



Dominican Republic: Background and U.S. Relations

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Summary

The Dominican Republic, a country of roughly 10.1 million people that shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with Haiti, is a close U.S. trade partner and political ally in Latin America. The United States is the Dominican Republic's main trading partner, with two-way trade totaling more than \$11.5 billion in 2011. In addition to trade, U.S. interest in the Dominican Republic has recently focused on anti-drug cooperation and governance/human rights issues, as well as the country's role in helping resolve regional conflicts. U.S.-Dominican cooperation on bilateral and regional issues intensified during Leonel Fernández's last two terms in office (2004-2008 and 2008-2012), and is expected to continue during the Danilo Medina Administration.

Led by former President Fernández, the center-left Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) has solidified its dominance over Dominican politics. In May 2010, the PLD captured two-thirds of the seats in the Dominican Congress; the party will remain in control of the legislature through May 2016. The PLD prevailed again in the May 20, 2012 presidential election, as its candidate, Danilo Medina, soundly defeated former president Hipólito Mejía (2000-2004) of the populist Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD). Medina benefitted from outgoing President Fernández's continued popularity and from infighting within the PRD.

Inaugurated on August 16, 2012, President Danilo Medina, a former congressman and minister of the presidency, is seeking to build upon his predecessors' legacy while resolving lingering challenges the country is facing related to its fiscal situation, energy sector, and education system. Analysts are expecting more continuity than change from the new government, particularly since Fernández's wife, Margarita Cedeño, is Medina's vice president, and several top Fernández administration officials have retained their cabinet positions. Medina will benefit from his party's congressional majority, but his room to maneuver may be limited by the country's budget problems and need to secure support from the International Monetary Fund.

In recent years, congressional interest in the Dominican Republic has focused on trade, security, and human rights issues. Trade and investment flows have expanded since the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) entered into force for the Dominican Republic on March 1, 2007. U.S. trade capacity building assistance has also reportedly helped boost Dominican competitiveness in some sectors. The United States is one of the largest bilateral donors to the Dominican Republic; in FY2012, assistance totaled some \$30.1 million. The Dominican Republic is also receiving U.S. aid through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), a regional security initiative for which Congress appropriated \$203 million from FY2010-FY2012. For FY2013, the Obama Administration requested \$29.8 million for the Dominican Republic and \$59 million for the overall CBSI program, with the Dominican Republic slated to receive a portion. Human rights issues, including the treatment of Haitians in the Dominican Republic and trafficking in persons, have also been of interest to Congress.

This report provides background information on political and economic conditions in the Dominican Republic, as well as an overview of some of the key issues in U.S.-Dominican relations. For additional information, see CRS Report R42468, *The Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA DR): Developments in Trade and Investment*, by J. F. Hornbeck.

Contents

Background.....	1
Political Situation.....	2
Fernández Administrations (2004-2012).....	2
May 2012 Presidential Elections.....	4
Medina Administration.....	4
Economic and Social Conditions.....	5
U.S. Relations.....	8
Foreign Aid.....	9
Counternarcotics Issues.....	10
Human Rights.....	11
Trade.....	14

Figures

Figure 1. Map of the Dominican Republic and Haiti.....	2
Figure 2. Annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Growth in the Dominican Republic: 1995-2011.....	6

Tables

Table 1. U.S. Bilateral Assistance to the Dominican Republic: FY2009-FY2013.....	9
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Contacts

Author Contact Information.....	16
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Background

The Dominican Republic is situated on the eastern two-thirds of the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, which it shares with Haiti (see **Figure 1**). A population of about 10.1 million occupies an area about the size of New Hampshire and Vermont combined. With a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of roughly \$5,530 (2011), the Dominican Republic is classified by the World Bank as an upper middle-income country. This stands in sharp contrast to neighboring Haiti, a low-income country with a per capita GDP of just \$726 that was struggling economically even before a devastating earthquake hit the country in January 2010.¹ The two countries had similar GDP per capita levels in 1960, but while growth in Haiti has stagnated and its per capita GDP has shrunk by half since that time, the Dominican Republic has posted one of the fastest growth rates in Latin America and its per capita GDP has quadrupled.²

After fighting to achieve its independence from Spain in 1821 and then from Haiti in 1844, the Dominican Republic embarked upon a bumpy road toward its current democratic form of government characterized by frequent coups, dictatorships, and U.S. interventions (including 1916-1924 and 1965-1966).³ Rafael Trujillo ruled the country as a dictator from 1930 to 1961, often employing violent tactics to quell political opposition. Despite his brutality, Trujillo's strong anticommunist stance earned him tacit support from the United States. His acolyte, Joaquín Balaguer, then served as president from 1960-62, 1966-78, and 1986-96. As a result of the dominance of these *caudillo* (strongman) leaders, the Dominican Republic did not develop into a modern democracy until the 1990s. In 1994, an agreement commonly referred to as the "Pact for Democracy" removed the aging Balaguer from power and paved the way for the country's first truly free and fair elections to be held in 1996.⁴

Since the mid-1990s, the Dominican Republic has, for the most part, continued to post solid economic growth (see **Figure 2** below), and developed stronger democratic institutions. In 1996, Leonel Fernández of the center-left Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) succeeded Joaquín Balaguer as president and presided over a period of strong economic growth fueled by expansion in tourism and free trade zones. In the 2000 presidential elections, after top PLD officials were charged with misusing public funds, Hipólito Mejía (2000-2004), an agrarian engineer of the populist Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), defeated the PLD candidate, Danilo Medina. He lost support, however, by spending excessively and deciding to bail out all deposit holders after three massive bank failures in 2003. Mejía seemed to focus more on his reelection bid, which required a constitutional amendment reinstating consecutive presidential reelection, than on

¹ Annual per capita income estimates are drawn from: World Bank. *World Development Indicators 2011*. For a description of the various challenges that Haiti has faced and is facing, see CRS Report R42559, *Haiti Under President Martelly: Current Conditions and Congressional Concerns*, by Maureen Taft-Morales, and CRS Report R41023, *Haiti Earthquake: Crisis and Response*, by Rhoda Margesson and Maureen Taft-Morales.

² World Bank, *Haití, República Dominicana: Más Que la Suma de las Partes*, 2012.

³ After a period of instability in the country, the U.S. military intervened in 1916 ostensibly to restore order, but did not depart until elections were held in 1924. U.S. troops again occupied the Dominican Republic in 1965-1966 after a civil conflict erupted following the 1963 coup that ousted Juan Bosch, founder of the anti-Trujillo Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), from power.

