



## ENVIRONMENT

*Over the past thirty years, the country's forest cover dramatically decreased and now represents less than two per cent of the Haitian territory. Eighty-five per cent of the country's watersheds are degraded. Such degradation causes frequent floods, soil erosion, and important losses of nutrients essential for agriculture. In 2012, the United Nations continued its efforts to increase agriculture production, improve watershed management and promote reforestation.*

### WHY ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN HAITI?

- Unsustainable environmental practices in agriculture and other sectors generate economic losses over time.
- The next generation of Haitians will inherit lower capacity for resilience and adaptation to different external shocks (such as hurricanes and other climate-related events).
- Increased scarcity of resources (i.e. water) can generate tensions within and between communities.

The United Nations works at central level with the Ministry of Environment, at departmental level, especially in the South, and across the Haitian-Dominican Republic border.

In the South Department, several agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNEP, UNOPS and WFP) have combined their expertise and resources in agriculture production, watershed management, promotion of renewable energy, coastal and marine resource management, and biodiversity conservation, among others.

### KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

13 reforestation brigades (from 6 in 2011), working on the Haitian-Dominican Republic border, replanted more than 300 hectares with forest and fruit trees.<sup>(1)</sup>

To improve shared management of natural resources, a **bi-national committee** is now **operational**, with representatives from the Dominican and Haitian ministries of environment.

As part of the UN-supported vulnerability reduction programme in the South Department:

- **more than 1,300 linear meters of gabion wall** were built.
- **1.5 million seedlings** were prepared to reforest **1,000 hectares of land** in Aquin and St Louis du Sud.
- **more than 50,000 short-term jobs** have been created (30% women) over the 18-month project duration.
- **70% of the funds for rehabilitation/mitigation projects** have been allocated through state entities (municipalities or departmental directions of sector ministries).



In an effort to commercialize clean energy products, the UN supported the production and sale of **500 clean energy products** and helped set up **11 clean energy retail businesses** in the South Department.<sup>(2)</sup>

To maximize the use of alternative energy sources and reduce fuelwood consumption, the UN helped with the construction of **two pilot hydropower stations** in the South Department.<sup>(3)</sup>

In the same vein, the UN continued to promote the **use of briquettes** to cook meals in schools, thereby saving 20,575 kg of charcoal and 123,000 kg of wood during the 2011-2012 school year.<sup>(4)</sup>

Installation of more than 250 solar lamps in some of the most impoverished areas of Port-au-Prince.<sup>(5)</sup>

## CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

- The UN will continue to accompany Haitian institutions at central and departmental level to support the modernization of the environmental legislation and strengthen their planning, fund management and coordination capacities.
- The UN will also pursue its engagement with community-based organizations to improve the livelihoods of Haitians through, for instance, the sustainable development of fishing, the development of eco-tourism initiatives and improved agro-forestry systems.



### VOICES

*“Reforestation is giving life. It protects our water springs in the mountains and also prevents landslides.”*

Troimène Siméon, member of a Women Group reforestation in Aquin (South).