IV. Livelihood Strategies

The crisis has had a deep impact on Haiti's macroeconomy, with profound consequences for the livelihood of every family in the country. Economic pressures contributed to changing family, gender, and class relations and to changing marketing practices since nearly all women are engaged in formal or informal market trading for income. Household coping mechanisms, especially dietary changes, were also employed to adapt to price increases and food shortages.

IV–A. Economic and Agricultural Disruptions

The political crisis was accompanied by a continuing and deepening economic downturn leading to declines in the population's standard of living. Production dropped, unemployment increased, and much of Haiti's export assembly industry was lost, perhaps irretrievably when many companies opted to move to neighboring countries. Inflation reached very high levels; and the value of the local currency declined from about 7.5 gourdes to US $1.00 in September 1991 to 14 gourdes in August 1993. Available data, albeit incomplete, suggested that real GDP plunged by 10.4 percent in 1992, with estimates of a further drop of approximately 4 percent in 1993 (UNDP/EERP Mission Report, 1993).

In the first few months of the crisis, many industries shut down totally, or contracted production schedules. The Association des Industries d'Haiti (ADIH) estimated that 138,000 workers were laid off, almost half of the nation's formal sector labor force (USAID/Haiti Monitoring Report, January 1992). After sanctions were eased in the export assembly sector in February 1992, some workers were re-hired, but the overall loss of income during that period exerted a "ripple effect" throughout the economy. Pre-embargo production levels have not been recaptured and fewer than half of the firms remained open by November 1992 (ADIH, 1993).

The underlying structural problems affecting Haitian agriculture — limited technology, poor infrastructure, weak extension services, lack of credit, and environmental degradation — were exacerbated by many factors, including a shortage of agricultural inputs. Although basic food was exempted from the OAS and US embargoes, inputs essential for Haitians to grow their own food, such as fertilizer, seeds, and pesticides, were not exempted from the embargo until late May 1992 by the US, and have never been exempted by other OAS nations. Even after the exemption was granted by the US on humanitarian grounds, importers have still been required to obtain licenses from the US Treasury Department, a lengthy and cumbersome process.

Other problems affecting food production include the decay of the rural infrastructure, especially irrigation systems, non-availability of fuel or higher transport costs, restriction of export crops, and a worsening of environmental conditions and deforestation due to cash and fuel shortages. Families increasingly resorted to wood cutting for charcoal production as an additional source of income and as a replacement for cooking fuel. A UNDP report (May 1993) indicates that from 1991 to 1992, firewood consumption increased by 8 percent and charcoal consumption increased by 18.5 percent, equivalent to the cutting of an additional 220,000 tons of wood.

There was an accelerated out-migration from Port-au-Prince and other cities to rural areas due to political repression and economic insecurity. Following the coup, over one-third of slum dwellers reportedly left Port-au-Prince. This migration had three effects. First, the unanticipated arrival in the countryside led to a substantial drawdown of rural families' food stocks and personal savings. Second, regular remittances from workers in Port-au-Prince to rural families ended. Third, the urban-centered temporary and seasonal employment opportunities diminished for rural families. Most people, however, returned to the capital by February-March 1992 as the security situation stabilized and the "hungry season" began in rural areas.

Due to economic difficulties, households adopted a number of strategies to cope with the crisis, as summarized in Table IV-1. Families reduced the size of cultivated plots, decreased the use of fertilizers, changed cropping patterns, sold livestock and other assets, and cut down on the consumption of goods.

IV–B. Changing Social Relations

Focus-group interviews suggested that the crisis exerted some impact on relations between classes, family members, and gender relations. Those in economic difficulties turned to peer and other networks for loans and emergency assistance. Tensions sometimes mounted between women's marital and natal kin, particularly regarding responsibilities — in terms of both time and money — for the caring of their children. Men may have more frequently abandoned women

Table IV-1
Summary of Livelihood Strategies

Source of Strategy	Type of Strategies
Production-Based	• Change in cropping patterns by substituting less input-intensive, but less profitable and nutritious crops; • Reduction in cultivated lands (hectarage), in application of fertilizers and in use of irrigation.
Common Property Resource-Based	• Increase in the transformation of wood to charcoal to earn modest revenues and to replace cooking fuel (cut off by embargo).
Internally-Based	• Obtaining credit at unusually high interest rates (20%/mo.).
Asset Based	• Mortgaging of land and/or yields; sale of livestock
Labor Based	• Less frequent hiring of seasonal labor and use of work teams due to higher wages and food costs (meal support).
Exchange-Based	• Liquidation of commercial capital to finance purchase of food; • Direct sale, rather than pawning, of personal goods to gain cash.
Consumption-Based	• Reduction in consumption of industrially-priced goods (soap, kerosene, oil, sugar, canned milk); • Reduction of quality and quantity of food consumed.

Source. Adapted from Susannah Davies, "Are Coping Strategies a Cop Out?" IDS Bulletin, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1993

and children, and parents had to play a greater role in providing social support and financial assistance. There was a reported trend, among both sexes particularly in the urban areas, towards increasing isolation and individualism. The type of union couples entered, either "maryaj" or "plasaj", appears to have been affected, as price increases in recent years have made it very expensive for a man to move in with a woman and particularly for him to marry her. Women reported that men preferred to maintain a "plasaj" relationship where the couple lived apart rather than "maryaj" where they co-habited.

Several interviewees reported that due to economic difficulties, women — especially those with children — were obliged to stay with violent partners because they were dependent on them for cash and housing. The case history below illustrates how a young mother was compelled to stay with a violent partner because, unlike most men, he was employed and also owned the house she lived in.

