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Day of Destruction

Survival and Stewardship in the Haiti Earthquake

Presented to USDA Economists Group

March 10, 2010

Henry “JH” Bahn

National Program Leader

NIFA USDA

HAITI



Overview

In 1697, Spain ceded the western third of the island of Hispaniola to France

The colony of Haiti, based on forestry and sugar, became the wealthiest in the Caribbean through the brutal exploitation of African slaves and environmental degradation

Haiti was the first independent nation in Latin America and first black-led republic in the world following a bloody slave rebellion in 1804

Since then Haiti has had 50 presidents

Nine served full terms - the remainder were overthrown, executed, assassinated, or died in office

Area 27,751 km² (10,714 mi²)

Population 10,033,000 (2009 est.)

Government by elected President, appointed Prime Minister, and bicameral National Assembly

GDP \$6.952 bil.; Per Capita \$570 (2008 est.)

Currency Gourde (HTG)

HTG 40 = approx. US \$ 1

Median age 20.2 yrs.

Population growth 1.8%

Birth rate 29.1/1,000 pop.

Death rate 8.65/1,000

Infant mortality 59.69/1,000 live births

Child mortality (thru age 5) 120/1000

Life expectancy 60.8 yrs.

Urban population 47%; growth 4.5% yr.

Literacy 52.9%

Poverty 80%; 54% abject poverty

Haiti (left)/Dominican Republic Border



Haiti suffers with poor infrastructure

- 80% of energy use is wood or charcoal
- Only 10% on the electric grid
- Water and sewer facilities lacking
- Poor urban and rural roads
- Inadequate and expensive harbor facilities
- Limited airport capacity











Erosion is pervasive...









