



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

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New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Nebenzia/Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
China	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador	Mr. Pérez Loose
France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Gabon	Mr. Biang
Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
Japan	Mrs. Shino
Malta	Ms. Gatt
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Switzerland	Mr. Hauri
United Arab Emirates	Mr. Almazrouei
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Eckersely
United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (S/2023/274)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (S/2023/274)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Canada, the Dominican Republic and Haiti to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Jean Victor Génés, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Haiti, and His Excellency Mr. Roberto Álvarez Gil, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. María Isabel Salvador, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti; and Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2023/274, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti.

I now give the floor to Ms. Salvador.

Ms. Salvador: I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to address the Council for the first time since I took office this month as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti. It is also an honour to be in the presence of Foreign Ministers Génés and Álvarez Gil, from Haiti and the Dominican Republic, respectively.

During my first week in Haiti, I had the opportunity to interact with civil society representatives, notably women's groups, as well as with national authorities and senior Government officials. I also managed to

circulate through some of the streets of Port-au-Prince, where I felt the tension and recognized the fear that the Haitian people experience every day.

During my initial exchanges and interactions, I observed that a path had been charted for Haitians to engage in dialogue towards restoring democratic institutions in the country. However, the general sentiment is that it will be difficult to move forward without effectively addressing rampant insecurity.

Since the previous briefing to the Council by my predecessor, in January (see S/PV.9247), gang criminality has grown. Gang violence is expanding at an alarming rate in areas previously considered relatively safe — in Port-au-Prince and outside the capital. The horrific violence, including sexual violence and particularly against women and girls, in gang-ridden areas is emblematic of the terror afflicting much of Haiti's population.

Allow me, to share figures that illustrate the shocking increase in criminality in Haiti. According to data collected by the Haitian National Police and by the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), in the first quarter of 2022, 692 criminal incidents — that is homicide, rape, kidnappings and lynching — were reported. In the same period in 2023, the number of recorded criminal incidents more than doubled to 1,647. Last month showed the highest incident rates since 2005.

Faced with increasingly violent armed gangs vying for control of neighbourhoods of the capital, with limited or no police presence, some residents have begun to take matters into their own hands. Those dynamics inevitably lead to the breakdown of the social fabric, with unpredictable consequences for the entire region. As the Council may know, only two days ago in Port-au-Prince, a group of civilians took 13 suspected gang members from police custody, beat them to death and burned their bodies.

The Government has continued to invest in the Haitian National Police. However, the force is severely understaffed and ill-equipped to address the violence and criminality. Deaths, dismissals and elevated resignations among the police have cut its operational strength from 14,772 to about 13,200 personnel, of whom only some 9,000 perform police tasks. Barely 3,500 police officers nationwide are on public-safety duty at any given time. In the meantime, the recruitment of new police officers has been halted due to deteriorating security and logistical constraints.

The national police succeed in mounting some effective anti-gang operations but holding those security gains is merely momentary. The need for providing urgent international support to the police to address the rapidly deteriorating security situation cannot be overemphasized.

Beyond the immediate support the national police requires, it is urgent to make progress towards a nationally led solution to the long-standing political impasse. This is fundamental to restore sustainable and durable security, as well as social and economic stability.

Despite Haiti's security challenges, efforts continue towards the implementation of the 21 December agreement. The newly established High Transitional Council, which I had the opportunity to meet, has continued to work with the Government and various stakeholders. Their efforts to broaden consensus on the way forward continue, as does the implementation of the agreement, including through steps towards the establishment of a provisional electoral council. This milestone is critical for the eventual holding of elections that will hopefully usher in a return to democratic governance.

The Court of Cassation was rendered functional on 28 February and stands ready to swear in a new provisional electoral council once established. In parallel, the Court has also started to address the obstacles faced by the judiciary.

In accordance with the 21 December agreement and in efforts to continue dialogue, the upcoming national security forum and political round table, to be convened under the auspices of the High Transitional Council, provides a critical opportunity. The aim is to build national consensus on the creation of the necessary security and political conditions for holding elections. Notwithstanding those political gains, the overall process remains fragile and vulnerable to the deteriorating security situation.