> Gladys, a young woman who lived in the Cité Soleil area of Port-au-Prince with her three children, was in a "plasaj" relationship with a man who drank heavily and beat her regularly. Unlike most men in the neighborhood, however, he was employed and worked as an electrician. Two days before the interview he had returned home drunk demanding money from her to buy *clarin* (a local alcohol). When she told him it was the middle of the night and all the *clarin* sellers would be asleep, he punched her in the mouth, dislodging two of her teeth. Although Gladys was unhappy, she felt that she could not leave her partner because the one-roomed house where she lived belonged to him and she could not afford to rent another place. In addition, for the sake of her children she felt obliged to stay because he did give her money from time to time. If she left him, she was unlikely to find another man who had a job and who would be able to support her and her children. Her neighbors knew he was a drunkard and she felt very embarrassed. Her mother was dead and her own father had always told her never to live with this man because he considered him "no good". Since November (1992), when the beatings started taking place with greater frequency, she felt ashamed to admit to her father that he had been right after all. Although she used to ask her father for money, she felt that she could no longer do so as he would tell her to leave this man, with whom she felt obliged to stay. Instead, she relied on gifts of food, soap and milk from her girlfriend who lived on the other side of town (focus group interview, August 1993).

IV–C. Changing Market Structures

The market structures and financing systems available to women have been affected by the recent economic difficulties. Four levels (from lowest to highest) characterize traditional market trading systems in rural and urban Haiti: (1) small village traders, (2) *revendeuses* (retailers), (3) regional traders, and (4) "Madame Saras" (wholesale sellers). For all four types of women traders, the crisis has reportedly squeezed credit, driven up prices, and disturbed customary trading practices.

Village traders usually sell produce from their own land or very small amounts bought from other village women. Revendeuses (retailers) usually buy and resell slightly larger amounts of produce. Regional traders buy large quantities of staple foods or other items from Madame Saras in Port-au-Prince or from large producers in other areas of the country, and resell in local markets for profit. Madame Saras buy and resell produce, cloth, clothes, and other items on a large scale, often travelling abroad to buy in bulk.

In addition to trading, there are several other methods women employ to obtain cash. "Solde" refers to a revolving credit system (*tontine*) whereby "an association is formed on a core of participants who agree to make regular contributions to a fund which is given to each contributor in rotation" (Laguerre, 1983). "Plan" refers to a system of pawn broking that is particularly common in urban areas. For example, a usurer will take an item brought to him — such as clothes, jewelry, iron, radio, television, bed, or fan — and give the client cash to be repaid during an agreed time period, often with exorbitant interest rates. A 1993 socio-economic survey which UNICEF undertook in the urban marginal areas presented evidence that distress sales of capital goods were widespread. For example, in one Port-au-Prince neighborhood (Fort Liberté), 42 percent of households owned a television in 1986; in 1993, that proportion has fallen to 11 percent. Among families in this neighborhood, 46 percent did not even own a bed to sleep on (Socio-Economic Survey/UNICEF Situation Analysis, 1993).

Credit and debt schemes involve many women in complex systems of borrowing money from professional lenders, market traders or from friends and neighbors. The historical phenomenon of mortgaging land to external brokers (Murray, 1977) recently appeared to be increasing in rural areas. In particular, women were mortgaging or selling land as a direct result of price rises and economic difficulties.

It has already been documented that sexual relations are considered in Haiti "an important arena in which any woman's material interests may be legitimately and successfully pursued" (Lowenthal, 1984). During focus group interviews, some women pointed out that they had to resort more frequently to this practice — initiating and maintaining a sexual relationship with one or several men — as an important economic strategy during the crisis period. These relationships, however, were perceived to be distinct from "prostitution" or the more formal selling of sex.

IV–D. Household Consumption Patterns

Individual interviews and focus group discussions revealed that the quality and quantity of food consumed deteriorated and was associated with shortages in cash, women's time (as participation in market activities increased) and fuel. In general, interviewees reported the consumption of different foods from the usual fare and the absence of food that were generally consumed. In July 1993, the following foods, ranging from least to most expensive, were typically consumed by an "average" family (Table IV-2): *arbre veritable* (breadfruit), *mai moulu* (ground maize), *patates* (sweet potatoes), *pois beans* (peas), *petit mil* (millet), and *riz Miami* (American rice). Previously eaten foods such as rice and meat, an important source of protein, were too expensive to buy and were absent from most household diets. Cooking oil was also bought in smaller quantities due to higher prices. Women reported diluting staples with water to make them stretch further. Particularly noteworthy is the increase in powdered milk prices, which rose to levels far beyond what Haitian families, small shelters and hospices could afford. Given the absence of exclusive breast-feeding practices and the widespread early use

Table IV-2

Average Prices of Selected Commodities in Port-au-Prince, September 1991-June 1993

Food Items	*Prices in Gourdes*				*Percent change*	
	Sept 91	Nov 91	Sept 92	Jun 93	Sept 91- Sept 92	Sept 91- Jun 93
Rice (lb)						
Milled-white	2.60	3.17	4.21	3.58	62	37
Parboiled-milled	2.50	2 89	4.31	3.32	72	33
Imported, USA	2.50	3.00	3 00	3.33	20	33
Gougousse	3.60	3.47	4.40	4.60	80	28
Flour (small mte)						
Wheat	1.68	2.03	2 08	2.88	24	71
Kidney Beans (lb)						
Red	3 50	3.42	4.67	6.23	33	78
Black	3 00	3.17	3.93	5.23	31	74
Butter	3.33	3.28	4.38	6 20	32	86
Corn (lb)						
Ground	1.37	1.79	2.00	2 42	46	77
Millet (lb)	1.43	1.88	2.00	2.39	46	67
Plantain (lot)						
Green (Muske)	2.00	3 56	2 00	2.00	0	0
Green Banana	1.33	1.89	2.00	2.00	50	50
Other (Poban)	1.33	1.78	2.00	2 00	50	50
Potatoes (lot)						
Sweet	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0	0
Oil (3.5 oz. bottle)						
Vegetable	0.78	0 87	1 00	1.25	28	60
Herring						
Smoked	NA	4.28	4.21	5.40	NA	NA
Salted	NA	4.67	4.54	5.87	NA	NA
Sugar (lb)						
Refined	3.00	3.67	3.88	5.23	29	74
Unrefined	2.78	3.06	3.42	4.05	23	46
Milk (small mte/ 6 oz. can)						
Powdered	NA	2.89	4.04	7.57	NA	NA
Evaporated	2.50	2.58	3.50	4 53	40	81
Charcoal (big bag)	45.0	50.0	52.0	82.0	16	82

Source: USAID Monitoring Reports – Oct 92, Sept 92, Feb 93, July 93

of breast-milk substitutes by Haitian mothers, this price increase is likely to have directly contributed to infant malnutrition.

