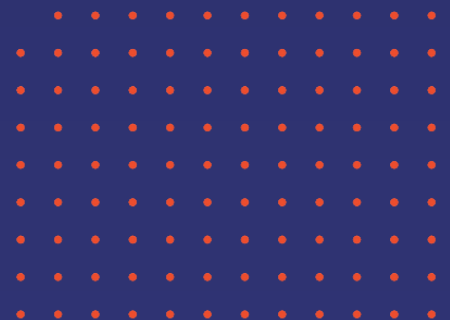

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Toward a Stable, Equitable, and Sustainable Haïti–Dominican Republic Relationship

From crisis management to a win-win strategy for stability, growth, and the island's shared future

JANUARY 2026
POSITION PAPER



— NOTE TO THE READER

This document presents the Institut Macaya's position on Haiti–Dominican Republic relations and proposes a five-year course of action structured in three phases (de-escalation, normalization, consolidation).

It is based on a study and consultations conducted between July and November 2025, combining document reviews, thematic monographs, targeted interviews, and comparative analyses.

Methodological elements, the composition of the working group, and key definitions are provided in Annex A.

— EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic has entered a cycle in which **asymmetry** (economic and institutional capacities) and **interdependence** (flows of people, goods, and services) generate recurrent crises, especially along the border area. The informal status quo and reactive management increase costs: smuggling and criminal networks, weakened public revenues and logistics chains, migrants' exposure to abuse, and hardening public narratives.

Breaking this spiral sustainably requires replacing unilateral actions with an architecture of predictability: consultation procedures that can be activated when needed, shared minimum rules, dispute-settlement mechanisms, and transparency through public indicators. The proposed approach is at once **ethical** (human rights, dignity, non-aggression including environmental non-aggression), **strategic** (interests made explicit, convergences leveraged, divergences managed), and **operational** (quick wins and a five-year sequencing).

At the core of the proposal is a « tooled » cooperation resting on four complementary levers:

- 1 stable institutions and routines for dialogue,
- 2 formalization of exchanges (customs data, regulated markets, gradual removal of non-tariff barriers),
- 3 regular channels for employment with minimum protection standards and complaint mechanisms, and
- 4 joint governance of shared resources, including water, ecosystems, transboundary mineral deposits, land border demarcation, and maritime borders, grounded in science, law, shared data, and dispute prevention.

Credibility rests on immediate signals (0–100 days): reactivation of bilateral mechanisms, crisis-communication channels, a pilot for customs data exchange, targeted anti-smuggling action, and temporary, legal, controlled frameworks for migrant labor, alongside improvements in identification and consular support.

Private sectors and technical and financial partners can reinforce neutrality, execution capacity, and transparency through co-investments with measurable returns.

The goal: to make possible a more stable, fairer relationship that benefits populations on both sides of the island sustainably.

01 Introduction

Haiti–Dominican Republic relations combine interdependence and recurrent tensions against a backdrop of economic and institutional asymmetries. In this context, lasting normalization requires pragmatic de-escalation based on continuous, technical, high-level dialogue, and on mechanisms that reduce unpredictability.

On the Haitian side, this requires a single agenda and a structured national position translated into coherent public policies, implemented by all institutions and assessed over time.

The document covers three areas: **bilateral governance**, **economic prospects** (trade and investment), **migration and border management**, articulating them with the security and development challenges of the border area. It proposes a sequenced, measurable five-year improvement pathway.

02 Guiding principles

To build a more predictable relationship and avoid crisis-driven management, Institut Macaya recommends that public action and bilateral dialogue be anchored in the guiding principles below, applied to the sequencing of priorities and the monitoring of measures.

3.1

Peace, security, stability

A sine qua non condition for dialogue. This implies coordinated action against criminal networks and security measures that are proportionate and traceable.

3.2

Non-aggression and mutual respect

Prohibition of hostile unilateral measures. Crises must be addressed through formal dialogue before any retaliatory action. This principle includes the concerted management of natural resources (data sharing, emergency protocols, joint impact assessments).

3.3

Human rights and citizen well-being

Protection of migrants against abuse, guaranteed access to identity and justice, and accessible complaint mechanisms.

3.4

Sovereignty and balanced relations

Mutual recognition of internal rules, with safeguards (review clauses, dispute settlement) to manage asymmetry.

