

# FAC Joint Field Mission to Haiti

June 26 – July 1, 2016



## Summary

*It is with great enthusiasm that I share with you the Food Assistance Convention's (FAC) trip report for this first joint field mission. Nearly half of the FAC members traveled together to Haiti in late June to explore the food security situation in that country, providing a unique opportunity to see together first-hand how we as donors are responding. Together we were able to see food voucher and cash transfer programs that provided aid to the most vulnerable and drought affected, livelihood activities aimed at diversifying incomes, and projects targeted at boosting the agricultural production of the regions we visited. We spoke directly to beneficiaries to hear how these programs were benefitting their families and traveled with implementing partners to learn about the opportunities and challenges they face on the ground. We shared in lively exchanges on the different approaches taken in response to food security and discussed how coordination could be improved based on lessons learned in Haiti.*

*I hope all those delegation members who joined the trip walked away with the same sense of satisfaction as I did that joint learning opportunities like this are worth it. My hope is that this experience and the lessons learned from it will help make the FAC a stronger body and in doing such, we will help make the world a more food secure place.*

*Thank you,*

*Matthew Nims*

*USAID and 2016 FAC Chair*

## Purpose

The objective of the Food Assistance Convention (FAC) field mission was to give participants the opportunity to see how the broader objectives of the FAC are operationalized at field level as well as to give members with limited field presence the opportunity to see humanitarian and development programs firsthand.

The EU initially suggested the idea of a joint FAC mission in 2015 – the EU chaired the FAC in 2015 – but it came to fruition in 2016 under the leadership of the U.S. Haiti was selected for this mission due to its high level of vulnerability to food insecurity – according to assessments conducted by World Food Program (WFP) and the Haitian National Coordination for Food Security Office (CNSA), about 3.6 million people are food insecure – roughly one third of the population – of which 1.5 million are severely food insecure. A three-year drought, made worse by the El Niño phenomenon, has exacerbated an already vulnerable population and hurting the food and nutrition security of the poorest. Other considerations that determined location selection included accessibility, safety, the presence of multiple FAC member programs as well as a broad spectrum of both humanitarian and development programs.

## FAC Delegation

FAC participants included the U.S. (with participants from USAID, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the State Department), Canada, the EU, Slovenia and Switzerland. With the exception of Canada and Slovenia, participants were accompanied by colleagues from their respective field offices. Spain sadly declined at the last moment for medical reasons. Implementing partners were on hand to present their programs, with a particularly strong presence from WFP. A full list of participants can be found in Annex A.

## Site Visits

On Monday June 26, participants spent the day in Port-au-Prince in a series of briefings by implementing partners on the upcoming field visits as well as a general overview of the food security situation by FEWS Net. Tuesday, June 27 through Thursday, June 30 were spent in the South East Department (*Sud-Est*), relatively close to the Haiti-Dominican Republic border. The area was chosen because of the close proximity to both development programs

and emergency programs, which were responding to the drought exacerbated by El Niño. In 2015, the region, among others, experienced an Integrated Phase Classification 3 (IPC 3), or food security crisis. Farmers in the region lost the previous harvest and have seen the current season seriously impacted due to a shortage of seeds and fertilizers as well as the need to repay debt contracted during the drought in order to survive. The projects visited included those funded by the EU and U.S. and implemented by a wide selection of partners – WFP, CESAL, German Agro Action, Solidarités, CARE and the Netherlands Red Cross.

The area's population is a vulnerable group of people largely dependent on subsistence agricultural and susceptible to poor rains and weather conditions. Due to their isolation, few other livelihood opportunities exist. The rampant production of charcoal is the region's main energy source and further contributes to the agricultural vulnerability through erosion as major rainstorms often wash away crops. The remoteness and inaccessibility of the region means that food coming from outside the region is more expensive than the national average and access to markets difficult. Many Haitians brave border crossings into the Dominican Republic to trade food and other goods, despite possible imprisonment or violence, further evidence of their vulnerability and desperation.