In addition, it was noted that families were often eating smaller quantities of food by cutting down on the number of meals consumed each day. Many women reported that their families were only eating one meal a day "if they were lucky" compared with the two or three they were habitually used to consuming. Our examination of cooking pots confirmed that little was available. Other women reported going several days without eating or giving their children the little amount of food available rather than eating themselves. One woman in Cité Soleil, six months pregnant and with five children, reported having fed her children (two of whom were under age five) one meal of breadfruit and sweet potatoes the previous day and not having consumed any food herself. On the day of interview, no-one in her family had eaten in the previous twenty-four hours. Reports of similar self-sacrifice among mothers in other areas of Haiti have also been documented. In the Damarie hills around Jeremie, mothers said that they fed their children corn meal, but that they themselves ate only the "gratin" — the scrapings from the bottom of the cooking pot. The qualitative finding that families were eating but one meal per day has been confirmed by the 1993 Socio-Economic Survey in Marginal Zones (UNICEF, 1993).

These modifications in food intake were due not only to seasonal shortages, but also to price increases of food items and to the lack of fuel needed for cooking. Since the stove could often only be lit once a day, women noted that they were now using straw or tree branches to light their fires instead of charcoal, the price of which had increased at least threefold.

The pattern of food procurement has also changed over the two-year period. Rural women said that they were buying whatever was cheap and available on a daily basis, rather than securing enough supplies for the entire week between markets. One of the main, and very interesting, changes noted in urban families was a trend towards eating street food rather than preparing home meals. To buy enough food for preparing meals at home, a woman could spend as much as 25 gourdes each day. By contrast, she could feed her entire family three times a day at a nearby street restaurant for a total of 9 gourdes. A restaurant owner said she had noticed many more women and children coming to eat at her establishment in recent months, so much so that she had developed a system whereby entire families could open an account with her and pay a lump sum at the end of each month.

For those who are not so fortunate, particularly in the rural areas, other strategies were cited. Two methods to quell hunger pangs had been used by women in Meilleur in recent weeks prior to the team's visit. One was to drink salt water to "feel full," and the other involved tying a piece of material tightly round the stomach. Interestingly, one year in the 1950s is commonly referred to as the "year of the three belts" — a year when widespread hunger apparently resulted in three belts being necessary to allay hunger pains (Berggren, personal communication, 1993).

Food is only the most obvious item of consumption compromised during this crisis. A family's investment in the future may be forfeited as well, for example the education of children. Although the evidence is not conclusive, there are numerous indications that access to basic education was seriously disrupted over the past two years of crisis, first by the repression which followed the coup d'état, provoking flight from the cities and fear of parents to send their children to school (many of which were closed from October through December 1991), and second by the inability of parents to pay school fees due to a reduction in their purchasing power. Thousands of children lost months and years of education; these can never be recovered. Similarly, the withdrawal of foreign assistance from the public sector and reduction in school feeding programs reduced the effectiveness of education services; it appeared that many parents withdrew their children from these schools, some of which ultimately closed.

V. Sanctions: *Instrumentality and Impact*

What precisely constitutes sanctions? What is known about the humanitarian impact of previous sanctions? What is the evidence that the coup d'état and subsequent sanctions in Haiti caused or contributed to a worsening of the human condition? These questions are addressed in turn.

V-A. Background

Sanctions, a half-way measure between pro-active diplomacy and war, may be defined as "deliberate, government-inspired withdrawal, or threat of withdrawal, of customary trade and financial relations" for the purpose of regulating or influencing the behavior of nation states (Hufbauer, 1990; Ngobi, 1993). Like criminal law, the purpose of sanctions is to punish, deter and rehabilitate the nation state which violates international agreements. The rationale behind sanctions is that they are likely to be less devastating, in terms of injury to persons and damage to property, than the ravages of warfare.

Sanctions have customarily been imposed for the promotion of democracy and human rights, for deterrence of military ventures, and for the settling of political disagreements. In the past, bilateral application of sanctions has dominated, but regional and multilateral organizations are increasingly resorting to sanctions as well. The 1990 UN action in Iraq may have set a modern precedent for the popular appeal of sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy. In the UN's first 45 years, sanctions were imposed four times — on North Korea to withdraw troops from South Korea in 1950; on Portugal to free African colonies in 1963-74; and against apartheid in Southern Rhodesia in 1966 and South Africa in 1977. In contrast, over the past three years, the UN has imposed economic sanctions against four nations including Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, Libya, and Haiti.

We could not locate, with the exception of the Harvard study of post-war Iraq, any scientific studies of the human impact of sanctions (Ascherio A., et al., 1992 and Harvard Study Team, 1991). A brief note on sanctions is included in the Appendix C.

V-B. Sanctions in Haiti

The major objective of sanctions in Haiti was the promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights. However, in this instance the term "sanctions" has been loosely applied, lumping together three distinct international actions. First is the political withdrawal or denial of legal recognition of a *de facto* government — "political sanctions." Second is economic sanctions or the trade embargo, usually involving the prohibition of financial transactions with the target country, the freezing of foreign financial assets and the prohibition of all imports and exports by the targeted country — "economic embargo." A third dimension of sanctions is the shift in the volume, type, and channelling of foreign aid to the target country — a restriction to simply "humanitarian assistance."