3.5

Sustainable and inclusive growth

Priority to projects that create visible local benefits, support SMEs, and preserve the environment (reforestation, water management).

3.6

Harmonization of relations and strategic cooperation

Institutionalization of exchanges through active sub-commissions, one-stop shops, and data-driven transparency.

03 Strategic context & diagnosis

The Haiti–Dominican Republic relationship operates within a complex environment shaped by overlapping historical and cultural legacies, recurrent crises, Haiti's institutional fragilities, the Dominican Republic's economic rise, border porosity and the expansion of informality, sometimes polarizing nationalist narratives, pressures on water, ecosystems, and shared natural resources, as well as the expectations of international partners.

Two structuring parameters dominate:

- An asymmetry of economic, administrative, security, and financial capacities;
- A de facto interdependence (commerce, labor mobility, border services, shared resources) whose effects are concentrated along the border.

This combination shapes a relationship that is both resilient and unstable, with human, security, and economic costs.

3.1 Impact on Haiti

- **Economy and public finances:** The scale of informality and smuggling erodes public revenue and weakens the capacity for public investment.
- **Security and public order:** Illicit networks exploiting informality sustain insecurity and violence that destabilize the country.
- **Border-area services:** Persistent deficits (health, education, water/energy) deepen social vulnerability and fuel survival migration.
- **Operational sovereignty:** Irregular controls and corruption links reduce the effectiveness of the law.
- **Human relations and image:** The often irregular situation and the treatment of many Haitian nationals in the DR generates a sense of injustice.
- **Trust and governance:** The intermittence of bilateral mechanisms, the absence of a formalized Dominican policy, weak institutions, and the lack of shared data complicate planning and the monitoring of commitments.

3.2 Impact on the Dominican Republic

- **Security and public order:** Institutional weaknesses in the border area mobilize significant police and military resources.

- **Pressure on services and territories:** Certain border areas face increased burdens (health, education, housing).
- **Economic predictability:** Episodic closures and ad hoc barriers disrupt supply chains and business activity in key sectors.
- **Reputation and tourism:** Episodes of incidents linked to repatriation waves and media-driven tensions can affect the international image and attractiveness.
- **Management of shared resources:** In the absence of robust joint mechanisms, unilateral projects expose both countries to environmental controversies.

3.3 Shared responsibility

Recent tensions are fueled by a succession of actions and reactions that reinforce distrust. Responsibility is shared.

On the Haitian side, the difficulty in maintaining regular control of crossing points, the dormancy of the Joint Bilateral Commission, and the lack of follow-up on concluded agreements have weakened predictability.

On the Dominican side, the multiplication of high-impact unilateral measures (closure of consulates, air restrictions) and the slowness of regularization regimes have fueled the sense of injustice.

The challenge is not only to manage episodes of tension, but to replace reactive management with an architecture of predictability.

Breaking the tension–reaction cycle requires:

- Real-time alert and consultation mechanisms;
- Joint procedures for the management of shared resources;
- Minimum standards for returns (information, consular access, non-separation of families);
- Sustained institutional cooperation (security, customs, migration) and mutual commitments;
- Public visibility of commitments so as to offer verifiable reference points to public opinion.

04 Intersecting strategic interests

To move beyond a logic of confrontation and establish predictable cooperation, it is necessary to state each party's interests clearly. Mapping Haiti's and the Dominican Republic's strategic interests reveals both possibilities for mutual gains and zones of friction to be managed through safeguards.

4.1 Haiti's strategic interests

- **Effective security and sovereignty:** Regain control of flows (people, goods, capital), reduce smuggling and the grip of criminal networks.
- **Rights and dignity of nationals:** Protect Haitian workers in the Dominican Republic through regular channels, joint inspections, and effective consular support.
- **Prosperity and diversification:** Predictable, regulated access to the Dominican market; formalize exchanges; attract responsible investment.
- **Territorial cohesion:** Deploy essential public services and structuring economic projects in border municipalities.
- **Institutional predictability:** Stable dialogue and dispute-settlement mechanisms, with transparency of commitments.
- **Shared resources and borders:** Jointly govern water, watersheds, ecosystems, and transboundary mineral resources; structure discussions on the delimitation of maritime and land borders.
- **Capabilities and data:** Build a « data diplomacy » (standards, secure exchanges) and strong inter-ministerial coordination capacity.

