

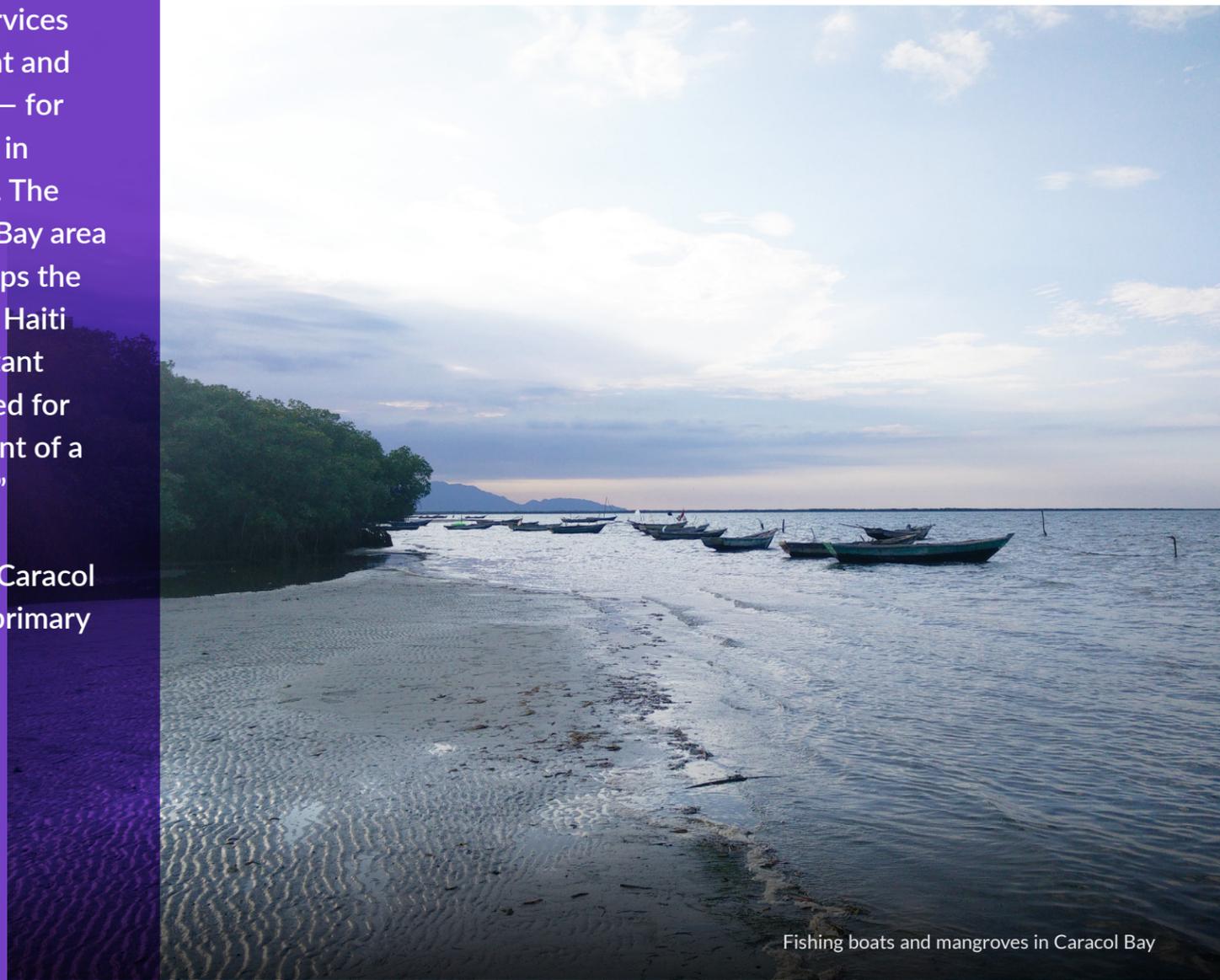
ENVIRONMENT UNDER
THREAT
CARACOL INDUSTRIAL PARK



In 2013, a [study](#) coordinated by the Organization of American States valued the total ecosystem services – the value of the environment and the resources that it provides – for the mangroves and coral reefs in Caracol Bay at US \$3.2 trillion. The study concluded “the Caracol Bay area should be considered as perhaps the most productive ecosystem in Haiti and therefore the most important site in Haiti in terms of the need for protection and the development of a sustainable management plan.”

The [same study](#) identifies the Caracol Industrial Park as one of the “primary threats” to Caracol Bay.

