



# USAID | HAITI

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## Building National Legislative Capacity

### Project Complete

USAID supports a more effective, transparent, and representative legislature.



The President of the Chamber of Deputies and his Chief of Staff participate on a national television program.

Through USAID support to PAPH:

- 32 laws were passed by Parliament from 2006 to date with technical assistance from PAPH
- A newly-created Parliamentary Broadcast Unit produced a series of public regional radio and TV broadcasts, emphasizing the roles and responsibilities of Parliamentarians vis-à-vis their constituents.
- Parliament assessed staffing needs based off of position descriptions and subsequently initiated a program to reduce staff from 700 to 220 by the end of 2011.
- A comprehensive re-design of the Parliament's website was launched (<http://www.parlementhaitien.ht>) to provide biographical profiles of MPs; research documents; current legislation; and parliamentary radio broadcasts.
- An electronic recording system was installed, permitting the archiving and digital flagging of Parliamentary debates.
- Training and support briefing booklets were created as reference guides for members of both houses

### Overview

The legislative branch is imperative in a functioning democracy, not only to pass legislation but also to keep the power of the executive in check. Since the program's inception in 2006, PAPH has provided material support and technical expertise in aid to the Haitian Parliament. PAPH's greatest challenge occurred following the earthquake on January 12, 2010. The Haitian Parliament was decimated by the loss of 35 staff members and two Senators. PAPH staff immediately went to work coordinating a search-and-rescue operation at the Parliamentary site, and succeeded in extricating 24 victims from the rubble. Less than a week after the earthquake, PAPH started assisting in the removal of records and salvageable furniture and arranged for tents and support to parliamentary staff most affected by the quake.

Since the earthquake, PAPH has supported Parliament by: 1) helping to draft the *Declaration de Solidarité*, which states that Parliament will support every effort of the government to mobilize aid without delay; 2) planning trips for parliamentarians to visit disaster areas in order to monitor government recovery operations, increase transparency of reconstruction funding, and oversee governmental intervention; and 3) drafting several pieces of legislation, including an anti-price gouging bill for Parliament in order to prevent unfair hiking of commodity prices post-quake.

### Objectives

The objectives of PAPH are to strengthen the institutional capacity of Parliament and to improve accountability and transparency in the legislative process.

### Activities

1. **Instituting a New Member Orientation Program:** Following 2010 elections and in collaboration with Parliamentary leadership, PAPH conducted a comprehensive five-day orientation program for new members of Parliament (MPs) that covered all aspects of parliamentary life.
2. **Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of Parliament:** The program provides seminars and in-depth training for the continued professional development of members and senior staff, such as administrative skills. PAPH has put into place a series of training and briefing books to serve both houses, focusing on providing professional documentation, research, and communication tools to the parliamentary commissions and members.
3. **Strengthening Public Accountability and Transparency in the Legislative Process:** PAPH airs a weekly broadcast of MPs being interviewed about specific topics in which listeners can call in with questions. In addition, parliamentary staff are being trained to engage with the media. This promotes more transparent government and better relations between voters and their representatives. PAPH also initiated a re-design of the Parliamentary website to provide more comprehensive information on MPs and Parliamentary activities.

**Life of Project:** July 2006 – September 2011

**Implementing Partner:** State University of New York (SUNY)/Tetra Tech ARD, Inc.