I will now turn to the human rights situation. With the increase in armed-gang violence, Haitians have continued to suffer one of the worst human rights crises in decades. People living in areas under gang control are exposed to the highest rate of human rights abuses. Interviews carried out by BINUH indicate that gangs continue to use sexual violence, including multiple-perpetrator rape, to terrorize and inflict pain on populations living in areas under the control of their rivals. Other forms of sexual violence, such as sexual

exploitation, were also reported as being used by gangs against women and girls living in communities under their influence.

Children are among the victims of the most heinous crimes, including murder, abduction and rape. Over the past three months, school children have been hit by bullets while sitting in their classrooms and kidnapped when being dropped off at school. Furthermore, many schools closed late last year as a result of violence and extortion by gangs. Despite most reopening in early 2023, many children have not returned to the classroom due to violence near the school or in their neighbourhoods or due to their family's inability to pay school fees. I am deeply shocked by reports of snipers indiscriminately targeting civilians. In this context of high vulnerability, children are being recruited into armed gangs. The appointment by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of an Independent Expert on human rights, following a request from the Haitian Government, is a welcome development that will strengthen human rights monitoring and protection mechanisms.

(spoke in French)

I strongly condemn the widespread incidents of sexual violence committed by armed gangs. These incidents are severely underreported compared to other types of violence due to fear of reprisals, stigmatization by families and communities and limited availability of health and psychosocial services, among other factors. It is essential that those crimes do not go unpunished and that the perpetrators of sexual violence are brought to justice.

Almost half of the population — 5.2 million people — are in need of humanitarian assistance. The number of internal displacements increased by 50 per cent in the Port-au-Prince commune, compared to November 2022. Some 39,000 suspected cholera cases have been reported since the outbreak resurfaced in October. The United Nations and its humanitarian partners remain on the ground and are providing essential services. Between March and April, at least 22 emergency missions were conducted in gang-controlled areas of Port-au-Prince.

(spoke in English)

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the urgent need for the deployment, authorized by the Security Council, of an international specialized force,

as articulated by the Secretary-General in his letter dated 8 October 2022 (S/2022/747). We need to find innovative ways to define the force to support the Haitian National Police.

Haiti requires immediate assistance to counter increasing armed-gang violence and to develop its police. The rapidly deteriorating security situation demands that the country remains at the centre of international attention and action. Further delay in addressing the unprecedented insecurity in Haiti could also lead to a spillover of insecurity in the region. The decisive support of the Security Council remains crucial in ensuring security, rule of law, stability and peace in Haiti.

Time is of the essence, and the Haitian people deserve urgent action from the Security Council. If the Haitian people are not supported, the vicious circle of violence and political, social and economic crisis in which they struggle every day will continue to turn. Breaking this daunting circle must not be delayed. The Haitian people cannot wait. We need to act now.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Salvador for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Waly.

Ms. Waly (*spoke in French*): I am grateful for the opportunity for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to again address the Security Council on the deteriorating security crisis that is paralysing Haiti. Since my last briefing to the Council in September (see S/PV.9136), the lack of law enforcement, escalation of violence and scale of organized criminal activities have continued to fuel the crisis and brought no relief to the Haitian people. On the contrary, these phenomena have progressively contributed to the deepening of the crisis and the weakening of national efforts for peace and security. Even more disturbing, we note new dynamics of groups acting outside of Port-au-Prince directly involved in the trafficking of increasingly sophisticated weapons and seeking to enlist new recruits in camps for displaced populations.

(*spoke in English*)

The latest report of the Secretary-General General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) (S/2023/274) points to an escalation of violence and insecurity in the country, including rising numbers of homicides and kidnappings. The flows of illicit firearms and drugs into Haiti are compounding

the situation, fuelling violence and adding complex challenges. Last month, UNODC published an assessment entitled “Haiti’s criminal markets: mapping trends in firearms and drug trafficking”, which we had the honour to present at the first meeting of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2653 (2022).

