

# **REBUILDING HAITI STRATEGIC PROPOSAL TO STRENGTHEN RURAL PARTNERS IN RESPONSE TO THE CATASTROPHIC EARTHQUAKE OF JANUARY 12, 2010**

**A SHORT TERM PROPOSAL FOR SEEDS AND TOOLS TO ASSIST THOSE  
DISPLACED BY THE EARTHQUAKE TO PRODUCE FOOD.**

**Agricultural Missions, Inc (AMI)**

**March 10, 2010**

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## Summary:

This proposal addresses a core part of a national strategic plan prepared by FONDAMA, the *Hand in Hand Haiti Foundation*, in urgent response to the cataclysmic earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010. The economic revitalization of rural Haiti has become of critical importance in the aftermath of the wholesale destruction of the capital city of Port-au-Prince, as feeding and sheltering, and providing employment for a large portion of the million Haitians rendered homeless has become the task of rural Haiti. The rural organizations that comprise FONDAMA are well placed to implement the plan that consists of providing the necessary means of production: seeds, tools, storage and management of seeds and water, irrigation, agro-ecological training, reforestation, soil conservation, rural cultural renovation. The highest priority as the rainy season sets in is to replenish the seed stocks for farmers determined to plant and produce food to combat the deepening hunger that is plaguing post-earthquake Haiti.

## Background and Rationale:

“*The Haitian Clock was turned back to zero on January 12, 2010*” says Chavanne Jean-Baptiste, leader of the Muvman Peyizan de Papay (MPP). There can be no doubt that this is a paradigm-changing event for Haiti, with its political and economic center devastated, and 3 million people impacted directly. But the bulk of the mainstream relief and reconstruction actors still do not appear to understand just what kind of change is called for. The grassroots *Hand in Hand Foundation of Haiti* (FONDAMA, acronym in Haitian Kreyol) and member organizations have a vision for that change: a revitalization of the rural economy of Haiti in partnership with grassroots Haitian-led rural organizations as the most strategic, effective and humanitarian response to this catastrophe.

In the days and weeks immediately following the January 12, 2010 earthquake that devastated the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince and nearby cities Leogane and Jacmel as well as rural areas near the epicenter, grassroots agricultural organizations like the Muvman Peyizan de Papay (MPP), the Muvman Nasyonalyon Peyizan Kongre Papay (MNPKE), RENHASSA, KROS and other farmers associations were among the first to provide emergency aid and assistance to their fellow citizens. The MPP and MNPKE whose Port-au-Prince-based offices and vehicles had been destroyed, were able to use their remaining vehicles to evacuate many victims of the earthquake to the Central Plateau, and to immediately settle approximately 100 displaced persons at the

training center of the MPP in Papay. With the colossal loss of life, and the massive destruction of basic infrastructure in the capital city, more than 500,000 people have already fled the city to provinces and rural areas in every region of Haiti. 150,000 are thought to have fled to the Central Plateau region alone, with 15,000 registered in the city of Hinche and another 8,000 registered at the MPP training center in Papay, from two rural districts. Approximately 80,000 fled to Gran Dans in the southwest, more than 150,000 to the Artibonite area, and to other rural communities as well. With the first rains falling on the heads of hundreds of thousands of homeless victims living outdoors in Port-au-Prince, there is a possibility of a second mass exodus to follow.

As news of the unprecedented extent of the devastation spread around the world, international emergency and relief organizations, governments and the United Nations whose security forces and aid programs were already established in Haiti, began to mobilize assistance. The systematically weakened and dependent Haitian government virtually vanished into the dust. High profile news coverage also came to highlight the damage and the relief efforts. Unfortunately, the work of Haitian organizations received very little media attention, financial or material support. Yet, those rural organizations continue to hold out the possibility for one of the only effective medium and long-term responses to the urban-to-rural exodus in Haiti: to reverse the impoverishment that has plagued rural Haiti for decades, and to create an economic base for the victims of the earthquake and their rural hosts staggered under the burden of feeding hundreds of thousands of destitute and homeless displaced people.

