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Written Submission
The Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights
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Committee on Foreign Affairs
United States House of Representatives
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A Coordinated Donor Response

Today, as the Subcommittee meets to address Haiti's development needs, we must consider the implementation of the key international process designed to specifically respond to those needs. In July 2004, the international community pledged more than US \$1 billion to Haiti. The Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF) established priorities and procedures for disbursing and spending funds donated by multilateral and bilateral institutions for the period July 2004 to July 2006. Following a conference to assess progress in July 2006, the timeframe was extended to September 2007.

A potentially innovative vehicle, the ICF's purpose is to coordinate donor assistance and empower the Haitian government to hold donors accountable for their commitments. The ICF's components include three pillars of action: identification of needs; coordination of assistance; and implementation of programs. The ICF initial report identified four priority areas of need, referred to as themes and/or strategic axes:

- 1) Improving political governance and promoting national dialogue;
- 2) Strengthening economic governance and promoting institutional development;
- 3) Promoting economic recovery and institutional development; and
- 4) Improving access to basic services and humanitarian aid.¹

Each of these was further broken down into distinct areas of intervention, many of which were practical and concrete: improving delivery of electricity to promote economic recovery, for instance, and providing water and sanitation as a means of improving access to basic services. The ICF Report also identified four additional, "cross-cutting themes" to be addressed in each strategic sector: Crisis Prevention, Human Rights, Gender, and HIV/AIDS.

Responding to Lessons Learned

¹ Republic of Haiti Interim Cooperation Framework 2004-2006 Summary Report, July 2004 ([haiticci.undg.org/uploads/ ReportVersion8%20Eng%20FINAL%20Low%20Res.pdf](http://haiticci.undg.org/uploads/ReportVersion8%20Eng%20FINAL%20Low%20Res.pdf)).

The structure and process of the ICF were intended as a dramatic shift from previous funding trends, which failed to address adequately the Haitian people's needs and rights. The ICF specifically recognized the central flaw in past assistance patterns: donors often created parallel project implementation structures, thus weakening the Haitian government and leaving it unable to coordinate external aid and to improve the nation's own absorption and execution capacities.

To address past missteps, the ICF calls for strengthening Haiti's institutional capacities through partnerships with local community organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); at the same time, the ICF seeks to promote active participation of Haitian civil society in both coordination mechanisms and at every level of development. These considerations were designed to outlast the ICF mandate and set new standards for donor assistance to Haiti.

Zanmi Lasante

In 2002, the RFK Center bestowed its annual Human Rights Award on Ms. Loune Viaud, the Director of Strategic Planning for Zanmi Lasante (Partners in Health), one of Haiti's largest NGOs. These two tactics, strengthening government infrastructure and promoting local participation, are central to Zanmi Lasante's success. Zanmi Lasante began working in the Central Plateau of Haiti in 1983. The organization started by traveling to villages, meeting people in their homes and asking about their most pressing needs. One of the organization's first initiatives was a free medical clinic, and Zanmi Lasante now runs several clinics across the Central Plateau which now helps more than a million patients each year.

Zanmi Lasante's founding principle is that "legitimacy is best achieved by collaborating with the poor and oppressed, who are not only the chief victims of structural and political violence, but also essential partners in any intervention that is to succeed."² The organization has used strategic partnerships with the Haitian government to grow and expand its services.

The ICF attributes the collapse of Haiti's public infrastructure in part to years of development funds flowing almost entirely to NGOs,³ and it anticipates that partnerships between the government and organizations like Zanmi Lasante will be key to finding and creating lasting solutions to Haitians' needs. The ICF recognizes that not only will development projects gain legitimacy, but that to fail to work with the Haitian government will further weaken state institutions and permanently undermine Haiti's ability to fulfill its people's needs and to promote full respect for Haitians' human rights.

Where the ICF Stands Today

Almost three years after the initiation of the ICF, approximately over US \$800 million has been disbursed. However, a relatively small portion of disbursed funds actually have reached Haiti, and international pledges have not always corresponded to the priority sectors the ICF report so clearly identified. Further, most disbursements so far have not been channeled through or in partnership with the Haitian government. None of the key benchmarks have been met. There has

² Campos, Nicole Gastineau, and Farmer, Paul, "Partners: Discernment and Humanitarian Efforts in Settings of Violence," *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 31 (2003): 508.

³ In addition, critical collapses in Haiti's infrastructure have stemmed from external intervention, including the closing of Haiti's medical school in Tabarre, which was seized by US and international troops in 2004 and converted to a military base without consulting the Haitian government or relevant NGOs. See Farmer, Paul, "Political Violence and Public Health in Haiti," *N.Engl. J Med* 350: 15 (2004): 1484. Reopening the medical school is a critical component to achieving the ICF's strategic axis (4).

been minimal participation by local NGOs and the Haitian people. Few Haitians have seen any concrete impact from these funds, and there seems to be little if any public accounting or reporting.

One key flaw in the ICF is the lack of any requirement or central means to track funds. Nominally, the Committee for Implementation and Monitoring (known by the acronym for its French title, COCCI), housed within the Haitian Prime Minister's office,⁴ has overall responsibility to implement the ICF and to monitor progress. In practice, however, COCCI has no tool or process to hold donor states accountable for their pledges or even to oversee funds disbursement. Further, multilateral and bilateral donors, including the United States, have not released any detailed public information about funds disbursement or plans to implement key components of the ICF.

Recommendations for the United States

1. Make public its ICF disbursements to Haiti, referencing the ICF priority axis.
2. Make public its efforts to ensure participation of local Haitian communities in all phases of project development and implementation.
3. Make public its work with the Government of Haiti, highlighting efforts to strengthen government infrastructure.
4. All efforts to make such information public should be made available in a manner which local Haitians can access.
5. Encourage other donor states to follow the same recommendations.

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⁴ COCCI is chaired by the Prime Minister of Haiti and includes the Minister of Economy and Finance, the Minister of Planning and External Cooperation, representatives from three Haitian civil society organizations (the Civil Society Initiative, Groupe Groissance, and the Professional Association of Artisans), and six international agencies (Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), US Agency for International Development (USAID), the EC, the IDB, the UNDP, and the WB).