⁴ For a history of the Dominican Republic, see Frank Moya Pans, *The Dominican Republic: a National History* (New Rochelle, NY: Hispaniola Books Corporation, 1995); Jonathan Hartlyn, *The Struggle for Democratic Politics in the Dominican Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

resolving the country's deep economic crisis. Leonel Fernández defeated Mejía easily in 2004 to garner another four-year term.

Figure 1. Map of the Dominican Republic and Haiti



Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as adapted by CRS Graphics.

Political Situation

Fernández Administrations (2004-2012)

During his last two terms, Leonel Fernández restored confidence in the Dominican economy, modernized the country's infrastructure, and played a key role in regional politics, remaining

popular at home even as he failed to solve some lingering social challenges. As a result of sound economic management, record foreign investment, and a successful diversification of the economy, Fernández helped the Dominican Republic resume its position as one of the fastest growing economies in Latin America (GDP growth averaged 7% per year from 2005-2011).⁵ Rapid growth combined with significant reductions in inflation helped reduce the percent of Dominicans living in poverty from 43% in 2004 to 34% in 2010.⁶

Former president Fernández also scored a number of political victories that will likely ensure that his party's dominance and his own political influence continues for years to come. In May 2010, Fernández's PLD party captured 31 of 32 seats in the Dominican Senate and 105 of 183 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. It will control both chambers through May 2016. In 2009, then-President Fernández achieved one of his primary political goals: securing congressional approval of a new constitution. The new constitution, which took effect in January 2010, allows presidents to complete one term and then serve again after sitting out of office for four years, making President Fernández eligible to run again in 2016.⁷ And, although Fernández left office in August 2012, his wife, Margarita Cedeño, is to serve as vice president through August 2016. Some argue that this may mean that President Medina finds himself governing in his predecessor's shadow.⁸

As president, Leonel Fernández maintained close ties with the United States, but also sought to diversify the Dominican Republic's trade relations and raise the country's international profile by mediating regional conflicts and supporting reconstruction efforts in Haiti. Fernández helped resolve disputes between Colombia and neighboring Ecuador and Venezuela, and supported efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement to the political crisis that occurred in Honduras after the June 2009 ouster of then-President Manuel Zelaya. Despite centuries of tension between the two countries, the Dominican Republic responded to the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti with an outpouring of public and private donations and emerged as a key supporter of international relief and reconstruction efforts.⁹ President Obama praised President Leonel Fernández for the leadership role he played in responding to the earthquake in Haiti.¹⁰

While some argue that Leonel Fernández passed an impressive legacy on to his successor, others maintain that his government left major problems unaddressed.¹¹ For example, despite efforts at reform, the Dominican Republic still suffers from persistent electricity shortages (blackouts regularly occur), high crime rates (the homicide rate stood at 25 per 100,000 people in 2011),¹²

⁵ GDP figures are from the Economist Intelligence Unit. (EIU).

⁶ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2011*.

⁷ The constitution also: made presidential and legislative elections coincide beginning in 2016 (the current Congress will serve until then); revamped the structure of the judiciary; and defined citizenship such that the children of immigrants residing in the country illegally (of whom there are currently an estimated 1 million Haitians) are ineligible to receive Dominican nationality.

⁸ "Medina Takes Office in Fernández's Shadow," *LatinNews Daily*, August 17, 2012.

⁹ For a history of Dominican-Haitian relations, see Michele Wucker, *Why the Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians, and the Struggle for Hispaniola* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000). For information on Dominican contributions to reconstruction in Haiti since the earthquake, see "Rebuilding Haiti," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 89, no. 5 (September/October 2010).

¹⁰ The White House: Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks Following a Meeting with President Leonel Fernandez Reyna of the Dominican Republic," Press Release, July 12, 2010.

¹¹ "After Leonel," *The Economist*, May 26, 2012.

¹² The homicide rate was 24.5 per 100,000 in 2004. See U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "Homicide Statistics," available at <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/homicide.html>.

and corruption. In Transparency International's 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index, the Dominican Republic ranked 26th out of 28 countries in Latin America and 129 out of 182 countries in the world.¹³ In addition to corruption, the Dominican Republic's weak education system, which ranked just above Haiti in a recent global competitiveness report, remains a major impediment to an otherwise competitive economy.¹⁴ The Fernández government's decision to let a stand-by agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) lapse rather than reducing electricity subsidies (as the Fund had recommended) has left the country in a precarious fiscal situation. In terms of foreign relations, the recent earthquake brought the Dominican Republic and Haiti closer together, but Haitian illegal immigration (and the ensuing Dominican response) remains a major source of tension between the two countries.

May 2012 Presidential Elections

On May 20, 2012, Danilo Medina, an economist, three-time congressmen, and two-time minister of the presidency, secured a first round victory in the Dominican presidential election. Standing for the PLD, Medina defeated former President Hipolito Mejía of the PRD by a comfortable margin of 51.2% to 46.2%. A number of independent monitoring organizations certified the election results, even as allegations of vote-buying and excessive campaign spending plagued both parties.¹⁵ While Medina undoubtedly benefitted from his party's massive campaign spending and the outgoing Fernández government's largesse, he also garnered support from the popularity of then-First Lady Margarita Cedeño and voters' negative associations of Mejía with the economic crisis of 2003-2004.¹⁶ Mejía's candidacy was further weakened by the president of the PRD's refusal to support his candidacy.

Medina Administration

Danilo Medina took office for a four year presidential term on August 16, 2012. During his inaugural address, Medina emphasized the development goals of his administration: reducing poverty and inequality; increasing spending on education to 4% of GDP as mandated by the constitution; ending illiteracy; and creating 400,000 new jobs.¹⁷ Observers expect his policies to be guided by the country's National Development Plan 2010-30, which sets specific targets for increasing education spending, boosting tax revenue, and increasing electricity production.¹⁸

Although foreign affairs may be less of a focus for President Medina than it was for former President Fernández, analysts expect the Medina government to maintain strong ties with the

¹³ Each year, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index measures the perceived levels of public sector corruption in countries around the world. Countries are ranked on a scale from 10 (highly clean) to 0 (highly corrupt). The countries ranked at the top of the list have the lowest levels of perceived corruption. For more information, see http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2011/results.

