



Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Drinking water is in short supply just a few days after the 7.7-magnitude earthquake. Veoliaforce teams provide emergency response services.

Haiti is now in the process of recovery after being devastated by a violent earthquake on the morning of January 12. With the initial terror now over, emergency services are steadily making headway, with the help of humanitarian organizations. Veoliaforce is among those working quietly behind the scenes to bring crucial aid.

# Haiti

## The urgency that precedes reconstruction

People are slowly getting back on their feet in Haiti; just a few weeks after the disaster. Stalls selling fresh fruit and vegetables are again popping up along the stricken streets of the country's capital, Port-au-Prince; a shop and a bank have now reopened their doors. Haiti has not lost hope in the face of hardship. A smile from one of the many children now seen in the streets, women laying her loved ones to rest—both bear witness to the strength of a people who have hardly been spared the ravages of history. Still, this most recent blow of fate hit hard. To date, although exact figures are hard to come by, a UN estimate has

already put the death toll at two hundred thousand people, with another two million in need of emergency assistance. Before the disaster, Haiti had a population of nine million people.

### Response

Facing the needs of a largely urban population that has been stripped of everything, but whose most urgent need is a lack of drinking water, the move to bring in Veoliaforce (the Veolia Environment Foundation emergency response team specializing in treatment and distribution of drinking water) was a logical step. Working alongside the humanitarian organizations already operational in the country, ...

## News Roundup



In Port-au-Prince, the Haitian capital, a Veoliaforce volunteer unloads sacks of filtration sand used to set up the Aquaforce 5000 units.

●●● Veoliaforce experts have brought vital hands-on help. In addition to the 30 metric tons of emergency equipment that began arriving on January 13, the presence of specialist volunteers has been crucial in easing the burden on a devastated population. In the first week, three specialists from the French Red Cross teams arranged the supply of drinking water in two neighborhoods of the capital. Three Aquaforce 5000 units—mobile drinking-water supply systems able to provide five thousand liters of water an hour—were set up, along with 50 distribution points supplied by tanker trucks. On Saturday, January 16, a second team of two volunteers worked to help the humanitarian association Action Against Hunger in the city center by

installing a fourth water supply line. “The first step was to find an uncontaminated water supply,” explains specialist volunteer Christian Brandebourger, a technician at Veolia Environnement subsidiary Sade, which set up the system on January 23: “We quickly pinpointed a suitable source thanks to the expertise of the local water authority. We then used computer technology to show them how to set up the Aquaforce system, which has made things easier. Given the quality of the water drawn from the well, with double sand filtration, we were even able to split the system in two and double our capacity. That is, we went from five thousand to ten thousand liters of water an hour.” Not to mention producing 120 cubic meters of water per day

for a population of nearly 35,000 people. One week later, a fifth unit was installed on the Champ de Mars. “First, however, we had to repair a 40m well to bring up the water, with a thirsty crowd of people looking on,” adds Mr Brandebourger. The whole world has come together to help stave off potential chaos, famine and violence, raising almost \$500 million in three weeks. However, as UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has made clear, it will take at least ten years to rebuild Haiti. The first step was an international conference to this effect, held under the auspices of the UN in March. Above and beyond the initial tragedy, there is a real desire on the part of an entire nation to latch onto hope. Haitians are the first to acknowledge this. ■

## Veolia: international campaign for Haiti

In the UK, Veolia began raising funds in mid-January one idea was a special “Casual Friday” event. The Veolia Environnement Foundation opened a “Haiti Earthquake” account, to which Veolia employees in Germany made donations, as did their colleagues in North America. In China, employees in Shanghai and Taiwan put together an impressive campaign. Above and beyond financial aid, many employees around the world have contacted the Foundation to offer assistance and sign on as Veoliaforce volunteers.

8



## Equipment and skills

Monday, January 18, 2010, 9:30pm. At Vatry Airport, near Reims in France, equipment is loaded into aircraft chartered by the Action Against Hunger and bound for the Dominican Republic. The Aquaforce 5000

units will be taken to Port-au-Prince, where they will be used to produce and distribute drinking water. A Veoliaforce technician will provide three weeks of on-site training for the people running the new facility.