Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP – UN World Food Program

Table of Figures

Fig. 1: Haiti Earthquake Intensity Map USAID	8
Fig. 2: How are disaster relief efforts organized?	14
Fig. 3: Global clusters/cross-cutting issues and clusters/sectors activated in Haiti	16
Fig. 4: Structures established by the military	22

1 Introduction

Haiti is one of the poorest nations in the Western Hemisphere suffering from high levels of poverty, weak governance structures, organized crime and sporadic outbreaks of violence as well as an extreme vulnerability to almost annually occurring floods, hurricanes and related disasters. This weak socio-economic and political situation in Haiti has aggravated the destruction and the losses of the devastating earthquake, which stroke Haiti on the 12th January 2010 with a magnitude of 7.0 (Grünewald & Binder, p.7, 2010). It can be considered as the most significant disaster since the Pakistan earthquake in 2005, requiring a large-scale multi-sectored international response. It is estimated that over 222'000 people have been killed and that almost one third of the Haitian population has been directly or indirectly affected by this natural catastrophe (IASC, p.1, 2010). The Haitian government lost 33% of its staff and 102 of the UN personal died, which severely constrained their response capacity (OCHA a, 2011).

This paper will firstly illustrate the socio-economic and political context of Haiti, both important determinants for the aggravation of the earthquake disaster and the emerging challenges for relief efforts taking place in the aftermath of the earthquake. Secondly, there will be a brief assessment of the earthquake's impact and its consequences on the Haitian society and the state. It then addresses the international humanitarian and the SDCs response to the enormous earthquake in January 2010 in Haiti, outlining their main achievements and challenges encountered. Based on these findings, we will then propose recommendations for the improvement of the international humanitarian aid concerning the UN Cluster approach, and then in more detail for the SDCs humanitarian aid in light of future humanitarian crises. The goal of this paper is therefore to clearly reveal weak instruments or areas in the multinational aid response and to make concrete suggestions in order to address these shortcomings. The conclusion will summarise our main points raised in the paper.

2 The Earthquake in Haiti

In order to grasp the full amplitude of the earthquake that hit Haiti on the 12th of January 2010, it is crucial to understand not only the country's current social and economic situation but also its political history. Haiti has endured political instability, constant challenges in governance and has the highest levels of poverty in the Western Hemisphere (UNDP, p.8, 2009). Reflecting on the country's context can thus provide a valuable contribution to assessing the humanitarian aid provided after the disaster and at the same time shed light on the difficulties it has imposed on it.

2.1 Socio-political and economic Context

Although being located in a relatively stable political region, Haiti is a particularly fragile state ranking twelfth out of 177 countries in the Failed State Index (Fund for Peace, p.1, 2009). Since having gained independence from France after a bloody civil war in 1804, Haiti is still faced with weak governmental institutions, lack of public infrastructure and massive unemployment that contribute to the frequent occurrence of violence and relate to various security problems in the country (Collaborative for Development Action, p.4, 2010).

Haiti ranks amongst the poorest countries worldwide with almost three quarters of its total population living under US\$ 2 a day (World Bank, p.1, 2009). In addition to wide-spread poverty, the high rate of urbanization in Haiti, with 45.6 percent of the Haitian society living in urban centres, has further aggravated the appalling living conditions in high-density areas for Haiti's vulnerable population.

The weak governance institutions and infrastructure has prevented the deliverance of public services to the citizens of Haiti. NGOs and international aid have in result stepped in to fill these gaps, reinforcing the state's weakness. Furthermore, the influx of international aid in the past has fluctuated strongly, rising sharply since 2002, mainly due to increased payments following tropical storms and several hurricanes and food riots in 2008 (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, p.1, 2009). The unpredictable funding through international aid and the absence of a coherent international aid strategy for Haiti have had negative impacts on peace building, reconstruction and economic development efforts

(Muggah, p.40, 2009). Moreover, the country highly vulnerable and prone to natural disasters, a condition that is further exacerbated by an extremely high rate of deforestation (99%) and land erosion (United Nations Population Fund, p.40, 2010).

In sum, these factors have imposed severe constraints on the provision of humanitarian aid to Haiti after the earthquake in 2010. Not only have the fragile state structures reduced Haiti's own national disaster risk management capacities, but have further impeded international assistance as a whole. The weak infrastructure, the high rate of deforestation and the elevated rate of urbanization have increased Haiti's vulnerability to the earthquake, leading to devastating destruction and to an extremely high number of victims.

2.2 The Impact of the Earthquake

In order to give the reader a full picture of the disaster and to understand the conditions the international community faced in Haiti more thoroughly, the impact of the earthquake will briefly be highlighted in this section of the paper.

With a magnitude of 7.0 on the Richter scale, the earthquake in Haiti had a disastrous impact. The dimension of the earthquake is comparable to the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004 but concentrated in a much more limited area (Grünwald & Binder, p.7, 2009). According to the Haitian Government, the death toll was as high as approximately 230'000 people, with over 2.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and a total third of the whole population affected (USAID, p.2, 2010). The magnitude of the earthquake in Haiti might not have been unusually high in comparison; however, the tragedy was mainly aggravated and reached such gravity due to two factors: Firstly, the epicentre was located only roughly 10 kilometres beneath the surface and occurred in close distance to the southern peninsula coastline, where it hit the country's urban settlements with great force (Grünwald & Binder, p.22, 2010), as illustrated in Map 1.

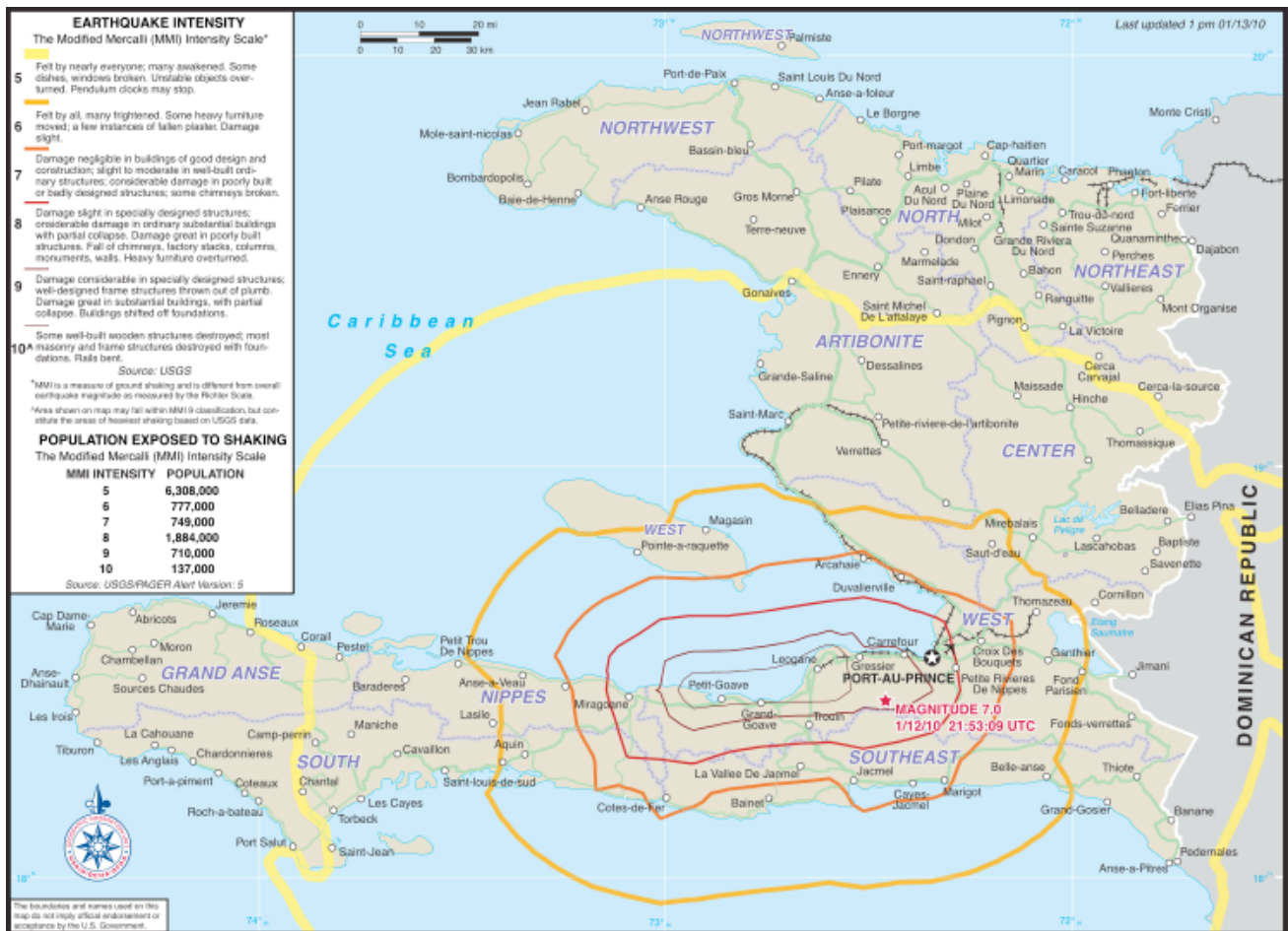


Fig. 1: Haiti Earthquake Intensity Map USAID

(www.usaid.gov/ht/docs/eqdocs/ofda_fact_sheets/01.13.10_haiti_map_1.pdf)