FONDAMA member organization leaders met in Papay, Haiti on February 10 and 11, 2010 to make decisions on an ambitious recovery plan, a plan that was ratified and supplemented at the FONDAMA assembly held on February 25, 2010. FONDAMA had been formed as a national coalition in order to advocate for policies that would defend and protect the food security of rural Haitians and the food sovereignty of Haiti as a whole. In response to the devastating earthquake, their agenda was quickly modified. Positioned as a coalition with national reach, FONDAMA took the strategic step to push for rural economic restoration as a national priority at this tragic time. FONDAMA member organizations have a presence in 80% of the municipalities across Haiti.

#### Supporting Local Haitian Organizations in Reconstruction Efforts.

This effort is led by competent and committed Haitians. One of the founding organizations of FONDAMA, the MPP, for example, has 35 years of successful experience in rural development and agricultural advocacy policy work. The networks and farmer federations involved in the FONDAMA alliance have a vigorous and positive track record. The effectiveness and cost efficiency with which these Haitian organizations are implementing their relief and reconstruction efforts could not be matched by international agencies that would need to establish infrastructure and presence, hire local staff and bring in materials and personnel. Rural Haitian organizations, while lacking in material resources when compared to the international agencies, are the primary organized presence in rural Haiti. They have the local knowledge and language skills to provide assistance in a socially and culturally sensitive manner, to effectively match resources to needs and to monitor the use of such resources. Haitian organizations are also unlikely (and materially incapable in fact) of creating the “dependency syndrome” that characterizes many large-scale relief efforts. On the contrary the strategy of this effort is to

direct their activities in assisting victims to restart their economic livelihoods and thus “get back on their feet” in the shortest possible time.

#### Importance of Strengthening the Capacity of FONDAMA-member Organizations.

This devastating earthquake destroyed the capital in 45 seconds, killing 230,000 people, wounding at least 300,000 and rendering between 1 and 1.5 million people homeless. Port-au-Prince, as a result of the abandonment of rural economic development and well-being over past decades, had become the destination for impoverished rural people in search of survival. Its destruction and transformation into an unlivable place of death has scattered the Haitian people back to their ancestral homes in the provinces and rural hamlets. The only effective solution recognized even by politicians who formerly ignored the rural populace, is to revitalize rural economies through investment in agriculture. Many organizations and institutions, including the Haitian government, have voiced the opinion that the devastation of Port-au-Prince and other urban centers presents an opportunity to invest in the development of the rural areas. This would prevent a repeat of the rural to urban migration that resulted in the growth of the impoverished urban slums in which so many perished. The form that investment will take, who will administer it, what policies will guide that process, are all up for debate. One of the best ways to achieve this goal is through strengthening the capacity and efforts of the grassroots rural-based organizations already advocating for agrarian reform and policies more favorable to rural people. These organizations are already engaged in various activities with the rural population and have the credibility, expertise and knowledge of the local conditions that will be needed in such an effort. There is no doubt that such organizations have a head start and can implement a program in a very cost-effective way.

A plan that would vitalize the rural economy, decentralize power and resources, strengthen rural community life through cultural enrichment programs, and over the long haul that would put in place the kinds of infrastructure that can make that recovery possible: rain catchment systems, family cisterns, irrigation systems, soil conservation, agro-forestry, diversified production, massive reforestation with useful fuel, food and forage trees as well as trees that bring fertility to eroded soils. Building and strengthening the capacity of those organizations with proven track records in defending and actively promoting rural livelihoods has to be viewed as a very strategic way of moving forward.

**This proposal represents a short to medium-term effort to deal with a critical but immediate need for food production by the thousands of displaced persons, in order to feed themselves, regain some level of independence and dignity and begin to rebuild their lives. It will also help replace seed stocks of farmers who used this precious resource to feed the displaced. This effort is part of a larger long-term plan of FONDAMA aimed at restoring rural communities.**

#### Goals:

- (1) To support Haitian partners ability to plan and implement programs for rebuilding rural communities in response to the earthquake
  
- (2) To facilitate the rebuilding of viable rural communities thus reversing the trend toward rural-urban migration.

(3) To engage in advocacy and education in the United States and Canada on the issues of justice relating to the rebuilding and reconstruction efforts.

