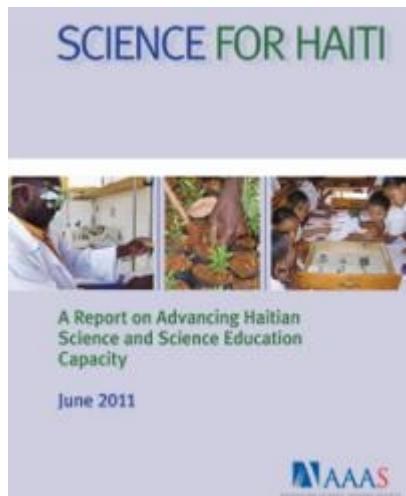


Science and Science Education Critical for Haiti's Future, Says International Team Convened by AAAS [1]

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Calificación:



http://www.aaas.org/news/releases/2011/0915haiti_science.shtml [2] PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—Haiti and the global community should work together to build a robust science sector that can help the nation recover from last year's deadly earthquake, support future development, and improve the lives of Haiti's people, says a new AAAS report by Haitian and international scientists and educators. The report, *Science for Haiti* [<http://www.aaas.org/go/haiti2011/>] [3], offers a set of strategic goals for increasing science capacity and urges collaboration between Haitian scientists, the international science community, donor and aid organizations, and other partners to achieve them. Taken together, the goals would cultivate scientific expertise in areas that support Haiti's sustainable development, rebuild and strengthen Haitian science education, and increase the nation's ties to the international science and engineering community. The report offers more than three dozen specific recommendations for achieving the goals. *Science for Haiti* will be a central

topic as the report's authors meet in the Haitian capital 19-20 September with representatives of Haiti's scientific community, universities and high schools and private sector. On 20 October, AAAS will host a meeting in Washington, D.C., of U.S. organizations interested in advancing Haitian science and science education capacity. "The task of increasing science capacity must be integrated into the full range of local, regional, and national efforts to rebuild Haiti," the authors conclude. "The strategies and proposals in *Science for Haiti* provide the Haitian government and educational institutions, the international aid and donor community, Haitian and international scientists, and others with a carefully developed list of ambitious goals and practical actions for advancing the science capacity. Progress is a shared responsibility and collective opportunity, as science contributes to the future of Haiti and its people." On 12 January 2010, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.0 devastated the nation. More than 222,500 people were killed and more than 300,000 injured. Some 1.5 million people were left homeless, and tens of thousands continue to live in temporary camps and settlements. Hundreds of government buildings, research facilities and educational institutions were destroyed or badly damaged. Within weeks after the quake, the AAAS Caribbean Division and other partners began reaching out to Haitian scientists and engineers, and from those talks emerged plans for a grassroots collaboration. In July 2010, 22 scientists and educators from Haiti, Puerto Rico United States, Canada, and Rwanda gathered in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and emerged with a set of proposals for advancing Haitian science. Those ideas were further developed in subsequent workshops held in Haiti with groups of Haitian scientists and school principals. The AAAS Center for Science Diplomacy joined the Caribbean Division in sponsoring the workshops and report, along with the University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, the College of Natural Resources at the University of Idaho, and the Association of American Geographers. The project is founded on a key principle: Haitians must chart their own future and their own goals for science, while the international science community must provide collaborative partnerships and other support. "Haiti needs to integrate science into the process of reconstruction and renewal," said Fritz Deshommes, vice rector of research at l'Université d'État d'Haiti. "This report will help build the scientific community in Haiti and strengthen bonds with the regional and global scientific community." *Science for Haiti* "is an important, ambitious document," said Alan I. Leshner, chief executive officer of AAAS and executive publisher of the journal *Science*. "The authors have recognized that science, engineering, and education are crucial to the future of Haiti....Through this collaboration, they have developed a road-map for building Haiti's prosperity and improving the lives of its people." Nations such as Rwanda and Vietnam have endured historic disasters, but are successfully pursing science-for-development strategies to build economic vitality. The new report suggests that Haiti could follow a similar path. Among the specific proposals for achieving those goals: - Set national policies to build science capacity as an "integral element of social and economic development"; - Develop science education at every level, while training and hiring more teachers and improving curriculum and textbooks to support that effort; - Promote more working engagement between Haitian scientists and their international peers through research programs in key disciplines and a program that identifies opportunities for collaboration. *Science for Haiti: A Report on Advancing Haitian Science and Science Education Capacity* includes translations of the executive summary in French, Creole, and Spanish. The authors include Gary Machlis, professor of conservation at the University of Idaho and a AAAS Fellow; AAAS Caribbean Division President Jorge Colón, professor of chemistry at the University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras; and Jean McKendry, senior researcher at the Association of American Geographers. "Science for Haiti reflects the resilience of the Haitian people and their strong desire for science and science education as a pathway towards sustainable development, even under the most challenging circumstances," said Colón. See the full report:

<http://www.aaas.org/go/haiti2011/> [4] Media Contact: Edward W. Lempinen, AAAS 925-945-1937 (office) 415-425-4439 (cell) elempine@aaas.org [5]

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