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LATIN AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN  
AND YOUTH IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Jointly sponsored by the Economic Commission for Latin America, the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning, and the United Nations Children's Fund, in co-operation with the International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the World Health Organization.

Santiago, Chile, 28 November to 11 December 1965

SUMMARY  
of

the Report Prepared by Haiti

Introduction

The total population of Haiti numbers approximately 4,660,284 inhabitants; the population increase at the rate of 2.29% per annum.

The birth rate is approximately 44.5 per thousand and the death rate is around 21.1 per thousand.

Population density is 167.9 inhabitants per sq. km., one of the highest in Latin America.

The population is young: 1950 figures showed 37.9% under 15 years, 56% in the 15 to 59 years age group and 5.5% in the 60 years and over age group.

Over 80% of the population works in agriculture.

The average per capita income is exceedingly low: 0.90 gourdes per day of which half is the very minimum required for food.

/Health

### Health

The most common diseases are gastro-intestinal: diarrhoea, enteritis, etc. These are responsible for 23.67% of children's admittance to hospitals.

The second most serious cause of disease is malnutrition, often accompanied by intestinal parasites, malaria, respiratory diseases, etc.

Respiratory diseases account for 11.42% of children's hospitalizations.

Intestinal parasites are also common (10.88%).

Umbilical tetanus causes a high percentage (7.34%) of infant deaths.

Malaria still exists, even in the Port-au-Prince area, but a campaign has been undertaken to combat it.

Tuberculosis was found in 8.87% of children in hospitals in a 1951-52 survey.

Meningitis, pertussis, etc. are also responsible for considerable child morbidity; diphtheria is endemic.

Yaws are very prevalent, particularly in rural areas; a widespread campaign is being carried out against it.

Dispensaries have multiplied; newly graduate physicians are required to spend two years in practice in rural areas; and in general the staff of dietitians, nurses, nurses aides, laboratory technicians and health workers is increasing due to the efforts of the present Government.

### Nutrition

Malnutrition is rife, its greatest incidence being amongst infants and young children. Even when cured it is responsible for retarded growth and also for a low haemoglobin count.

One out of every 15 children suffers from multi-nutritional deficiencies (Kwashiokor), and to a greater or lesser extent all the school age population suffers from protein and calory deficiencies.

Various centres have been established, under a Bureau of Nutrition, to combat the problem.

There are milk centres attached to Public Health Dispensaries, and there is also a school canteen service; both these systems are under the Social Protection Division.

/Education

## Education

The greatest educational problem is illiteracy, which is as high as 85%.

A national literacy campaign has been undertaken under the aegis of a specially created agency "ONEC".

The simultaneous use of Creole and French does not simplify the educational problem.

There is a great shortage of schools, trained teachers and teaching material; nevertheless schools have increased and work on a shift basis in order to increase their capacity.

In rural areas the educational problem is very acute due to the scarce availability of schools and to the fact that children are valuable economic units who have to do a considerable amount of work before and after school, during the sowing and harvesting, etc.

Technical and professional education for boys is dispensed by 16 establishments which differ in nature and level. It has been suggested that these be classified into three sections: prevocational, professional for skilled workers, and professional for technicians. The latter, provided by 2 establishments, provides a 4 year course with an enrolment of some 300 students. The other establishments provide technical training at a far lower level and are handicapped by poor equipment.

There is a great need for skilled workers and technicians which far surpasses the annual number of graduates. Haitian youth has a rooted prejudice against manual labour, but it is also true that technical school graduates find it difficult to obtain positions, partly due to the country's low industrialization, and partly to the fact that employers prefer to train their own workers.

Business education is only provided by the Ecole Hoteliere d'Haiti and by some private establishments.

Training for girls in the technical or professional field is only provided by religious schools whose standards are low. Such establishments really train infant teachers and housewives.

In general education at all levels suffers from poor teachers and scant equipment.

/Welfare, Protection

Welfare, Protection and Community Development

The general poverty means that customarily both parents work with the consequent neglect of children during a considerable part of the day.

It is common for unions to be established without marriage; if the illegitimate issue of such unions is recognized by the father their rights are similar to those of legitimate children.

Community development has been given great importance, particularly in rural areas - there is a Project for Rural Artisans (Project d'artisanat rural) prepared with ILO and UNICEF technical assistance.

Rural schools do a great deal of community development work, and are also active in adult and family education, aware that the solution of the educational problem is complex and requires the general improvement of conditions.

The Institute of Social Welfare and Research is entrusted with raising the level of living from the economic, moral and social standpoints.

The Division of Social Defense is responsible for the maintenance of social order, with particular regard to the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency. Under present legislation, offenders under the age of 16 are subject to special courts.

The Division of Social Protection is concerned with pre-natal care, mother and child care, milk stations, meals for school children, etc.

Welfare efforts are assisted by private organizations such as "Le Mouvement Haitien des Meres", "La Ligue Féminine d'Action Sociale", "Jeunesse Ouvriere Catholique", etc.

State protection is assured by constitutional provision (1964 Constitution) to families, mothers and children.

The work of minors, apprentices, etc. is protected at present by special legislation.