

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT: HAITI QUAKE UPDATE

- ESTIMATED THAT AS MUCH AS 75% OF THE HAITIAN POPULATION IS LIVING IN ABSOLUTE POVERTY
- HAITI IS THE THIRD HUNGRIEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD AFTER SOMALIA AND AFGHANISTAN
- THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ARE STILL LIVING IN CROWDED TENT CITIES WITH POOR SANITATION AND LITTLE ACCESS TO CLEAN DRINKING WATER
- CHOLERA HAS TAKEN THE LIVES OF OVER 250 FROM LACK OF CLEAN WATER
- HIV/AIDS IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG HAITIAN CHILDREN.
- TOTAL DAMAGE AND LOSSES IS ESTIMATED AT \$7.8 BILLION

COUNTRY INFO

Haiti is located on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, which it shares with the Dominican Republic. Almost all of the 9 million residents are of African descent and speak Creole and French. The capital is Port-au-Prince. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, where nearly four out of five people live in poverty. The country has lived under political violence for most of its history. Unemployment and underemployment is another issue, as two-thirds of the labor force does not have formal jobs.



CURRENT SITUATION

On January 12, 2010, Haiti was struck by an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.0 in the capital Port-au-Prince, and the earthquake was assessed as the worst in the region over the last 200 years. The earthquake left the city in shambles including destruction of hospitals, government buildings, schools, and homes. At the peak of the displacement, 2.3 million people left their homes with a shortage of food and water.

Ten months after the earthquake, the city is still covered in rubble. Despite the multitude of pledges for aid, many countries have not followed through including the U.S., who has not delivered any of the \$1.15 billion pledged. In addition to the lack of aid, other issues include lack of security, shelter, health care, and other food and emergency aid. Up to 1.8 million people are living in tent cities, with inadequate sanitation, no electricity, and limited security. Rape, hunger, and disease are constant threats to people in the camps. Space is limited in the overcrowded tent cities where sickness and disease is rampant. With the destruction of approximately 4,000 schools, children have a limited access to education. Some of the youth are able to attend private schools, but most families are unable to cover the cost. Much support and funding is needed.

CHOLERA OUTBREAK

According to Haiti's department of public health, Port-au-Prince has experienced an outbreak of cholera, a water-borne disease, resulting in 292 deaths and 4,147 confirmed cases over the past week. The disease has not been seen in Haiti for years. Hospitals and health clinics are overwhelmed with the amount of patients coming in with the infection. The Dominican Republic recently closed its borders in fear of Cholera spreading. Cholera can cause vomiting and diarrhea so severe that people die of dehydration within hours. The disease is often contracted from lack of safe drinking water and inadequate treatment of sewage. Health authorities are making strong efforts to prevent the infection from further spreading into the tent camps. Currently impoverished families are being educated about how to avoid water-borne diseases through basic sanitation.

DISCOVER MORE AT:

- <http://earthyfamily.com/H-issues.htm>
- <http://www.globalissues.org>
- <http://www.haitichildrenproject.org>
- <http://www.news24.com/World/News>

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

This is a monthly newsletter that is intended to provide information about issues around the world. The Office of World Missions believes it is important to be aware of global issues and begin entering discussions that affect others in our local and global communities.