Secondly, the earthquake hit the capital Port-au-Prince and other nearby cities severely. By striking at the very heart of the Haitian economy and administration, the earthquake had an acute effect on the human and institutional capacity to deliver timely response to the victims of both the public and the private sector. A great part of the government's and the UN's infrastructure was badly affected; making the institutions functioning as actors in the humanitarian response becoming victims of the earthquake themselves. Faced with partially complete destruction of infrastructure and traumatization of personnel, the already weak State of Haiti only had limited capacity to take charge of the disaster response.

Additionally, the existence of several external constraints further complicated the timely and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. Amongst them was for example the almost complete breakdown of telecommunication networks that hindered communication both within the country and with the outside world. Furthermore, the control tower of the airport

in Port-au-Prince was no longer operational after the earthquake, which resulted in the U.S. Army taking control over the airspace as well as the regulation of the air traffic in Haiti (Grünwald & Binder, 2010). Although many international NGOs and UN agencies had the necessary equipment in place, their delivery was negatively affected due to high infrastructural damages such as blocked roads and ports. There were also difficulties with accessing affected areas evoked by the non-availability of fuel or vehicles.

The damage to buildings and infrastructure has been enormous. The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) estimates that 105'000 homes were completely destroyed while over 208'000 houses have been damaged, including various prominent government buildings, prisons, schools and hospitals (Government of the Republic of Haiti, 2010). The fact that an estimated 1.3 million people were living in temporary shelters around the city of Port-au-Prince and an additional 500'000 people were seeking refuge in rural areas of the country further exacerbated the already difficult access to food and other basic services.

The total value of damage and loss caused by the earthquake is estimated at US \$ 7.804 billion, which is equivalent to about 100% of Haiti's GDP in 2009 (Government of the Republic of Haiti, p.7, 2010).

3 The International Response to the Earthquake

The humanitarian response and reconstruction program has been an exceptional challenge for the numerous international actors who have been on site in Haiti after the disastrous earthquake. The influx of hundreds of humanitarian actors – many of them not necessarily professional and well informed in their tasks – has posed a serious coordination problem constraining the response capacity. In this chapter, we will briefly discuss the international, national and regional actors who have been involved in the humanitarian response in Haiti, as well as the humanitarian coordination mechanism behind their help commonly known as cluster approach. To date, the international humanitarian community has contributed enormously to the provision of emergency relief services, lifesaving activities and the reconstruction of Haiti – in sum, achievements that we will discuss in more detail in the next

chapter. However, due to the extent and nature of the earthquake, the volatile situation in Haiti and the coordination challenges among the international actors, the international community has experienced some major problems in responding effectively and efficiently to the disaster. These problems as well as some lessons learned will be part of the last chapter.

3.1 Humanitarian Actors

In this chapter we will briefly enumerate the most important international, regional and national humanitarian actors responding jointly to the enormous earthquake hitting Haiti in 2010.

3.1.2 International

International Search and Rescue

Within 48 hours after the earthquake, 6 teams were operational which amounted to 67 teams in the following days. They saved 134 people, which is the highest number of live rescues ever recorded by the international SAR teams. On 23 January, the search was halted and the teams left the country (IASC, p.8, 2010).

United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team

The UNDAC team was essential in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake in coordinating the SAR teams and humanitarian coordination as well as conducting initial damage and impact assessments. The UNDAC team was composed of 13 members who established an Onsite Operations and Coordination Center (OSOCC) in the MINUSTAH Logistics Base in Port-au-Prince and two sub-OSOCCs in Jaemel and Léogâne, in order to help local authorities and humanitarian actors involved in the response (IASC, p.8, 2010). They were supported by both the European Civil Protection Mechanism (EU-MIC) and the staff of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (IASC, p.8, 2010).

International Humanitarian Community

The international humanitarian organisations, which were already stationed in Haiti before the disaster, were able to mobilise their aid efforts within the first 72 hours. However, they had suffered heavy losses from the earthquake themselves. Staff was killed and injured and offices and homes were severely damaged. The international humanitarian community who provided assistance in response to the earthquake was composed of a variety of humanitarian actors, which made an effective coordination even more important.

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) was introduced during the first week of February and played a crucial role in addressing key strategic issues in relation to the humanitarian response. Seven UN Agencies, seven NGOs, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, observers from the NGO Coordination Support Office and in case of extended meetings humanitarian donors are part of the HCT, which is led by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). In the aftermath of the earthquake, “the office of OCHA was strengthened to provide dedicated support to the humanitarian community on inter-cluster coordination, information management and analysis, mapping, civil-military liaison, donor coordination, advocacy and media outreach (IASC, p.9, 2010).”

MINUSTAH and International military Presence

MINUSTAH has already been present in Haiti with a strong and extensive military corps since 2004. Due to the earthquake, their initial response was hampered because they lost over 100 staff members and many more were injured. The UN Security Council extended the MINUSTAH mission on the 19th January 2010 in order to “increase the overall force levels (...) to support the immediate recovery, reconstruction and stability efforts (IASC p.10, 2010).” Additionally, twenty-six countries offered military assets to support the earthquake response, including field hospitals, troops, military aircrafts, hospital ships, cargo ships or helicopters. Canada, the US and the Dominican Republic sent the largest contingents to Haiti (IASC p.10, 2010).

3.1.2 National***Government of Haiti***

The Haitian Government’s capacity was already limited prior to the earthquake, but its ability to respond effectively was furthermore constrained by the destruction of many

national and municipal buildings and by the death and injury of many public officials. The fire station of Port-au-Prince was severely damaged as well as the buildings of the Ministry of the Interior in which the Emergency Operation Centre and the “Direction de la Protection Civile” (DPC) were located (IASC, p.7, 2010). The DPC started its work the day after the earthquake despite the destruction of communication lines and the damaged headquarters. In order to cooperate with the international community, the government introduced a coordinating mechanism and organised daily to weekly reunions between the Council of Ministers and representatives of the international community. The Government also implemented six working groups consisting of people from the civil society and the Government in order to organise and coordinate actions in the areas of energy and fuel, health, food aid, reconstruction, safety for temporary shelters and water distribution. Ministers were also authorised to undertake specific geographic responsibilities at the commune level to support the municipalities (IASC, p.8, 2010).

Haitian population and civil society

The immediate response after the earthquake came from the Haitian community itself, which rescued affected people and provided support for the injured. The local community was however constrained in helping due to the blocked roads, absence of electricity, limited first aid skills, and psychological trauma and fear of strong aftershocks (IASC, p.7, 2010).

The Haitian Civil Society Organisations’ (CSOs) immediate assistance to the affected and displaced people was also crucial, which was comprised of over 800 organisations both national and international prior to the earthquake (IASC, p.7, 2010).

3.1.3 Regional

Due to its proximity, neighbouring country Dominican Republic was the first country to assist Haiti by sending water, food and heavy-lifting machinery. Especially in the initial first months of the response, it was of importance that the Government of the Dominican Republic allowed the international community to use its territory and facilities (such as their international airport) for the distribution of relief goods to Haiti (IASC, p.11, 2010). The Dominican Republic sent emergency teams to help the injured and the Dominican Republic Red Cross coordinated early medical relief in conjunction with the IFRC (IASC, p.11, 2010).

After having briefly enumerated the major humanitarian actors involved in Haiti, the next chapter will discuss the organisation of the international humanitarian response known as the UN Cluster Approach.