4.2 The Dominican Republic's strategic interests

- **Stability and public order:** Reduce risks linked to illicit networks, manage irregular flows.
- **Regularized and productive labor:** Meet sectoral needs (construction, agriculture, tourism) through legal employment schemes.
- **Economic predictability:** Secure supply chains, avoid disruptions caused by crises and closures.
- **Reputation and attractiveness:** Preserve a favorable reputation for tourism and investment.

- **Resources and environment:** Prevent negative externalities (pollution, deforestation, water stress) through robust joint mechanisms.
- **Controlled budgetary costs:** Limit service burdens (health, education, security) in areas under pressure; reduce the crowding-out effect linked to informality.

4.3 Convergences and divergences

An operational reading of the convergences and divergences between Haiti and the Dominican Republic makes it possible to identify, on one hand, areas of agreement likely to generate mutual gains, and on the other, friction points that must be managed through safeguards, realistic sequencing, and monitoring mechanisms.

| STRUCTURING CONVERGENCES

- **Haiti's stability as a regional public good:** the Dominican Republic derives a direct interest (reduced control costs, smoother supply chains).
- **Security & fight against the criminal economy:** shared interest in dismantling illicit networks (arms, drugs, smuggling, human trafficking) and securing border posts.
- **Formalization of exchanges:** fiscal and competitiveness gains through customs data exchange, one-stop shops, traceability, and compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary measures.
- **Regular employment channels:** regulated sector-specific frameworks reducing irregularity and abuse, with joint inspections.
- **Shared resources and border areas:** joint technical mechanisms for the management of water, watersheds, ecosystems, transboundary mineral resources, and territorial markers.
- **Crisis management:** alert mechanisms, coordinated communication, and humanitarian corridors if necessary.
- **Dispute settlement:** mediation/arbitration with timelines, publication of decisions, and execution tracking.

DIVERGENCES TO FRAME

- **Pace and scope of regularization of migrant workers' status:** establish written rules and inspections.
- **Natural and mineral resources and maritime areas:** avoid any unilateral exploitation without prior consultation; establish notification mechanisms and joint impact assessments.
- **Land border demarcation, encroachments, and local uses of border lands:** finalize and update the joint inventory of border markers. A 2022 joint inventory identified 36 missing markers, 3 submerged, 70 located on private properties, and 17 with differing shapes.
- **Non-tariff barriers and high-impact unilateral measures:** technical review mechanism, progressive harmonization, alert and notice procedures.
- **Political narratives and media cycles that fuel distrust:** establish communication rules and credible spokespersons.

The identified convergences constitute areas of opportunity for rapid, visible technical agreements. The divergences, for their part, call for sequencing and safeguards (review mechanisms, indicators, public visibility of commitments). In this spirit, cooperation commitments will be designed as co-investments with measurable mutual returns through key indicators (reduced control costs, lower incidents, improved social indicators).

05 Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)

The table below presents the conclusions of the SWOT analysis carried out for the three shared-interest themes identified according to the key strategic issues Haiti should address with a view to normalizing relations with the Dominican Republic: the economic perspective, Haitian public governance, and migration and border management.

The analysis highlights four key lessons:

- Normalization cannot be sustainable without strengthening Haiti's institutional steering capacity;
- Informality and smuggling are priority leverage points;
- Migration must be addressed through regular channels;
- There is room for a win-win approach if cooperation is tooled, sequenced, and monitored through public indicators.

Dimension	Economic perspective	Haitian public governance	Migration & border management
STRENGTHS	• Agricultural and natural-resource potential • Strategic geographic position • Young, abundant workforce	• Staff motivation can be strengthened • No ultranationalist wing • Ability to adopt changes by decree	• Dominican openness to dialogue • Haitian workforce is hard to replace • Willingness to identify undocumented migrants • Geographic proximity
WEAKNESSES	• Fragile institutions and political instability • Dependence on Dominican imports • Weak infrastructure • No national competitiveness strategy	• No clearly assumed Dominican policy • Weak coordination mechanisms • Lack of qualified staff • Reactive rather than proactive management	• No migration policy • Negative perception • No border development policy • Haitian institutional weaknesses

