PN-ABZ-038

DESFIL
Development Strategies for Fragile Lands

Institutional Approaches for Ameliorating Environmental Degradation in Haiti

A Concept Paper

Chemonics International
Abt Associates
Datex
Rodale Institute

December 2, 1994

2000 M Street N.W., Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel: (202) 331-1860 • Fax: (202) 331-1871

INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES FOR AMELIORATING ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN HAITI
A CONCEPT PAPER

I. Introduction

The introduction to the Haiti Country Environmental Profile captured the distressing situation observed in 1985:

> "Few countries in the world face a more serious threat to their own survival from environmental catastrophe than Haiti. Overpopulated, its resources are overexploited and trends towards further environmental deterioration are apparent everywhere. The chance for reversing these trends, thereby preventing human suffering, destabilization of the country, and the further loss of development potential is diminishing daily. Much needs to be done, and quickly" (USAID 1985).

Since then, much has happened but little done to generate inroads for comprehensively addressing this problem. Although a series of interesting, but somewhat disparate projects were initiated during the last few years, from which some promising experiences were generated, overall, Haiti's environmental and economic situation has worsened. It is only with the recent return of Haiti's President that a truly meaningful opportunity exists to address one of the most daunting challenges of this hemisphere.

The purpose of this concept paper is to assist development professionals to address two objectives: (1) begin reversing the degradation and (2) establish processes and experiences from which newly formed local governments can be strengthened. From such targeted activities and the expansion of these technical, operational, and institutional experiences, a more sustainable society will evolve.

This paper defines a new institutional construct to address these two inter-related themes. Based on the DESFIL Team's assessment of the critical depletion of ground cover at all levels within the steeply sloped valley and USAID project-level experience, we conclude that future efforts should also focus on watershed management needs. In developing the strategic response, the Team concluded that at the same time, local governmental units can be strengthened and new participatory experiences launched with local NGOs and rural organizations. Much needed local governance enhancing experiences would be provided as local institutional capacities and civic and democratic attitudes are fostered.

The rationale for such an outcome is based on the following elements contained within the paper: (1) the current situation and implications on society if current degradation trends continue, (2) an overview assessment of recent relevant USAID experiences, and (3) a justification for aggressively promoting watershed management and the institutional constraints impeding this thrust. From this analysis, the proposed Commune Based Watershed Management Development Support Initiative is described.

II. Effects of Increased Populations and Changing Land Use Practices On An Increasingly Fragile Land Base

A. Overview

Since the colonial period, a growing population and increasingly limited employment opportunities have generated serious natural resource and related environmental problems, most easily measured in deforestation and topsoil erosion rates. These losses, in turn, have generated ecological, economic, social, and political problems of immense magnitude, which will take years if not generations to reverse. This section describes how these problems have arisen and their impacts on society.

B. Early Exploitation Of An Unfavorable Topography

Initially, Haiti's development was sparked by colonists introducing forest clear cutting practices to remove timber stocks in the fertile plains and in the more fertile foothills to produce food crops, coffee, and a variety of plantation crops (indigo, tobacco, cotton, cane, etc.). Since nationhood, this approach to resource use has prevailed. Haiti has been the Western Hemisphere's most agrarian-based society.

The bulk of Haiti's land mass has severely sloping terrain. Over one half of the country has slopes above 40 degrees or more. The lower slopes and limited plain areas have a rich soil base which, combined with a regular water supply, provided a very productive environment for food and plantation crops. During this early period, since the population pressures on arable land were negligible, maintaining sufficient vegetative cover and a soil base were not of concern.

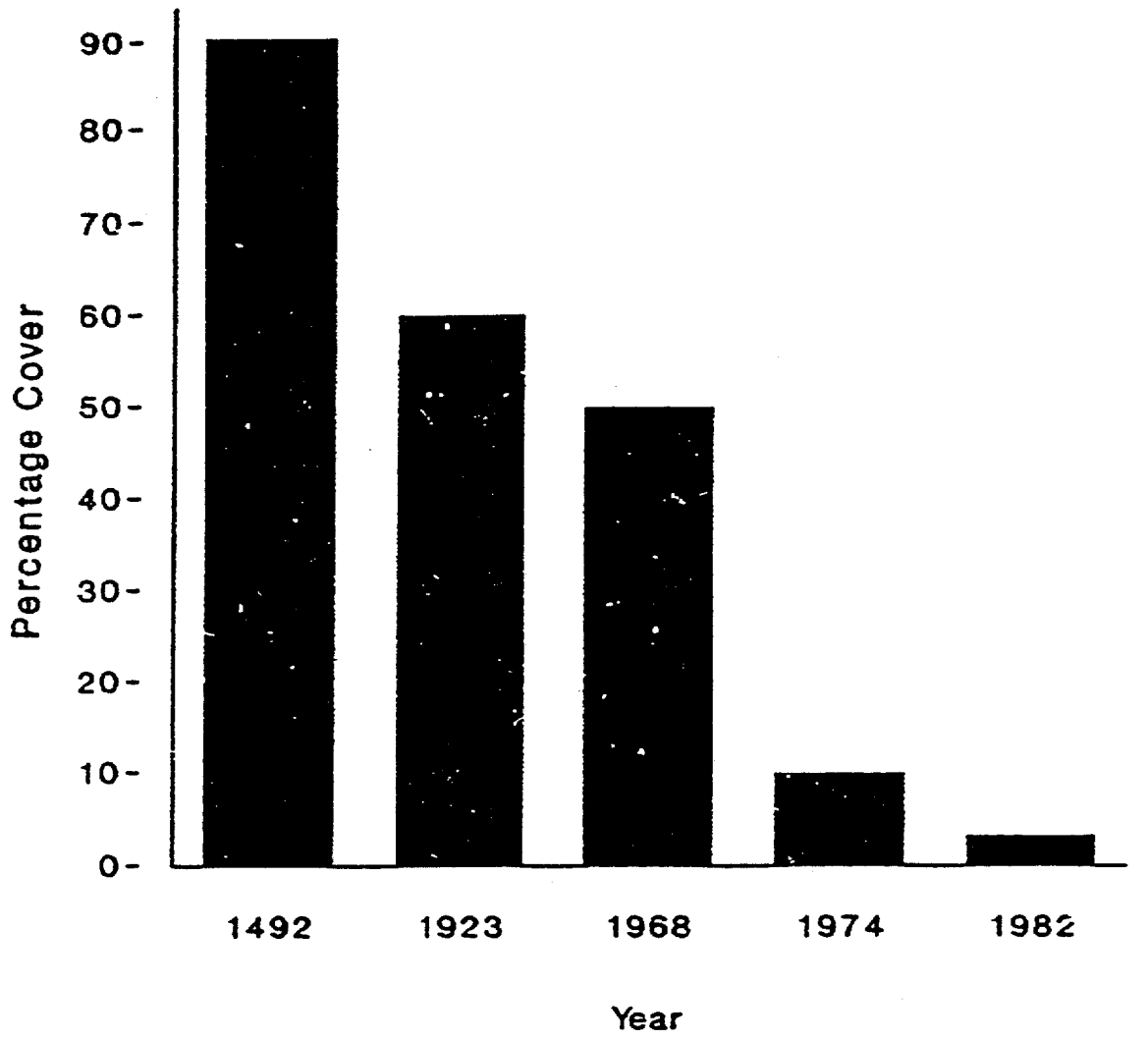
C. Increasingly Inappropriate Land Use Practices