Front Cover Photo: Fisherman in Caracol Bay



Fishing boats and mangroves in Caracol Bay

LAND WAS SEIZED AND COMMUNITIES WERE LEFT BEHIND, TO MAKE WAY FOR HAITI'S CARACOL INDUSTRIAL PARK

In January 2011, approximately 3,500 people were forced from their land in Northeast Haiti to make way for the Caracol Industrial Park, a compound of garment factories and related infrastructure funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and other international donors with earthquake reconstruction funds.

The land taken for the park was the most fertile agricultural land in the area. Almost overnight, the farmers and their families lost their primary source of income and food security. They waited almost three years for promised replacement land, only to be told that most families would instead receive an inferior and inadequate cash compensation package.

Almost all of those families now struggle to meet their basic needs.

On 12 January 2017, the seventh anniversary of the earthquake, the Kolektif Peyizan Viktim Tè Chabè, a collective of hundreds of displaced farmers, filed a [complaint](#) with the Bank's accountability office. The Kolektif, supported by [Accountability Counsel](#), [ActionAid](#) and local partners, is calling for fair compensation for their lost land and for the Bank to address the many other environmental and social problems, including pollution and poor working conditions, linked to the industrial park.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF CARACOL INDUSTRIAL PARK: THE DANGERS OF CONSTRUCTING GARMENT FACTORIES NEXT TO A MARINE NATIONAL PARK



Salt basins on the edge of Caracol Bay

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The assurances made by the the IDB that the necessary mitigation measures would be taken to protect the marine protected area will be significantly tested during the operation of the park in the next 5-10 years.

— The Inter-American Development Bank

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The Caracol Industrial Park not only displaced hundreds of farmers and their families: it also threatens their environment.

The park is located approximately four kilometers inland from Caracol Bay, a sensitive coastal mangrove, sea grass and coral reef ecosystem that was recently designated part of the Three Bays National Park, a marine protected area. The bay is home to [endangered plants and animals](#), as well as important community resources, such as salt basins, fish and shellfish. Its coastal mangrove forest is one of the largest left in Haiti. The area acts as a nursery for many fisheries and provides shoreline protection from erosion and storm surges.

The Trou-du-Nord River, which flows into Caracol Bay, runs through the site chosen for the Caracol Industrial Park. The park discharges wastewater into this river, putting both the river and bay at risk from chemicals and other pollutants.

An influx in population near the park, drawn to its employment opportunities, could also harm marine resources, through increased waste, deforestation and overfishing.

Air pollution is another concern. Increased, heavy traffic on unpaved roads near the park (particularly its eastern entrance) is already causing large amounts of dust. The power plant built for the park burns heavy fuel oil and diesel, producing pollution and greenhouse gases that [could affect human health](#).

The park's primary investor, the Inter-American Development Bank, has recognized many of these environmental risks. However, mitigation measures are not being implemented effectively.

- Workers clearing the land for construction of the park [failed](#) to maintain a recommended 20-meter buffer zone near the Trou-du-Nord River bank, exacerbating risks to the health of the river, including erosion.
- The construction of a permanent wastewater treatment plant (“WWTP”) was delayed by nearly two years. A temporary WWTP did not operate correctly and potentially [released untreated waste into the environment](#). Even the permanent WWTP, which became operational in 2015, has [failed](#) at times to meet Bank water discharge standards.
- As of 2017, the park still lacks permanent waste disposal facilities. There is no onsite storage facility for hazardous waste, and the temporary non-hazardous waste disposal facility reached its capacity while [waste accumulated in and around the park](#).

In violation of the Bank's [policies](#), the affected communities have not been consulted or given sufficient, accessible information that enables them to understand how serious the environmental risks are; what harm communities might experience now or in the future; and how successfully the risks are being managed.

These communities have a right to have input into decisions that affect their livelihoods, their communities and their natural environment.

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It's not every time you go to the river that you can see it's directly polluted. They will throw stuff in the river at specific moments. One day you may come and you see the river quite clean, and then if you come back the next day, the water smells really bad and is completely green.

— Renan Carries

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THE WAY FORWARD

In spite of how they have been treated, the Kolektif believes that fair compensation remains possible. Working in collaboration with approximately 210 victims of the displacement, the Kolektif has developed a detailed proposal, including fair financial and non-financial compensation to reestablish sustainable livelihoods as well as specific support for their children's education. Their complaint seeks a constructive dialogue with the Bank and its client, facilitated by the Bank's independent accountability office.

Additionally, the Kolektif requests a new, meaningful, consultation process to explain the broader environmental and social risks and impacts of the Caracol Industrial Park to affected communities and to facilitate their input into how those risks will be managed.

For more information about the complaint, see accountabilitycounsel.org/communities/current-cases/haiti-caracol-industrial-park/.



#CARACOLHAITI

Photo by Marilia Leti / ActionAid

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