Dimension	Economic perspective	Haitian public governance	Migration & border management
OPPORTUNITIES	- Regional integration via CARICOM and the EPA - Cross-border cooperation with the DR - International technical and financial support - Border area as a strategic hub	- Redefinition of relations on more balanced foundations - Relaunch of the Binational Mixed Commission - Mobilization of TFPs and the private sector	- International mobilization - Economic diversification - Stronger bilateral cooperation - Development of border municipalities
THREATS	- Smuggling, customs fraud, and insecurity - Vulnerability to climate shocks - Risk of marginalization in regional trade	Haitian inertia preventing institutions from containing smuggling and preventing tensions over transboundary resources	- Xenophobic anti-Haitian narrative - Ultrnationalist pressure - Growing capacity of illegal networks - Uncontrolled urban growth
CONCLUSIONS	Haiti must turn its institutional weaknesses into reform levers while leveraging its regional opportunities	- Need for a competent, structured institutional architecture - Room remains for win-win arrangements	Need for clearly defined policy measures and continuity in government action

06 Strategic perspectives for a win-win model

Institut Macaya's vision is a harmonized, equitable, and sustainable Haiti–Dominican Republic relationship, founded on a win-win model aligned with the sustainable development goals, supported by credible institutions and clear rules, ensuring the effective protection of people and grounded in concrete economic projects, in particular in the border area, so as to strengthen regional security and guarantee shared prosperity.

Haiti's stability constitutes a regional public good. It is in the well-understood interest of both countries to co-invest in reducing the vulnerabilities that fuel tensions.

6.1 The Haitian perspective

To negotiate successfully and defend national interests, Haitian authorities should define a Resilience and Negotiation Strategy whose principles and action imperatives would be:

A. Strengthening the state and the governance of binational relations

Building a durable steering capacity so that Haiti can negotiate, implement, and monitor commitments consistently, beyond governments and political cycles.

- A unified national « Dominican policy » defining objectives, red lines, sequencing, and instruments, applied across all ministries;
- Making the Haiti–Dominican Republic relationship an absolute priority of government action, engaging the highest authorities of the Haitian state;
- Structuring Haitian institutions on the front line to ensure the coherence of state action;
- Organizing dialogue roundtables with political, economic, and institutional actors.

B. Border management and migration

The current crisis stems from the deficit of a migration policy followed by all institutions, as well as a border policy that would designate the development of border municipalities as a priority pillar of a national security strategy.

Such a comprehensive approach would address the major challenges in an agenda of continuous public policy actions aimed at tackling the root causes of irregular migration. These actions would include:

- The establishment of a legal labor migration framework to guarantee the rights and dignity of Haitian workers in the Dominican Republic, while humanely managing returns;
- Security cooperation through regular intelligence sharing to combat organized crime (arms trafficking, drug trafficking, human trafficking);
- The economic and social development of border communities;
- Local institutional strengthening to consolidate state authority;
- The restoration of the physical environment and planned urban development.

The border area can only become a sustainable development hub if economic investments are accompanied by rigorous urban, land-use, and infrastructure planning, anticipating needs in housing, public transport, water, electricity, sanitation, and social services.

C. Economic formalization and diversification

Reducing economic asymmetry and economic dependence vis-à-vis the Dominican Republic is fundamental to Haiti's long-term stability. This approach consists of:

- The formalization of trade flows between the two countries, including urgent actions against smuggling and for the elimination of non-tariff barriers;
- The improvement of Haiti's business environment and competitiveness factors to encourage investment in local production;
- The effective integration of Haiti into international and regional trade;
- Binational public and private investment projects making the border area a shared strategic development hub, inscribed within Haiti's strategic master plan.

6.2 The Dominican perspective

The Dominican Republic has clearly identified the challenges of its relations with Haiti through a series of intersectoral dialogues, in order to anchor its Haiti policy around the broadest possible consensus.

Several documents structure Dominican policy vis-à-vis Haiti and should serve as a working basis for the relaunch of dialogue (see Annex B). They include notably: (i) the commitments of the presidential dialogue between Presidents Abinader and Moïse (2021), (ii) the National Pact of October 2023, (iii) the report of the Economic and Social Council published on September 16, 2025.

