

Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL)

Report on a conference entitled

“Governance in Haiti: Strengthening the State and Democratic Development”

held in Ottawa,
November 7-8, 1996

Organization

The Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) organized, in November 1996, a conference on the topic of governance in Haiti. The purpose of the conference was to allow participants to discuss issues pertaining to strengthening the state and democratic development. The presentations and discussion periods that followed were organized along three axes:

- **Law, Order, and Democracy** which covered the role of the current United Nations (UN) mission, the role of the young *Police Nationale d’Haïti* (PNH), the evolution and purpose of the current judiciary reform, as well as the overall role of the State in this area of activity;
- **The Economy, Strengthening the State, and Democracy** which covered the current economic situation, allowing for the identification of sectors crucial to Haiti’s economic development, as well as the links between the State and the economy, and between democratic and economic development;
- **Social Development and Democracy** which covered development priorities in the area of health and social services, the role of NGOs and their relationship with the Haitian government, as well as possible mandates and/or actions for the State in this area.

Presenters came from both within Haitian society and outside, namely Canada and the United States. The keynote speaker was Madame Claudette Werleigh, former Prime Minister of Haiti under President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Madame Werleigh provided an excellent introduction to the points at issue.

The agenda of the conference had been designed to ensure the widest spectrum of options would be presented at every panel. In most cases, views were conflictive which led to insightful debate and discussion.