3.2 The Cluster Approach

The Cluster Approach was part of the humanitarian reform introduced by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2005 and 2006 involving key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners in order to ensure “more systematic and predictable attention to all the main sectors of response (Holmes, p.4, 2007).” The Cluster Approach was proposed to strengthen the building of partnerships and to increase the predictability and accountability of humanitarian response to humanitarian disasters. The overall goal is to make humanitarian response more effective by clearly indicating the division of labour among organizations and defining their roles and responsibilities within the different fields of activities. The IASC has elected global cluster leads in eleven fields of humanitarian action, which can be seen in the figure below.

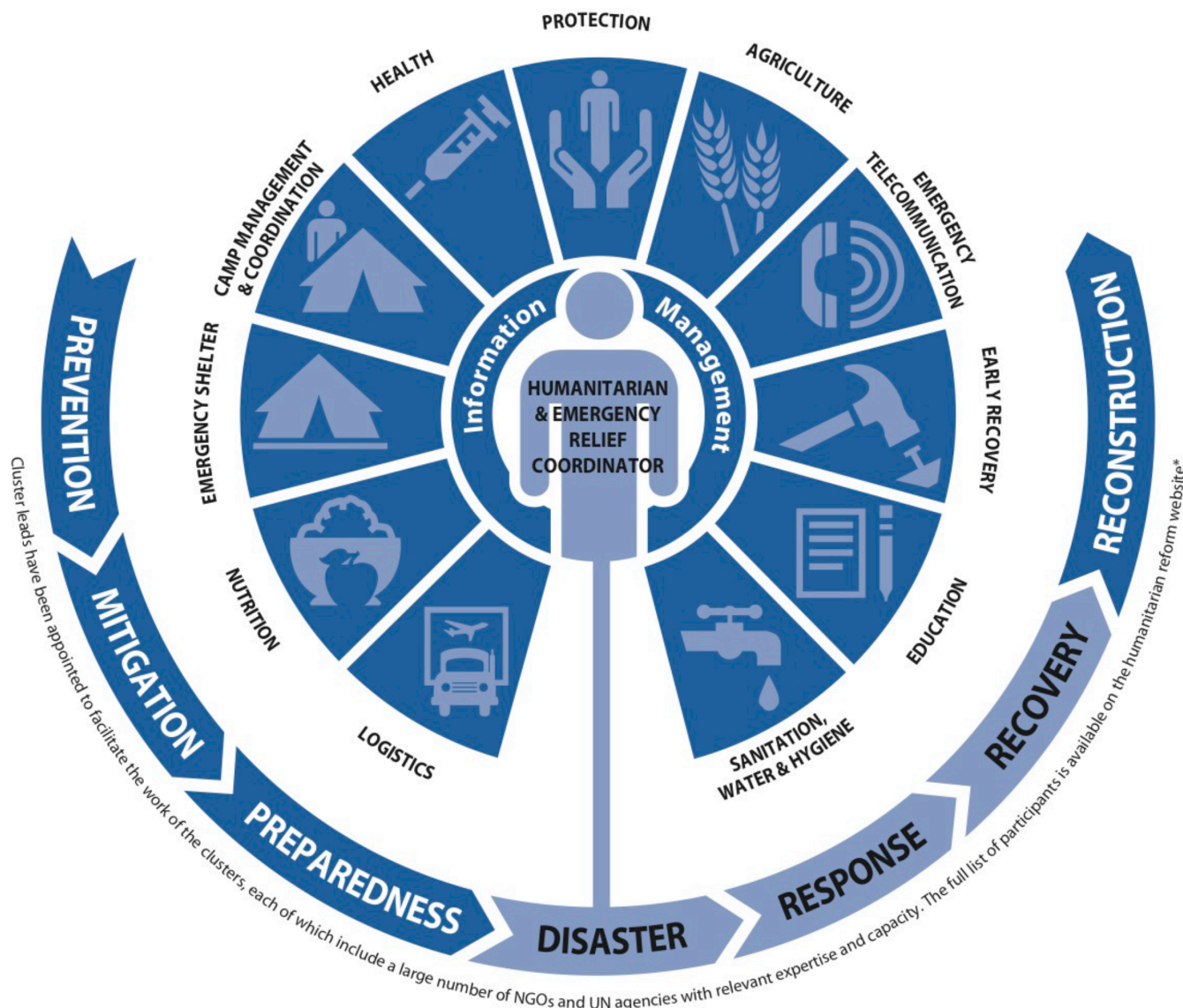


Fig. 2: How are disaster relief efforts organized?
<http://business.un.org/en/documents/6852>

An important institution for the implementation and the functioning of the Cluster Approach is the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), whose “mission is to mobilise and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors in order to:

- alleviate human suffering in disasters and emergencies
- advocate for the rights of people in need
- promote preparedness and prevention
- facilitate sustainable solutions” (business.un.org – Partnering for a better world, 2011).

OCHA is based at United Nations Headquarters in New York and has another main office in Geneva and 30 regional and field offices. OCHA is one of the departments of the UN Secretariat, led by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (USG/ERC). The ERC (displayed in the middle of the figure) has to guarantee the functioning of the OCHA in New York, Geneva and in its field offices, as well as to perform advisory tasks for the Secretary-General on humanitarian affairs (OCHA, 2006). At the country level, the USG/ERC can appoint a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) who is responsible for coherent and well-organized aid responses in a country hit by a conflict or a natural catastrophe. The HC will then collaborate with the local government, international organizations, NGOs and the affected society. In order to support the Humanitarian Coordinator, an OCHA office will be installed on site (business.un.org – Partnering for a better world, 2011).

In Haiti, the cluster system was introduced in August 2006, even before the OCHA was present in the country and before the IASC/CPIO Country Team and the relevant clusters were established (Grünwald & Binder, p.19, 2010). The clusters were then formally activated by the IASC/CPIO Haiti in September 2008 to coordinate the response to the Gonaives flood emergency and devastating series of storms. The national authorities and the humanitarian country team decided on the coordination structure for humanitarian operation in Haiti illustrated in Figure 3. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that the Cluster Approach has been set up parallel to already existing governmental and local coordination structures in Haiti, which have sometimes hampered the international relief efforts after the earthquake due to their abundance and often dysfunctional coordination mechanisms (Grünwald & Binder, p. 16, 2010).



Fig. 3: Global Clusters/cross-cutting issues and Clusters/sectors activated in Haiti (Grünewald & Binder, p. 21, 2010)

The IASC has recently published an assessment paper for the Cluster Approach in Haiti, highlighting that the introduction of the Cluster Approach has helped improve coordination. “It enhanced partnership between the UN and other international humanitarian actors, facilitated information sharing, improved the predictability of leadership, limited duplications and enhanced coherence (Grünewald & Binder, p.7, 2010).” On the other hand, the evaluators also found various shortcomings concerning the Cluster Approach in Haiti, such as weak ownership and connectedness as well as low levels of accountability towards the Humanitarian Coordinator and affected population (Grünewald & Binder, p.7, 2010). These aforementioned shortcomings will be studied in more detail in the subsequent chapters in relation to the earthquake.

In light of the occurrence of the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, the already established Clusters were immediately reactivated on January 15th 2010, with the response operation organized through 12 Clusters and 2 sub-Clusters. The Haitian Government appointed counterparts to co-lead each cluster if possible.

After having elaborated on the UN Cluster Approach and its implementation in Haiti, we will now discuss the main achievements of the international humanitarian response based on the Cluster Approach.

3.3 Achievements

Over the past 16 months, there has been a far-reaching international humanitarian aid response to the disastrous earthquake in Haiti in January 2010, supporting Haitian people and its government by providing humanitarian assistance in order to help rebuild the country. As a result, the international community (NGOs, UN and donor governments) succeeded in saving many lives and alleviated the misery of the affected people.