### **Emergency Food Assistance**

In Fond Verrettes, the U.S.-funded a WFP and CESAL (its Spanish NGO implementer) project that provided **unconditional cash transfers** to beneficiaries in eight Departments. Beneficiaries received a transfer equivalent to 60 percent of the monthly food basket for a three month period, covering the lean season before the next harvest – with a follow-on cash-for-assets program scheduled for the following three months. Beneficiaries were determined through a household survey and selected on the basis of their vulnerability – with a focus on women, children under 5 as well as the elderly or disabled. They used the money received to reimburse debt, engage in trade (usually in the Dominican Republic) and to diversify their diets.

The same program also supported another site visited in the community of Palmis Tampe, whose population has greater access to livelihood opportunities, food and local markets. Nevertheless the program was needed in order to mitigate the depletion of seed reserves and other agricultural inputs caused by the drought. The program was operationalized through mobile transfers via Digicel and their cash agency, MonCash, which allowed beneficiaries to access a country-wide network of “cash-out” locations.

In Bois d'Ormes, the FAC visited a second emergency food assistance program funded by the EU and implemented by Solidarités. This **conditional voucher program** hosts food fairs (artificial markets with selected vendors that only accept vouchers) in three disbursements and provides separate vouchers for dry goods, fresh vegetables and meat with the purpose of diversifying the beneficiary diets. In order to receive vouchers, beneficiaries sit through a presentation on nutrition and diet diversification. The quality of produce was very good and the operation seemed to suit both sellers, who found it worth their while to come despite the delayed payments, and beneficiaries who benefit from high-quality produce that was no more expensive than available elsewhere. A U.S.-funded water, sanitation and hygiene program complimented the food assistance and is discussed further in the resilience activities.

Finally, the delegation visited an EU-funded cash for work program implemented by the Netherlands Red Cross. The program had beneficiaries construct retainer walls, check dams and plant drought-resistant vetiver in order to prevent erosion and improve water filtration for the local water source for Bodaire. In return, beneficiaries received 4,500 Goude a month for four months, roughly equivalent to 70 percent of the monthly food basket. The Netherlands Red Cross hopes to extend the activities to include the sinking of a borehole to ensure the availability of water all year round.



A beneficiary receives her vouchers for the day's food fair. She uses them to purchase cornmeal and vegetables. Maggie Moore/USAID

## Development Food Assistance

The visit to Grand Gosier was an opportunity to see the U.S.-funded Kore Lavi (meaning “life changing” in Haitian Creole) safety net program, implemented by the Haitian Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MAST), CARE, WFP, World Vision and ACF. The program is comprised of three components: 1) a 152,000 households vulnerability data base, 2) a voucher program and 3) a behavior change program to improve nutrition and diet diversification. The voucher program - which the FAC delegation saw – has provided more than 17,000 households with \$25 monthly for 18+ months, allowing beneficiaries to access locally sourced dried goods and fresh produce through designated traders at their normal market places. CARE operationalized the voucher program through a combination of physical vouchers for fresh products and mobile vouchers for staples, such as maize and beans.

The FAC delegation also visited a group for pregnant and lactating mothers, also part of the Kore Lavi program. Women in the program, called Mother Leaders, learn to advocate for maternal child health and nutrition in their communities using the 1,000 days approach that targets pregnant and lactating women and children up to two years of age. In return, they receive a food ration which strengthens their household food security.



A Mother Leader group role plays how to talk about breast feeding and lactation to Haitian mothers. Maggie Moore/USAID

## Resilience and Livelihood Programs

In addition to the emergency and social safety net programs, the FAC delegation visited a number of resilience and livelihood programs in Haiti. The EU's DEVCO funded programs implemented by the German Agro Action to boost a diverse breadth of income-generating opportunities beyond sustenance agriculture. Activities included the production of high quality organic soil using worms, grafting of plants to increase value and bee keeping.