Unfortunately, only 11 percent of Haiti's highly irregular land base—the fertile plain region—is suitable for permanent cultivation under irrigated or mechanized systems. At the same time, due to a limited number of suitable economic alternatives, an ever growing population base with no land frontier has forced further encroachment on lands inappropriate for intensive cultivation.

The dramatic removal of forests, with an increasingly diminishing amount of land under shifting cultivation/fallow systems, increased, particularly in the foothills. This reduced the land's capacities to retain essential and nutrient-rich porous topsoil and resulted in increasing amounts of land being abandoned as land productivity dramatically declined under increasingly intensive systems. As a result, due to limited job opportunities in other sectors, Haiti's poor have gone onto the higher, steeper slopes. Usually, they engaged in increasingly destructive annual crop cultivation practices or mixed farming livestock operations that further exposed the soil.

Deforestation trends, one of the best ways to assess these developments as they have evolved since colonial times, can be reviewed in Table 1, on the next page. By 1950-60, over 50 percent of the total forest cover had been removed. It was during this period that, for the first time, a sufficient number of farmers encountered conditions for which no

TABLE 1



Source: Paskett and Pierce, 1986.

Decrease in Forest Cover, 1492-1982

sustainable practices had yet been developed for Haiti. Fallowing was actually precluded and the number of tree gardens were diminishing. Six times the amount of land was under cultivation from what was actually suitable for permanent cultivation (IICA 1993). Table 2, on the following page, is a map of actual areas within Haiti's land base deemed suitable for permanent cultivation.

D. Increasingly Worsening Trends Beginning in the 1980s

The combination of such practices, plus numerous other complex factors, have contributed to the formation of one of the poorest and most densely populated countries in the world. Apart from the wrenching poverty, unstable land tenure practices contributed to resource depletion (Forster 1994). By the 1980s, over 70 percent of the population derived their livelihood from the production of agricultural commodities on small fragmented plots. Eighty percent of the agricultural crops are now produced on hilly or mountainous terrain.

Further exacerbating the depleting resource base has been the growing demand for wood and charcoal. Although a large number of poor people had been employed in supplying wood, this activity increased significantly to supply the increased needs of urban dwellers caused by the high energy costs resulting from the embargo (*Washington Post*, 1994). The high prices for these products, along with the curtailment of Haitian cash crop exports, have caused most farmers to sacrifice coffee, mango, avocado, and even annual crops to generate charcoal. The absence of such water/soil retaining covers has meant that the consistent annual erosion rate of 3 percent of the arable land base reported prior to the coup is now higher. Groundwater and usable surface water supplies have also diminished due to reduced levels of vegetative cover that are inadequate to retain the heavy precipitation levels (IICA 1993). Hurricane Gordon literally tore more soil from the unprotected slopes, causing immense human tragedy and economic loss.

