

## **International Conference of World Cities and Regions for Haiti - 23 March 2010 - Fort de France - Martinique**

*“Participating in the equitable and sustainable development of Haiti”*

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*After his official visit to Haiti on 17 February, the President of the French Republic announced that France would organise an "International Conference of World Cities and Regions for Haiti". This Conference, designed to assist with the equitable and sustainable development of Haiti, was held on Tuesday, 23 March 2010 in Fort de France, Martinique.*

*On 12 January 2010, a devastating earthquake hit the Haitian capital as well as several cities in the south-east of the country. Given the scale of the disaster, the Haitian government called for international assistance. There was an immediate show of solidarity from local bodies and their civil societies in response to this call. A large-scale international humanitarian operation was put into action to meet the Haitian people's overwhelming needs.*

*After the acute emergency phase, which has already mobilised numerous local stakeholders, and under the aegis of the United Nations, four sectoral international meetings (private enterprise, diasporas, NGOs and local authorities) have been organised in partner countries, in preparation for {the International Donors' Conference for Haiti on 31 March, 2010 in New York}.*

*Because of its historical ties to Haiti and given the strong dynamics of its local body networks working in situ, France offered its many friends and partners a chance to undertake or to further decentralised cooperation efforts with this country.*

*In order to achieve these objectives, the Fort de France Conference consisted of plenary discussions, workshops, and a feedback session at the end of the day. There were five workshops (Urban and Regional Development; Human Resources; Local Financing; Local Economic Development; Pooling of Resources and Coordination), each co-chaired by a Haitian representative as well as one from another country. A summary of the discussions from the "International Conference of World Cities and Regions for Haiti" will be issued to the press.*

*The work of this Conference will be consolidated in a single document which will set out the regional and local authorities' vision for rebuilding Haiti, and will outline their different*

*action programmes. It will be submitted to the Haitian government during the International Donors' Conference on 31 March 2010 in New York. This document will subsequently be sent to donor countries, international institutions and various local stakeholders. The final document will be available on the websites of the United Nations and the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.*

## **1. The conference**

On 12 January 2010, the devastating earthquake that hit the Haitian capital as well as several cities in the south-east of the country sparked a mass exodus from Port-au-Prince to the countryside and other cities. Although many residents from the capital may return, this upheaval must encourage a more balanced development of forces between the capital and other cities, between urban and rural Haiti, within the framework of a political decentralisation and rural development policy requested by the Haitian authorities.

Haiti's problems cannot be solved by the State authorities and international institutions alone, as they also need help from local authorities who can set up a network in the territory and provide basic services. The International Conference of World Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Haiti will help to speed up the launch of new initiatives and ideas from local authorities. It provided an international space for offering and requesting decentralised cooperation, made up of a platform offering expertise and a coordination capacity for regional and local authorities wanting to help Haiti.

Whether relating to projects and ideas to reconstruct infrastructure or provide training support and technical assistance, all such initiatives will be put forward with a view to financing (or co-financing) at the International Donors' Conference for Haiti on 31 March 2010 in New York.

### **Objectives and expected outcomes**

The foundation for this conference, made up of partnerships formed between regional and local authorities from Haiti and those from other countries, also gave many more regional and local authorities the chance to act for the first time in decentralised cooperation with Haiti.

- The objectives of the International Conference of World Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Haiti were to:

- Bring the contribution of regional and local authorities to the development plan desired by the Haitian authorities, in particular the section on support for local governance
- Coordinate the international aid from regional and local authorities
- Pool the efforts of Haitian regional and local authorities with those from abroad
- Help strengthen Haitian decentralisation efforts which were already underway before the earthquake

- The expected outcomes of the International Conference of World Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Haiti were to:

- Clearly identify the key areas in which the Haitian regional and local authorities should launch projects
- Set up partnerships based on these projects, pooling the efforts of different regional and local authorities

- Alongside and under the supervision of the Haitian authorities, help to define a comprehensive and coherent development strategy for Haiti combining decentralisation and devolution
- Contribute to the "local governance" issue in the plan to be adopted in New York

## **Working environment and methodology**

The International Conference of World Cities and Regions took place over the course of a day and was aimed at all regional and local authorities involved in or wishing to become involved in decentralised cooperation efforts with Haiti, as well, of course, as Haitian regional and local authorities with their national authorities.

Aside from the protocol of the opening and closing addresses, the Conference consisted of plenary discussions, workshops, and a feedback session at the end of the day.

To facilitate dialogue, each workshop was co-chaired by a Haitian representative as well as one from another country, who shared between them the roles of moderator and rapporteur.

The work of this Conference will be consolidated in a single document which will set a vision for the regional and local authorities in order to rebuild Haiti, will include a summary of the work carried out in the various workshops and will set out the regional and local authorities' action programme for Haiti. It will be submitted to the Haitian government during the International Donors' Conference on 31 March 2010 in New York. This document will subsequently be sent to donor countries, international institutions and various local actors. The final document will be available on the websites of the United Nations and French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. A summary of the work of the International Conference of World Cities and Regions will be transmitted to the press.

## **2. Guest countries**

Other than Haiti and France, the local bodies at the "International Conference of World Cities and Regions for Haiti" represented the following countries:

Algeria	Dominican Republic	The Netherlands
Armenia	Germany	Peru
Austria	Italy	South Korea
Belgium	Japan	Spain
Benin	Lebanon	Sweden
Brazil	Morocco	Switzerland
Burkina Faso	Mauritius	United States
Canada	Mexico	Vietnam
Cape Verde	Norway	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

## **3. Learn more on the Franco-Haitian decentralised cooperation**

### **Update**

Some thirty local bodies from France are taking direct action in Haiti as part of decentralised cooperation efforts. These local bodies have become major stakeholders in Franco-Haitian cooperation, especially when it comes to assisting the development of Haitian municipalities –

an important element in the democratic process – which will help bring about the emergence of new elites.

Through the intermediary of the Delegation for Local Body Action Abroad (known by the French acronym DAECT), the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs maintains a strong policy of support and financial assistance for decentralised cooperation in Haiti.

The DAECT has identified, in its new French Atlas of Decentralised Cooperation:

- 29 French local bodies that are active internationally
- 41 partner local bodies,
- 43 decentralised cooperation projects,
- 8 projects that are part of other initiatives abroad.

### **Contribution to decentralised cooperation in Haiti**

The first Franco-Haitian Decentralised Cooperation Conference, held on 10 and 11 July 2009 in Haiti, was an outstanding success, bringing together 360 participants including representatives from Haiti's 140 municipalities.

Thanks to this Conference, consideration could be given to the expectations of local elected officials and the Haitian government, who wished to benefit, in particular, from France's experience in the decentralisation process.

The meeting reaffirmed the special value that both the French and Haitian governments attach to cooperation between French local bodies and their Haitian counterparts, which is a key component of Franco-Haitian cooperation.

Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guyana, French Départements in the Americas (DFAs), see their cooperation with Haiti as part of the regional cooperation framework of the Caribbean. For these cooperation efforts, these local bodies can mobilise a variety of stakeholders: associations, businesses, hospitals, universities. This cooperation brings great hopes, so as to offer Haiti a whole platform of capacities that are close at hand.

*To view the map of decentralized cooperation between France and Haiti:*  
[http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/51Carte\\_Cooperation\\_decentralisee\\_.pdf](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/51Carte_Cooperation_decentralisee_.pdf)