Due to the limited scope of this paper, we will only briefly enumerate the main points of accomplishments divided by fields of activities in the table below (OCHA b, 2011):

Sector	Activities
1. Displacement to safer areas and Camp Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At present 810 000 people are living in 1150 camps • Regular monitoring of 95% of camps • Relocation of 8000 IDPs to planned sites
2. Early Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing of 10 – 15 % of rubble • Successful installment of Cash/Food-for-Work schemes (1 Mio people benefited) • Work such as debris removal and clearance of drains, restoring public facilities
3. Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.1 Mio. children receive daily meals through the National School Feeding Program • 2 729 temporary learning spaces and 80 % of damaged schools reopened • 195 000 children have benefited from temporary learning spaces
4. Food and Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.3 million people received food rations in the following weeks • Over 100 000 children and 48'000 mothers benefitted from nutrition counseling
5. Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 400 health partners are providing assistance • 90% of IDPs in Port-au-Prince have access to health clinics • Psychological support and activities

	provided in 25 communes
6. Water and Sanitation (WASH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Water and sanitation needs met for over 1.7 million people • Over 11 000 latrines constructed • At least 5 liters of drinking water per person is being delivered to 1.2 Mio. people daily
7. Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection and human rights trainings for camp managers, NGOs, and the police • 109 solar lights in 40 camps to improve security and patrolling • IDP Camp security needs assessments conducted
8. Shelter and NFIs (Non-Food Items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 100'000 tents and 1'000'000 tarpaulins distributed • 1.5 million people have received emergency shelter materials
9. Common Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistics: Air Service by the UN Humanitarian Air Service, logistic hubs • Emergency Telecommunications: establishment of a security communications network
10. Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2010 revised UN Haiti Earthquake Appeal envisaged activities costing \$1,502 million over a one-year timeframe. 72% of the contributions have been received by January 2011

Despite these successes, the international humanitarian community was also facing some exceptional challenges in Haiti, such as weak government structures and widespread poverty.

Their aid efforts were further complicated by an outbreak of cholera in October and a period of political instability followed by the November 2010 elections (BBC News Online, 2011).

As these external constraints have already been discussed, the next chapter will lay focus on the organizational and operational challenges faced by the international humanitarian community.

3.4 Challenges and Recommendations

The 2010 earthquake in Haiti was disastrous due to several unique circumstances, which were on the one hand already present before the earthquake hit (poverty, weak government and high urbanity), and on the other hand created by the earthquake itself (destroyed infrastructure and IDPs). The particular challenges emerging for the international humanitarian community when providing aid assistance in Haiti can be summarized as follows:

How to handle an urban disaster with damaged infrastructure, weak and/or destroyed state institutions combined with a massive influx of humanitarian actors?

These different challenges can be split up into two main groups, namely organizational and operational issues. Organizational issues occurred during the coordination of aid and relief efforts involving international and regional helpers, whereas operational issues are problems that occurred in the process of helping, i.e. problems that humanitarian actors were confronted with on the field. This chapter will give a brief overview over these two types of challenges encountered as well as proposing a short recommendation after each challenge identified.

3.4.1 Organizational Issues

Organizational issues have occurred on the one hand within the international aid community regarding coordination, leadership, communication and organization capability and on the other hand, when the international aid community had to cooperate with the local

government and the Haitian civil society. We will discuss both types of organizational issues accordingly in the next paragraphs.

Coordination within the international aid community

According to the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI) Report, the first five Clusters (Food, WASH, Health, Shelter, Non-Food Items (NFI) and Logistics) were mobilized within two days. The formation of the Clusters, the coordination structure installed by the UNDAC as well as the take-over by the OCHA have all been successful. International and local observers also complimented the international helpers who were already stationed in Haiti prior to the earthquake on their immediate help, despite being badly affected by the earthquake. The quick emergency response in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake was well organized; yet, problems within the Cluster System occurred at a later stage in the process of providing emergency relief services. These will be now summarized in the following paragraphs.

a. Leadership

According to the GPPI Report, weak humanitarian leadership was one of the main problems and in consequence responsible for many shortcomings regarding the response. Operational agencies such as the UN as well as national agencies didn't have a framework ready for their activities, the military forces (MINUSTAH and US Army) could not be properly assigned to tasks and the local government could not be sufficiently included in the ongoing relief efforts by the humanitarian community. These shortcomings can be related to several reasons (GPPI Report, p. 38&39, 2010):

1. Due to the fact that the head of office of OCHA left office shortly before the earthquake, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), which is supposed to receive orders and support from the office, could not facilitate the development of a common humanitarian strategy efficiently
2. Several Cluster coordinators were rather inexperienced and had difficulties to exert leadership over their Cluster. Furthermore, Cluster leads were reluctant to provide support for inter-Cluster coordination
3. These country-level leadership problems were aggravated by a lack of strategic support from the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and headquarters

Recommendation: The transition period between old and new staff of the OCHA could have been optimized as well as the support by experienced Cluster coordinators. The appointment of a Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator could have also been an option as well as a delegation of certain tasks of the HC to other people (GPPI, p.23, 2010). Additionally, OCHA has to ensure quick inter-cluster coordination and leadership capacity, as well as to impede the emergence of a silo-effect (exclusive focus of each Cluster on their sector-specific activities).

b. Organization

The humanitarian community missed an opportunity to establish a working structure in order to set up a common decision-making and coordination forum for the entire Haiti relief effort. In consequence, the US military stepped in and established a functioning structure illustrated in Figure 4:

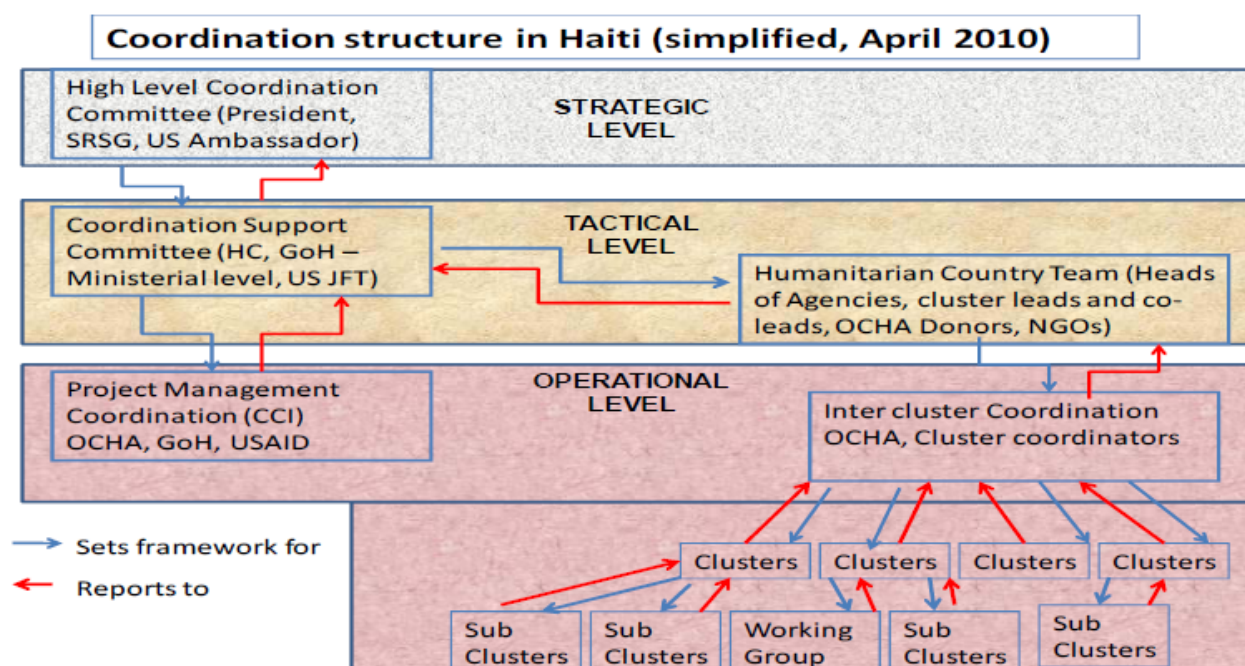


Fig. 4: Structures established by the military
(GPPI Report, p.40, 2010)

Humanitarian actors had difficulties to integrate themselves into this coordination structure, since their participation was limited OCHA. The chosen structure also disempowered the Humanitarian Country Team, which is supposed to be the main strategic body, and the Inter-Cluster Coordination (operational coordination body). The exclusion of Cluster leads from

the CSC resulted in a lack of operational and technical inputs, which led to questionable humanitarian responses (GPPI Report, p. 40. 2010).

Recommendation: It can be difficult for a country to defend its own approach against powerful political donors (such as the US). A solution could be to prepare for coordination with political and military forces in advance in order to ensure that the interests of the humanitarian community are heard and taken into sufficient consideration. OCHA's role has to be strengthened, and additionally, OCHA has to give more priority to inter-cluster information management support in order to guarantee an efficient organization of the Cluster approach and inter-cluster communication.

c. Personnel Deployment

The deployment of short-term surge capacity by aid agencies created a massive staff turnover. This caused difficulties for the Cluster coordination, lowered the efficiency of information management and individual capacities of the humanitarian helpers. Additionally, the staff had to work under extremely harsh conditions and staff trauma management has mostly been weak, contributing to the relative quick staff exchange in Haiti (GPPI Report, p.33, 2010).