**Objectives:**

1) To support the strengthening of the capacity of FONDAMA member organizations to provide 100 tons of seeds, basic tools and training in order to employ FONDAMA member farmers plus 3,000 to 5,000 of the victims of the earthquake in the rural communities, within the next six to eighteen months.

2) To help to channel and to provide resources for the implementation of the strategic national plan for rebuilding the rural economy of Haiti by supporting the Haitian-led efforts, including:

- Advocate for the rights of the earthquake victims (particularly women and children) and their rural hosts, and for a decentralization of power and resources in Haiti, for the benefit of a revitalized rural economy, by means of 10 regional and national forums, media work, and international communications, media and organizing efforts;
- Jump-start a massive and successful spring planting season, by providing resources for the provision of sufficient bean and maize seed, starting in the southeast and west as seasonal rains have already begun and expanding to other regions in succession.
- Expand on-going environmental protection and soil conservation efforts and accelerate programs of water management and agro-ecological training on small-holdings and on eroded lands, in order to secure increasing food security and food sovereignty for rural communities. Do so through a coordinated series of trainings, cistern building workshops, and through mobilizing 500 person days of work in the short term and another 1,000 person days work in the medium term in soil conservation, tree nursery and water management projects.
- Conduct advocacy and education in the ecumenical and wider community in the United States on issues of justice in the rebuilding efforts with emphasis on the impacts of food aid on local farmers, land tenure and availability and equitable distribution of resources to rural communities

**Haitian Partner Network.**

FONDAMA is a network of Haitian organizations created last September as a result of the Joining Hands organizing efforts in that country. It is comprised of some 11 organizations, both rural and urban, some networks while others are NGOs and grassroots groups. The following organizations are members of FONDAMA at the time of its creation:

Peasant Movement of Papay (MPP) (Central Plateau) ; National Peasant Movement Papay Congress (MPNKP) (National); The Haitian Council of Non-Governmental Agents (CONHANE) (National); Christian Service of Haiti (SCH)(National); Peasant Koumbit of Grandanse (KPGA) (Southwest); Hands United for the Liberation and Advancement of Communities (MULAC) (Northwest); National Platform of Haitian Peasant Organizations (PLANOPA) (National); Peasant Mobilization for Economic and

Social Development (MOPEDES) (Southeast); Northeast Peasant Agricultural Association (OPANE) (Northeast); Haitian National Network for Food Security and Sovereignty (RENHASSA)(National); Network of Associations and Agricultural Production Cooperatives of the Lower Artibonite Valley (RAKPABA) (Artibonite).

The Executive Committee of FONDAMA is composed of the following persons:

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|---------------------------------|-------------------|--|
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The Coordinator of FONDAMA is :

|                         |                 |  |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--|
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#### The Role of Agricultural Missions:

Agricultural Missions (AMI) sees its role as one of accompanying FONDAMA-member organizations as they seek to strengthen their capabilities and provide assistance to the victims in building new livelihoods in the rural setting, and as we advocate for policies that will favor the successful implementation of this rural revitalization, as part of organized alliances of North American organizations pushing for just policies toward Haiti and a respect for Haitian self-determination and dignity. The FONDAMA-member organizations involved in this effort (and listed above) have the capacity to undertake effective programming and to draw on personnel and other resources from their grassroots networks in the rural areas and from others. As members of Via Campesina, they have already begun coordinating their efforts and activities with Via Campesina member organizations in the Dominican Republic and other Caribbean countries. (For example, Lionel Derenoncourt and AMI staff member Stephen Bartlett traveled to Papay, Haiti in a vehicle provided by Via Campesina member National Rural Women's Coordination/CONAMUCA of the Dominican Republic). FONDAMA, its officers, coordinators and members will be the "point organizations" that will undertake the primary implementation roles in reaching out and assisting their colleagues in the disaster areas, as they have already begun to do. All of these organizations have been engaged in the relief and reconstruction activities in their respective communities but lack the resources to fully utilize their available human resource capabilities.

In addition, AMI will provide oversight to ensure transparency and accountability by working with FONDAMA in establishing clear guidelines for implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. AMI will also facilitate training and technical support to ensure that guidelines are followed, when needed. The specific areas of AMI's intervention will be:

- Supporting the activities of FONDAMA member organizations, in accordance with their strategic national plan to respond to the earthquake and rebuild the rural economy of Haiti.

