



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Statement

by

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**Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH)

United Nations Security Council

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At the outset, permit me, on behalf of Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1), to thank Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), Ms. Helen La Lime, for her comprehensive briefing. We further commend SRSG La Lime and her team for their efforts in assisting to advance the peacebuilding process in Haiti during BINUH's first year of operation.

Mr. President,

The situation in Haiti is extremely complex. It has been approximately eight months since the 50th Legislature concluded its tenure, and parliamentary elections have not yet been held. The ensuing institutional vacuum created by the absence of a parliament has further impeded the socio-economic and political stability of the country. Coupled with the multidimensional challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and Haiti's longstanding vulnerabilities, the current situation may spiral out of control.

The A3+1 takes note of the marginal progress on BINUH's six benchmarks as highlighted in the latest Secretary General's report S/2020/944 and commends the government of Haiti for its response to the pandemic under the leadership of the COVID-19 Multisectoral Commission and in cooperation with the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Whilst the pandemic has moderately impacted Haiti; our sister Caribbean country is still far from being out of the proverbial woods - both in responding to the pandemic and tackling outstanding challenges. In this regard, the A3+1 offers the following perspective.

First, on the political front, the uncertainty surrounding the elections and the constitutional crisis are of great concern. It is incumbent that all Haitian stakeholders engage in inclusive and constructive dialogue and assume their collective responsibilities towards resolving the current political impasse. We wish to take this opportunity to stress, in line with our previous interventions regarding Haiti that dialogue remains the only viable means to achieving a peaceful settlement to the political stalemate. In this respect, we urge all Haitian political leaders to convene a national dialogue and to refrain from acts that may trigger further violence and compromise the country's gains under the guidance of the UN. Importantly therefore, we call on the Haitian political leaders to forge ahead with the urgent formation of a government in order to enable the state to undertake its mandate, including service delivery to its people, as well as to attract more bilateral and multilateral support.

Second, the A3+1 reiterates its support for the role of the National Commission for the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration in reducing community violence. We encourage the government to urgently undertake the necessary measures to adopt the draft national strategy on community violence reduction as it represents a critical opportunity to curbing crime and violence plaguing Haiti. Equally, the draft strategy can assist in bolstering the State's security apparatus.

Additionally, we applaud the contribution of the United Nations through its Peacebuilding Fund initiatives, geared towards minimizing community violence and strengthening the capacity of the Haitian National Police (HNP). Adequate resources need to be devoted to the HNP so that this critical institution can effectively execute its mandate, including an intensive recruitment drive and training. We also urge the government to effectively implement the 2017-2021 HNP Strategic Development Plan.

We further appreciate the efforts to enhance the role of women in the HNP. The full participation of women in Haiti's political and economic life is crucial for advancing peace and security. Women are an integral constituent in Haiti and as such, empowering them through appropriate mechanisms and facilitating their equitable participation in formal and informal processes, must be a priority.

Mr. President,

We remain concerned about the scourge of violence resulting from gang activities across Haiti. The expansion of their networks and amalgamation of others such as the recently formed G9 have the potential to worsen the country's security situation. Therefore, the A3+1 welcomes the efforts of the HNP in combating these plagues.

Peace and security - the central pillars of this Council - cannot be divorced from the fight against human rights violations. We urge the authorities to address the lack of accountability and impunity in instances of human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). We note that the government of Haiti has appointed the Minister for Human Rights and therefore are hopeful that this will assist the nation to improve its record regarding human rights. We reiterate the importance of respecting international human rights law and therefore call for all perpetrators to be held accountable.

Mr. President,

Allow me to come to our third point. The socio-economic realities remain dire and, in addition to the complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic, Haiti continues to grapple with the existential threat of climate change, as exemplified with this year's devastating tropical storm that claimed thirty-one (31) lives and left many homeless and in distress.

Acute food insecurity and a gloomy economic outlook further compounds these challenges and it is heart wrenching and most concerning that children continue to suffer from malnutrition. Accordingly, the A3+1 appeals to the international community to continue providing humanitarian support to the people of Haiti.

We also repeat our call for debt forgiveness and debt relief to help Haiti address its economic challenges. We maintain that debt relief based on the magnitude of exogenous shocks are unavoidable elements of any serious Haitian-centered development discussion. Haiti's development and economic health must also include a structured evaluation of its vulnerability and resilience.

Mr. President,

The A3+1 impresses on this Council that as long as the legacy of under-development in Haiti is not fundamentally addressed, stability and sustainable development in Haiti will remain elusive. Consequently, it is our conviction that during this International Decade of the People of African Descent, the initiation of a dialogue process for proper recompense for the legacies of underdevelopment in Haiti must be undertaken. The historic importance of the Haitian Revolution and its symbolic meaning of triumphing over adversity in the pursuit for liberty, equality and the control of one's fate continues to be an inspiration to all.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the A3+1 reaffirms its support for BINUH and emphasizes the importance of adequate funding in order for it to effectively carry out its mandate. Accordingly, we renew our support for BINUH's mandate extension.

Haiti's needs are long-term, but its current socio-economic and political challenges are very immediate. Haitian-ownership remains central to resolving existing challenges. Now is not the time for dithering nor continued divergence of opinions on the elections or constitutional reform, but for Haitians to band together, in the spirit of compromise, to overcome their challenges.

We call on the United Nations, CARICOM, the OAS and the wider international community, to continue accompanying Haiti in attaining political and socio-economic stability.

I thank you.