Recommendation: Since this massive influx of humanitarian actors and the consequent high turnover will happen in every future large-scale disaster, the international humanitarian community has to find solutions to tackle this challenge. Employing experienced helpers only, improving information exchange with new staff and psychological assistance to helpers will certainly reduce the rate of deployment.

d. Situation Analysis

The conduct and interpretation of a situation analysis is an important task in order to organize humanitarian aid. Although needs assessments have been carried out in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, they lacked a clear context and a local capacity analysis. Moreover, the assessment process was time consuming (up to 3 hours to answer all questions for aid workers) and produced slow outputs, which often caused a massive delay of several weeks in the announcement of the assessment results, rendering them useless in certain cases. Some assessment teams also arrived late and reinforced the common belief that

local capacity was too minimal to be included in the international aid efforts (GPPI Report, p.46, 2010).

Recommendation: Expand the analysis to a context and capacity analysis. Try to speed up the assessments and neglect some accuracy in exchange. The aim should be to have the right information in time, not the perfect information too late. More importantly, the different assessments conducted should follow the same standards and methods in order to facilitate their comparison.

e. NGOs

“A major challenge for Cluster coordination was the massive influx of international NGOs with varying capacity, resources and levels of professionalism (GPPI Report, p.33, 2010).” Cluster meetings were sometimes overcrowded with more than 200 participants, while Cluster coordinators received hundreds of E-Mails per day, delaying severely their response efforts. A local coordinator stated that “20 percent of the NGOs do 80 percent of the work”, while the remaining 80 percent of the actors only hindered the system from working efficiently (GPPI Report, p.33, 2010).

Recommendation: We would recommend two approaches to handle such a massive influx. The first would be to split up the larger Clusters into smaller Clusters, which concentrate on a more narrow area or activity. The second suggestion is hold two kind of Cluster meetings, firstly there are the informal meetings, where information is shared among many aid actors, and secondly there are the strategic meetings, which would involve fewer actors and where also critical decisions can be made. Furthermore, OCHA has to develop guidance on how to manage the influx of a large number of agencies and increase their quality and standards they apply. Another option would be to limit the amount of NGOs allowed in the disaster response based on a judgment of their effectiveness and efficiency, which would in turn have positive spillover effects on the NGOs accountability.

f. Finance

Despite having raised a sufficient amount of emergency payments for relief efforts by international donors and agencies, some Cluster leads have complained about being underequipped in both money and goods. Therefore, the unequal distribution of these funding was a major problem and obstacle for some of the Clusters, while other received

more funding than they actually needed. A considerable amount of money was raised for emergency funds, which led to a neglect of Clusters relevant for long-term issues such as education and agriculture (GPPI Report, p.35, 2010).

Recommendation: The establishment of a redistribution structure for financial aid could be a possible solution to avoid discrepancies between funds and Clusters. Although NGOs are independent, a part of the aid could be put into a pool from which underfunded Clusters can use money to invest in necessary projects.

In sum, these were some of the main organizational problems identified which had their root within the international humanitarian community; however, we can also highlight other organizational issues concerning the coordination with the local government and the Haitian society, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

Coordination with the local government and the civil society

Coordination with the local community is crucial in providing effective aid after a disaster for several reasons. Local governmental institutions and civil society usually possess superior knowledge about local circumstances, needs and preferences and most importantly, local capacities available as well as the necessary language expertise. However, the international community was not able to fully take advantage of the benefits that can be derived by cooperating locally. Some of the issues that occurred shall be identified below.

a. Coordination with the Haitian Government

Government agencies were mostly excluded in humanitarian coordination and decision-making and parallel operational structures were established unnecessarily. An initial close cooperation with the President René Préval and the minister for interior Paul Antoine Bien-Aime, based on daily meetings, wasn't sustained for long. As a result, relations between humanitarian actors and the government became tense. Additionally, people felt that the government wasn't acting and therefore lost further trust in public institutions. As the international community took over governmental functions to fill certain voids, the actual government actually lost legitimacy within the population. An example would be the „Food for work“ programs, which worked really well, but were only covered by logos of the NGOs and did not show any signs of government involvement (GPPI Report, p.50, 2010). Moreover, links between Clusters and their respective government agencies (e.g. Security

Cluster with police forces) previous to the earthquake was very uneven. While some Clusters had excellent relations with their respective ministries others had no or only little contact. This further influenced coordination issues negatively after the earthquake (GPPI Report, p.43, 2010).

Recommendation: In a disaster response, the affected government must be involved and empowered regardless their capacity and capability constraints. It is central that the government plays a crucial role in the coordination and leadership of the humanitarian operation, especially in view that the government plays an important role in rebuilding the country after emergency relief efforts have finished (GPPI, p.26, 2010). This will enhance the trust of its people, an essential determinant for the resilience of the country.

b. Support for the Haitian Government

Direct support for the government to rebuild its capacities and infrastructure was largely neglected. This allegation can be exemplified with the fact that the President had to hold meetings under a mango tree even three months after the earthquake had taken place (GPPI Report, p.44, 2010).

Recommendation: This point addresses a similar issue as the previous one. Restoring the government's ability to help citizens rebuild their lives is as important as providing direct aid to people. To empower the Haitian government it is necessary to organize Cluster meetings which are co-chaired by the government, to hold meeting at national authority buildings or in proximity to Government offices and to embed Clusters within ministries to avoid the establishment of parallel structures to the national sectoral approach (GPPI, p.26, 2010).

c. Lack of Knowledge about Local Context

Another challenge was that a considerable group of international helpers did not have enough knowledge about the local context and also didn't speak French or the native language Creole. This made information assessment and cooperation difficult, because communication with the civil society and the government was constrained due to language barriers (GPPI Report, p.42, 2010). Moreover, due to the inadequate knowledge of the local context, relief efforts and support programs were often unilaterally installed and enforced

without considering the actual needs and desires of the Haitian people. This in consequence led to an almost complete ignorance of local capacity and the network of the Haitian civil society, a point which will be discussed in the next paragraph (GPPI Report, p.43, 2010).

Recommendation: It is of high importance to employ translators within the international aid community, as well as to include English-speaking people from the local population in the relief efforts. Furthermore, awareness about the existent local capacity should be clearly highlighted in the assessments and given adequate consideration.

d. Neglect of Local Capacity and Lack of Inclusion of the Civil Society

The civil society was largely excluded in getting involved in designing and implementing programs because humanitarian actors falsely assumed that local capacity was very limited already prior to the earthquake and therefore, virtually non-existent after it. Affected local people and NGOs therefore felt that they weren't respected and heard by international aid organizations. For example, humanitarian actors favored the speed of relief over inclusiveness, although examples showed by organizing an inclusive distribution of food, that those two factors weren't mutually exclusive. The food aid would have got distributed faster and more equally if inclusiveness had been considered (GPPI Report, p.41, 2010).

Recommendation: As already indicated in the last paragraph, it is important that aid workers are able to speak the local language and that meetings as well as the provision of documentation is in the respective language. This in turn will improve the dialogue with the affected people and their involvement in the relief efforts. It is also essential that local initiatives are taken seriously and are supported accordingly. Furthermore, the OCHA should also conduct an assessment of what hinders local NGOs in participating in the Cluster approach.

e. Lack of Communication with the Civil Society

Finally, the Haitian people were insufficiently informed about important issues regarding the aid distribution in their community. For example, Haitians didn't know that there were only two rounds of food aid. Neither did they know about the fact that free water services will

stop and also when they would stop. This created uncertainty among people and worsened their (emotional) situation severely (GPPI Report, p.41, 2010).

Recommendation: Employ native speakers or translators and make sure they inform the civilians correctly about the plans and timings of the relief effort. Additionally, all information released should be published in the local language. Furthermore, humanitarian actors need to know how people inform themselves (radio or others) in order to effectively reach the entire population.

3.4.2 Operational Issues

We will now briefly address some main problems that emerged in the process of ongoing emergency relief efforts.

a. Urban disaster

Humanitarian actors were neither methodologically nor conceptually equipped to respond to a large-scale urban disaster. This fact combined with a lack of contextual analysis led to a false start, where camps were seen as the unit of intervention instead of preexisting neighborhoods and administrative areas of the city. This led to confusion among the civil society who was used to the old administrative system (GPPI Report, p.45, 2010).