In Haiti, all three sanctions-related instrumentalities were exercised, not simply an economic embargo. Some instruments were blunt and generalized, while others were sharp and targeted. Moreover, the three dimensions of sanctions interacted with each other and influenced the political and humanitarian agenda. Each of the components had the objective of pressuring the Haitian military and *de facto* government toward restoration of democracy and protection of human rights. Each also had human consequences. Political isolation, the economic embargo and the withholding of foreign aid had an unfortunate impact on the poor. For example, political ostracism of the *de facto* government resulted in broken contact and withdrawal of aid for the "public sector" by some donors, thereby affecting social services such as immunization, food distribution and schooling. However, freezing overseas bank accounts and denying visas to military and *de facto* government leaders, in contrast, had a sharper, more targeted effect on those whom the sanctions were intended to influence. The economic embargo hurt the poor more than the rich, who continued to meet their needs from the black market. Reduction of foreign aid, its shift to purely humanitarian purposes, and its channeling only through NGOs, had a profound effect on socioeconomic development in a heavily donor-dependent country.

Enforcement of sanctions was weak and fluctuating until the June 1993 oil embargo and the subsequent re-imposition of the embargo in October 1993. While the pronouncements and rhetoric of sanctions were firm, their actual implementation in 1992 wavered. One reason for their weak implementation was conflicting priorities in the US and the OAS

— diplomatic, ideological, commercial, humanitarian, pragmatic (Constable, 1992-93). The primary objective of American policy was the restoration of democracy and the protection of human rights. However, there were other indirect objectives as well, including the need to satisfy domestic constituencies in halting the influx of Haitian "boat people," in protecting American business investments in Haiti's export assembly sector, and in advancing humanitarian concerns. Fluctuating US assessments of the ousted Aristide regime — as a democratic liberator versus a violator itself of human rights — may have also contributed to the ambivalence of US foreign policy toward the island republic (Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Affairs, 1992).

Half-hearted implementation of sanctions throughout 1991-1992 characterized much of the US', and consequently the OAS', attitude towards the Haitian crisis. Although the US threatened to seize the foreign assets of wealthy Haitians involved in the coup d'état and to cut US diplomatic relations, it failed to do so and never completely severed ties (Constable, 1992-1993). Several Haiti-bound ships were boarded by the US Coast Guard in 1992, but most were allowed to traverse the Caribbean unmolested. Moreover, lobbying efforts by American firms with investments in the Haitian export assembly industry resulted in the White House's overruling State Department advice and granting those businesses an exemption from the embargo in February 1992. Moreover, he recent debate between the US administration and Congress about the psychological fitness and human rights record of President Aristide reflects an ongoing debate by American policymakers.

These mixed external signals, in turn, generated a corresponding defensive strategy from the Haitian military and the *de facto* government which attempted to stretch out the crisis in hopes that foreign critics would simply give up. Moreover, the *de facto* government and Haitian private business simply evaded the OAS embargo in 1992 through trade with Europe, Japan, and other countries. In fact, until the naval blockade, many considered the economic embargo entirely ineffective. The growth of contraband trading, higher prices and supply shortages merely inconvenienced the Haitian well-to-do who simply paid higher prices for goods. The combination of the embargo and the non-functioning of the *de facto* government created an unregulated environment wherein hoarding, contraband trading, speculation, and price manipulation fostered "commercial criminalization," generating high profits for speculators.

V-C. Impact of Sanctions

Some have argued that Haiti's human suffering in the last two years can be attributed to internationally-imposed sanctions, while others have argued that the coup d'état, political insecurity, and economic mismanagement, not the sanctions, were responsible (Maguire, 1992). Which position is supported by the evidence?

There are many pathways through which the coup d'état and sanctions may ultimately impact upon health and nutrition status. Political instability affects virtually all pathways. Sanctions can contribute to limiting the access to and reducing the effectiveness of health services due to lack of vaccines, drugs, or transportation; fueling the transmission of infectious diseases through the breakdown of the physical infrastructure or the movement of people; crippling the economy through inflation, lower wages, increased unemployment and thus compromised household food security and reduced dietary intake. There is, moreover, a time dimension to these linkages, with pathways operating with various time lags. For example, decades rather than years may be required before changes in educational status is reflected in health and nutrition indicators. Acute deprivation of food, however, may precipitate the mortality crisis of famine in a matter of weeks rather than years.

In Haiti, the sanctions were imposed not as an isolated, single action; rather, the sanctions were imposed in the midst of a complex political crisis. In the Haitian case, political sanctions and an economic embargo were superimposed upon a crisis of governance, a military coup d'état, the de facto government's mismanagement, an atmosphere of political violence and repression, and evasive and black-market activities by the private business community. The sanctions in Haiti can be described as contributing to a "syndrome," a multidimensional political crisis. As such, it becomes very difficult to disaggregate any single element of the syndrome as being responsible for any particular humanitarian insult.

Overall, we believe the following conclusions are warranted. First, it is important to underscore that the long-term health and nutrition of the people of Haiti depend upon democracy, good governance, and the protection of human rights. The coup d'état which overthrew democratic governance was the triggering event of the crisis. In other words, political crisis and instability brought about by the coup d'état were the primary causative factors for the crisis. In addition, however, the international political intervention exacerbated the human crisis. Where the sanctions instruments employed were broad and extended, the human impact was correspondingly greater than where the instruments employed were time-limited or sharp and targeted at the political elite.