The assessment paints an alarming picture. Increasingly sophisticated and high-calibre firearms and ammunition are being trafficked into Haiti, with most new firearms and ammunition entering the country illegally by land, air and, most frequently, sea. Severe limitations in maritime control capacities, personnel and equipment, as well as a lack of border surveillance and patrol infrastructure have curtailed efforts to stop the influx, which is enabling gang-related violence to reach unprecedented levels. Heavily armed criminal gangs are targeting such critical infrastructure as ports, grain storage, customs offices, police stations, courthouses, prisons, businesses and neighbourhoods. They have also gained control of major highways and roads, providing access to the capital. Some gangs have expanded their territory outside Port-au-Prince.

The dire security situation is overwhelming the already limited capacities of Haiti’s national police, customs and border patrols and coast guard. Haiti is leading its security response the best it can, but this comes at great human cost. Homicide rates are skyrocketing, while an increasing number of police officers are being targeted and killed in the line of duty by gangs.

Meanwhile, Haiti’s law-enforcement and border-control challenges make it an attractive hub for drug traffickers. Haiti acts as a trans-shipment country for drugs, primarily cocaine and cannabis, which arrive through public, private and informal ports, as well as clandestine runways; these drugs are mostly being shipped onwards to North America and Western Europe.

As illicit drug markets expand around the world and global supply and demand of cocaine reached record highs, the threat of trafficking as a destabilizing factor in Haiti only grows. These realities undermine prospects for the political process, not to mention the catastrophic implications on efforts to address acute hunger and access to essential services. The international community and invested partners need to urgently develop and support large-scale comprehensive actions to assist law enforcement and border management to prevent illicit flows and help stabilize the situation.

The Security Council has repeatedly stressed the importance of reinforcing the capacities of the Haitian National Police, including its specialized units focused on borders, drugs and firearms. Significant investments are also needed for community policing and criminal-justice reforms, as well as combating corruption and money-laundering.

Black markets are relying on corruption and patronage networks to thrive, with the complex web of public and private actors implicated in trafficking, while corruption in the criminal-justice sector leads to impunity. The conditions for a political process leading to peace can be achieved only when Haiti has the institutions and capacities capable of meeting these challenges.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime continues to work with its partners to help lay the foundations for the progress that is needed in Haiti. Since I last addressed the Council on this topic, UNODC has been fast-tracking its assistance on border management. Our Office has successfully carried out assessments of six border points, identifying urgent equipment needs, including to support patrolling and maritime-domain awareness, and now our Office is procuring the equipment to be provided to national authorities.

In parallel, we are exploring the potential of greater Haitian/Dominican cooperation on border control to develop mirroring skill sets, vision and commitment. We stand ready to engage with both countries to expand support, but much greater investment is needed. UNODC has also continued to support Haiti's General Customs Administration, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate its staff members on some of the promising results they have produced. Last month alone, customs revenue collection saw an increase of 44 per cent from the previous month and a 216 per cent increase as compared to March 2022. In addition, our Office has been cooperating with the Organization of American States to strengthen Haiti's capacity to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases of corruption, money-laundering, and economic crimes, as well as to improve information-sharing with international investigators on transnational organized crime.

These represent important first steps, but the scale of what is needed in Haiti requires greater international investment and support. Sustained comprehensive assistance is needed, complementing any operation and

support provided to Haiti's police with the long-term vision to restore criminal justice, border control and customs institutions. It is through these fundamentals that we can protect Haiti's people from violence in the long term, return normalcy and security to their daily lives, and pave the way for more effective efforts to meet basic human needs.

UNODC is encouraged by the establishment of a sanctions regime that will help fight impunity for the crimes committed in Haiti. We support the Panel of Experts appointed by the Security Council and will remain, within mandate and means, at its disposal. We will also continue to collaborate closely with BINUH and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Our cooperation has been key to developing effective interventions on border control, corruption, money-laundering, criminal justice and the rule of law. In thanking BINUH, I take this opportunity to welcome the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Ms. María Isabel Salvador. I very much look forward to working closely with her, and I assure her that she will have the full support of my Office.

(spoke in French)

We all know how the political, security, humanitarian and development dimensions are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. To help Haiti build strong security and justice institutions and address the root causes of instability, I would also like to reiterate the importance of financial support commensurate with the challenges. UNODC is strengthening its support programmes in Haiti in close collaboration with its national, regional and international partners, so that the country can regain the foundations of peace and security necessary for its economic development and the well-being of Haitians.