¹⁴ The Dominican Republic ranked 143rd out of 144 countries ranked on the quality of its education system. World Economic Forum, *Global Competitiveness Report 2012-13*, available at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GlobalCompetitivenessReport_2012-13.pdf. Hereinafter WEF, 2012-2013.

¹⁵ Participación Ciudadana, *Informe Final de PC Sobre las Elecciones 2012*, Segundo Informe Sobre el Desarrollo de las Elecciones Presidenciales y de Diputados de Ultramar, Santo Domingo, May 2012, pp. 1-5.

¹⁶ "Dominican Republic: Medina Win Means Policy Continuity," *Oxford Analytica*, May 22, 2012.

¹⁷ EIU, *Country Report: Dominican Republic*, August 2012.

¹⁸ A copy of the plan is available in Spanish at http://www.end.gov.do/download/Anteproyecto_de_Ley_de_END_RD_2010_2030.pdf.

United States and to pursue closer cooperation with new partners like Brazil and Colombia. President Medina has vowed to pursue a free trade agreement with neighboring Haiti (the country's 2nd largest trading partner) and to improve migration cooperation between the two countries. The two countries have just launched a ten-year joint plan to eradicate cholera, a disease which has caused 7,000 deaths in Haiti and 350 in the Dominican Republic since it emerged in October 2010.¹⁹ Haitian-Dominican tensions could arise, however, over Dominican deportation policies, the costs of new work permits required for Haitians migrants, and provisions in the 2010 constitution that deny Dominican citizenship to the children of Haitian migrants born in the country.²⁰

Since taking office, President Medina has endorsed austerity and fiscal reform. Medina recently introduced a fiscal reform proposal to the Dominican Congress containing a variety of tax changes aimed at boosting revenue by close to 2% over the next three years.²¹ His proposals are likely to be unpopular among Dominicans, but welcomed by the IMF. Medina knows that in order to be able to achieve the goals he outlined in his inaugural address, he will need financial backing from the IMF, as well as additional financial support and technical assistance from both bilateral and multinational donors. The Medina government recently resumed negotiations with the IMF in hopes of securing a new agreement by early 2013.²²

Economic and Social Conditions

From 1995 through 2002, rapid expansion in both the tourism and free-trade zone (FTZ) sectors boosted average annual growth rates in the Dominican Republic to more than 6% as traditional agricultural exports (such as sugar) declined. Remittances from Dominicans living abroad contributed \$1.5 billion per year to the country's stock of foreign exchange. Economic expansion was also facilitated by the passage of several market-friendly economic reforms in the late 1990s by then-President Leonel Fernández. One critical reform was a 1997 law allowing the partial privatization of unprofitable state enterprises. Economic expansion did not translate into significant reductions in poverty, however, as inequality and unemployment remained high.

In 2003, the Dominican economy, wracked by banking scandals and economic mismanagement, contracted by 0.3% (see **Figure 2**). The country's public finances were placed under enormous strain after then-President Hipólito Mejía bailed out the country's third largest bank, Banco Intercontinental (Baninter), which collapsed in May 2003, and two other banks. The Baninter scandal occurred after bank executives defrauded depositors of \$2.2 billion worth of account holdings. The country's precarious financial situation was exacerbated by the Mejía administration's failure to comply with IMF conditions. Inflation reached 42%, unemployment stood at 16.5%, and the country's currency (the peso) lost more than half of its value.

¹⁹ "Dominican Republic, Haiti in 10-year Cholera Fight," *AP*, October 8, 2012.

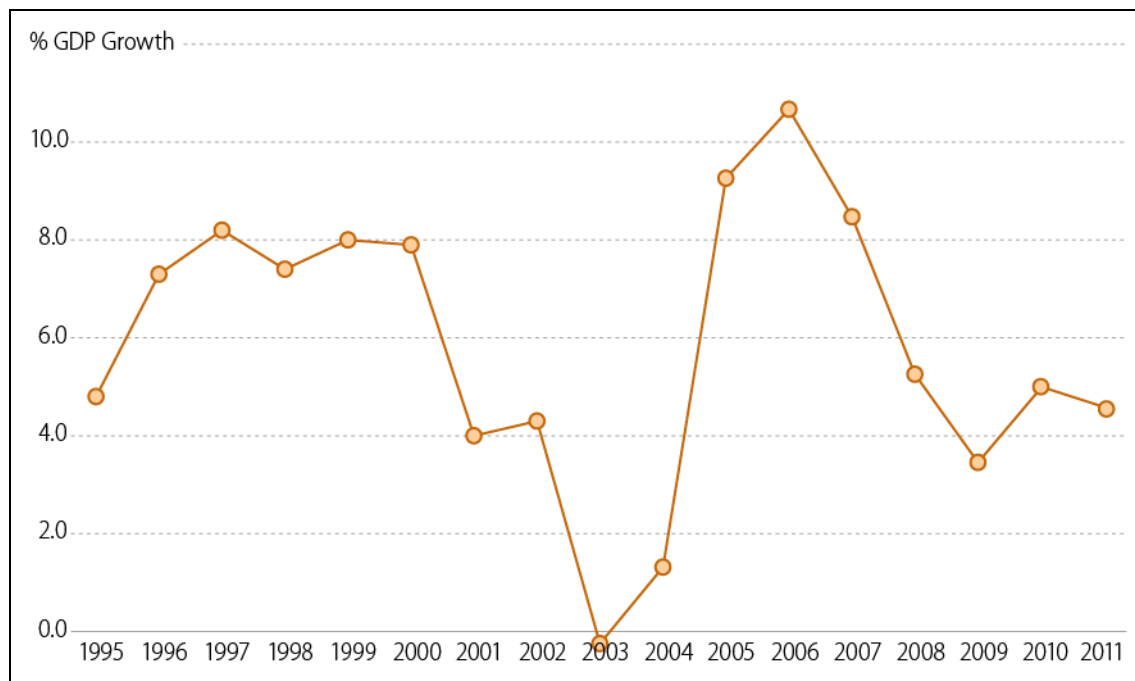
²⁰ Ezequiel Abiu Lopez, "Haitian Migrants Must get Dominican Work Permits," *AP*, June 11, 2012; "Dominican-Haitian Relations: Stateless in Santo Domingo," *The Economist*, December 16, 2011.

²¹ "Key Reform Enters DR Congress," *LatinNews Daily*, October 25, 2012.