VI. Humanitarian Action

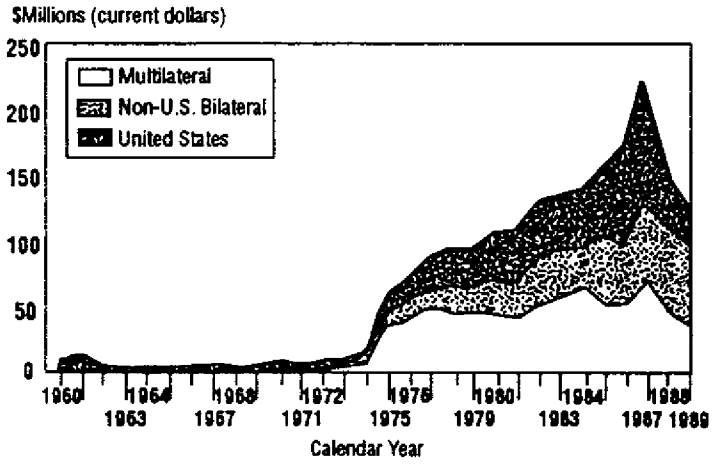
VI-A. Development Assistance

Haiti is a major recipient of foreign development assistance; indeed, some have observed that the country suffers from longstanding donor dependency (Center for International Policy, May 1992). In the latter half of the 1980s, foreign aid averaged about $150 million annually, ranging from $130 to $220 million (Figure VI-1). One-third of the official assistance came from each of three source clusters: multilateral, bilateral, and the United States (USAID). The food and agricultural sector commanded 25 to 35 percent of the official aid flows, whereas health and education received about 20 percent. These official flows were supplemented by substantial private flows through churches, NGOs, and private remittances.

The two-year crisis resulted in a major shift from development assistance to humanitarian assistance. The shift in aid was characterized by reduction in volume, changes in type of assistance, and a shifting channel of recipients. The volume of foreign aid to Haiti was an estimated $85 and $112 million, respectively, for 1992 and 1993 (Table VI-2), having dropped from annual levels of approximately $150 million in prior years. The contraction in volume, as compared to previous years, was accompanied by a change in the nature of foreign assistance. All foreign aid was screened on the criteria of humanitarianism: food and agriculture increased to about two-thirds and health to about one-third of humanitarian aid flows, with other types of development assistance suspended. The "humanitarian aid" was exclusively channeled through NGOs, circumventing the *de facto* government. In the shifting composition of foreign aid, bilateral flows were 2 to 3 times larger than multilateral flows. The largest bilateral donors were the United States, Canada, and France; the largest multilateral donors were the EEC and UN agencies.

Figure VI-1

Official Development Assistance: Disbursements to Haiti, 1960–1989



Source: USAID Program Office

Table VI-2

Estimated Donor Expenditures, 1992-1993

	1992			1993		
	Food/Ag	Health	Total*	Food/Ag	Health	Total*
Bilateral						
Canada	5.4	3.6	**9.0**	5.0	4.0	**9.0**
France	2.5	1.0	**3.5**	3.0	1.5	**4.5**
USA	31.1	9.8	**50.0**	29.1	17.6	**61.2**
Other	—	0 4	**0.4**	0.1	1.1	**1.2**
Total	**39.0**	**14.8**	**62.9**	**37.2**	**24.2**	**75.9**
Multilateral						
EEC	11.0	1.4	**12.4**	18.4	1.6	**27.0**
IFRC	0.5	0.6	**1.1**	—	—	—
PAHO	—	2 1	**2.1**	—	1.6	**1.6**
UNDP	0.6	1.3	**1.9**	—	—	—
UNFPA	—	—	—	2.0**	0.7**	**2.7****
UNICEF	—	1.2	**1.2**	—	—	—
WFP	3.4	—	**3.4**	4.7	0.6	**5.3**
Total	**15.5**	**6.6**	**22.1**	**25.1**	**4.5**	**36.6**
Grand Total	**54.5**	**21.4**	**85.0**	**62.3**	**28.7**	**112.5**

* Includes other assistance as well as food and health
** UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF combined

Source USAID Monitoring Report, February 15, 1993 and July 15, 1993

VI-B. Humanitarian Aid

The shift from development to humanitarian assistance did not proceed smoothly. Ambiguity, tension and conflict emerged between "political" and "humanitarian" purposes of international action, mediated by bureaucratic delays. Immediately after the coup d'état, most bilateral and virtually all multilateral aid was suspended. Aid resumption initially was very tightly confined to food distribution and health care — two activities which are uniformly recognized as "humanitarian." Over time, some adaptability evolved in aid implementation. Each decision was a test case, exercised cautiously.

A consolidated multilateral humanitarian plan was proposed in April 1992, but received a poor response from bilateral donors still cautious over the political implications of foreign aid. By the fall of 1992 the UN agencies in Haiti finalized a coordinated plan for humanitarian assistance. Over the next six months considerable wrangling took place between relevant parties regarding how humanitarian aid should be categorized, through whom it may be delivered, and what its implication would be for the political negotiation process. Only by March 1993 was a joint UN and OAS humanitarian appeal launched, albeit in a deliberately low-key manner. Its meager yield in terms of donor contributions resulted from tardiness, ongoing political negotiations, and donor policy uncertainty. Only about ten percent of requested resources has been pledged thus far. With prospects of restoration of democracy, the humanitarian appeal was superseded by an "Emergency Economic Recovery Programme" recommended by a joint mission headed by the UNDP in May-June 1993. Given the October 1993 breakdown of the Governors Island accord, the EERP will also soon be outdated.

A comprehensive study of humanitarian aid policies in Haiti would require more time, effort, and several steps: compilation of all available documents and statements, elaboration of the political and humanitarian policy of various governments and agencies, and interviews with the major actors. Pending such an analysis, we have examined available documents and obtained diverse views. The following offers a preliminary assessment of the major issues associated with humanitarian action in Haiti.