The President *(spoke in Russian)*: I thank Ms. Waly for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I would like to welcome Special Representative of the Secretary-General María Isabel Salvador in her first appearance at the Security Council since the Secretary-General announced her appointment on 1 March. I would also like to thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Waly for

her briefing, and I acknowledge the presence here this morning of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

The United States welcomes the appointment by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of William O'Neill as an Independent Expert on Human Rights in Haiti. There is an urgent need to monitor and report on the human rights situation, with special emphasis on the safety and well-being of women and children.

As we heard this morning, the reports on the security and humanitarian situation in Haiti are pretty horrific. In the capital city of Port-au-Prince, schools and community hubs have become sites for terrorizing and recruiting young people. Gang violence threatens the daily lives of citizens and the economic prosperity of Haiti. Women and girls are most vulnerable to the unacceptable rise in sexual and gender-based violence, used as a tool of fear and intimidation. We are deeply concerned about the increase in violent gang activity. The United Nations reported that homicides increased 21 per cent in the first quarter of this year, and kidnappings by 63 per cent. As the Special Representative noted, schools have closed after teachers and students were hit by stray bullets in classrooms in what the United Nations describes as gang attacks of an indiscriminate character. Abductions of children and parents have often taken place within the vicinity of schools.

The United States also condemns in the strongest terms the killing in the line of duty of brave the Haitian National Police officers. The brutal tactics gangs have enacted in carrying out those crimes are deeply troubling.

Political stability is a key element towards restoring peace and security in the country. Since the December 2022 signing of the National Consensus for an Inclusive Transition and Transparent Elections, we have seen positive political developments, including the appointment of members to the High Transitional Council and the Court of Cassation. While those political developments are promising, we urge the Government of Haiti and all political stakeholders to establish an inclusive and broad-based Provisional Electoral Council to restore democratic governance in the country.

Despite increased assistance from the international community, more is needed to support the security, health and stability of the Haitian people. We

applaud the United Nations recent approval of the Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up for Haiti to address malnutrition, cholera, gender-based violence and child protection needs in the country. The United States has committed more than \$90 million to support the Haitian National Police and provided more than \$204.7 million in humanitarian funding to Haiti. In the past six months, the United States announced an additional \$56 million in humanitarian assistance, delivered 450 metric tons of health, logistics and water, sanitation and hygiene commodities and transported 232 metric tons of personal protective equipment for health workers, as well as rehydration fluids for cholera patients, and water-disinfection tablets.

The Government of Haiti and its people have asked for international support to address violence and insecurity. The United States continues to work with a growing number of international partners to support the urgent security needs in the country. The Security Council will need to do its part in helping Haiti, including by advancing additional sanctions against those who finance and foment violence and instability in Haiti. The United States stands in solidarity with the Haitian people during these difficult times.

Mr. Pérez Loose (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank Ms. María Isabel Salvador, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), for her informative briefing, and I wish her every success in her work. I also thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, for her informative briefing. I acknowledge the presence in today's meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, as well as the Permanent Representative of Canada.

We are not starting from scratch. I wish to acknowledge the extraordinary work that Ms. Helen La Lime is doing as the Head of BINUH, which is not clearly reflected in the situation on the ground because the security crisis exceeds the composition and logistical and institutional capacities of BINUH, which authorizes only 42 civilian personnel to advise on police and penitentiary matters. But the work of the Integrated Office remains crucial in the efforts to promote political stability and good governance, promote and protect human rights and accompany and support Haitian dialogue.

The Security Council should encourage the strengthening of the initiative launched on 21 December to build a national consensus, including through the ensuring the effective implementation of the initiative and an increasingly broad and inclusive participation of all Haitian actors and sectors. That will be conducive to strengthening the rule of law and institutions, including in the justice sector, with a view to advancing accountability and the democratic transition, through transparent elections held by the February 2024 deadline.

But restoring security is indispensable to achieving that major objective, as affirmed by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 52/39, adopted unanimously on 4 April. In response to the Security Council's request contained in resolution 2645 (2022), the Secretary-General — six months ago already — recommended the deployment of a specialized multinational force to support the Haitian police. And the people of Haiti are still waiting. In the face of that, we cannot delay any longer. Week by week, as we reflect on the situation, analyse options and discuss ideal solutions, day by day — it becomes too late — there are too many violations and too many lives lived only to be lost.