There also existed difficulties in finding a balance to coordinate the organization of the Clusters between the urban cities and the rural areas regarding the organization of the Clusters. In case of a disaster, national Clusters usually collect information and concerns from localized Clusters in order to establish a countrywide strategy. But since the earthquake hit Port-au-Prince, all the national Clusters were also “Port-au-Prince” Clusters, which led to a bias in response, favoring the capital and neglecting rural areas (GPPI Report, p.48, 2010).

Recommendation: An urban disaster is difficult to handle, however, there are certain recommendations which could improve the humanitarian response. Firstly, it is suggested that local organizational structures remain intact in order to minimize additional confusion; and that there is a balance achieved in aiding urban as well as rural people. Secondly, the aid response has to be adjusted to urban environments by providing training and tools to aid

workers. Thirdly, a close collaboration with district administrations and the Haitian private sector has to be ensured to design and deliver adequate services, Fourthly, joint meeting with urban experts from the World Bank or UN-HABITAT should be hold in order to increase the knowledge in how to deal with land tenure issues and settlement planning, important issues surfacing in Haiti (GPPI, p.25&26, 2010).

b. Mobile Population

Part of the affected Haitian population who had relatives in the countryside fled to rural areas to seek shelter and subsistence. As a result, food scarcity and housing problems emerged because the people living outside of the affected urban areas were not prepared to such an immediate urban-rural migration. This was further aggravated by the fact that humanitarian actors were often not present in those areas since they were difficult to access and because relief efforts were concentrated on urban areas.

Recommendation: Be aware of the local context (see Situation analysis) and prepare for eventual massive population movements; this is especially relevant for urban disasters due to the lack of space for refugees. Refugee waves into the rural area can overwhelm local logistics.

3.4.3 Conclusion

A disaster of such scale will evidently lead to multi-faceted problems and thus clearly represents an extraordinarily challenge for the humanitarian community. Up to a certain extent it is therefore comprehensible that relief and aid effort were sometimes uncoordinated or insufficient, and leave room for improvement. However, it can be seen that most of these points raised previously are somehow interconnected and often have the same causes.

Weak and/or wrong situation analyses combined with weak leadership and coordination lead to several different issues on the operational but also on the organizational level. Therefore it is crucial not to put too much emphasis on the minor challenges, which occurred in providing emergency relief efforts, but to tackle the main crosscutting problems such as coordination failure and lack of context analysis. As soon as these remaining concerns in the international response will be improved, the issues within the Clusters (such as the

difficulties in food distribution) are easier to solve and will possibly not occur again. For example, if the context and needs assessment had been carried out correctly, it would have been clear that local capacity was available and therefore, the necessity to integrate the civil society in the response could have been identified. As a result for future engagement in catastrophes, the responsible heads of the international humanitarian community (HC, Cluster leader) should promote a bottom-up approach, meaning that an efficient and sustainable reconstruction of a failed or disaster-prone country can only be achieved if the civil society and local networks are included.

4 The SDCs response to the Earthquake in Haiti

Since 2000, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has supported Haiti in the form of bilateral development cooperation, focusing on two projects related to drinking water/sanitation and forest protection. However, in the light of the earthquake disaster, the Swiss Government decided that the SDC should extend its development cooperation until at least 2012 in addition to the current engagement in humanitarian aid provided to Haiti (SDC Homepage).

The humanitarian aid provided after the earthquake in Haiti represented the most extensive delivery of emergency relief in the history of the SDC. In order to provide relevant and comprehensive recommendations to the SDC, this paper will first analyse the response of the SDC concerning their provision of humanitarian aid and subsequently identify challenges and problems encountered. Based on these findings, recommendations for the SDC will be deduced for both future bilateral and multilateral aid efforts.

4.1 Response

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation offered its services and assistance to the Haitian Government in the same night the earthquake occurred, and by the 13th of January 2010 had prepared several measures to provide emergency assistance. A team consisting of six people of the SDCs Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) together with one expert from UNDAC left for Haiti on the 13th of January in order to assess the situation on

the ground, to support the SDCs personnel already present in Haiti and further initiate first emergency measures. A few days later, several experts from the fields of medicine, logistics, water and construction were added to the personnel (Dahinden, p.2, 2010). Being a very small donor country, the SDC spent approximately 14 million Swiss Francs on humanitarian aid in Haiti in 2010 (SDC Homepage). In comparison, the United States pledged a total of US\$ 1.15 billion at the May Haiti's Donor Conference (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, p.1, 2010). As a result, the activities of the SDC in response to the Haitian earthquake were focused on a few specific fields of activity including medical support, shelter, water and hygiene as well as the provision of relief goods, which were provided either in form of bilateral or multilateral aid incorporated in the UN Cluster Approach.

The Swiss team of doctors, mainly active in the "Hôpital de l'Université de l'Etat de Haiti", conducted around 620 medical interventions, many of which were live saving, assisted in 95 births and provided administrative assistance as well as relief goods. Furthermore, 10'000 people received so called "Shelter Kits" to help rebuild provisional housing and 50'000 people were provided with safe drinking water through the establishment of "Water Kiosks" (Dahinden, p.3, 2010). The distribution of "Shelter Kits" instead of tents positively influenced the plans of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), who, as the leader of the shelter Cluster, had organized the establishment of tent camps outside of the capital Port-au-Prince. From the SDCs perspective, these camps had the potential to deteriorate into future slums and therefore were not supported (De Ville de Goyet et. al., p.24, 2011). Moreover, the SDC applied a need-based, flexible approach, serving as many people as possible with the available resources, which was highly praised. To give an example, the SDC provided assistance to people living in rural areas who were suffering from the high influx of urban people fleeing to the countryside, but were mostly neglected by the international community, who laid its aid focus mainly on Port-au-Prince and other urban regions.

In addition, the SDC has both assisted multilateral as well as national partner organizations in form of funding, logistical support and secondments. The funded partners included, amongst others, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the UN World Food Program (WFP), the OCHA and Helvetas (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, p.1, 2010). However, with 77% of the total means spent for bilateral projects, the focus of the SDC didn't lay on multilateral aid (De Ville de Goyet et.al, p.23, 2011) as can be

undermined by the fact that the SDCs aid activities in the UN Cluster Approach were rather limited and focused on only a few Clusters.

4.2 Challenges and Problems

Although the Swiss Humanitarian Aid provided by the SDC has been praised as being timely and effective, they have encountered many challenges and problems in organizing and conducting their relief efforts. The internal review requested by the SDC identified a number of challenges – several of them relating to the difficult circumstances the teams were faced with - namely the very rare if not yet unique situation of a massive earthquake striking a metropolitan area in a weak and poor country without significant national disaster risk management capacities. These severe external constraints have not only impeded the relief efforts of the international humanitarian community as has already been highlighted in the past chapters, but also the SDCs response.

Another challenge for the SDC aroused through unsolicited donations and equipment, mostly coming from the private sector, which continued to clog the national relief system. The distribution of donated goods was decided at headquarter level of different governments involved in the aid response and thus often turned out to be of little use on the ground (De Ville de Goyet et.al, p.35, 2011). Concluding, this is a challenge faced not only by the SDC but also by the international community. However, it has to be taken into consideration that these decisions about donations and goods were made under great time pressure and with little knowledge about the local needs.

As Jürg Bohnenblust notes, the implementation of rehabilitation projects was further impeded through the lack of pre-defined standards and unsettled land rights. For example, the rebuilding of schools or streets required certain standards, which had to be agreed upon by all actors and must have been made operational, especially through the Haitian Government (Bohnenblust, p.1, 2010). Yet, the Haitian state's inability to define standards and take control over the coordination of rehabilitation projects further complicated national relief efforts. The lack of pre-defined standards is also a point of critique raised within the SDCs impact evaluation. The SDC does not have any written standard criteria that would enable the measurement of the impact of its bilateral activities, which thus constrains an

effective impact monitoring (De Ville de Goyet et.al, p.53, 2011). Other difficulties mentioned in the SDC evaluation were, amongst others, the lack of emergency response agreements signed with relevant host countries and the tension between responsiveness and cultural appropriateness, meaning the trade-off between reacting in time and integrating the assistance into the already existing national or local structures.