²² Diego Moya-Ocampos, "Dominican Republic Resumes Negotiations with IMF," *IHS Global Insight Daily Analysis*, September 13, 2012; "Dominican Republic: Medina Courts Brazil and Colombia," *Latin American Weekly Report*, July 19, 2012.

Economic recovery occurred during Fernández’s second term (2004-2008), as inflation decelerated, growth resumed, and the peso more than regained its pre-crisis value. In February 2005, President Fernández signed a \$665 million standby agreement with the IMF, which expired in January 2008. The IMF’s review of the three-year package lauded the government’s ability to bounce back from the economic crisis and efforts to bring public spending under control. However, the IMF also urged the government to reduce energy subsidies and broaden the tax base in order to have a better fiscal position and revenue available for targeted social programs.²³ Up until that point, the Fernández government had struggled to reduce poverty even as growth had picked up; the percentage of Dominicans living below the national poverty line actually increased from 42% in 2004 to 48.5% in 2007, according to the World Bank.

Figure 2. Annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Growth in the Dominican Republic: 1995-2011



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

The Dominican economy fared better than many other economies in Latin America during and after the 2008-2009 global financial crisis, with GDP growth of 3.5% in 2009 and 7.8% in 2010, but economic expansion has slowed down since 2011. In November 2009, the Fernández government signed a 28-month, \$1.7 billion stand-by agreement with the IMF that helped it implement a stimulus package involving investment projects and social safety net programs.²⁴ High levels of foreign investment, strong manufacturing and mining exports, and continued strength in tourism revenues boosted growth figures. The Dominican Republic has the largest stock of foreign direct investment and the most diversified export structure of any of the CAFTA-

²³ “IMF Executive Board Completed Final Review Under Stand-by Arrangement with Dominican Republic,” *U.S. Federal News*, February 4, 2008.

²⁴ International Monetary Fund, “IMF Executive Board Approves \$1.7 Billion Stand-By Agreement for the Dominican Republic,” November 9, 2009.

DR countries.²⁵ According to the Dominican Central Bank, remittances totaled roughly \$3.0 billion in 2010 and \$3.2 billion in 2011. Nevertheless, the Dominican economy remains vulnerable to external shocks, which can cause declines in remittances, exports, or tourism inflows, or increases in energy prices. The government's failure to implement structural reforms to increase revenue and reduce excess spending (including subsidies) may limit its room to maneuver in the event of future external shocks. GDP growth forecasts for the Dominican Republic for 2012 have been revised downward to 3.9%.²⁶

Problems in the electricity sector have long constrained growth in the Dominican Republic, as electricity providers have struggled to provide adequate service to a populace angry at continued blackouts. In recent years, state distribution companies have added a million paying customers to their client base, reduced electricity losses by 15% since 2008, and reformed their internal operations to reduce payroll costs, combat corruption, and improve customer service.²⁷ The government has also made an effort to target electricity subsidies only to the poorest households and to criminalize non-payment of electricity bills. Nevertheless, the grid remains fragile, electricity losses are still roughly 30%,²⁸ and blackouts continue to occur. The Dominican government continues to subsidize the state distribution companies, owing \$600 million to private generators in 2011 (down from \$1.3 billion in 2008).²⁹ In February 2012, the Fernández government reportedly decided to let its IMF agreement lapse rather than reducing the subsidies to generating companies and letting electricity rates rise, as the Fund had been pressing it to do.³⁰

The high price of importing oil, still the source of just under half of the electricity produced in the country, has also proved challenging for the Dominican Republic. The country has been able to find some relief from high oil prices through PetroCaribe, an agreement promoted by Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez that provides oil to Central American and Caribbean nations at subsidized costs. Former President Fernández also sought to reduce the country's dependence on oil by promoting the use of alternative forms of energy and providing tax breaks to the private sector for installing energy efficient technology. In 2007, the Dominican legislature passed legislation establishing a regulatory framework and tax incentives to promote energy production from renewable sources; the importance of fostering alternative energies is also enshrined in the 2010 constitution. The Dominican Republic has received significant foreign investment for solar power, biomass, and wind energy projects. Its first large-scale wind farm opened in 2011.³¹

The Dominican Republic has thus far been unable to translate rapid economic growth into significant reductions in poverty and inequality and improvements in education and health indicators; the country's poor education system has been identified as a barrier to growth.³² Unemployment has remained in double digits (13.5% in 2011), the highest of any CAFTA-DR

²⁵ CRS Report R42468, *The Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA DR): Developments in Trade and Investment*, by J. F. Hornbeck.

²⁶ EIU, "Dominican Republic: Outlook for 2012-16," August 2012.

²⁷ Email from the Dominican Embassy in Washington, DC, October 9, 2012.

²⁸ Corporación Dominicana de Empresas Eléctricas Estatales [CDEEE], *Informe del Desempeño del Sector Eléctrico*, July 2012.

²⁹ Email from the Dominican Embassy in Washington, DC, October 9, 2012.

³⁰ "Dominican Republic: Break with the IMF," *EIU Business Latin America*, February 27, 2012.

³¹ Stephan Nielsen, "Dominican Republic Baited \$770 Million of Wind Farms With Perks," *Bloomberg*, August 4, 2011.

³² WEF, 2012-2013.

country, with youth unemployment at particularly high levels.³³ Anti-poverty programs have, until recently, not been well targeted, which has limited their effectiveness.³⁴ Since 2005, however, conditional cash transfers provided to impoverished families in exchange for compliance with health interventions and keeping their kids in school through the *Solidaridad* (Solidarity) program have had positive results on nutrition outcomes and school attendance rates. In 2011, the Dominican government spent \$23.4 million on the program, which benefitted more than 620,000 families through the nutritional stipend program alone.³⁵ The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) have provided \$370 million in loans and technical assistance to support *Solidaridad* and related efforts since 2009.