How many more Haitians must die? In the first quarter of 2023, more civilians died in Haiti than in many of the bloodiest ongoing conflicts in the rest of the world. Just two days ago (see S/PV.9308), in this very Chamber, we debated effective multilateralism. I therefore want to say here today that if we are unable to contribute to overcoming the state of gang-generated violence and cruelty in Haiti, how can we hope to resolve the much larger conflicts around the world? How can we hope to comply with Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, which confers the Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, in addition to the same Article also recognizing that we act on behalf of the Members of the Organization to ensure prompt and effective action? I would therefore like to insist on the Security Council's responsibility to work reciprocally with the people of Haiti to benefit from their historic contribution not only to the freedom of Latin America and the Caribbean but also to freedoms throughout the world.

Ecuador highlights Gabon's leadership as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2653 (2022) concerning Haiti and supports a visit to Haiti as soon as possible to hold a dialogue and assess the situation and issues, such as security-sector reform,

strengthened sanctions and a targeted arms embargo. We are particularly concerned about the issues raised by the report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime entitled *Haiti's criminal markets: mapping trends in firearms and drug trafficking*. The Council must support efforts to promote border and port controls and combat the illicit trafficking of arms and ammunition, which continues to increase. The Council must encourage all United Nations system authorities to pay special attention to Haiti. In that regard, we appreciate the visit by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk in February and the recent appointment of Mr. William O'Neill as an expert on human rights in Haiti.

Ecuador is alarmed by the projections in the *Food Price Monitoring and Analysis Bulletin* of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme for this month. According to the *Bulletin*, by June of this year 4.9 million people will likely be affected by acute food insecurity, that is to say, half of Haiti's population. With thousands of displaced persons adding to such already challenging conditions, issues related to displacement particularly affect women and girls. Sexual and gender-based violence cannot go unpunished.

Lastly, we call on the Security Council to send a message of unity and determination to ensure full, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, and to move forward with coordinated and targeted international action to support Haitian efforts.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3), namely, Ghana, Mozambique and my own country, Gabon. We welcome the appointment of Ms. María Isabel Salvador as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, and express our support for her during her term as Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti. We thank Ms. La Lime for her work and commitment during her term in that post. We also thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for her insightful briefing. We welcome the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Haiti and the Dominican Republic and the Permanent Representative of Canada to this meeting.

We listened very carefully to the Special Representative's informative briefing on the situation in Haiti, which has continued to deteriorate over the

years. It is terrifying on the human front and alarming on the political front, and its economic repercussions are intolerable. All of that should compel every one of us to act, considering that it is happening less than four hours by plane from our meeting today.

In terms of security, Haitians continue to face unspeakable terror, fueled by the criminal acts of gangs that are expanding their control in the country with the most heinous crimes, including rape, other forms of sexual violence, kidnapping for ransom, robberies and various forms of illicit trafficking. We are extremely concerned about the fact that such violence does not spare children, who, together with women, are the preferred victims of the gangs that are directly targeting the police and have no qualms about using schools and health-care facilities as bases for their mafia-style operations. Ghana, Mozambique and Gabon firmly condemn the continued use of rape and other forms of sexual violence by armed gangs, which disproportionately affect women and girls with serious consequences for their human rights and health. The statistics speak for themselves. Violence in Haiti has reached unprecedented levels, with a 63 per cent increase in kidnappings and a 21 per cent increase in homicides compared to the last quarter of 2022.