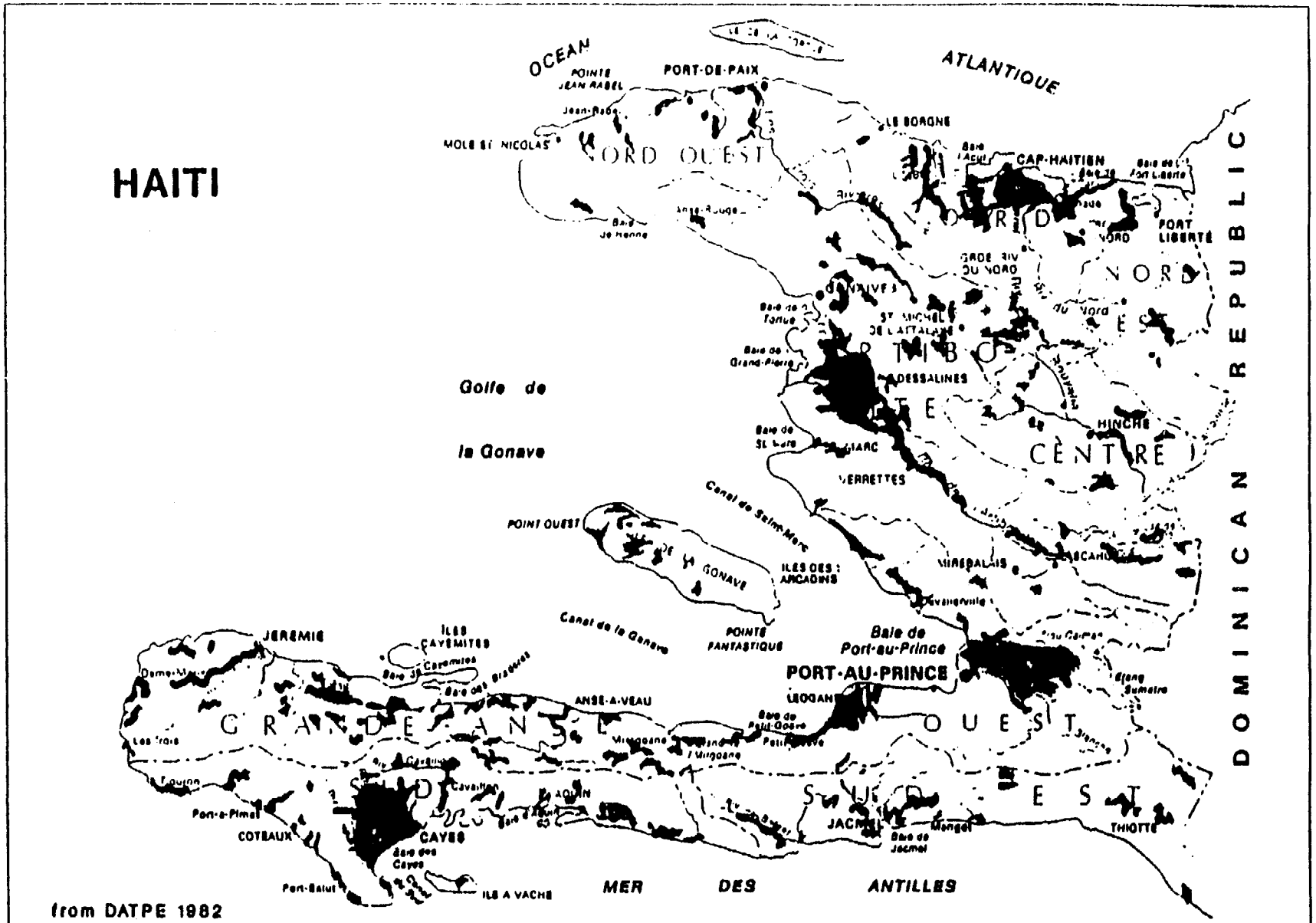
E. Environmental and Production Consequences

USAID's 1985 Environmental Profile highlights numerous key points that depict the increasingly worsening situation then observed. Some of the most revealing conclusions are mentioned:

- A catastrophic state of erosion throughout the country exists and will now do subsequent damage to the agricultural potential of the productive lowland, including further destruction to irrigation and other infrastructure.

- A high percentage of all cultivated lands are farmed beyond their carrying capacity, resulting in accelerated and potentially irreversible land degradation.

- Of Haiti's 30 watersheds, 12 were completely deforested by 1978. By the year 2008, unless current rates of tree cutting are stopped and reforestation rates accelerated dramatically, only one river basin will have any remaining forest cover.



from DATPE 1982
Source: Ehrlich et al., 1987, p.38.

Areas Suitable for Intensive Agriculture

TABLE 2

- About one third of all lands are either extremely eroded, abandoned for farming, or saline and practically sterile due to inappropriate land uses—including farming, grazing, and tree cutting (USAID 1985).

The sum of this depletion of topsoil and declining water supply impacts negatively, measured in declining crop yields. According to the FAO, although agricultural productivity trends have stagnated since the mid 1980s, beginning in 1990 this trend increased at an unprecedented rate. Whereas per capita food production declined by an average of 3 percent per year from 1986 to 1989, from 1990 to 1992 the annual decrease jumped to 12.5 percent. Total cereal production declined on an annual basis from 1989 to 1992 by the unbelievably high rate of 26 percent annually. Reflecting the increased pressure on the forest products and charcoal production, the extraction rates increased 11 percent from 1986 to 1991 (FAO 1993).

Considerable damage to the vital downstream infrastructure systems include increasingly silt-filled hydroelectric and irrigation systems as well as eroded roads. For example, at current sediment rates of 12 million square meters per year, the Peligre hydroelectric generating reservoir (the county's largest) will have to cease operations by 2018 (Delatour and Voltaire 1984).

III. Recent USAID Led Activities and Relevant Lessons Learned

A. Introduction

Beginning in the 1970s, USAID/Haiti introduced a series of targeted activities related to reforestation, soil conservation, watershed management, and complementary agriculture development. In 1985, USAID reoriented its portfolio to promote a "hillside strategy." Planners concluded that solutions for natural resource degradation and declines in agricultural production required that hillside erosion rates be reduced. The comprehensive strategy directed resources toward new reforestation strategies, hillside cropping systems, soil conservation, and targeted watershed environmental and production problems (DEVRES 1990). By 2000, improved production systems were to have been introduced to significantly decrease soil erosion on 290,000 hectares.