As anti-poverty programs and subsidies have been increasingly targeted at the poorest families, the Ministries of Education and Health have also worked with donors to develop model schools and hospitals that provide quality services that can then be replicated nationwide. Spending on education in particular remains low relative to other countries in Latin America, and the quality of the education system is, as previously mentioned, at the bottom of global rankings. Improving the quality of pre-university education (particularly in math and science) and aligning education and training programs with workforce needs is crucial for promoting development and economic growth in the country.³⁶

U.S. Relations

The Dominican Republic enjoys a strong relationship with the United States, evidenced by extensive economic, political, and cultural ties. The Dominican Republic is one of the most important countries in the Caribbean for U.S. policy because of its large size, diversified economy, and close proximity to the United States. The United States has been a strong supporter of the democratic and economic development of the country, and is currently supporting the Dominican government's efforts to strengthen governance, improve the provision of social services, boost competitiveness, and address citizen security. The ongoing implementation of CAFTA-DR is likely to also ensure close economic relations. President Obama praised former President Fernández's leadership in the region, particularly the role he played in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, and has said that he looks forward to working with President Medina on bilateral and regional issues of shared concern.³⁷

³³ CRS Report R42468, *The Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA DR): Developments in Trade and Investment*, by J. F. Hornbeck.

³⁴ Manuel Agosin et al. *La Ruta Hacia el Crecimiento Sostenible en la Republica Dominicana*, (Washington, DC: Inter American Development Bank, 2009), p. 257.

³⁵ The compliance rate for the educational component of the program is roughly 82%, which is on par with other countries that have similar programs. More than 42,000 families were excluded from participation in the program in 2011 for either not keeping their children in school at the required attendance level, or for not getting them vaccinated. Information provided by the Dominican Embassy in Washington, DC, June 15, 2012.

³⁶ Agosin, section beginning on p. 289.

³⁷ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by President Obama and President Fernandez of the Dominican Republic in Joint Press Availability," July 12, 2010; The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Readout of the President's Call with President-elect Danilo Medina of the Dominican Republic," June 4, 2012.

Foreign Aid

The United States is one of the largest bilateral donors to the Dominican Republic, with U.S. assistance totaling an estimated \$30 million in FY2012 (see **Table 1** below). U.S. foreign assistance is currently focused on helping the Dominican government improve governance, combat drug trafficking and crime, implement CAFTA-DR, provide quality healthcare and education services, and protect the environment. U.S. assistance totaled roughly \$30.1 million in FY2012, down from \$37.0 million in FY2011 and \$50.2 million in FY2010. From FY2010 to FY2012, funding provided through the Development Assistance account to the Dominican Republic has declined by half, while funding for health programs has remained relatively stable. Bilateral law enforcement aid has also been phased out as regional funding for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), which is discussed below, has increased.

Table 1. U.S. Bilateral Assistance to the Dominican Republic: FY2009-FY2013

Account	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012 (est.)	FY2013 req.
DA	24.6	24.6	18.1	12.3	13.3
GHP (State)	11.0	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.0
GHP (USAID)	10.3	9.0	9.0	7.8	6.8
ESF	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
INCLE	3.7	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
IMET	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.8
FMF	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	51.8	49.2	37.0	30.1	29.8

Sources: U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations FY2011-FY2013*.

Notes: DA = Development Assistance; GHP = Global Health Program; ESF = Economic Support Fund; INCLE = International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement; IMET = International Military Education and Training; FMF = Foreign Military Financing.

The Obama Administration requested \$29.8 million for the Dominican Republic in its FY2013 budget request. Neither the Senate nor the House Appropriations Committees' versions of the FY2013 foreign operations appropriations measure, S. 3241 and H.R. 5857, include a specific aid amount for the Dominican Republic. However, they do maintain support for regional trade capacity building programs that benefit the Dominican Republic, as well as the CBSI. S. 3241 would provide \$24 million for trade capacity building in Latin American countries that have free trade agreements with the United States. In the absence of a final FY2013 foreign appropriations measure, Congress passed a continuing resolution, H.J.Res. 117, to fund most foreign aid programs—including assistance to the Dominican Republic—at FY2012 levels plus 0.6% through March 27, 2013.

In addition to bilateral assistance, in FY2009, the Dominican Republic received a total of \$5 million in assistance under the Mérida Initiative, an anticrime and counterdrug assistance package originally designed for Mexico and Central America.³⁸ Mérida-funded projects in the Dominican

³⁸ For more information, see CRS Report R40135, *Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues*, by Clare Ribando Seelke.

Republic supported police professionalization programs, provided logistical support to interdiction units, and trained judicial authorities in implementing the criminal procedure code.

In FY2010, rather than continuing to receive this assistance through the Mérida Initiative, the Dominican Republic began to receive assistance through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), a regional security initiative first announced at the April 2009 Summit of the Americas. CBSI is aimed at reducing illicit trafficking in the Caribbean, advancing public safety and security, and promoting social justice. U.S. funding for the CBSI amounted to almost \$62 million (of which the Dominican Republic received \$5 million) in FY2010, \$77 million in FY2011, and an estimated \$64 million in FY2012.³⁹ In FY2010, CBSI funding supported training and education programs for at-risk youth in the Dominican Republic, as well as assessments on how to improve existing community policing, anti-corruption/good governance, and education programs. The Obama Administration asked Congress for \$59 million in CBSI funding in its FY2013 budget request. CBSI-funded programs in the Dominican Republic would support ongoing reform of the Dominican police, military, and judiciary; as well as social programs, including those aimed at at-risk youth. H.R. 5857 includes \$56.2 million for CBSI.

Counternarcotics Issues

On September 14, 2012, President Obama again designated the Dominican Republic as one of four major drug transit countries in the Caribbean. The Dominican Republic has also been designated a jurisdiction of primary concern for money laundering. According to recent U.S. government estimates, the majority of the roughly 4% of U.S.-bound cocaine that transits Hispaniola passes through the Dominican Republic.⁴⁰ As a result of the \$93.7 million purchase of eight Super Tucano aircraft, the Fernández government reports that air drops of cocaine into the country's airspace, once a frequent occurrence, now rarely occur.⁴¹ Instead, traffickers appear to be using maritime routes to transship drugs into and through the country. Several high-profile arrests have pointed to an increasing presence of Mexican and South America traffickers in the Dominican Republic and laid bare ties between international traffickers and corrupt Dominican officials.⁴² Drug trafficking-related violence and crime have remained at elevated levels.

The Dominican Republic cooperates closely with the United States in antidrug efforts through seizures, joint operations, and extraditions of drug trafficking suspects. In 2011, the Dominican government strived to improve coordination between police and military units engaged in efforts to combat drug trafficking and money laundering; increased seizures resulted from those efforts. Increased attention to air and sea port security, as well as U.S.-supported operations to interdict "go-fast" boats have yielded positive results. Cooperation is particularly strong with the Drug Enforcement Administration through the vetted Sensitive Intelligence Unit (SIU) and with Southern Command, which is reportedly providing \$1.5 million to build a small naval base on an island in the Southeast of the country for use in interdicting drugs and migrants.⁴³ Efforts to

³⁹ The amount of CBSI funding provided to individual countries in FY2011 and FY2012 is not publicly available.