The pressure that gangs are able to exert on the police shows that there is a power imbalance in their favour. The gang members are more heavily armed and are violating every conceivable right, including human rights. In their attempts to combat the violence, particularly in the Ouest and Artibonite departments, the police, with inadequate supplies of equipment and personnel, are struggling to achieve results and are running out of steam in the face of the scale of the challenges. On 23 April, clashes broke out between the Haitian National Police and armed gangs in the Débussy and Turgeau neighbourhoods of Port-au-Prince. The incident resulted in several deaths, looting and the burning of houses and vehicles. The A3 believes firmly that we must prioritize overcoming the security challenges if we are to restore Haiti's ability to take control of its destiny. In that regard, we welcome all complementary initiatives aimed at strengthening the material, technical and human capacities of the Haitian police and call on donor countries to increase their contribution to the basket fund in support of the professionalization of the Haitian National Police, which to date has received only about \$14.9 million of its \$28 million goal. We take note of the ongoing

consultations on the deployment of a specialized force that will work with the Haitian National Police and encourage discussions aimed at finding a concerted and effective response that can end the prevailing insecurity.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, the stabilization of the cholera epidemic appears to have provided a respite in an alarming environment marked by a 15.8 per cent increase in humanitarian needs as compared to 2021, including the 92.3 per cent increase in funding needs for the humanitarian response plan. The humanitarian situation is the result of multiple combined factors, including endemic poverty and insecurity, mass displacement and forced repatriation, which continues to add men, women and children returned from a forced exile caused by the harshness of daily life to a population that is already in difficulties. The situation must be very quickly stabilized to enable those 4.9 million Haitians to be lifted out of acute food insecurity and to provide schooling for the more than 500,000 children who are not in school and are living in gang-controlled areas. We welcome and encourage the initiatives of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, along with bilateral partners, to meet the urgent humanitarian needs. We especially note the Spotlight Initiative, aimed at providing medical care and psychological support for victims of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as measures for returning children to schools that have been occupied by armed gangs.

We urge international partners to intensify their efforts to bolster women's resilience, reduce stigma and strengthen the community fabric. In that regard, we welcome the constructive discussions on establishing the presence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the reinstatement of an independent human rights expert in Haiti, as well as the consideration by the Human Rights Council of the human rights situation in Haiti under its agenda item 101.

We note that the re-establishment of the rule of law in Haiti goes hand in hand with the strengthening of the presence of State institutions, in particular the police, throughout the country. No place should be left to the mercy of gangs. The appointment of eight judges to the Court of Cassation, the measures taken concerning the evaluation of prosecutors and other initiatives launched

to improve the judicial system are steps in the right direction. Those laudable efforts should be supported by donors in order for them to achieve their full impact, including with respect to the successful completion of penal reform with a view to combating impunity and corruption in a sustainable manner. It is essential that ongoing judicial cases — particularly those related to the assassination of the late President Jovenel Moïse, as well as those concerning the killings in Grand Ravine and Bel Air — are brought to a conclusion.

On the economic and social front, we encourage the various reforms initiated by the Government in the customs and tax sectors, as well as those aimed at improving the social situation. Even bolder reforms are needed to reduce poverty and social inequality and strengthen the resilience of Haitians to tackle the many different crises they face. Haiti must be supported in its efforts to build a more inclusive and resilient economic model that will provide employment opportunities for the thousands of young people who are otherwise obliged to leave the country each year.

At the political level, the conclusion of the 21 December agreement is a positive development in the search for a consensus to re-establish State institutions. We call on the Haitian authorities to implement it in all its aspects in order to pave as solid a path as possible for the organization of credible elections. The actions taken to create a peaceful climate for the elections, in particular the prevention of electoral violence and the updating of the electoral roll, reflect the will of the Haitian people to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.

We welcome the establishment of the High Transitional Council and the creation of a monitoring committee with the objective of advocating for the agreement's rapid implementation. We urge political actors to seize the opportunity presented by the agreement to create a dynamic of constructive consultations. Only the Haitians themselves have the ability to sustainably chart their path towards democracy, peace and stability.

Ghana, Mozambique and Gabon believe in the important role that the Caribbean Community can play in accompanying Haiti through this painful era in its history. We encourage the countries of the region to strengthen their solidarity with Haiti, which we Africans consider to be an integral part of the sixth region of Africa. We will continue to stand alongside the brotherly Haitian people.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Special Representative Salvador for her briefing on the situation in Haiti and congratulate her on her new assignment. I also thank Executive Director Waly of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for her briefing and welcome the representatives of Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Canada to this meeting.

Haiti remains mired in political, security, development and humanitarian crises. The Haitian people are struggling in pain and despair. Their situation, as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights described it, is “a living nightmare”. That is deeply disturbing.