From these diverse experiences, a considerable knowledge base covering a broad range of resource management topics developed. Although foreign policy differences impeded program continuity, over the years a variety of new technological approaches and institutional experiences were introduced. Increasingly, nongovernmental agencies at the local level became implementors of new programs, particularly during the period of military reign, when only humanitarian assistance programs were permitted.

A brief description of some of the most noteworthy of these experiences is provided. From such experiences a broader technological base was developed to include more effective approaches to disseminate technology. In addition, a large cadre of community organizers, natural resource management technicians, and project administrators was trained. These experiences provided a base from which the broader program now proposed can evolve.

B. Agroforestry Outreach (AOP), Agroforestry II, and PLUS Projects

These three sequential project activities that started in 1981 with the AOP have provided over $57 million to CARE and the Pan American Development Foundation for pioneer systems for tree planting and maintenance and soil conservation practices. They have been successful in increasing fuelwood stocks and introducing conservation practices and rural incomes. As these project experiences evolved, field leaders adjusted their original strategies from a "conservation first" objective to improving income. Once farmers increased income an additional array of more immediate-term income generating technologies could subsequently be introduced.

The two PVOs employed different operational approaches as they provided extension and educational services. CARE directly provided the services to farmers whereas PADF worked to establish the capacities of a large number of local NGO affiliates. Essential silviculture research services were provided by the University of Maine in AOP and Auburn under PLUS. The two evaluations of these activities reveal interesting lessons learned that influenced the PVO's operational approaches. Both dedicated themselves to understanding the farmer's situation and needs from which a "farmer led" approach was employed to guide operations. As will later be observed, this differed considerably from the traditional "engineer driven" (also known as *équipement du territoire*). From such positive experiences, other more conservation-oriented measures such as hedgerows and gully plugs (both of which had demonstrable economic impacts) were introduced. More abstract "conservation" concepts of a longer time horizon would then be possible.

AOP was, according to the evaluators, an "unprecedented success" (USAID 1981). The most recent evaluation of PLUS recorded considerable "financial rewards" and "enhanced fertility and higher production rates" for the 19,000 project beneficiaries (Chemonics 1993). While these are noteworthy contributions, the magnitude of the resource management challenges confronting Haiti demand broader action. According to a separate review of the AOP, although a large number of trees were planted, the overall environment was not substantially improved, nor was there a systematic targeting of specific watersheds of the scale needed (Comino 1988).

C. Local Resource Development I and II

In July 1985, USAID authorized $1 million for Save the Children (STC) to implement a pilot project regarded as the "corner stone" of their hillside strategy. The grant was targeted to help STC develop group participatory approaches to address resource conservation needs within an integrated rural development context for the Upper Artibonite watershed around Maisade. Later, under Phase II, STC received another $1 million to work in the summit area of the Archaie watershed.

The project emphasized work with local "groupman" organizations. This Creole term, translated loosely as small groups, applies to a pre-cooperative type organization that focuses on accumulating savings and labor exchanges. STC used these organizations and worked with them as the means to extend agricultural services and project-related training in agroforestry, soil conservation, ravine treatment, animal husbandry, and small-scale infrastructure development. The evaluation gave the groupman good marks for implementing

new land management practices on the farmers own land. The team felt that the emphasis on tree planting was inappropriate and that soil and water conservation should be the first priority (Gaddis and Smucker 1988).

This project has served as a core base for subsequent research studies dealing with technology transfer and group participation themes. From such studies, White concluded that for survival purposes Haitian peasants developed a willingness to accept appropriate technological innovations and for participating in labor groupings. However, such involvement was constrained by the local political environment and economic conditions (White 1992).

D. Targeted Watershed Management

This project was Haiti's most massive watershed management experience. It started in 1987 and terminated in 1991, due to political differences. Associates for Rural Development (ARD) conducted the project in the Le Cayes area, Haiti's most important and strategically important watersheds. ARD worked very closely with four NGOs to assist in technical and administrative matters. Much of their activities focused on developing planning and budgetary systems, procurement and inventory systems, and technical training to the organization's membership via extension personnel.

This was an extremely difficult project to implement due in part to a variety of logistical, political, social, economic, and technical considerations. The final report completed by the contractor, nevertheless, reported numerous positive contributions. Particularly positive are the improved capacities of the four NGOs in improving technologies, approaches, and administrative procedures. Several thousand hectares of agricultural land in the watersheds of southwest Haiti were observed under improved systems, including contour hedgerows and improved fallows and intercropping practices, and the construction of furrows and berns on the contour (ARD 1992).

E. Secrétariat Technique à l'Aménagement des Bassins (STAB)

During 1987, the DESFIL project strengthened the Ministry of Agriculture's capacity to coordinate policy and strategies for national watershed development and to develop a comprehensive database. STAB, the secretariat staff arm of the Ministry of Agriculture, was created. Two expatriate advisors and the Haitian staff created an inventory of 116 watershed management projects, developed a project tracking system, established tangible measures for project evaluation, and evaluated ongoing projects (Pierce 1988). This four-year programmed effort lasted only 11 months, due to curtailment of USAID assistance. However since the PL 480 resources continued, the Haitian staff was able to continue through September 1988.

STAB provided a new approach for planning and program operations for the ministry. Unlike other more operationally related units, STAB was limited to long-range program development activities such as strategy development, information exchange, and project design and evaluation; STAB had no daily project management responsibilities. This long-term orientation proved to be a useful means to assist the ministry and the donors for developing a national watershed program (Pierce 1988).

F. Lessons Learned Regarding Technology Change at The Producer and Institutional Levels

The examples above help document USAID's leadership role in the natural resource management area. They serve as vital case studies to illustrate the ever changing approaches employed to incorporate more quickly a wide range of economically renumerative/ environmentally enhancing technologies. This process will have to accelerated to meet emerging emergency conditions.