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR)*, vol. 1, March 2012. Hereinafter, *INCSR*, 2012, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/03/185364.htm>.

⁴¹ "Why It's No Longer Raining Cocaine in the Dominican Republic," Ezra Fieser, *Time*, August 25, 2011.

⁴² "Dominican Republic Accuses 3 High-Ranking Police Officials with Helping Drug Traffickers," *AP*, May 24, 2012.

⁴³ Rachel Glickhouse, "U.S.-Funded Naval Base Sparks Controversy in the Dominican Republic," *Americas/Society*, February 27, 2012.

improve coordination with the Haitian National Police and other Caribbean partners have continued, particularly through the Cooperating Nations Information Exchange System.

Still, obstacles exist to greater U.S.-Dominican counterdrug and anticrime cooperation. As in previous reports, the State Department's most recent narcotics control strategy report asserted that "corruption remains endemic in all levels of Dominican society,"⁴⁴ and adversely affects antidrug efforts. Despite efforts to root out corrupt officials, Dominican police and military personnel continue to be arrested for drug trafficking-related crimes.⁴⁵ For its part, the Dominican government has said that it, like many receiving countries in Latin America, is ill-prepared to absorb the volume of deportees with criminal records who are arriving from the United States.⁴⁶ Dominican officials would like U.S. officials to provide more information about the past convictions of criminal deportees, a request that a recent Senate Drug Caucus report also endorsed.⁴⁷ They would also appreciate U.S. assistance for deportee reintegration programs. Analysts who have worked with the Fernández government on anticrime efforts have criticized the limited amount of U.S. anticrime aid that the country has received bilaterally and through the CBSI as too little to help it deal with the significant security challenges it is confronting.⁴⁸

Human Rights

According to the State Department's 2012 *Country Report on Human Rights Practices* (covering 2011), the most serious human rights problems prevalent in the Dominican Republic include abuses by police and other justice sector authorities; violence against women (domestic abuse, rape, and femicide); and severe discrimination against Haitian migrants and their descendants.⁴⁹ Other human rights issues covered in that and other recent U.S. government reports include child prostitution and child labor, trafficking in persons (TIP), and ineffective enforcement of some labor laws. While progress has been made in some areas (improving prison conditions and prosecuting TIP cases), setbacks have occurred in others (including efforts to reduce extrajudicial killings by police and to weed out corruption in the justice sector).

Reforms of police tactics and increased punishments of officers accused of misconduct had led to a steady decline in extrajudicial killings carried out by security forces, but police reportedly killed 154 people from January to July 2011 (up from 125 in the same period in 2010). Despite laws against torture and inhumane treatment of detainees, and senior police officials' commitment to comply with those prohibitions, the National Human Rights Council reports that some Dominican

⁴⁴ *INCSR*, 2012.

⁴⁵ "DR Military Personnel Arrested on Drug Links," *LatinNews Daily*, October 2, 2012.

⁴⁶ U.S. Congress, Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, *U.S.-Dominican Security Cooperation*, Statement of Ambassador Aníbal de Castro, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to the United States, 112th Cong., 1st sess., February 1, 2011.

⁴⁷ U.S. Congress, Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, *Preventing a Security Crisis in the Caribbean*, 112th Cong., 2nd sess., September 2012.

⁴⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps and Global Narcotics Affairs, *The U.S. Caribbean Shared Security Partnership: Responding to the Growth of Trafficking and Narcotics in the Caribbean*, Testimony of Dr. Eduardo Gamarra, Professor at Florida International University, 112th Cong., 1st sess., December 15, 2011.

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2011: Dominican Republic*, May 2012, available at <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?dliid=186510>. Hereinafter, *Human Rights Report*, 2012.

police officers still torture and abuse suspects and prisoners. While prison conditions in many older facilities ranged from “fair to extremely harsh,”⁵⁰ the government opened 14 new correctional and rehabilitation centers (CRCs) with a rehabilitation-focused structure and mission that have been described as model facilities.⁵⁰ The cost of these CRCs, however, has meant additional cuts in funding to other, already over-crowded prisons elsewhere in the country. The government continued to implement its new criminal procedures code, which only allows suspects to be held for 48 hours without being formally charged, but pretrial detentions averaging three to six months are common for suspects who have been charged with a crime. Corruption remains a major obstacle to justice sector reform.

Violence against women is the second major human rights problem identified by the State Department human rights report as pervasive and increasing in the Dominican Republic.⁵¹ Despite laws criminalizing rape and domestic violence, both abuses continue to commonly occur but were rarely reported or punished. In 2010, Dominican authorities received some 62,000 gender-based violence complaints, with more than 7,000 cases recorded in Santo Domingo (the capital) alone. According to an assistant prosecutor for women’s affairs, more than 1,200 Dominican women have died as a result of gender-based violence over the last five years, less than 20% of whom had ever filed a complaint against an aggressor with Dominican authorities.

The Dominican government has also received criticism for its migration policies as they relate to Haitian immigrants and their descendants, as well as its treatment of an estimated 1 million Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent living within its borders.⁵² Each year, thousands of migrants, many without proper documentation, continue to flee from Haiti, the poorest country in the hemisphere, to the Dominican Republic to work in the construction, tourism, and agriculture industries, as well as in the informal sector. Emigration accelerated after the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. The Dominican government has recently attempted to regularize migration flows from Haiti by implementing regulations that require migrant workers to obtain work permits and companies to ensure that temporary laborers they bring into the country return to Haiti. Labor rights groups fear, however, that the costs of the permits will have to be paid by the migrants themselves, rather than the companies who employ them.⁵³ Workers who lack proper documentation are subject to deportation. A temporary humanitarian lull on deportations to Haiti that had occurred in 2010 in the wake of the earthquake had reportedly ended by early 2011.⁵⁴

The State Department’s human rights report continues to document “strong prejudices against Haitians, which disadvantaged many Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian ancestry.”⁵⁵ In the past, Haitians and their Dominican-born children were regularly denied identity documents necessary to prove their migration and employment status, a practice that was condemned by an October 2005 Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) ruling against the Dominican government. Beginning in 2007, the Dominican government established a system to register the births of children of undocumented immigrants residing in the country and to help those children (and their

⁵⁰ “A Journey Into Hell: Prisons in Latin America,” *The Economist*, September 22, 2012.