The FAC delegation also visited two water management activities, one financed by the U.S. and the other by the EU. The American project was a cistern available to the Bois d'Ormes community and complimented the EU emergency voucher program discussed earlier. This cistern is available to the community, which charges a nominal fee (2 Goude) during the lean season but is free otherwise, and managed by the community who maintains the tank, chlorinate the water and check for water purity. The cistern is not the community's main water supply (which are household rain catchment efforts), but an emergency resource to protect against drought. The second water project we saw collected rainfall in a school in Bodaire, which was funded by the EU and constructed by the Netherlands Red Cross after the natural water system dried up during the recent drought. The water is free for the children at the school and the community members are charged a nominal fee that fluctuates depending on how full the tank is.



U.S. and EU funded cisterns (above) and work for asset water/ erosion prevention projects (below). Maggie Moore/USAID

## Lessons Learned

The context in Haiti demonstrates vividly the need for **multi-sector responses**. Food and nutrition security, livelihoods and WASH programs have greatest impact work best when they take place as part of an integrated whole. The virtual absence of the Haitian authority due to weak capacity, poor governance and corruption make it all the more necessary for donors to act with coherence and across sectors.

The trip was also an excellent opportunity to raise awareness among FAC members on the **need for resilience** and to show this in practice. The programs visited all, in one way or another, demonstrated that sustainable impact and outcomes will only be achieved within a framework that is multi-sector in nature and that looks at solutions from a resilience angle.

One of the key principles of the FAC is to improve donor coordination. The mission to Haiti showed a country where many actors and partners are present, but where coordination could be improved. **Efforts should go**

**beyond information sharing and translate into program planning, beneficiary targeting and complimentary responses.** Coordinating better both at the headquarter level and on the ground would lead to improved programs for beneficiaries and the more effective use of resources.

Haiti is a difficult place for donor coordination because no food security cluster has stood up in response to the drought and food security crisis. Yet donors and partners are doing their best on the ground to make sure beneficiaries are reached and programs are complementary. However, the FAC delegation saw examples where improved coordination could have led to more cohesive programming. In Fond Verrettes CARE was distributing unconditional cash transfers for food security, sg funded by USAID, in the same neighborhood and on the same date and time as the food fair implemented by Solidarités and funded by the EU. The lack of coordination between the two efforts was surprising and led to questions about the duplication of efforts and why one program was unconditional cash and the other conditional voucher for the same emergency in the same community. Better coordination on the ground may have enabled donor resources to reach more areas and more people.

The FAC also witnessed a muddled response in terms of modality selection. In similar programs and in the same region, delegates witnessed a wide breadth of modalities but were rarely provided an explanation for why that modality was best suited to their targeted outcome. FAC members are not in accordance regarding a preference for one modality over others, but delegates also witnessed **technical issues with cash and voucher programs**. One member was struck by the significant time lag in reimbursing vendors for (mobile) cash payments by beneficiaries. This delay led some vendors to rely on credit in order to restock before their payment came through or to choose not participate in the program because of perceived risk. This experience runs counter to the general thinking that cash is faster or more efficient than other modalities.

This field visit was worthwhile for members and **broader representation on future trips is encouraged**. Not only does it offer an opportunity for members to build stronger inter-personal relationships among each other, which results in stronger working relationships, it is an important opportunity for FAC members who work together on policy and practice in headquarters to see field operations in action, providing a fresh dynamic to dialogues. It also offers an opportunity to informally evaluate programs funded by different donors and implemented by a range of partners which offers a wonderfully holistic view of food assistance efforts in a country. Members recommend trips to take place biennially and suggest that the next country visited should be located in Africa for centrality of location.

## **Annex A: FAC Delegation Member List**

Matt Nims, FAC Chairperson

Jacqueline Birrer, Switzerland

Amy Diggs, USA (State)

Matthew Keyes, EU

Gardy Letang, Switzerland

Jordi Torres Miralles, EU

Maggie Moore, USA (USAID)

Ben Muskovitz, USA (USDA)

Danielle Mutone-Smith, USA (USAID)

Magdala Beaublanc, USA (USAID)

Eva Nastav, Slovenia

Chris Rittgers, USA (USDA)

Vicky Singmin, Canada

Laura Wilkenson, USA (USAID)