■ ***Humanitarian Actors***

Different humanitarian actors, each with its own priorities, were involved in Haiti. Among Haitian entities, there were: the *de jure* government in exile represented by the Presidential Commission in Port-au-Prince, the *de facto* Haitian government in control in Port-au-Prince, local NGOs, and the people of Haiti, the object of humanitarian action. The major international actors were the OAS, a regional political body, and the many constituents of the UN system. The political arm of the UN consisted of the General Assembly and Security Council; political negotiations were brokered by a special envoy of the UN Secretary-General. The humanitarian arm of the UN consisted of a newly established Department of Humanitarian Affairs headed by an Undersecretary working with semi-autonomous specialized UN agencies — UNDP, UNICEF, PAHO/WHO, UNFPA, and WFP. Although these agencies have comparative autonomy in field operations, they have increasingly pooled their donor appeals and coordinated their field activities. Bilateral donors controlled humanitarian flows of their respective governments, but also ultimately shaped multilateral action through their earmarked donations to multilateral fundraising appeals — withholding, increasing, conditioning, or targeting their contributions to diverse UN agencies. Because of its predominant influence in world politics and foreign aid, the US Government operated through the OAS and the UN, in addition to playing direct roles. International NGOs — CARE, CRS, and ADRA among others — continued their operations to the extent possible, given logistical constraints, political insecurity, and funding controls imposed by bilateral donors.

Each of these actors had unique perspectives on humanitarian assistance policy. The *de jure* government welcomed the assistance but only if it did not strengthen an illegal *de facto* government. The *de facto* government perceived the receipt and control of aid as symbolic of political recognition and legitimization. Indeed, bilateral donors — USAID included — scaled back development assistance so as not to give the appearance of carrying out "business as usual" with the *de facto* government. The political arm of the UN tended to view humanitarian assistance as instrumentalities of political priorities. The humanitarian arm of the UN, while recognizing the importance of humanitarian assistance, was newly established and had not yet developed a strategy for advancing humanitarianism under these complicated dynamics.

■ ***Definition***

Throughout the crisis, the international bodies (OAS and UN) attempted to develop a clear and workable definition of "humanitarian assistance." Relevant parties proposed various restrictions, but none that satisfied all parties and none that was workable in terms of field implementation. The lack of an acceptable and workable definition acted as a barrier to humanitarian action.

In January 1993, more than one year after the onset of the crisis, the UN proposed a definition of humanitarian assistance according to three criteria (UN/DHA, 1993): (1) life saving, (2) necessary action to permit the effective distribution of essential relief supplies, and (3) preventive interventions such as seeds and tools. This definition, while possessing requisite breadth, was apparently not accepted by all parties, especially political units or organizations.

The OAS also attempted its own definition of humanitarian assistance (OAS, February 1993): (1) non-profit making, (2) "ad hoc" in nature, and (3) covering support systems such as transportation and administrative arrangements to ensure the security, safety and proper distribution of supplies. Also included were health care, basic nutrition and sanitary programs, plant disease protection and basic education. In translating this definition for fundraising, the OAS bifur-

cated the 1992 consolidated humanitarian assistance appeal into two categories — "emergency" versus "support for humanitarian activities." The effort to identify a core indisputable set of humanitarian assistance in contrast to a broader set of humanitarian support assistance presumably reflected a political goal of restricting aid to absolutely essential humanitarian purposes. This arbitrary division in humanitarian aid was not accepted by some UN agencies.

The definitional ambiguities were translated into some donors' operational procedures. A few donors, it is alleged, simply renamed ongoing development projects as "humanitarian" aid. Others struggled with definitional changes. For example, CARE's agricultural and natural resources project, initially suspended because its funding source was USAID, was restarted as "humanitarian" assistance in 1992. Yet the agency's water and sanitation programs, also funded by USAID, were not considered "humanitarian" and therefore not permitted to resume.

Had an internationally accepted definition of humanitarian assistance been developed, it is possible that some of the delays that ultimately retarded humanitarian action could have been avoided.

■ *Implementation*

A customary practice in sanctions is the exemption of "food and medicines." Reality on the ground, however, was quite different. Exemptions do not ensure the free and unconditional movement of goods. The US Government insisted, for example, that prior written clearance be obtained for all imports into Haiti. WFP officials also noted increasing difficulties with port authorities and customs officials when shipments of food commodities arrived in port.

From the outset, the OAS/UN/US restricted humanitarian assistance to NGO channels, avoiding the *de facto* government (UN, 1992). Yet the field staff of these donor agencies complained that such guidelines forbid contact not only with high level government officials, but also often with lower level operating officers, making oversight, monitoring, inspection, and surveillance very difficult. The guidelines also tended to restrict field staff travel. A clear distinction between *de facto* governmental political levels (for example, ministers and other policy-makers) and operating public structures (for example, doctors at public hospitals) failed to emerge in official policy pronouncements.

One illustrative case study involves vaccine supplies, maintenance of the cold chain, and immunizations. In an emergency, there can be no substitute for the ministry of health in the central procurement, storage and distribution of essential vaccines. Barriers in contact between the UN agencies and the ministry resulted in severely compromised vaccine availability and cold chain breakdowns throughout much of 1992. More recently, however, the agreement between UNICEF and PAHO appears to have overcome this obstacle through PROMESS.

VI-C. Ethics and Humanitarian Action

If these were some of the constraints to humanitarian aid, what might be some of the goals and objectives of humanitarian action?

By imposing sanctions, the OAS and the UN as international bodies chose to coerce political change within a sovereign nation state. While the instruments chosen to achieve political ends plainly have economic and human consequences, none of the international bodies or national governments, neither the OAS nor the UN, made an explicit commitment to assume humanitarian responsibility for the protection of the innocent or vulnerable in Haiti. Indeed, the lack of public acceptance of humanitarian responsibility contrasted with the highly visible command of the political agenda by the OAS and UN.

In the Haiti case, the sanctions early on could have been better targeted at the responsible political elite. Targeted actions aimed particularly at the political leadership — such as the freezing of foreign bank accounts, denial of travel visas and air connections, an embargo on arms for the military — might have been more actively pursued and may have minimized the hardships for the population. During the extension period of sanctions, recognition of civilian hardship appears to have increased, but there was little evidence of a corresponding enhancement of humanitarian action to meet the obvious human distress and suffering.