- Inform, educate, communicate and raise consciousness among solidarity organizations and the wider community on the island of Hispaniola/Haiti and in North America, in order to expand the base for fund raising and for advocacy work.
- Support Haitian organizations in their efforts to expand their human resource capabilities and infrastructure to implement the ambitious reconstruction plan of FONDAMA
- Assist FONDAMA member organizations to provide those affected with training, financial and material support, so that they can become productive members of the rural economy.
- Support FONDAMA in coordinating and implementing their training, capacity building, and agronomic and water management projects. Monitor, translate and communicate FONDAMA's assessment, monitoring and reporting work as the plan is being implemented, for the benefit of donors and supporters of this work.
- Provide technical support in areas of planning, appropriate technology and training where needed.

#### Methodology:

FONDAMA member organizations, coordinated by their executive directorate and the leaders of the member organizations, and empowered by the affirmation of their General Assembly held February 25, 2010, have considerable experience in implementing the kinds of programs envisioned in this project. What this project does is expand and accelerate the work that is already being done. The basic methodology is the activation in this time of national crisis of the staff members and the base farmer associations of the member organizations to implement the objectives of this plan. The need for this intensive effort has become obvious to all Haitians, particularly rural Haitians due to the extremity of the human suffering being experienced. Therefore motivation will be high, and urgency the prime mover of this effort. Agricultural Missions, and other partners working to support the national plan of FONDAMA, such as Grassroots International, the Presbyterian Hunger Program and others, will be assisting in strengthening the capacity of the Haitian organizations themselves, including providing additional resources for the hiring of personnel for coordinating and intensifying work on the ground. Through means of departmental (provincial) gatherings and planning meetings, and the coordination provided by the executive council of FONDAMA, this plan will be implemented through and with the participation of the local community-based farmer organizations that are members of FONDAMA. The national organization will coordinate the distribution of farming inputs and related support services, applying a national perspective based on need, the agricultural cycle and the farming calendar.

Oversight and overall coordination will be provided by AMI staff through regular and substantive visits by AMI staff person Stephen Bartlett, in coordination with other US- based partner organizations, thus enabling the US network supporting these efforts to keep abreast of developments and focus their support where it is most needed as the plan implementation and conditions on the ground evolve. In particular, the US-based FONDAMA solidarity group will accompany the Haitians as they communicate the needs in terms of policy changes needed if

obstacles to the implementation of the plan emerge. AMI has been and will continue to be an integral part of this FONDAMA solidarity group. The advocacy work will need to be greatly expanded internationally, and AMI staff, together with our allies in North America and internationally, will expand and intensify advocacy work, through media, messaging, public education events, speaking engagements, agricultural and food justice speaking tours and presentations around the U.S. and abroad.

Short-term phase (in first year):

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|---|------------------|
| Purchase and procurement of maize, bean and pea seeds for March-April planting season, including distribution costs, 80 tons of seed (out of goal of 450 tons needed nationally): | \$50,000         |
| Supplementary hand tools for 5,000 farmers :<br>A machete and one hoe for each of 5,000 farmer households:  | \$50,000         |
| Materials and labor for installation for 50 family-plot cisterns and rain catchment systems,  | \$40,000         |
| 25 Agro-ecology/agro-forestry trainings for new groups of farmers from among displaced persons:   | \$25,000         |
| Funds for soil conservation and water management project labor: 500 person days at \$5 per day.   | \$25,000         |
| AMI coordination, monitoring and evaluation:  | \$ 5,000         |
| AMI staff travel to Haiti and FONDAMA spokespersons travel to US for advocacy work, ie to US Social Forum:  | \$ 8,000         |
| AMI staff advocacy work in the U.S., Haiti and internationally for 2010:  | \$ 10,000        |
| <b>Subtotal short term phase:</b>   | <b>\$213,000</b> |
| <b>Total Short and Medium Phase budget for AMI support Of FONDAMA plan:</b>   | <b>\$213,000</b> |
| <b>AMI overhead @ 8%:</b>   | <b>\$ 17,000</b> |
| <b>Total:</b>   | <b>\$230,000</b> |