F1. Technology Adoption Processes

The Haitian land user is a consummate adopter and adapter of new technologies, albeit somewhat tardy given the ever changing conditions confronted. Haiti's development has evolved as a constant series of relatively quick and complex adjustments. Since the slave revolt in 1804 Haiti has gone from "emergence to emergency." As its population outpaced the carrying capacity, the country did not introduce appropriate innovations quickly enough (Lowenthal 1989). In seven generations, the production base for the bulk of the country's population has shifted from flat, fertile plains to increasingly steeper and more fragile areas (USAID 1985). The widespread annual cropping occurring on the hillsides is a relatively recent practice. Over the last 40 years, farmers have not been sufficiently able to respond in a way that best shepherds their land's base.

Some farmers have gradually developed a series of indigenous practices, which increasingly are being incorporated within a series of broader development oriented projects. Such measures include: *zare* (soil and stubble scraped up into a mound to retain water for rice cultivation); *sakle en woulo* (weeds hoed into small mounds along the contour at one pace intervals); *rammp pay* (stubble gathered along the contour and supported with stakes); *dig ravin* (assorted plant and soil material placed in ravines to retain soil and water for banana, taro, rice or yam cultivation); and *bit* (soil heaped into mounds for sweet potato cultivation) (White 1992).

The extension methodology developed under the Agro Forestry Outreach project was based on introducing local practices and later, hedgerows and gully plugs and a variety of more complex agrisilviculture, silvopastoral, agro-silvo-pastoral or multipurpose tree production systems. Within these systems a variety of inter and alley cropping and contour, border, and interspersed planting agroforestry systems were proposed (Ashley 1988). These technology-based processes are being introduced, albeit usually on isolated activities.

F2. Technology Development Approaches

Basically, three approaches for technology introduction have been used: (1) the *équipement du territoire* or engineering/agenda driven; (2) agriculture parcel; and (3) integrated promotion. The engineering approach was the traditional means for introducing contour rock walls, contour and bench terraces, and similar larger infrastructure works, usually facilitated with compensation (cash or food commodities). Rarely was this approach based on an understanding of land tenure patterns or producer preferences. The earlier government projects usually employed this approach, and although much work was quickly accomplished, the completed infrastructure was often not used and over time was neglected.

During the late 1970s, due in part to the expenses occurred in carrying out the approaches and their less than optimal utilization, a growing number of nongovernmental organizations begin introducing the more "farmer driven," agricultural parcel approach. Much attention was employed toward adapting appropriate indigenous, more vegetative-based practices that produced profits. From such experiences, the array of interventions was expanded. This slower process focused work more at the individual farm level. Compensation for the labor contributions was not a part of this approach.

Later, a third approach, one that is more integrated and participatory, and which emphasizes soil conservation techniques plus other agronomic interventions, was introduced. Techniques here are frequently based on indigenous practices and local group interactions. Maissade is an example of such an approach (White and Jickling 1994).

While a considerable experiential base has developed, to include the generation of a variety of more appropriate technologies, the conclusion of this review is that more comprehensive watershed development strategies are needed now. The magnitude of the problems/opportunities and the complex interrelationships both geophysically, agronomically, economically, and socially requires a broader analytical and operational framework from which more relevant contribution will occur. The case for this emphasis is now provided. The institutional experiences related to operationalizing such a strategy are also developed. Based on the above review and the experiences provided below, new conceptual institutional and operational approaches are proposed in Section IV.

III. A Watershed Management Approach and Institutional Impediments

A. Growing Attention To Promote Watershed Management

Throughout the world, as soil and water resources become increasingly scarce, there is an awareness that watershed degradation threatens the sustained economic development and social welfare of millions of residents of developing countries (FAO 1986). Due in part to Haiti's immense poverty, topographical constraints, including steep terrain and the large number of watersheds (most of which are already in a critical state), effective long-term interventions are being recognized as a matter of highest priority. The downstream degradation caused by unsustainable upstream practices is now generating ever-increasing financial losses.

The USAID Environmental Profile noted that "improvement of the country's watersheds must be one of the critical, if not the most crucial environmental concern of the nation. All available data and surrogates, albeit very limited, indicated that despite widespread recognition of land degradation and destruction, land use practices and trends continue to lower the short-term potential of productivity of Haiti's forest land and water resources, and threatens the long-term viability of the nation's natural resource base and its economy...this is a national problem." (USAID 1985).

B. Watershed Management As a Unifying Concept For Facilitating Participatory Development

The emerging inter-related environmental, economic, and political conditions create unique opportunities for introducing innovative approaches. Given Haiti's large number of sizable watersheds and the vital interconnecting effect they have upon Haiti's development, watersheds have emerged as one major unifying theme for promoting new decentralization concepts and civic responses to matters of direct importance to the nation. The earlier Haitian American Watershed Management Program was designed in part as an experiment to facilitate more relevant decentralized planning and local interaction. Wolf Donner concluded that the watershed should be the matrix within which resource management should be addressed. This was to be accomplished within a new decentralized structure supported by grassroots participation. The unifying economic importance evolving from this structure would provide the basis for coordination of the means of production and employment and local government (Delatour and Voltaire 1984).

C. Institutional and Social Legacies Constraining a Watershed-led Local Development Strategy

While in many countries established institutions have evolved to confront these types of challenges, the situation is different in Haiti. As described below, there are major limitations regarding the traditional ministerial structure. There are no relevant experiences at the newly established local level. NGOs have developed great capacities and provided highly relevant services and some rural organizations have provided positive contributions. The current environmental and political situation requires that a more coordinated institutional and operational mechanism be developed.