In the medium and long term, maintaining asymmetries, the informal status quo, and the failings of the Haitian state is not in the Dominican Republic's interest. It would therefore be in its interest to engage in a win-win perspective through a responsible engagement strategy articulated around the following complementary axes:

- **Durable stability in Haiti:** support, together with international partners, stabilization efforts in Haiti as a lever for regional security;
- **Balanced migration management:** establish a legal, humane, and secure migration framework meeting the labor needs of the Dominican economy;
- **Border development:** invest in the border area (special economic zones, infrastructure) to formalize exchanges and create jobs;
- **Fight against hate speech:** combat anti-Haitianism and all forms of xenophobia in order to improve the respect for human rights and the sociopolitical climate.

Together, these pillars anchor a pragmatic, measurable, and durable cooperation.

07 Implementation pillars of Haiti's strategy

7.1 Strategic objectives

The strategic objectives below could constitute the operational foundation of a Haitian strategy translated into clear, measurable, and sequenced priorities.

- **Institutional predictability:** Establish a reliable, transparent, and regular dialogue and dispute-settlement framework (public calendar, records, execution tracking).
- **Reduction of informality:** Substantially reduce smuggling through traceability, data exchange, and regulated binational markets.
- **Regular employment channels and protection:** Open and supervise sector-based temporary-work schemes, with enrollment, joint inspections, and consular support.
- **Services and resilience in the border area:** Deploy service packages (health, education, water/energy) and structuring projects.
- **Protected shared resources and areas:** Jointly govern water, watersheds, ecosystems, transboundary mineral resources, and sensitive territorial markers, while framing discussions on land and maritime borders.
- **Transparency and co-responsibility:** Design bilateral commitments as co-investments with measurable mutual returns.

7.2 The four implementation pillars

P I L L A R



Dialogue & Institutions

Making the relationship a process rather than a succession of crises.

- Simultaneously adopt a Dominican Policy and a Border Policy (objectives, red lines, instruments, governance, financing, monitoring and evaluation).
- Establish a dedicated national governance chain: Border High Authority (HAF), Inter-ministerial Commission on the Dominican Republic (CIDR), focal points in relevant ministries.
- Reactivate the Joint Bilateral Commission / Technical Secretariat (active sub-commissions, quarterly calendar, systematic publication of decisions).
- Establish accountability bodies: dispute-settlement framework (mediation/arbitration), monthly public dashboard, independent annual audits.

P I L L A R



Shared Prosperity & Formalization of Exchanges

Reducing informality (smuggling) that penalizes revenues, fair competition, and trust.

- Implement transparent and reciprocal customs procedures, lift non-tariff barriers, establish one-stop border facilities, and deploy electronic data exchange.
- Review and regulate border markets.
- Create an anti-smuggling task force (Customs/Police/Justice) targeting high-value channels.
- Promote PPPs and job-creating joint ventures in border special economic zones.

P I L L A R



Border, Mobility, Security & Protection

Replacing irregularity and the criminal economy with regular channels and minimum guarantees.

- Strengthen border control through a risk-based targeted approach and mixed operational cells (joint patrols, regular intelligence sharing) targeting illicit trafficking.
- Negotiate a sector-based binational temporary-work agreement (construction, agriculture, tourism): biometric enrollment, registered contracts, joint inspections.
- Frame returns through minimum standards (information, consular access, non-separation of families).
- Expand essential service packages in priority municipalities via accredited operators, with performance-based contracts and co-financing.

P I L L A R



Borders, Shared Resources, Environment & Societal Diplomacy

Preventing conflicts through science, law, data transparency, and joint mechanisms.

- Expand and operationalize the Binational Technical Committee on borders, shared resources, and the environment, with four sub-commissions: water/watersheds, land border demarcation, transboundary mineral deposits, maritime borders.
- Produce common technical reference frameworks: watershed mapping, updated border-marker inventory, technical scoping of maritime areas to be delimited.
- Establish a dispute-resolution mechanism for matters relating to borders, shared resources, and the environment.
- Launch societal and scientific diplomacy initiatives: academic exchanges, expert work, campaigns against disinformation.

08 Five-year roadmap

The five-year roadmap below translates the strategy into a five-year implementation pathway, structured around clear milestones, sequenced actions, and public indicators for measuring progress and adjusting action.