The SDCs internal review further revealed challenges related to multilateral activities. Being a signatory state to the Good Human Donorship (2003) initiative, the Swiss Government is convinced that financial support is an indispensable instrument to lessen suffering (De Ville de Goyet et.al, p.56, 2011) which is why funding multilateral partners is an integral part of the SDCs Humanitarian Assistance. However, the decision to automatically fund the World Food Program (WFP) was questioned by the SDC in the aftermath of the earthquake, as most interlocutors doubted a lack of food or even its restricted availability (De Ville de Goyet et.al, p.7, 2011). Furthermore, the SDC regretted not having engaged itself more actively in the UN Cluster System and in the cross-sectored coordination mechanism at the national level, allegedly due to time constraints and the pressure for taking concrete actions. Therefore, participation was only satisfactory at the local level (De Ville de Goyet, p.59, 2011).

Regarding secondments (key expertises) provided to several UN agencies, interviews have been conducted with SDC staff from which can be concluded that the skills of secondees (experts) should be upgraded and specialized in order to guarantee an adequate reaction to the major challenges in disaster management at the level of logistics, techniques, management and coordination (De Ville de Goyet et.al, p.58, 2011).

5 Lessons learned for the SDC

This paper aims to specifically provide recommendations and inputs to the potential role of the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency in regard to the multilateral aid system. However, this does not mean that we can strictly separate Switzerland's engagement in multilateral activities from its bilateral activities. On the contrary, their interconnectedness and mutual influence shall be emphasized aiming at one coherent strategy for Swiss

Humanitarian Aid. Swiss multilateral assistance should therefore always be based and decided upon criteria already in place for its bilateral assistance in order to ensure the implementation of the most effective and adequate measures. Furthermore, the deduction of recommendations for multilateral engagement is only possible by being aware of the SDCs specific comparative advantages in know-how and skills, which are the result of many years of experience in globally implementing bilateral and multilateral aid projects.

The Swiss Humanitarian Aid contains a mix of bilateral and multilateral instruments. As it has already been noted in the previous chapter, in the case of Haiti, 77% of the means deployed were directed towards bilateral projects, making the SDCs focus on its own activities apparent. Furthermore, it has been recognized that the participation in the Cluster System was very limited and more importantly, the room for improvement in this area has been acknowledged. However, one can argue that the SDCs emphasis on bilateral assistance in Haiti can be justified, because Haiti represented a unique disaster situation that rendered the effectiveness of multilateral assistance especially difficult. It can thus be concluded that the bilateral focus of the SDC in the case of Haiti instead of completely integrating their assistance into the Cluster System was an appropriate decision (De Ville de Goyet et.al, p.58, 2011).

Nevertheless, despite the fact that bilateral projects implemented by the SDC were highly favourable in Haiti, it shall not be concluded that the SDCs engagement in multinational aid particularly in the UN Cluster Approach is of secondary importance for future natural catastrophes (De Ville de Goyet et.al, p.58, 2011).

Despite the many flaws that still need to be overcome regarding the UN Cluster System, multilateral aid provides an effective and efficient platform and operational structure in which countries can engage in and coordinate their relief efforts, combining the profound humanitarian aid knowledge of many countries. Bearing in mind that the Cluster System is a relatively new phenomenon, a constant learning-process is taking place, necessarily leaving room for improvement. Judging by the many evaluations we have come across, the international community is aware of the problems it is still facing and is actually making an effort to find solutions which can for the moment leave us to be optimistic for the future of multilateral aid. With the effective integration of the SDCs know-how and resources into the multilateral relief efforts, Switzerland indisputably has the potential to make a positive

contribution to multinational aid by tackling together its operational and coordination shortcomings identified in the previous chapter 3.4.

5.1 General Recommendations regarding the Multilateral Aid System

Multilateral actors mostly appreciated the SDCs contribution to humanitarian assistance efforts in Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake in 2010. Besides being timely and effective, the SDC was praised for its positive influence towards global changes, its leadership in launching or supporting new initiatives or in advocating debates on new ideas on a general level (in the case of Haiti specifically for implementing the “Beyond the Rubble” approach) (De Ville de Goyet et.al, p.34, 2011). Switzerland has also expressed its willingness to coordinate its actions with multilateral actors and further integrate itself in multilateral relief efforts. However, in our opinion, the positive and successful achievements in respect to bilateral assistance should in no way be compromised. Rather, the limited resources the SDC has available for multilateral aid, due to the fact that Switzerland is a relatively small donor country, should be used in the most effective way. In order to achieve this goal, this paper proposes three general requirements and areas of improvement that are believed to be absolutely crucial to ensure the effectiveness of multilateral cooperation and the responding implementation of projects. These conclusions have been drawn out of analysing a large number of evaluations that have been conducted on multilateral aid systems; some in the specific context of the earthquake in Haiti, others on a more general level. Furthermore, these conclusions have been adapted to the SDCs availability of resources, capabilities and comparative advantages in delivering humanitarian assistance.

5.1.1 Increase Influence in Multilateral Organizations

Generally, Switzerland should use its excellent relations on the international level to positively influence the multilateral aid system on the government level. Well respected for its neutrality and impartiality and with several government ministries present in various international organizations, the aim is to coordinate the involvement in the latter in order to ensure the most effective implementation of projects and further contribute to the attainment

of Switzerland's objectives in humanitarian aid: saving lives and alleviate suffering (De Ville de Goyet, p.7, 2011). Also, international forums can be used to launch new initiatives and proposals. Moreover, direct negotiation with representatives of international institutions (OCHA, UN etc.) is crucial in order to make progress in multinational aid efforts; this of course demands excellent negotiation skills and requires Swiss SDC representatives to be trained and instructed respectively. Overall, this will help the SDC to further strengthen and expand its advocacy role. Furthermore, all interactions on multinational aid in the international arena should follow the same principles and criteria in order to accomplish a coherent strategy and monitoring effect. In addition, Swiss SDC experts could contribute and participate in the management of international organizations such as the OCHA or the WFP. In order to choose which international organisations should be financially or operationally supported, the SDC should evaluate these IOs according to some standards, which will be more thoroughly discussed in the paragraph below.

5.1.2 Assessment and Monitoring of Funded Partner Organizations

Recognizing the importance of direct involvement in international organizations, the cooperation should be based on a careful assessment of respective institutions. In consequence, financial or operational support should not be directed towards organizations that are not in line with the SDCs objectives or seem to be ineffective in providing assistance. Especially because the resources for funding are limited, the funds provided should be used in the most effective manner by partners and the SDC should only support organizations that are best placed to contribute to development. As noted earlier, funding is an integral part of Switzerland's strategy and is regarded to be indispensable. However, blind funding of partners should be avoided. Constant monitoring of funded partners seems to be crucial to ensure the effectiveness of provided financial or other support. Not only will the assessment and monitoring of partners provide relevant information for future funding decisions for the SDC, but will more importantly contribute to the overall accountability and transparency of international organizations by not rewarding inefficient use of resources. Switzerland can lead with good example and maybe influence the funding decisions of other donor countries positively. In the long run, such behaviour can improve the effectiveness of the multilateral aid system as a whole.

5.1.3 Internal Monitoring of the SDCs cooperation and activities

In order to guarantee effective cooperation in multilateral organizations, the development strategy of Switzerland as a whole and in particular the strategy of the SDC should continuously be evaluated and questioned. This will ensure the adaption to changed circumstances that can originate both from within the SDC but can also include external changes. These reviews and evaluations can further entail changes in thematic priorities of the SDC. More importantly, by monitoring and reviewing also the bilateral and multilateral activities of the SDC, identified challenges and shortcomings can be addressed adequately and be improved. In order to achieve this goal, general standards have to be formulated that allow the measurement of the concrete impact of specific activities. In sum, this leads to a coherent, adjusted and updated strategy of the SDC, which is the fundament for taking action in the area of development assistance and humanitarian aid, i.e. optimally selecting new bilateral projects or new multilateral partners.

After having discussed the rather general recommendations for the improvement of the groundwork of the SDC and its possible extension of cooperation in multilateral organisations, we will now give concrete recommendations for the SDC inclusion and incorporation in the UN Cluster Approach.