C1. Centralist Traditions

Countries with "Jacobin" centralized administrative and political systems such as those observed in almost all former French protectorates and colonies do not lend themselves to promoting decentralized services (Moudoud 1989). Therefore, it is no surprise that decentralization and regionalization as an applied public policy appeared for the first time in the 1976-1981 Five-year Plan (Delatour and Voltaire 1984). Except for the Ministry of Interior, which has dealt with political control matters throughout the country, there has been a general tradition of neglect and isolation towards the countryside.

Although for many years the Ministry of Agriculture was known for its high quality technical staffing natural resources management, that capacity has eroded. One of the more meaningful experiences in the resource management area was the period of the STAB. Under this project there was a concerted effort to better coordinate government, NGOs, and donor watershed development and related activities within a more coordinated strategic approach.

Activities contemplating Haiti's central administration are further plagued by its being characterized as one of loose funding accountability, endemic corruption, a high degree of "personalismo," insulation from outside influences, and a general resistance to change (Brinkerehoff 1990).

While there are a variety of laudable new initiatives underway with the creation of the new Ministry of Environment, strengthened activities for the Ministry of Agriculture, and also the Minister of Planning, some time will be needed before sufficient improvements will permit mounting a ministry-led, watershed development program.

C2. Nongovernmental and Private Voluntary Organizations

Because of the inherent deficiencies of the central ministries and the constantly changing relations that have affected official assistance levels, the well established NGO and PVO community have taken over as purveyors of traditional services. Some important leadership roles and contributions have been undertaken. In the agriculture and natural resource management areas these have usually been productive experiences. In general, however, few have developed the broad range of technical skill required to introduce more comprehensive activities.

The legacy of this heavy dependence has, however, also been described as an assistance effort that is "tantamount to a privatization of the foreign assistance to Haiti." To critics of this effort, an "effective neocolonial system with remarkable access to remote areas has been created. Due to such involvement, a threat to create competitive power bases exists." (Brinkerhoff and Garcia-Zamor 1985).

While recognizing the important contributions such organizations are making, changing political realities suggest that the time is ripe for a broader and more coordinated working relationship.

C3. Rural Organizations

Throughout rural Haiti, a variety of social and cooperative-like organizations have evolved. First allegiance is usually given to a kin grouping through which access to land is provided. Beyond this relationship farmers affilliate with a large number of groups at one time or another. The basic function is labor exchange involving groups of a few to several individuals. While agriculture pursuits predominate, there are other organizations dealing with religious affiliations, schools neighbors, etc. (White 1992). The *kombite*—a cooperative-like work party—is one of many types of rural organizations. The groupman type of local capital and work sharing group working in the Save the Children Project described earlier is an example where such organizations have been mobilized to address resource management concerns within a watershed setting .

While numerous organizations exist, due to the true isolation from government services and the constant dependency on local resources, it should not be inferred that broad unity always prevails within these communities and organizations. For example, Smucker stated that "the mere existence of population aggregate does not imply a unity of purpose or of interest among the members of a resident grouping." In fact, the community "is not really a local group, but rather it is composed of local groupings, competing factions and ties of mutual obligation. There is not a cohesive whole which might be called a true community (Smucker 1982).

Policy makers and development professionals must consider these local organizations as they contemplate approaches for mobilizing the broader support base needed to address the multitude of farm/parcel specific and trans boundary issues associated with watershed management activities. The various experiences researched demonstrate that while some positive elements exist, a new broader based, interlinking mechanism will have to be established to assure a core sustainable development structure.

V. Proposed Commune Based Watershed Management Development Support Initiative

A. Introduction

This initiative establishes over a one to two year period the experiential framework by which nascent Haitian local governmental structures, in collaboration with nongovernmental and traditional rural organizations, will work to execute a comprehensive assault on watershed management degradation. Project resources will be used to mobilize and prepare local communes and their "new collaborators" to undertake the design, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation for improved watershed interventions. The goal is to quickly begin reversing environmental degradation and enhance the leadership capacities of the newly elected community officials to support this initiative. Through the process, the new leadership would be given special opportunities to provide meaningful leadership for priority activities, generating local participation and community resources. From such experiences, additional donor and Haitian resources could later be mobilized and a basis for long-term community support for sustainable watershed management established.

B. New Opportunities Provided Through Local Government

Within the context of centrist traditions, the 1987 constitution provided the newly elected mayors and caseks increased responsibility to govern at the commune and commune section levels. Although the 1991 coup d'état curtailed the activities of the congress, the authorities granted these local institutions continued (though little financial) support.

Haiti's complex, insecure, and ever-changing panorama has created considerable stress and uncertainty, which has affected the activities of these new leaders. Since the coup, the mayors and the caseks, generally, have not been able to develop meaningful projects and programs. The military presence further constrained their activities and some leaders were assassinated or harassed. Further, except for the municipal development training program under a USAID project with Planning Associates, no basic training was extended to the new front line of Haitian democracy. To generalize, many of the new leaders offer some positive prospects for creating a foundation (conversation with Joe Coblin of Planning Associates and correspondence with John Grant USAID/W) .

A comprehensive study of the capacities and needs of these fledgling organizations concluded that if sufficiently nurtured by minimal capacity building activities, they offer great promise. The study further concluded that strategic support at the commune level is essential for the newly acquired democracy to prosper because (1) the uncertainties and the traditional single issue focus of many of the NGOs, (2) the traditional fears associated with the Port au Prince structure, and (3) the closeness of these new governmental bodies with the

electorate. The study encouraged that these communes address pressing needs in the natural resource management area (PIRED 1993). This new governmental unit must be nurtured and supported; much is at stake, while the resources and experiences for such undertakings are slim.