0–6 months DE-ESCALATION & PREPARATION		Start the machinery
EXPECTED DELIVERABLES • Mapping/status of agreements • HAF + CIDR created; JBC + Secretariat reactivated • Binational Technical Committee expanded and 4 sub-commissions created • Update of the joint inventory of border markers • Prior notification protocol adopted • Customs data pilot • Pilot market selected and scoped • Temporary-work framework launched • Crisis protocol operational • Rapid territorial assessment of 3 priority border municipalities	PUBLIC INDICATORS (EXAMPLES) • HAF/CIDR established • JBC/sub-commissions held (calendar + minutes) • 4 technical sub-commissions constituted • Border-marker inventory updated • Notification protocol adopted • Customs pilot signed/active • Pilot market selected • Crisis protocol operational • 1st set of indicators published	

6–24 months **NORMALIZATION & FIRST PROOF POINTS**

Prove and regularize

EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- Regulated border market (1 site)
- One-stop shops operational
- Temporary-work scheme active (biometrics/contracts/inspections)
- Markers brought into compliance; regular joint inspection visits
- Shared technical reference framework on mineral resources developed
- Technical dialogue on maritime border delimitation relaunched
- Development plans for 3 municipalities with service packages
- Anti-smuggling task force (3 channels)
- Binational dashboard established

PUBLIC INDICATORS (EXAMPLES)

- # regulated markets
- Customs clearance times
- % files via one-stop shop
- # biometric enrollments
- % of markers verified, repaired, or replaced
- # projects submitted to joint ESIA
- # technical meetings on maritime borders
- # anti-smuggling operations
- Dashboard publication regularity

24–60 months **CONSOLIDATION & SCALE-UP**

Scale and anchor

EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- Expansion of markets & one-stop shops
- Broader customs interconnection
- PPPs & economic zones (logistics/energy/agri)
- Permanent program for land border-marker inspection
- Consolidated protocols for shared resource management
- Dispute-settlement framework adopted
- 6–8 municipalities covered with services
- Budget anchoring (dedicated lines, multi-year programming)

PUBLIC INDICATORS (EXAMPLES)

- Flow formalization rate
- Customs revenue/gaps
- # PPPs signed / investments
- Annual report on status of border markers
- # shared-resource protocols adopted
- # jobs created (direct/indirect)
- # municipalities covered
- Budgets voted/executed

09 Immediate signals to build trust (0–100 days)

A constructive dynamic to build trust is built through rapid gestures, verifiable commitments, and projects that concretely improve the lives of populations on both sides of the island.

Initiatives on the Haitian side	Initiatives on the Dominican side	Joint measures
• Initiate a structured dialogue with civil-society actors (consultations + public synthesis). • Develop and publish a Dominican Policy. • Assess consular capacity (identity documents) + prioritized action plan. • Announce a temporary, legal, and controlled labor migration framework (priority sectors + inspections). • Establish and resource the HAF/CIDR (mandate + action calendar). • Reactivate the JBC / JBC-TS (quarterly calendar, sub-commissions, public minutes). • Launch a pilot customs data-exchange protocol + anti-smuggling task force.	• Restore a minimal consular service + transparent channels (visas, documents, information). • Reopen the DR-Cap-Haïtien air route. • Publish minimum standards for returns (information, consular access, non-separation of families).	• Publish a joint de-escalation communiqué (no generalized measures without prior notice). • Activate an alert line + fact-based crisis-communication protocol. • Designate a pilot border market site to regulate (decision + technical calendar + terms of reference).

10 Conclusion – Toward a win-win dynamic and a shared vision for the island

The Haiti–Dominican Republic relationship stands at an inflection point. The repetition of crises, the persistence of informality, and the accumulation of costly unilateral measures have demonstrated the limits of reactive management. For Haiti as for the Dominican Republic, the status quo increases risks, raises control costs, weakens supply chains, exposes populations, and fuels narratives that make any de-escalation more difficult.

A win-win dynamic, founded on clear rules, consultation mechanisms, and visible projects, offers the most credible path to restoring predictability, protecting people, and securing shared prosperity.

In this context, the private sectors of both countries can and must play a catalytic role in the de-escalation. Because they immediately bear the costs of closures, logistical disruptions, insecurity, and unpredictability, they have a direct interest in stabilizing and formalizing the relationship.

In the medium and long term, the Haitian and Dominican private sectors must become the drivers of sustainable growth on both sides of the island. Only more widely shared economic and social growth can guarantee durable stability and anchor cooperation in concrete interests.

