

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HARDEEP SINGH PURI, PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE, DEBATE ON HAITI AT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY  
COUNCIL ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2011

Thank you, Mr President.

At the outset, I would like to join others in thanking SRSG Mariano Fernandez for his comprehensive briefing on the recent developments in Haiti and for the Secretary General's report.

2. Haiti is making steady but slow progress towards recovery since devastating earthquake that struck the country on 12 January 2010. Despite the death of an estimated 300,000 people, including civil servants and destruction of the capital Port-au-Prince, Haitians have shown tremendous resolve and determination to rebuild their country. Haitians need sustained support of the international community in this critical phase of recovery and reconstruction to improve the governance, create employment and undertake comprehensive reforms, including in police and judicial sectors.

3. The relatively peaceful conduct of the electoral process and transfer of power following the second round of presidential elections demonstrate the vibrancy of the Haitian society. The role played by regional organizations, particularly the Organization of American States (OAS), in the later stages of the elections also gave credibility to the entire process. We join others in congratulating the new President Michael Joseph Martelly on taking over from outgoing President Rene Garcia Preval and wish him success in his endeavours to restore political stability and undertake economic and social reconstruction.

4. The delay in formation of the new government has, however, slowed down the recovery efforts and could affect the fragile security situation as well. Nearly 634,000 IDPs are living in temporary shelters and depend on assistance for survival. The fact that only 47,000 have left these camps since March 2011 underscores the importance of effective administration and the need to accelerate efforts for creation of conducive environment to facilitate their return. The reduced donor funding is also affecting the reconstruction efforts. Clearly, the confidence of donor community has been eroded by political instability in the beginning of the year and the current stalemate in government

formation. Together with the increasing food prices and unemployment, these developments make the affected population vulnerable to violence and exploitation.

5. If Haiti has to recover quickly from the effects of last year's disasters, the political leadership has to show resilience to achieve much needed reforms to improve the living conditions of the Haitian population. It is, therefore, important that the political leaders of the country set aside their differences to reach a compromise on formation of the government as the first step.

6. MINUSTAH has played a commendable role from the beginning of its mandate in maintaining overall security and stability. The earthquake and resultant large-scale humanitarian efforts and the presidential and legislative elections threw up new challenges. MINUSTAH made sterling efforts along with other UN agencies in the immediate aftermath of the disastrous earthquake and also ensured peaceful elections this year. I also recall the contributions made by the Indian police officers deployed with MINUSTAH, presently numbering 470 in three contingents, two of which were deployed by India after the earthquake at the request of the United Nations.

7. While the role of MINUSTAH continues to be critical in the near future, it is a matter of satisfaction that the Haitian national institutions have gradually been assuming larger role with an objective to ultimately take over MINUSTAH's responsibilities. Against this backdrop, MINUSTAH should focus its efforts on supporting the political process, capacity building and consolidation of Haitian national institutions. We, therefore, agree with the Secretary General's recommendation of partial drawdown of the Mission's post-earthquake surge capabilities. We also support the extension of MINUSTAH's mandate for one more year as recommended by the Secretary General.

8. The outbreak of cholera epidemic which affected the population had also resulted in wild allegations about its origin. We are happy to note that the Independent Panel of Experts appointed by the Secretary General has not found any substance in those allegations. While the efforts to combat cholera continue, there is a need to focus on providing clean drinking water and better sanitation conditions to the population to avoid regular occurrence of the epidemic.

9. Mr President, India made a modest contribution to the efforts of the Haitian authorities to deal with the situation there. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, India made a cash contribution of US\$ 5 million to the Government of Haiti towards relief measures as a token of our solidarity with the people of Haiti. India also contributed US\$ 500,000 to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) that was put to good use in the earliest stages of recovery work in Haiti. We have also undertaken a

waste management project under a joint IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa) initiative. In addition, at the request of the President of Haiti, the Government of India will support construction of 500 low-cost housing units.

10. In conclusion, Mr President, the continuing support of the international community coupled with stable and effective governance in Haiti would help the Haitians overcome the problems they are currently faced with. It is our hope that Haiti would soon emerge out of these problems and move towards stability and development.

Thank you.

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