Although the acceptance of responsibility is essentially ethical and moral, it has broad implications for political action and foreign policy. Public and international support for sanctions usually are based upon broad understanding and acceptance of the "justice" of specific intrusive actions. Public information that "food and medicines" are exempted from embargo suggests that efforts are being made to protect the innocent. The increase in child mortality, of course, presents another picture altogether. To garner and sustain public support, the ethical basis of sanctions should be strengthened, and such will require the assumption of humanitarian responsibilities.

The quality and effectiveness of humanitarian aid might be assessed on the basis of four objectives of action:

(1) non-interference or exemption of movement of goods or services considered critical for sustaining life;

(2) pro-active provisioning of critical essential goods and supplies for maintaining life as well as preventing unnecessary and extreme hardship;

(3) independent information gathering as early warning of human distress for targeting interventions; and

(4) protection of humanitarian action by preventing misuse, abuse, or diversion of humanitarian goods for political or commercial purposes.

In Haiti, none of these objectives were squarely addressed. "Exemptions" did little to facilitate the flow of critical goods and supplies, given the method of implementation. Insufficient "pro-active" provisioning was planned or implemented. Although information was collected, no independent monitoring system that could detect early signals of hardship was instituted. Finally, while there are suggestions that humanitarian aid was of secondary priority in comparison to political negotiations at various stages, there is no evidence that whatever humanitarian aid was delivered was misused.

VII. Lessons

Our review of the Haitian crisis identified both fundamental policy issues and practical operating bottlenecks that can undermine effective humanitarian action in sanctions-exacerbated political crises. Our initial exploration identified some key policy and operational issues. We summarize our initial findings, but more detailed analyses would be required.

VII-A. Politics and Sanctions

■ ***The September 1991 Coup was the triggering event of the crisis.***

Although it is difficult to disentangle the various factors responsible for the human crisis, the coup that precipitated the two year crisis was the primary triggering event of the crisis and is thus primarily responsible for the human consequences. The coup also had some direct negative health consequences, including mass displacement of people, the disruption of health activities due to general insecurity and fear (which prevented or discouraged groups from meeting), and deliberate interruptions of peaceful assemblies by security forces.

■ ***Long-term humanitarianism in Haiti is compatible with democracy and human rights; thus the primary political objective pursued through sanctions were not necessarily in conflict or in competition with humanitarian goals.***

The deplorable human condition in Haiti before the crisis demonstrates vividly that the long-term health and nutritional status of the Haitian people depends upon attaining a stable democracy that values human rights. Good governance is a necessary, although perhaps insufficient, condition for good health. Likewise, good health can contribute to the strengthening of democracy and the protection of human rights. Thus, actions to restore democracy and protect human rights are compatible with advancing long-term humanitarian improvements.

■ ***There were, however, at least short-term human costs to sanctions which were paid mostly by ordinary people, especially the poor and children.***

In Haiti, there is evidence of stagnant and deteriorating human conditions during the crisis that are attributable to the political, economic, and aid sanctions. The poor and disadvantaged and vulnerable children and probably women absorbed most of the burden through coping strategies that depleted physical and human assets to meet the crisis. Those who absorbed the cost of sanctions had no voice in decisions about sanctions either through their exiled democratically elected government or through international organizations.

■ ***The human impact (magnitude, distribution, and character) of sanctions depended upon the instruments selected and the manner in which they were applied.***

The choice of sanctions instruments (blunt and generalized such as an economic embargo versus sharp and targeted such as the denial of visas) powerfully affects the magnitude and distribution of human impact; likewise, the timing of sanctions. For example, an immediate worldwide oil embargo in 1991 might have terminated the crisis two years earlier. The October 1993 embargo and blockade may eventually bring a resolution but with prolonged suffering. The specific socioeconomic context in which sanctions are applied (in this case donor-dependent impoverished Haiti) shapes the human impact.

VII-B. Monitoring, Definition, Implementation

■ ***The data monitoring systems instituted by the international community were not sufficiently strong to provide early warning of human distress due to the sanctions-exacerbated crisis.***

In the case of Haiti, only USAID attempted to maintain a monitoring system. Unfortunately, however, the system was insufficient to detect early signals of the deteriorating human condition. Moreover, no government or bilateral agency dispatched "humanitarian monitors" (such as the UN human rights monitors) to warn of and prevent silent deaths and suffering among the innocent. Our own analysis was seriously handicapped by the scientific inadequacy of data in Haiti.

■ ***International humanitarian action in Haiti was delayed by the lack of a workable definition of "humanitarian assistance", weak donor performance, and the intrusion of political considerations into humanitarian aid policies.***

Two years after the coup and on-going sanctions, no clear humanitarian strategy has yet been developed by relevant international organizations, largely due to lack of consensus over what constituted humanitarian aid and weak donor per-

formance. The human condition in Haiti received low visibility, attention, and priority on the part of the involved international organizations.

■ ***Even if definitions had been clear and political interference minimal, humanitarian action would still have confronted many complexities in operational implementation in Haiti.***

Political ostracism of the *de facto* government limited and hampered international agencies' contact with preventive health services, education, food and nutrition, and other essential public sector activities. These operational restrictions created significant negative human consequences, such as the collapse of immunization programs, with little political gain. On-the-ground implementation of humanitarian assistance, however, is likely to confront complex political and logistical dilemmas, some of which will be contextually unique.

VII-C. Multilateral Humanitarian Action

■ ***The OAS and UN did not have a satisfactory policy framework, organizational modalities, or operational guidelines that efficiently and effectively pursued humanitarian goals along with competing political objectives.***

The international organizations were unable to respond effectively to competing objectives — restoring democracy through sanctions while protecting the innocent from human damage. Political priorities tended to overwhelm humanitarian needs, an imbalance that is neither necessary nor desirable.

■ ***External intervention in Haiti's political affairs was adopted by the international community without corresponding assumption of responsibility to undertake the utmost effort to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of the international action.***

The Haitian experience demonstrates that humanitarian priorities were not given sufficient priority in comparison to political objectives. For example, the proclaimed exemption of "food and medicines" under the embargo falsely conveyed to the public the notion that humanitarian needs were being protected even as sanctions were being exercised. Such over-simplification of humanitarianism in Haiti obscured the abrogation of humanitarian responsibility by the international community.

