Statement by Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri, Acting Permanent Representative, at the UN Security Council debate on MINUSTAH, on October 03, 2012

Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me at the outset, welcome you to the Security Council, and congratulate Guatemala and you personally on the assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the first time ever. We have very fruitful cooperation with the Guatemalan delegation, and thank the Permanent Representative and his delegation for organizing today's debate. I would also like to express our sincere thanks to SRSG Mariano Fernandez for presenting the Secretary General's report on MINUSTAH and for his briefing on recent developments in Haiti.

2. Mr. President, we are encouraged by the developments in Haiti during last few months, including the appointment of Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe and its ratification by the Parliament in May. These developments have ended the political uncertainty and underscored the collective resolve of Haiti's leadership to work in a constructive manner to address various issues related to governance, economy, elections and reconstruction. We commend the steps taken by the new government for improving the law and order situation, attracting foreign investment, promoting new industrial projects, and combating smuggling. We also commend the steps for resolving differences between the executive and legislative branches of the government, and hope that the newly established constitutional court, the electoral council, and the Superior Council of the Judiciary will satisfactorily settle the outstanding issues.

3. In order for these steps to succeed, Haiti requires continued support of the international community. In this connection, we commend MINUSTAH for assisting the Haitian national police in ensuring stable security situation across the country. We think that international support needs to be enhanced, particularly in the implementation of the 2012-2016 Haitian National Police Development Plan. We hope that the local elections due since last year will be held soon, and help in rebuilding democratic institutions at the gross root level.

4. Mr. President, while there has been substantial progress in resettling the internally displaced persons and addressing their humanitarian needs, a number of challenges continue to face recovery and reconstruction efforts. Nearly 400,000 persons remain dependent on humanitarian assistance for their basic survival. Assistance is also required to fight the cholera epidemic. For long-term improvement in the situation, the international community needs to align its efforts with Haiti's national development priorities. In this regard, we welcome the creation of the Housing and Public Buildings Construction Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister, which will contribute to the improved coordination and effective implementation of humanitarian programmes. We also welcome the new Integrated Strategic Framework for the period 2013-2016 drafted by MINUSTAH in consultation with the Haitian authorities.

5. Mr. President, MINUSTAH and its leadership have played an important role in the positive developments in Haiti. MINSUTAH has not only helped Haitian stakeholders in resolving their differences, it has also lent its hand in capacity building and recovery efforts of national institutions, and in ensuring overall security and stability in the country. With the Haitian national institutions assuming greater role, MINUSTAH should gradually hand over its core functions to the Haitian National Police and focus on long-term stabilization and development goals. In this context, we support the recommendation of the Secretary General to narrow MINUSTAH's activities to a core set of mandated tasks that are achievable within a reasonable timeframe. MINUSTAH's drawdown should, however, be based on the evolving situation in the country rather than a fixed timeline.

6. Mr. President, India has remained a major contributor to MINUSTAH with three contingents of the Formed Police Units. Our FPUs are playing an important role in maintaining peace and stability in Haiti, including the guarding of the Presidential Palace. In addition, the Indian FPUs have arranged blood donation camps for the benefit of the Haitian people and earned their goodwill.

7. India remains committed to supporting Haiti in its reconstruction activities. In September 2012, India donated US$ 5 million to the Government of Haiti for construction of 500 low cost housing units for the victims of the January 2010 earthquake. Earlier, India had donated US$ 5 million in cash as disaster relief assistance. India has also been contributing US$ 500,000 annually since 2009 to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which continues to play an important role in the recovery work in Haiti. India is also cooperating with Haiti in capacity building and human resources development by offering scholarships under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme.

8. In conclusion, Mr. President, let me state that while Haiti has come a long way since the devastating earthquake of 2010, the international community should continue its engagement so that Haiti is able to achieve sustainable peace, security, stability, and development. As Haiti assumes the Chair of the Caribbean Community next year, we convey our best wishes to the government and people of Haiti, and also assure them of our continued partnership.

I thank you.

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