## **Annex B: Site Visit Itinerary**

### **Monday, June 27, 2016:**

9:00 AM - 15:00 PM Conference at Karibe Hotel

9:00 - 9:30 AM Welcome Remarks, Matt Nims

9:30 - 10:00 AM FEWS Net Presentation

10:00 - 10:45 Exchange with Government of Haiti (GoH)

10:45 - 11:15 World Food Program Presentation

11:15 - 11:45 EU's DEVCO Presentation

11:45 AM - 12:15 PM USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance Presentation

12:15 - 13:15 PM Lunch and Discussion of Site Visit Goals and Expectations

13:15 - 13:45 PM Kore Lavi Presentation

13:45 - 14:15 PM EU's ECHO Presentation

14:15 - 14:30 PM Wrap Up and Closing Remarks

18:30 - 21:30 PM Delegation dinner

### **Tuesday, June 28, 2016: WFP**

06:45 AM Arrives @ Karibe to pick up delegation

07:00 AM Delegation departs Karibe and meets at Embassy Departure to Thiotte

7:30 - 10:30 AM Travel from American Embassy to Fond Verrettes and then to Community of Palmis Tampe

10:30 - 11:00 AM CESAL Briefing. Focus Group Discussions with EMOP Beneficiaries, and household visits in Community of Palmis Tampe (dry zone)

11:00 - 12:00 PM Travel from Fond Verrettes to Foret des Pins

12:00 - 12:30 PM Light lunch stop at Auberge Foret des Pins

12:30 - 12:50 PM Travel from Fonds Verrettes to Boucan Chat Community

12:50 - 13:50 PM CESAL Briefing. Focus Group Discussions with EMOP Beneficiaries, and visit to productive plots in Boucan Chat Community (Semi humid Zone)

13:50 - 14:30 PM Travel from Boucan Chat Community to Thiottes

14:30 - 15:30 PM Site Visit German Agro Action project in Thiotte DEVCO funded intervention

15:13 - 14:30 Check in at Hotels

18:45 PM Pickup Guests at Esperanda Guest House and Coin Vert Hotel for dinner at Dominique Hotel

19:00 - 21:00 PM Dinner @ Dominique Hotel

21:15 PM Delegation returns to Esperanda Guest House and Coin Vert Hotel

### **Wednesday, June 29, 2016: CARE/Solidarité**

7:15AM Delegation meets at Dominique Hotel

7:30 AM Delegation departs Dominique Hotel to Bois d'Ormes (Marché de Mare Rouge)

8:00 AM Visit Solidarités Food Trade Activity (Food Assistance) in Bois d'Ormes ECHO  
9:15 AM Departs Maché de Mare Rouge to K-Toussen  
09:45 AM Visit Solidarités Site in Bois d'Ormes K-Toussen (WASH OFDA)  
10:30 AM Departs K-Toussen to to Bodarie Market visit / Fresh food Voucher, Grand Gosier  
11:30 AM Bodarie visit/Redemption fresh food voucher Vendor Barthelemy Talita Phillippe  
12:15 AM Depart Marché Bodarie to Thiotte  
13:15 PM Lunch @ Dominique Hotel  
14:00 - 14:35 PM Cash for Asset: Name of locality: Dupuy-Corail Work  
14:35 - 15:00 PM Meeting with Pregnant and lactating mother: Kore Lavi Beneficiares  
15:10 - 15:30 Meeting with Thiotte's CADEC and Mairie at CARE Sub Office  
18:45 PM Pickup @ Hotels for dinner @ Dominique Hotel  
19:00 - 21:00 PM Dinner @ Dominique Hotel

**Thursday, June 30, 2016: ECHO**

8:00AM Fleet departs Dominique Hotel  
9:00 AM EU Site Visit in Bodarie Red Cross Netherlands Cistern Project Cash for work project  
12:00 PM Lunch @ Dominique Hotel/Checkout  
13:30 PM Departs Thiotte to PAP  
16:30 PM Arrives at Karibe  
18:45 PM Pickup at Karibe for diner at Observatoire

**Friday, July 1st, 2016: Depart Home**