This ambition must take into account the deep asymmetries that currently characterize the relationship: economic delays, institutional weakness, infrastructure and human development deficits in Haiti. Progressively reducing these gaps is an essential condition for building a more balanced and stable relationship.

The ultimate objective should be to arrive, in time, at a genuine common island policy: a strategic approach capable of leveraging the assets and potential of both countries, while respecting their sovereignty, national identities, and respective interests.

Institut Macaya intends to contribute to this trajectory. Its immediate priority is to work with Haitian stakeholders in order to foster the emergence of a structured, coherent, and realistic Haitian position on the relationship with the Dominican Republic.

The durable normalization of the Haiti–Dominican Republic relationship will not happen by decree. It will be built through immediate trust-building gestures, verifiable commitments, institutions capable of ensuring follow-up, and a long-term economic vision carried by the productive and social forces of both countries.

Methodological elements

ABOUT INSTITUT MACAYA

Institut Macaya is a Haitian, non-partisan think tank funded by the private sector, which mobilizes expertise from diverse sectors to conduct evidence-based research and develop forward-looking solutions to Haiti's most pressing challenges. Its work is organized around two fundamental pillars: governance and economic policy, both essential to fostering durable stability, restoring citizen trust, and stimulating inclusive economic growth. In this capacity, the Institute acts as a neutral facilitator and coalition catalyst, puts evidence-based options up for debate, and supports their implementation through transparent monitoring and verifiable indicators.

REFERENCES AND METHODOLOGY

This position paper was prepared by Institut Macaya based on a study conducted by Haitian consultants during the period from July 7, 2025 to November 15, 2025. The reports draw on a combination of sources: document reviews, thematic monographs, targeted interviews with Haitian and Dominican public and private stakeholders, and international comparative analyses. The findings and proposals reflect the state of information available at the time of drafting and may be revised as new reliable data are published.

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KEY DEFINITIONS

Haiti's Dominican Policy

The strategic, legal, and operational framework through which the Haitian state defines its objectives, red lines, instruments, and implementation mechanisms regarding its relations with the Dominican Republic.

Border Area

The set of Haitian municipalities contiguous to the land border, prioritized for the provision of public services, the regulation of flows, and local economic development.

Environmental Non-Aggression

A commitment to avoid any unilateral action harming shared ecosystems (water, watersheds, forests) without consultation and without a joint impact assessment.

Societal Diplomacy

An approach that extends traditional diplomatic practices beyond governments to include social actors (NGOs, local communities, media, citizens) and economic actors.

Dominican reference frameworks and inventory of agreements

Four primary documents structure the Dominican Republic's decisions and public-policy measures toward Haiti and should serve as reference points for Haitian authorities as part of a relaunch of binational dialogue:

- 1** The information exchange agreement between the Haitian and Dominican customs offices (March 2017), not yet implemented, whose objectives are to systematize information exchanges enabling rapid detection of fraud linked to smuggling, customs fraud, and tax evasion.
- 2** The meeting of Presidents Jovenel Moïse and Luis Abinader (January 10, 2021), during which the two presidents committed to continuing collaboration in the priority areas of their respective countries. They identified nine points, some of which remain relevant: identification of Haitian citizens in Dominican territory, construction of hospitals in Haiti, opening of negotiations on maritime borders, anti-smuggling technologies, fight against desertification, strengthening of border security, transparent rules for exchanges, energy interconnection, and biodegradable packaging.
- 3** The National Pact for the Formulation and Implementation of State Policies in Response to the Situation in Haiti (October 2023), resting on four pillars: the search for urgent and sustainable solutions, strict control of migration and illicit activities, management of informal trade flows, and promotion of production and investment.
- 4** The report « Dialogue on the Haitian Crisis and its Implications for the Dominican Republic » by the Economic and Social Council (CES), published on September 16, 2025, comprising more than one hundred recommendations from six thematic dialogue tables: Migration, Bilateral Trade, Development of Border Communities, National Security, International Relations, and the Labor Market.

Alongside these four documents, there are numerous commitments (Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding, Protocols, etc.) that govern relations between the two countries and will likely be subject to review when bilateral negotiations resume: the Border Treaty; the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union; WTO trade agreements including the Trade Facilitation Agreement; the arrangements of the HOPE/HELP program; the memoranda of understanding of the Martelly-Lamothe Administration; the joint declarations of the Haiti-Dominican Republic joint bilateral commission.



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