



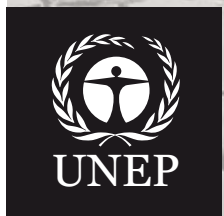
GEOHAITI



2010



State of the Environment Report 2010





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MINISTRY OF THE
ENVIRONMENT



GEO Haiti 2010

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*Jean Marie Claude Germain, Ing.
Minister of the Environment of Haiti*

PREFACE BY THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF HAITI

In regard to the environment, Haiti has often been presented as the example of the ecological devastation of the Western Hemisphere. The country is extremely vulnerable. Its natural systems have been visibly weakened, and now seem incapable of withstanding external shocks, each one of these being more catastrophic than the last.

On January 12, 2010, Haiti's extreme vulnerability was again demonstrated when an earthquake registering 7.0 on the Richter scale struck the country, leaving in its wake unprecedented damage and loss to the Haitian society and to its economy, infrastructure, cultural sustainability and environment.

Now, more than three months later, the Ministry of the Environment, with sustained support and close guidance from UNEP, and availing itself fully of university-level knowledge, notably from the University of Quisqueya, is launching the GEO HAITI 2010 Report, the first report on the status and outlook of the Haitian environment. This report, addressed to decision-makers, professionals and the general public in Haiti, is also one of the recommendations of the government's Environmental Action Plan published in 1999.

Some might wonder, following the January 12 earthquake which compromised and weakened the buildings and infrastructure in Haiti, and generating all the new problems that Haitians have had to face since then, why a GEO HAITI? Why now? Is this document not outdated? What will it contribute in terms of solutions to Haiti's various developmental ills?

I will concede that it is not the document in itself that will save Haiti. I also can add that if we have learnt one thing from the event of January 12, 2010, it is that we need to be more serious, coherent and structured in our approach to the implementation of the important provisions contained in the documents on the path and orientation which should be followed in regard to development.

In this regard, I commend the accuracy and foresight of GEO HAITI 2010.

It is true that all eyes are on the new conditions of the post January 12 period. However, well before this, the report had increasingly been bringing to our attention the fact that, at the centre of Haiti's development woes, primarily lies an environmental problem encompassing diverse issues linked to difficulties regarding environmental management. The GEO HAITI report underlines the fact that this environmental problem is also an economic problem (we are paying dearly for our inaction), a problem of poverty and development (the achievement of the Millenium Development Goals is in jeopardy), a problem of trans-generational equity (are we going to pass on to the next generation the burden of resilience and sustained capability of adapting to various external shocks?), and finally a moral and security problem (environmental refugees, new competition for resources, expansion of disease zones).

The January 12, 2010 event has only exacerbated the already dire environmental indicators. Having said that, I commend the addition to the report of the section dealing with the aftereffects of the earthquake, since, let us not delude ourselves, the restructuring of the Haitian government cannot be achieved without addressing the environmental threats that jeopardise the country's recovery and development. The environmental issue is a fundamental one. Things must be done differently, avoiding a recurrence of the vulnerability that existed prior to January 12, 2010.

The GEO Haiti report comes at an opportune time.

Let us give it a warm welcome.



Jean Marie Claude GERMAIN, Ing
Ministre



Margarita Astrálagua
Director UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

PREFACE BY UNEP

After many years in the making, the first GEO Haiti is now a reality, thanks to the continued support of the United Nations Environment Programme, of the Quisqueya University team of professionals, and of Haiti's Ministry of the Environment. Several Haitian government bodies contributed to the execution of this project by providing the necessary key information. The overwhelming participation at the workshops organised by Quisqueya University is testimony to the interest and concern displayed by local and international organisations, as well as by the civil society, to environmental problems.

During the execution of this report, several devastating natural disasters occurred, severely testing Haiti's local and national response capacity. The period between the years 2004–2008 was marked by several hurricanes which left devastation, hundreds of thousands of victims and massive infrastructure loss in their wake. Compared to its neighbours, Haiti has always been more severely affected by such events. In 2010, the country's West and Southeast Departments were badly hit by an earthquake of about 7.0 on the Richter scale, causing varying degrees of destruction in the cities of Port-au-Prince, Leogane, Grand Goave, Petit Goave and Jacmel, and seriously impacting the towns located along the Enriquillo-Plantain Garden fault line (or the Petionville-Tiburón fault line).

The GEO Haiti 2010 Report assesses the state of the country's natural resources and the problems encountered in trying to preserve them from the uncontrolled urban development of the main towns and an excessive use of resources without the necessary protection and security measures. This report aims first to educate the general public, seemingly ill-informed of the natural

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