C. An Overview Statement of New Approach to Begin Developing Local Capacities to Support Watershed Development

The principal institutional strengthening target for the Commune Based Watershed Management Development Support Initiative is the commune. However, the broader objectives will require that the most promising of the other local organizations, particularly the NGOs, be supported.

A Community Based Watershed Development Fund ($1-2 million) would be created to fund selected works facilitated and coordinated by the commune but actually implemented by initiated by appropriate local NGOs or rural organizations. Based on a process to be undertaken in some five to eight watersheds, existing soil maps, watershed planning technical documents, and other related information would be slated with leaders from interested NGOs and organizations. Through an intuitive process, priority activities would be discussed, agreements reached, and interested parties would then develop proposals for additional assistance to undertake various activities. This consensus building/strategic planning and development process would be undertaken publicly and the ideas and suggestions for various improvements solicited from the invited local organizations. The various proposals would be ranked based on a previously agreed upon ranking system. Those proposals closest to the requirements would be awarded the grant.

The purpose of this approach is to get the commune leadership involved so that the mayor's leadership and autonomy can be strengthened and local experience mobilized to support new mandates. At the same time, the process would mobilize community interests and resources around common priority problems.

As proposed, this is an opportunity for developing local leadership and organizational development experience and generate positive civic attitudes and pride. In addition, it would be an opportunity to initiate reforestation, conservation enhancing cropping technologies, and related infrastructure and soil and water resource enhancement. Maximum community participation in the process is emphasized.

A relatively small technical assistance team with considerable Haitian experience, including access to Haitian experts in local organization, training, and natural resource management skills will be provided to directly assist the commune in all phases while interacting with the participating organizations as needed.

D. Purpose of the Commune Based Watershed Management Development Support Initiative

The purpose is to create a pilot-like local institutional development support capacity that would prepare selected communes to engage in coordinating, overseeing, and managing priority watershed management activities. The activities would be implemented by local

organizations (NGOs and traditional rural organizations) in close coordination with the commune and an external technical assistance team. External support would be provided to help manage a fund to finance local projects submitted by local organizations under a competitive process. The technical assistance also would provide targeted technical and organizational development personnel. From this initial phase of the initiative, covering a minimal one-year period, a more massive program, based on the positive experience, could be launched by USAID or in collaboration with other donors.

E. Basic Elements of the Initiative and Their Responsibilities

A list of the anticipated basic responsibilities each of the initiative's participants is expected to undertake is listed for the commune, NGOs and rural organizations, local land users and participants, technical assistance team, and government ministries.

D1. Commune

- Provide overall direction and leadership in the selected sites.
- Encourage promotion and local involvement in the development and finalization of a watershed development plan.
- Solicit regular meetings of the participating local groups and provide overall guidance to these groups.
- In conjunction with the technical assistance team, approve release of funds, the implementation plan for each of the approved sub projects, and provide regular monitoring of this plan to include the accounting and financial management system.
- Conduct regular public meetings with the participants to review progress and discuss issues to be resolved.
- Conduct periodic meetings with departmental and capital-based leaders to advise on activity status and success.

It is anticipated that after the first six months the initiation of a second round of the process would be possible.

D2. NGOs and Rural Organizations

- Conduct the project under each proposal as spelled out in the contract signed with the commune. It is anticipated that criteria will give special weight to an organization's past experience with USAID projects and the status of their financial management system.
- Interact with the commune in a supportive manner and participate in the timely submission of inspection reports, invoices, and bi-monthly reports.

- Agree to share experiences with the technical assistance team and consider technical advise regarding project implementation and overall group development.

- Encourage the maximum use of labor from the local membership and other parties.

- Participate in a collaborative manner with the technical assistance team.

D3. Local Land Users and Participants

The project's success is contingent upon the fullest involvement and participation of this group.

Through the arrangements with the NGO or rural organization and the arrangements agreed to about their specific contributions, they will provide the necessary support or will advise on group leadership.

In those activities where the parcels of non-participants are crucial to overall success, the various participants will use every effort to cajole their involvement.

D4. Technical Assistance Team

- Provide advise in technical direction and regularly assess progress and to provide guidance and support for overall program management and administration.

- Provide assistance in the following core areas (1) local organization and development, (2) natural resource management planning, strategies and technologies, and, (3) contract administration and financial management. Supplemental support will include Haitian technical experts. There would probably be one team assigned to two to three sites.

- In conjunction with the mayor and staff and through regular interaction with local leadership, develop project promotion strategies, local organization development strategies, natural resource management strategies, and promote technology dissemination and the development of agile contract administrative and financial management systems.

- In conjunction with commune mayor and staff, develop grant promotion strategy, procedures and requirements. When applications are completed, assist the commune in the proposal review process, the awarding of grants, and the subsequent negotiation of the contract the organization will have with the commune.

- Regularly interact with commune mayor and local leadership to advise on progress and suggestions related to achieving the project's strategic objectives.

- Introduce a project management information system to assess progress in institutional development and technology adoption.

- Regularly meet with USAID officials to report on status, strategic and policy concerns, fund utilization, and overall management and administration concerns.

D5. Haitian Government

- Provide regular reports to Environment, Agriculture and Planning Ministries.

- Seek periodic counsel and interaction regarding the initiative so that positive experiences are more broadly and systematically shared.

E. Supplemental Activities

E1. Accessing Available Technologies

There is great urgency for accelerating the use of a wider range of appropriate technologies. Much is out there but might be confined to only one watershed. Provisions should be made to develop the most promising technologies in formats that can be rapidly disseminated. Efforts to conduct field trips and make videos or complementary communications technologies (including training aids) should be done early on.

