

Le Nouvelliste

A Cahier des Charges for the development of the Northeast

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Civil society organizations, including the CCC of the North East (CODCINE), the Rally of Farmers of Mont-Organisé (*Rassemblement des paysans de Mont-Organisé*, RPM) and the Centre for Culture and Development of Carice (*Centre pour la Culture et le Développement de Carice*, SKDK) with the support of the Departmental Directorate of the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation of the Northeast, municipalities, the Fund of Economic and Social Assistance (*Fonds d'Assistance Économique et Sociale*, FAES) and the Human Rights section of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), met last Friday in Fort-Liberté at the hotel Le Relais to present a development roadmap, during a forum held in this region. The meeting was the synthesis of a series of community assessments through district and communal forums in the Northeast department on the public policies included in the municipal development plans.

The document is an effective tool at parliamentarians and public authorities' disposal. The complaints listed in the cahier have to do with the deficiencies in sanitation and healthcare staff, lack of irrigation in agricultural areas, increased deforestation, lack of recreational facilities, the limited number of schools, as well as the small size of the police force. The document focuses on the priority actions that need to be taken in terms of the rights to education, health, food, a healthy environment, a decent standard of living, justice and security.

According to the organizers of the event, the cahier has been elaborated using a human rights approach, and it would be the first of its kind in Haiti, since it takes into account the economic, social and cultural rights of the population of the Northeast department.

In the opinion of Pierre Francique, departmental coordinator of CODCINE, the cahier was made following a democratic and participatory approach, ensuring the expression of the demands of the vast majority of the population. That constitutes a new dimension in the process of rapprochement between elected officials and the general public, a step in the affirmation of the capacity of people to take control of their destiny. All these needs have been identified as a result of an assessment undertaken by civil society organizations and other actors in the region.

"This document was compiled following a democratic and participatory approach with the intention of ensuring the expression of the demands of the people," said Mr. Francique Pierre in the presence of Ricardo Valverde, Executive Director of NDI; Marcel Oremus, mayor of Mont-organisé; and the MP Ronald Larèche, vice president of the Lower House.

Speaking at the ceremony, MINUSTAH's Human Rights officer, Maismy Fleurant-Marie, said that the activity is of paramount importance and that the UN mission is interested in this project whose development approach focuses on the dignity of human beings.

"This approach sees the issue of development as a participatory process. One should not think of development only from a Port-au-Prince perspective or from an international point of view, it has to start through the local communities," added Fleur, who claimed that this document will allow the department of Northeast to achieve sustainable development.

On her part, Lesly Benoit, representative of the Presidency of the Republic, said that this initiative is part of the vision of President Joseph Michel Martelly, notably through its proposal of free education for Haitian children.

"This civil society initiative falls under the scope of President Joseph Michel Martelly's vision, who during his campaign pledged to the establishment of human rights in the country, particularly through its n campaign for universal education ", added the representative of the head of state, stressing that the cahiers will be sent to the presidential team and the President of the Republic so they can appreciate the work of citizen participation in the reconstruction of the country.

As for Rudolph Joazile, President of the Senate, this pilot initiative is an important tool that shows that through dialogue and exchanges, solutions to problems in the department of Northeast, particularly in Fort-Liberté, can be found.

The MP added that the cahier constitute a roadmap for state authorities, parliamentarians and local politicians alike.

On behalf of the UN mission, Nuzhat Amhad referred to the cahier in similar terms. She encouraged the realization of processes involving the population in the development and good governance of their communities.

She emphasized that the development of Haiti, including its reconstruction, must involve devolution and decentralization of services in the different regions of the country.

Finally, it is important to note that, in the short term, the cahier recommends promoting good quality education through the improvement of the access to education and teachers' conditions. And in the medium run, the cahier focuses on justice and security and recommends the establishment of a border police force.

However, long-term priorities depend on the relaxation of the conditions for the commercialization of border communities' agricultural commodities.

-English translation by NDI, original article available at

<http://www.lenouvelliste.com/article.php?PubID=1&ArticleID=97646>