⁵¹ *Human Rights Report*, 2012, p. 24.

⁵² See, for example, Amnesty International, *Haitian Migrants at Risk in the Dominican Republic*, October 8, 2009; and *Dominican Republic: Challenging Discrimination in the Dominican Republic: Protecting the Rights of Haitian Migrant Workers and their Descendants*, November 9, 2008.

⁵³ Ezequiel Abiu Lopez, “Haitian Migrants Must get Dominican Work Permits,” *AP*, June 11, 2012.

⁵⁴ “Dominican Republic Resumes Deportation of Haitians,” *BBC News*, January 6, 2011.

⁵⁵ *Human Rights Report*, 2012, p. 28.

parents) obtain birth certificates from their countries of origin (which is most often Haiti). While the 2010 constitution reiterates a 2005 Supreme Court ruling that the children of immigrants residing illegally in the Dominican Republic are ineligible for Dominican citizenship, they are eligible for health care services and education. This definition of citizenship applies no matter how long undocumented Haitians have lived in the Dominican Republic. The State Department human rights report says that this could render hundreds of thousands of Dominican-born persons of Haitian descent as “de facto stateless;”⁵⁶ the Dominican government maintains that they are not stateless because they are eligible for Haitian citizenship.⁵⁷ Dominican authorities also assert that the 2010 constitution guarantees that anyone who held Dominican nationality prior to its entry into force will retain it.⁵⁸ Without proper identity documents, individuals living in the Dominican Republic can encounter difficulty traveling; cannot register to vote; and have only limited access to formal sector jobs, property ownership, and secondary education.

Other major human rights issues in the Dominican Republic are the related problems of trafficking in persons (TIP) and forced labor (including child labor).⁵⁹ The Dominican Republic is a source country for sex trafficking victims; a transit country for trafficking victims; and a destination country for TIP victims, particularly for undocumented Haitians. Forced labor cases have been cited in construction, the service sector, and some agricultural industries. The Department of Labor (DOL) has published and commissioned recent reports citing instances of forced labor in the Dominican sugarcane industry, charges that the country’s sugar producers have challenged.⁶⁰ The sugar industry cites past U.S. investigations that have found no evidence of forced labor in the industry and improvements that have been made in living and working conditions at their facilities as evidence to contradict the DOL reports.⁶¹ Thousands of Haitian and Dominican children have been forced to work as domestic servants, and in construction, street vending, and agriculture. According to the DOL, instances of child labor have been found in the cultivation of sugarcane, rice, coffee, and tomatoes in the Dominican Republic.⁶² The Dominican sugarcane industry has also challenged that finding.⁶³ In 2011, the Dominican Ministry of Labor rescued 141 children from situations of child labor. (See “Trade” section below for a discussion of how the labor chapter of DR-CAFTA addresses forced labor).

⁵⁶ *Human Rights Report*, 2012, p. 18.

⁵⁷ Letter from Aníbal de Castro, Ambassador, Embassy of the Dominican Republic, Washington, DC, December 27, 2011, available at <http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2011/12/our-blog-post-haitian-dominicans>.

⁵⁸ Email from Dominican Embassy official in Washington, DC, October 24, 2012.

⁵⁹ Unless otherwise noted, this paragraph draws from: US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report*, June 2012, available at <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2011/>. Hereinafter, *TIP Report*, 2012.

⁶⁰ U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking, *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*, 2011. Hereinafter, DOL, 2011. See also a DOL-commissioned study by Verité, *Investigación Sobre los Indicadores de Trabajo Forzoso en la Cadena de Subministro en la República Dominicana*, 2012, available at <http://www.verite.org/sites/default/files/images/Investigacion%20Sobre%20Indicadores%20de%20Trabajo%20Forzoso%20en%20el%20Sector%20de%20Azucar%20de%20la%20Republica%20Dominicana.pdf>.

⁶¹ The industry also cites its decision to join the U.N. Global Pact, a group of businesses committed to ten universal principles (including respect for human and labor rights); as well as its willing submission to external audits as evidence of its commitment to combat forced and child labor. See Statement of the International Sugar Policy Coordinating Commission of the Dominican Republic before DOL’s ILAB, May 20, 2011, available at <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/programs/ocft/tvpra/20110520k.pdf>. Hereinafter International Sugar, 2011.

⁶² DOL, 2011.

⁶³ International Sugar, 2011.

In June 2012, the State Department issued its eleventh annual, congressionally mandated report on trafficking in persons (TIP). In addition to outlining major trends and ongoing challenges in combating TIP, the report categorizes countries into four “tiers” according to the government’s efforts to combat trafficking.⁶⁴ The report classified the Dominican Republic as a Tier 2 country. According to the report, the Dominican Republic improved from Tier 2 Watch List to Tier 2 as a result of “notable progress in identifying and assisting child trafficking victims ... [and] convicting child trafficking offenders.”⁶⁵ Despite the enactment of an anti-trafficking/anti-smuggling law in August 2003, the Dominican government had, until recently, struggled to arrest and prosecute those accused of human trafficking, particularly in cases involving public officials. In 2011, the Dominican government initiated 14 new sex trafficking prosecutions and secured five convictions for child sex trafficking; the government also reported eight forced labor prosecutions. These results revealed a significant improvement from 2010 and 2009, years in which no TIP prosecutions nor convictions were reported.

Trade

Over the past few decades, U.S.-Dominican trade and investment linkages have increased, first as a result of U.S. trade preference programs and then as a result of CAFTA-DR. From the mid-1980s until 2000, the Dominican Republic benefitted from its involvement in the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), a unilateral U.S. trade preference program. From 2000 to 2007, the Dominican Republic received expanded trade preferences through the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA) of 2000. For the Dominican Republic, both the CBI and CBTPA have been replaced by CAFTA-DR.⁶⁶ The Dominican government, along with the governments of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, signed CAFTA-DR with the United States on August 5, 2004. In July 2005, after a contentious debate and a close vote, both houses of the U.S. Congress passed implementing legislation for CAFTA-DR, which President Bush signed into law on August 2, 2005 (P.L. 109-53, 119 Stat. 462). The Dominican Congress ratified the agreement in September 2005 and implemented it on March 1, 2007.⁶⁷ Under CAFTA-DR, 100% of U.S. industrial and consumer goods are to enter the Dominican Republic duty free by 2015, and nearly all U.S. agricultural exports are to enter duty free by 2020.