5.2 Specific Recommendations regarding the Involvement in the Cluster System

More specific recommendations shall be formulated in this chapter in regard to how Switzerland's involvement in the international Cluster System can be improved and how scarce resources can be directed most efficiently to contribute to overall international relief efforts. These recommendations are deduced from the challenges and lessons learned identified in the previous chapter 3.4 of this paper. Although this paper has its emphasis on international relief efforts taking place in Haiti, the following recommendations aim to be applicable in a more general way to any disaster situation. The SDCs contribution to international relief efforts should first and foremost always be in line with its overall objectives and with its comparative advantages. Based on its profound knowledge acquired in bilateral assistance and its prominent role in advocacy, we think that the SDCs comparative advantage is concentrated on providing exactly these secondments, which will be discussed in more detail below. Acknowledging the fact that the numeration of these

recommendations can never be final, the following inputs presented are seen as being the most pressing and useful regarding the financial and operational capacities of the SDC.

5.2.1 Focus on Selected Clusters

As already mentioned, Switzerland is a small donor country and must therefore select a few areas of activity when providing humanitarian assistance. It is recommended that the SDC extends its already present involvement in certain Clusters such as water and sanitation and shelter. The SDC should select the participation within the Clusters according to specific knowledge it has already established in its bilateral cooperation as well as offer expertise especially relating to the coordination of Clusters, which is seen as crucial for its effectiveness. It is thus necessary to include people with organizational expertise into the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) and to train them accordingly. In addition it is crucial that the SDCs personnel working in the specific Clusters is very sensitive to the needs of the affected people and the prevalent local capacity in order to prevent parallel working structures and the exclusion of the civil society.

5.2.2 Offer Translation Services

As seen in the case of Haiti, the effectiveness of international aid depended strongly on the ability of aid workers to communicate in the local language. Being a multilingual country, Switzerland is in the position to provide translation services to the participating actors in the Cluster System and the Humanitarian Country Teams. The participation of civil society, local NGOs or more importantly government institutions in the multilateral aid system should not be impeded for communication reasons. Thus, Switzerland should establish translation facilities in order to enable all actors to fully participate in meetings and to ensure that any information published is also printed in the local language(s).

5.2.3 Establish Multilateral Forums

Switzerland is the host country of many international organizations. The SDC should take advantage of the already existing infrastructure to promote communication and information

sharing between donor countries. For example, the SDC could organize a periodical meeting of willing donor countries in Berne or Geneva, where information and best practices can be exchanged especially in times of no prevalent acute crises. These meetings could, for example, provide the OCHA with its results in form of an annual report in order to summarize lessons learned and collect inputs from various donors. This would further strengthen the coordination between the immense availability of humanitarian actors and could offer a platform for cooperation and verbal exchange, which could lead to the avoidance of overlapping activities and double standards. Very vulnerable and weak countries such as Haiti should be integrated into these forums in order to give them a primary voice and to be sensitive to their needs, as well as to give them advice on how to improve their resilience and national building capacity.

5.2.4 Strengthen Public-Private Partnership

The private sector of various donor countries has offered a considerable amount of financial aid and also provided equipment for rehabilitation efforts in Haiti. However, their delivery was more chaotic than helpful and often, the donated equipment could not be used at all (for example out-dated medicine). Yet, the international humanitarian community should not neglect the potential of the private sector; its entrepreneurial and innovative initiatives ought to be supported. In order to strengthen public-private partnerships, the SDC could in consequence offer its expertise to manage private sector funds and arrange the distribution of donations according to needs. The SDC could also encourage other partner governments to actively control the selection and distribution of goods by the private sector, in order to avoid the influx of unnecessary equipment into the affected country blocking the way for more important relief and emergency goods. It is also recommended that donor governments regulate and eventually avoid already at the national level the massive surge of rather unprofessional and unskilled humanitarian actors into areas of crises. The SDC could set a good example by coordinating the collaboration between its own staff and Swiss private humanitarian actors from NGOs in order to send only the most skilled helpers to countries in need of help.

Additionally, ideas for projects and programs from the domestic private sector of a troubled country (e.g. Haiti) should be supported. Not only can local partners provide financial

support or required equipment immediately, but they also have further specific knowledge of the local context, the constraints and preferences of their society. The SDC could therefore try to engage more with local partners and citizens in order to be sensitive to their needs and ideas.

5.2.5 Offer Psychosocial Support

Due to the massive impact and the destruction after the earthquake, as well as the severe conditions and constraints the international actors faced in Haiti, a considerable part of the national and international personnel became severely traumatized resulting in shorter deployment times and consequently less efficient work due to a loss of acquired knowledge (De Ville de Goyet et.al, p.23, 2011). The SDC should thus incorporate psychologist into its Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) in order to offer counselling services for international as well as national humanitarian actors located in areas of conflict. If possible, they also should carry out a plan with the HC and other governments to improve sanitation and living conditions of staff in order to guarantee an effective and sustainable response of their people.

5.2.6 Raise Awareness

Furthermore, the SDC could encourage the Cluster leads to further raise awareness of the existence of the Cluster System on a global level. Not only should governments be informed and engaged across the globe about the Cluster System, but also other relevant stakeholders to the international aid system, especially the civil society and the media. This would enable all stakeholders, including the private sector, to combine their strengths in case a disaster occurs. Raising awareness amongst all stakeholders will make sure that everyone can contribute to the international relief system and actors are aware of the relevant coordination mechanisms in place.

5.2.7 Support National and Local Ownership

As could be seen in Haiti, the national ownership was severely limited and also not strengthened in the aftermath of the disaster by the international community. However, it is important for the resilience of the people and the country as a whole, to have a strong back

up by the state. Haitians felt sometimes cheated by their government, because they almost solely saw international humanitarian actors in their country organizing the emergency response and reducing their plight. The Haitian government, however, had certain capabilities that could have been included in the international response, but they were rather overrun and marginalised by the influx of the international community. The multilateral forums discussed above could therefore give the SDC a platform to discuss these issues of national ownership and to give the SDC the opportunity to indicate the humanitarian community that the situation assessments have to be sensitive to the prevalent local and national networks and that the rebuilding of the national capacities is crucial for an effective emergency relief.

6 Conclusion

Generally it can be said that despite the extent of the earthquake catastrophe and the challenging operating environment in place in Haiti, the national and international humanitarian actors were able to fulfil the critical, live-saving needs identified and achieved its immediate objectives in the initial response phase. Sadly, the overall situation in Haiti remains fragile, 1.3 million affected Haitians still live in temporary settlements and 600'000 reside with host families, many of them are in very poor and vulnerable condition and need to be taken care of by the humanitarian community (UN, p.128, 2011). The large-scale outbreak of the cholera in October 2010, which has since sickened 300'000 Haitians and killed nearly 5'000, further impeded the international humanitarian response (The New York Times, 2011). In consideration of the fact that the cholera is still not annihilated, it becomes evident that Haiti will remain for a much longer period a country in despair need of international humanitarian aid.

After more then 12 months since the earthquake, the initial emergency aid response has therefore transformed into large-scale reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts as well as the continuous provision of basic needs such as shelter, food and water, health care, sanitation and education, which are mostly concentrated on people living in camps. However, people who did not live in camps or fled to the countryside were largely excluded from these goods and services, which consequently heated up social tensions dividing the Haitian society (UN,

p.1, 2011). This is why the implementation of rural projects covering the needs of the people living in the countryside should be an integral part of the international humanitarian response. The SDC has somehow addressed this shortcoming of the UN Cluster Approach by allocating its limited resources for the provision of bilateral projects in rural areas at the expense of being more involved in the multinational aid response in form of the Cluster System. This paper proposed that the decision to only support two or three Clusters in Haiti by the SDC was adequate in accordance to the fact that Switzerland is a small-donor country. Nevertheless, it shall not be automatically assumed that the SDC should generally lay its emphasis on bilateral rather than multilateral aid, because the SDC commands some important comparative advantages that can represent a tremendous asset for the improvement of the multilateral approach. These advantages range from being a home country for many international organization headquarters, to being a multi-lingual, well-respected and neutral country with a strong tertiary, private sector. It is therefore of importance that the SDC uses these national assets wisely by firstly extending its participation in international organizations and in selected Clusters, secondly by being a role-model in organizing the aid and goods of local Swiss NGOs and the private sector prior to sending it to a country in trouble, thirdly by organizing international multilateral aid forums in order to promote best practices and discussions on lessons learned and fourthly by offering psychological and translational support for international humanitarian actors working in the field. These recommendations were derived from a profound analysis of various evaluations conducted by the international humanitarian community and the SDC, which can in our opinion represent a possible future for Swiss humanitarian aid.

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