... but not without hope

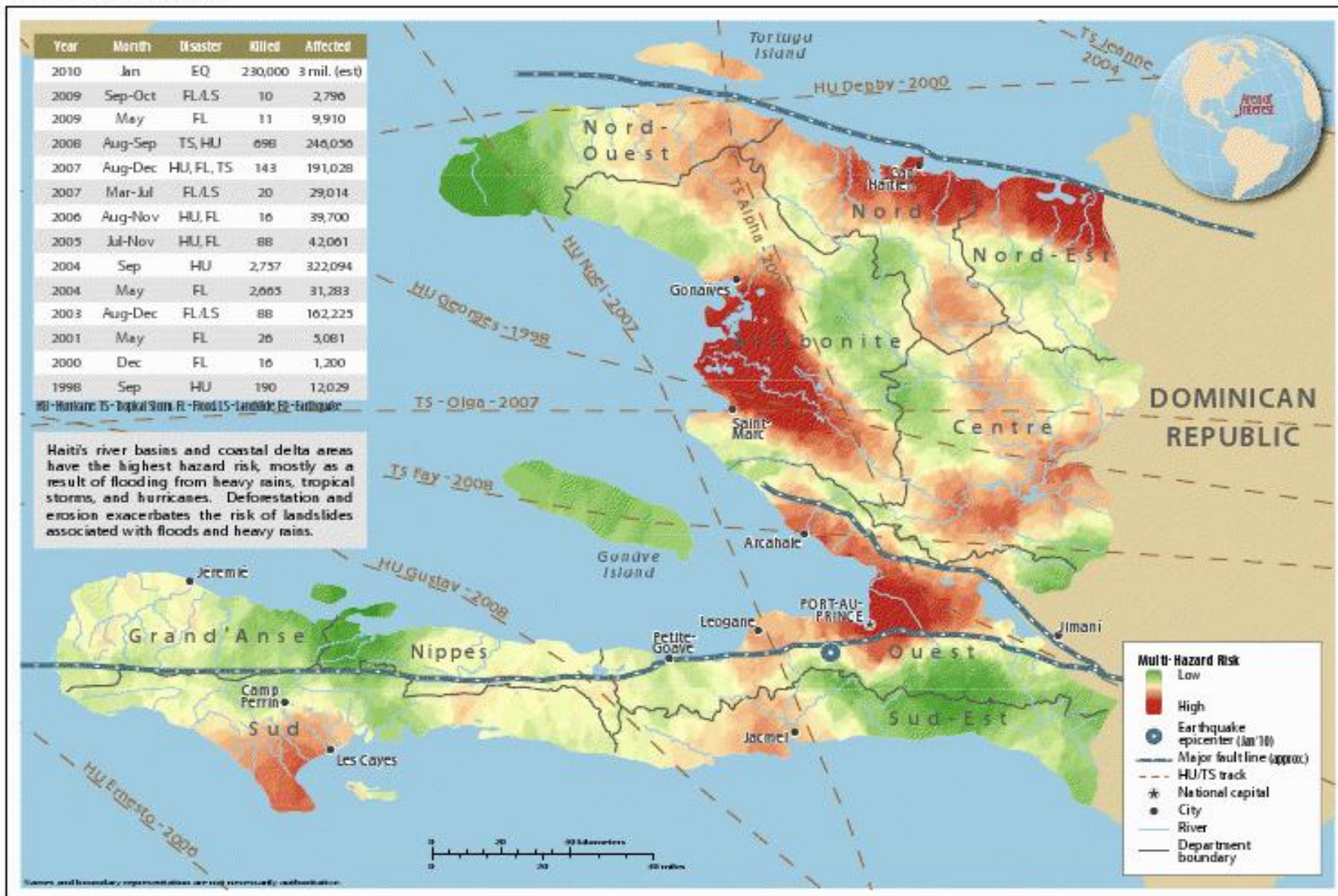






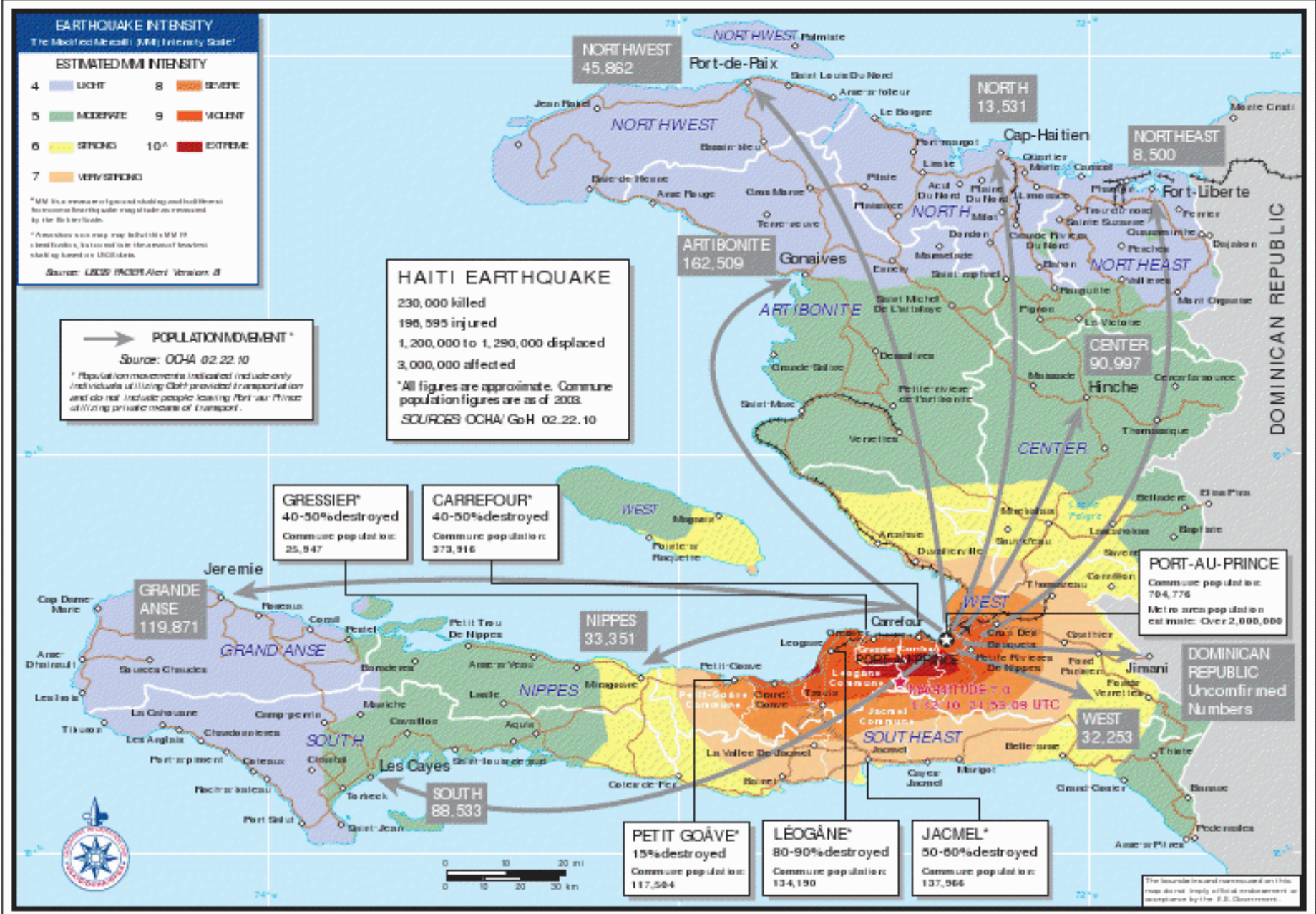


Haiti: Multi-Hazard Risk, Major Disasters and Severity (1998 - 2010)



Tuesday, January 12, 2010, 4:54 PM





Villa Creole Hotel







Haiti's Heroes









Parking lot became a triage clinic



At dusk the injured began to arrive







We cared for hundreds







using hotel furniture...





...whatever else we could find...

...or
just
the
ground



the parking lot filled





Medical supplies were exhausted

After 18 hours supplies were reduced to water and torn sheets for bandages



Hope For Haiti

Just after dark on the second evening Hope For Haiti, a Florida based NGO, arrived with a truckload of supplies and a doctor

They were miracle workers - with drugs, morphine, IVs, antibiotics and skills I lacked

They stayed for 12 hours then went on to help others

Lessons Re-learned

- When we are called, we can perform

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- When we must, we will perform at levels above our capability

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- When we are called, we can perform
- When we must, we will perform at levels above our capability
- Spontaneous actions reinvigorate humanity
- Individually and collectively, we will do the right thing...

...because it's the right thing to do