VIII. Recommendations

Our recommendations are of two types: first, regarding specific humanitarian action in Haiti and second, regarding general policy and management of future sanctions-exacerbated crises.

VIII-A. Haiti

■ *Humanitarian Corridor*

The breakdown of the Governors Island accord, the reimposition of sanctions, the naval blockade, and the partial evacuation of UN personnel in October 1993 have extended the Haitian crisis. Sanctions are likely to be continued, perhaps even tightened, with no clear and definitive resolution in sight.

The human toll over this crisis period has resulted from a myriad of factors including government mismanagement, economic and agricultural disruptions, population movements, economic sanctions and humanitarian neglect. Yet, the extension of the crisis has not been accompanied by the articulation of a policy or plan by the United States or the international community to mitigate the suffering and to protect the lives of innocent civilians. A "humanitarian corridor" should be opened by the international community to proactively ensure basic provisions for the Haitian people, especially the poor. The "corridor" should have the simple but critical goal of meeting the people's requirements for water, food, medicines and other essentials. Meeting such goals would require mobilizing NGO, UN, and key non-governmental and public sector operations in Haiti, for childhood immunization, food distribution, and other critical public functions.

In opening such a corridor, four basic humanitarian objectives should be advanced.

1) Non-interference or exemption in the free movement of life-saving supplies, including food and medicines;

2) Protection of human security by ensuring access of the most essential human needs (water, food, shelter, clothing, and physical security) by the most vulnerable populations, especially women and children;

3) Assessment and monitoring of the "human situation" with impartiality and independence using early warning indicators on human survival, the quality of life, and the satisfactory nature of policy and program interventions; and

4) Maintenance of the purity of the humanitarian engagement, guarding against misuse, abuse, diversion or other illegitimate uses of humanitarian assistance.

■ *Accelerated Human Recovery*

Upon the restoration of democracy and constitutional rule, the international community should launch an "accelerated human recovery" program in Haiti. Parallel to an emergency economic recovery program proposed by the UN, urgent humanitarian actions should be launched. Action priorities should include: programs in food and nutrition, basic immunizations, clean water and sanitation, and credit and employment generation. The aim of the human recovery program should be to ensure household security in food, water, and primary health and educational services, thereby helping to replenish the depleted reserves of Haiti's families.

VIII-B. Future Actions

The most important aspect of future sanctions-exacerbated crises, is the assumption of humanitarian responsibilities by the international community to undertake the utmost effort to mitigate the human damage caused by external political intervention. Without political will and responsibility, humanitarian action will be treated as palliative and secondary to other, for example political, considerations.

The legitimacy and public support of sanctions and their effectiveness ultimately rest upon their ethical base. International intervention into the political affairs of sovereign states should carry the corresponding international responsibility for ensuring that innocent civilians are protected against unnecessary harm and suffering. The imposition of sanctions should require a plan addressing humanitarian responsibility, humanitarian monitoring, and definitional and operational guidelines. It is important that over time the public becomes increasingly aware of and sensitive to the humanitarian dimensions of political crises and sanctions. Acceptance of international responsibility would be expressed through:

(1) Selecting more appropriate and effective sanctions instruments that target political leaders while minimizing

damage upon innocent civilians, especially women and children.

The choice of instruments should be based on the criterion of attaining long-term political and humanitarian objectives while minimizing short-term human costs.

(2) ***Monitoring the human condition through independent and timely surveillance systems for early warning of humanitarian distress and for guiding and prioritizing humanitarian action.***

Consideration should be given to the design and implementation of improved assessment and surveillance of the current situation, including the development of methodologies for rapid appraisal of complex emergencies. Appraisal and monitoring systems should be scientifically valid and probably under the control of non-partisan groups, such as NGOs which are linked to independent academic centers. A multi-sector body of interested individuals (agronomists, nutritionists, physicians, economists, etc.) would be able to review data, monitor food production and marketing climate (price movements and distribution of goods), and assist in general policy recommendations.

(3) ***Developing humanitarian plans of action which are based upon clear objectives, a workable definition of "humanitarian aid" and feasible operations.***

This responsibility should rest with the new Department of Humanitarian Affairs within the UN. Customary pronouncements of "exemption of food and medicines" from embargo are outdated and inadequate; more sophisticated, realistic, and effective strategies for humanitarian action are required.

(4) ***Introducing organizational reforms to permit regional and multilateral organizations like the OAS and UN to address multiple political and humanitarian objectives more effectively and simultaneously.***

Although the OAS and the UN pursued political objectives, they also had humanitarian obligations. Organizational mechanisms to resolve potential conflicts between political decisions by the UN Security Council and the humanitarian decisions of the UN should be developed to enable both objectives to be pursued effectively. Mechanisms that reconcile competing objectives should be resolved at high levels. Another alternative would be greater decentralization and operating autonomy by UN agencies which would provide pluralism of organizational engagement and enhance effectiveness to meet diverse objectives (for example, political and humanitarian).

(5) ***Formulating operational guidelines for effective implementation of humanitarian action in complex and rapidly changing situations.***

The need is especially great where host government legitimacy, control, law and order, and other contextual factors are in rapid flux. The operating guidelines would best be constructed from lessons learned in recent complex emergencies, such as the Haitian case study, along with others that might be developed.

(6) ***Improving donor effectiveness by expanding the pool of core resources available for humanitarian action followed by a regular post-crisis audit of performance.***

Because crises require flexibility and rapidity of response, unrestricted resources are required rather than ad hoc contributions by bilateral donors to multilateral agencies. The efficient and effective use of pooled resources should be subject in each and every case to a post-crisis audit. In the long run, donor effectiveness would be enhanced by shifting from voluntary ad hoc bilateral donor pledges to automatic prorated assessments of support for humanitarian action, paralleling assessments for UN peacekeeping operations.