E2. Monitoring and Evaluation System

To assist program management and advise the numerous interested parties of various aspects of this initiative, a reliable program-wide database that is systematically updated and monitored will have to be introduced. Areas of interest would be results and issues associated with changing technologies, impacts of these changes on land use, gender issues, and also the monitoring of the changing attitudes and activities of the local groups and the commune. From such systems a basis will be established for quickly making program adjustments and influencing sub projects and activities, and also, future donor investment activities. Under a buy-in with the Africa Bureau, we have developed such a system for Senegal that is now being considered by missions in Niger and Mali. A description of this activity is also provided.

E3. Policy Development

Recent grassroots experiences have documented the important positive contributions that occur when local organizations become involved in natural resource management policies and regulations. The "Green Book" experience is the most recent example to support this observation. The introduction of this experience might also help energize the introduction of needed policy interventions and a constructive role for the central government.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ashley, Marshall D. *Agroforestry in Haiti*. University of Maine: Agroforestry Outreach Research Project, 1987.

Associates in Rural Development, Inc. *Projet Sove Te: Final Report of Project Activities*. Port-au-Prince: Prepared for USAID/Haiti, September 1992.

Brinkerhoff, Derick and Arthur Goldsmith, eds. *Institutional Sustainability in Agriculture and Rural Development: A Global Perspective*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1990.

Brinkerhoff, Derick W. and Jean-Claude Garcia-Zamor, eds. *Politics, Projects, and People: Institutional Development in Haiti*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986.

Brown, Donald G., Alicia Grimes and Michelet Fontaine. *Design Assessment: The Productive Land Use Systems Project*. Washington, D.C.: LAC TECH II Project, April 1993.

Comino, Silvana P. *Planning and Implementing Sustainable Agroforestry Projects with Local Participation: Lessons Learned from the Haiti Agroforestry Outreach Project--A Project Report*. Cornell University: In Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of Master of Professional Studies, May 1988.

Country Tables on Agricultural Sector - 1993. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 1993.

Delatour, Leslie, Hervé Denis, Daniel Lafontant, Judith Magny, Carole Roy, and Leslie Volvaire. *Regional Development in Haiti: A Socio-Institutional Profile*. Port-au-Prince: Submitted to USAID/Haiti, April 1984.

Ehrlich, Marko, et al. *Haiti: Country Environmental Profile*. Prepared by USAID/LAC/DR and USAID/Haiti, 1985.

Forester, Nancy R. "Tenure Systems and Resource Conservation in Central America, Mexico, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic." *Economic and Institutional Analyses of Soil Conservation Projects in Central America and the Caribbean*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1994.

Gaddis, Ronald J. and Glenn R. Smucker. *Peasant Groups and Conservation Farming: An Evaluation of the Save the Children Pilot Project in Watershed Management, Local Resource Development Project I*. Massed, Haiti: Prepared for USAID/Haiti, June 1988.

Inter-American Institute or Cooperation on Agriculture Office in Haiti. *Rural Haiti Economic Recuperation Project: An Organization and Implementation Model.* Haiti, May 1993.

Klein, Wilma B. Local Organizations in Haiti and Effective Community Development: Specific Reference to the Central Plateau. Cooperative Agreement on Human Settlements and Natural Resource Systems Analysis. Worcester: Clark University/ Institute for Development Anthology, 1984.

Lowenthal, Ira P. *Social Soundness Analysis of the National Program for Agroforestry.* Washington, D.C: Development Alternatives, Inc., DESFIL Project, 1989.

Moudoud, Ezzeddine. *Modernization, the State, and Regional Disparity in Developing Countries: Tunisia in Historical Perspective, 1881-1982.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1989.

Murray, Gerald F. *Terraces, Trees, and the Haitian Peasant: An Assessment of Twenty-Five Years of Erosion Control in Rural Haiti.* Prepared for USAID/Haiti, October 1979.

Oriol, Michèle, Pierre André Guerrier and Danielle Saint-Lot. *Les Collectivités Territoriales Entre 1991 et 1993: Essai d'Analyse Institutionnelle et de Prospective.* Port-au-Prince: Projet Intégré Pour le Renforcement de la Démocratie en Haïti, December 1993.

Pierce, Thomas H. *Watershed Management in Haiti: The STAB Experience.* Washington, D.C: Development Alternatives, Inc., DESFIL Project, October 1988.

Production Year Book. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 1993.

Ringle, Ken. "Island Paradox: In a Place That Nature Made Rich, A Country That Man Made Poor." Washington, D.C.: *The Washington Post*, October 28, 1994. Section F1.

Smucker, Glenn R. *Peasants and Development Politics: A Study in Haitian Class and Culture.* Ph. D. Dissertation New School for Social Research, April 1982.

Strategies, Approaches and Systems in Integrated Watershed Management. FAO Conservation Guide 14. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 1986.

White, Thomas A. *Landholder Cooperation for Sustainable Upland Watershed Management: A Theoretical Review of the Problems and Prospects.* EPAT/MUCIA, July 1992.

_____. *Peasant Cooperation for Watershed Management in Massed, Haiti: Factors Associated with Participation.* EPAT/MUCIA, October 1992.

_____. *Peasant Initiative for Soil Conservation: Case Studies of Recent Technical and Social Innovations from Massed, Haiti.* EPAT/MUCIA, July 1992.

White, Thomas A. and Jon L. Jickling. "En Economic and Institutional Analysis of Soil Conservation in Haiti." *Economic and Institutional Analyses of Soil Conservation Projects in Central America and the Caribbean.* Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1994.