As a result of CAFTA-DR, the Dominican Republic has enacted a number of reforms to improve its tax structure, strengthen intellectual property rights, and facilitate trade flows through the country (customs reform). Perhaps partially as a result of these efforts, foreign investment to the

⁶⁴ Since 2001, the U.S. State Department has evaluated foreign governments’ efforts to combat trafficking in persons in its annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) reports, which are issued each June. Countries are grouped into four categories according to the U.S. assessment of efforts they are making to combat trafficking. Tier 1 is made up of countries deemed by the State Department to have a serious trafficking problem but fully complying with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. Those standards are defined in the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-386) as amended. Tier 2 is composed of governments not fully complying with those standards but which are seen as making significant efforts to comply. Tier 2 Watch List, first added as a category in the 2004 report, is made up of countries that are on the border between Tier 2 and Tier 3. Tier 3 includes those countries whose governments the State Department deems as not fully complying with TVPA’s anti-TIP standards and not making significant efforts to do so. Tier 3 countries have been made subject to U.S. sanctions since 2003.

⁶⁵ *TIP Report*, 2012.

⁶⁶ CRS Report RL33951, *U.S. Trade Policy and the Caribbean: From Trade Preferences to Free Trade Agreements*, by J. F. Hornbeck.

⁶⁷ For historical background, see CRS Report RL31870, *The Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR)*, by J. F. Hornbeck.

Dominican Republic has steadily increased since 2009. The country is now a leader in manufacturing and FDI (foreign direct investment), matched in the region only by Costa Rica.⁶⁸ U.S.-Dominican trade, which reached record levels in 2008 (the year after CAFTA-DR took effect in that country), continued to flow at relatively high levels in 2009. According to the most recent statistics, however, the share of Dominican exports to the United States has declined, particularly in comparison to the shares of its regional competitors.

The United States remains the Dominican Republic's main trading partner, with two-way trade totaling more than \$11.5 billion in 2011. Dominican imports from the United States are up 37% from 2006 (pre-CAFTA) levels. A significant percentage of that increase is due to increasing oil imports, but declining tariffs have also favored U.S. manufacturing and agricultural producers. The top Dominican imports from the United States in 2011 were oil, electrical machinery, machinery, vehicles, and cotton, yarn, and fabric.

Dominican exports to the United States are shifting, as apparel exports to the United States decline (from 55% of U.S.-Dominican trade in 2000 to 17% in 2011) and more technology-intensive exports and mining exports increase. High-tech exports to the United States include medical instruments and other electrical machinery goods. The Dominican Republic still exports agricultural goods, like sugar and tobacco, but those exports as a percentage of overall trade are in steady decline.⁶⁹ Although Dominican exports to the United States have diversified, they have also declined—exports in 2011 were down 7.5% from 2006 (pre-CAFTA) levels, perhaps because other export sectors have not yet made up for declines in apparel exports.

In addition to influencing Dominican trade and economic policies, the labor chapter (Chapter 16) of CAFTA-DR seeks to ensure that there is increasing respect for internationally recognized labor standards in the Dominican Republic. Pursuant to Section 403(a) of the CAFTA-DR implementing legislation (P.L. 109-53), the Department of Labor (DOL) has produced two biennial reports to Congress on progress in implementing the labor chapter of the agreement and the results of U.S.-funded labor capacity building efforts.⁷⁰ As outlined in a May 2012 version of that report, the Dominican Republic increased its Ministry of Labor's budget for enforcing labor standards by more than 40% between 2005 and 2010, resulting in an 84% increase in the number of workplace visits by labor inspectors.⁷¹ Nevertheless, funding for labor courts declined and penalties for employers who had failed at least some labor standards, such as prohibitions on child labor, had rarely been imposed.⁷² In 2011, the Dominican Ministry of Labor increased inspections on work sites suspected to be using child labor, removed 141 children from situations

⁶⁸ CRS Report R42468, *The Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA DR): Developments in Trade and Investment*, by J. F. Hornbeck.

⁶⁹ CRS Report R42468, *The Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA DR): Developments in Trade and Investment*, by J. F. Hornbeck.

⁷⁰ From 2005-2010, the U.S. government provided \$136 million to CAFTA-DR countries to improve respect for international labor standards as outlined in a "White Paper" developed and agreed to in 2005 by the Vice Ministers responsible for trade and labor in each of the CAFTA-DR countries. Since 2007, country compliance with the White Paper has been monitored every six months by the International Labor Organization (ILO) with financing from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). For background information on the White Paper and verification reports for each country, see <http://www.ustr.gov/trade-topics/labor/bilateral-and-regional-trade-agreements/cafta-dr-white-paper-and-verification-rep>.

⁷¹ DOL, *Progress in Implementing Chapter 16 (Labor) and Capacity-Building under the Dominican Republic –Central America –United States Free Trade Agreement*, May 11, 2012, available at <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/2011-cfta-dr-rpt/2011-CAFTA-DR-REPORT.pdf>, pp. 19, 22.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 28-30, 34.

of child labor (up from 3 in 2010), and imposed a similar number of sanctions on entities for using child labor.⁷³

The labor chapter of CAFTA- DR also includes a process by which individuals or groups can submit complaints (“submissions”) presenting evidence that a signatory country is not complying with the labor provisions of the agreement. On December 22, 2011, DOL’s Office of Trade and Labor Affairs (OTLA) received a submission alleging that the Dominican Republic had violated the labor chapter of CAFTA-DR by allowing various labor abuses—including forced and child labor—to persist in the country’s sugarcane plantations.⁷⁴ The Dominican sugar industry has vigorously rejected those allegations and presented evidence to the contrary. OTLA is still in the process of reviewing the submission. Should OTLA conclude that violations have indeed occurred, it could recommend that the U.S. government begin consultations with the Dominican government on how they should be addressed.

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⁷³ Figures provided by the Dominican Embassy in Washington, DC, October 24, 2012.

⁷⁴ A copy of the submission is available on DOL’s Office of Trade and Labor Affairs’ website, at <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/programs/otla/DRSubmission2011.pdf>.