

Haiti: Communiqué from the Bibliothèque nationale de France

As soon as the terrible earthquake which struck Haiti was announced, the BnF has been actively collecting all the available information and participating to ministerial and professional meetings held on this topic.

Several actions launched by different organizations such as *Bibliothèques sans frontières*, the *Comité pour la Mémoire et l'Histoire de l'Esclavage*, the Blue Shield committees and the *Comité français IFLA*, are on-going or in preparation. Moreover, the BnF is attentively following the current situation of the National library of Haiti via the mailing-list of the CDNL (IFLA Conference of Directors of National Libraries). President Bruno Racine, Jacqueline Sanson, CEO, and all the BnF staff express their deepest sympathy to Françoise Thybulle, director of the National Library of Haiti, and their will to help the NL to reopen as soon as the conditions permit it.

In close cooperation with its French partners, particularly the *Bibliothèque du Service Commun de Documentation de l'Université des Antilles et de la Guyane* (University of Antilles-Guyana Library), which belongs to the BnF network of associated institutions, and with its foreign partners, such as *Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec* (BAnQ) and the John Carter Brown Library (JCBL), Rhode Island, which preserves a rare collection on *La Première République Noire*, the BnF is studying several possibilities of actions. Some of them have been already launched. Since January 12th, the BnF has started to harvest the Haitian community websites in France.

Two types of actions are planned to be launched:

1 – Helping to rebuild and reopen libraries

Regarding libraries and archives as for the other fields, the actions must be defined in close cooperation with all the actors, meet the current needs and be considered from a long-term perspective. That is why the BnF, in collaboration with the services of the French Embassy, will pursue with the Haitian cultural heritage network a policy of medium and long-term cooperation and will provide expertises, training, residency training programs, educational activities, documentary exchanges, etc.

2 – Contributing to rebuild and constitute collections and reading offer

- The BnF is preparing an important donation of books, coming particularly from its research library.
- In line with the joint efforts of the BnF and BaNQ to develop the digital French-speaking network (*Réseau Francophone numérique*), the Haitian digital library will keep on constituting and will be intensified. That is why the director of the *Bibliothèque Haïtienne des Pères du Saint-Esprit* (BHPSE), Patrick Tardieu, will be on March in Paris for a meeting organized by the BnF, with the support of the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF). Besides, the current dialogue with the John Carter Brown library should result in a joint program of digitization. Other French and foreign libraries with collections on Haiti will be called to join this program.