After the Haitian interim authorities reached an agreement on a transition with some of the country's political parties and civil society organizations, the High Transitional Council was established. However, the political transition process still lacks broad support. An immediate end to the political stalemate should be an urgent priority for all parties in Haiti. It is imperative that the Haitian interim authorities and all political parties and factions put the essential interests of all Haitians first, show a commitment to dialogue and meeting their responsibilities by taking concrete actions and strive for broader agreements on transitional arrangements so as to create the necessary conditions for holding free, fair, transparent and credible elections at the earliest possible date. We look forward to seeing the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, under the leadership of Special Representative Salvador, play an important role in facilitating an inclusive dialogue among Haitian political groups in order to forge a consensus on transitional arrangements and advance the Haitian-led and Haitian-owned political process.

Curbing the rising tide of gang violence and criminality is the key to improving security in Haiti. In that regard, it is imperative to urgently eliminate political support for the gangs and the sources of their funding and weapons. According to the latest assessment report by UNODC, the raging gang violence is inextricably linked to the illicit flow of weapons into Haiti from abroad, especially from the United States. We find that trend deeply worrisome — if left unchecked, it will fuel the reckless and violent behaviour of gangs and exacerbate the current levels of insecurity and instability. Resolution 2653 (2022) provides for sanctions, including an arms embargo, targeting Haitian gangs. Those provisions must not remain on paper only,

and the countries concerned must take effective steps to implement them. China supports Gabon in its work as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2653 (2022), concerning Haiti. We encourage the Panel of Experts to step up its work and the Sanctions Committee to update the sanctions list as soon as possible in order to further refine sanctions measures and ensure the proper monitoring of their implementation.

Haiti is experiencing a rampant cholera epidemic and an economic decline. Nearly half of its population is threatened by food insecurity. We are deeply concerned by the dire humanitarian situation facing the Haitian people. We support the United Nations and other international partners in their continued support for Haiti through the formulation of a cooperation framework for sustainable development and other means, in particular by providing assistance to women, children, migrants and other vulnerable groups. We support the countries and organizations of the region in playing a larger role and working in synergy with United Nations agencies to jointly improve the humanitarian situation on the ground. Haiti's many crises are intertwined.

Our thoughts are with the Haitian people in the current circumstances. There is no quick fix for such a complex problem. Together with the international community, China will continue to support the Haitian people in finding an effective solution to their current plight and suffering.

Mr. Hauri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Ms. María Isabel Salvador, for her briefing in her new role as the Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti and I would like to reaffirm Switzerland's continued support for the discharge of her mandate. I also thank Ms. Ghada Waly, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for her briefing. We acknowledge the presence at today's meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, as well as the Permanent Representative of Canada.

The briefings we just heard illustrate the continuing deterioration of the security situation and the gross violations of human rights that Haitians are facing daily. The freedom and movement of the population in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area are severely restricted. Almost no area of the capital and its surroundings has been spared from gang violence. We condemn the

gangs' systematic use of sexual violence as well as their targeting of children and recruitment of minors. The Secretary-General's report (S/2023/274) emphasizes that insecurity in the capital has reached levels comparable to those in countries experiencing armed conflict.

Restoring stability and security in the country remains crucial. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced. Stopping the gang violence, including by disarming them, will help to support the efforts to rebuild State institutions. Through its continued presence in various regions of Haiti, Switzerland aims to provide humanitarian assistance in these difficult times. Let me highlight the following three points.

First, food insecurity must be reduced urgently and for the long term. Almost half of the population is experiencing acute food insecurity and for an estimated 1.8 million people that is now an emergency. The food crisis has deteriorated rapidly over the past two years and is now at an unprecedentedly severe level. The structural challenges, the adverse effects of climate change and recurring natural disasters have exacerbated the situation, while the increased gang activity in areas that are important for food production could leave even more people hungry. Switzerland has increased its funding to the World Food Programme. We encourage humanitarian and development organizations to continue to provide the necessary emergency aid. Without food security, stability in Haiti will not be possible.

Secondly, the safe, timely and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance remains essential to the survival of many. Gang activities are limiting access to people in urgent need of basic goods and services, and unrestricted access for humanitarian personnel must be guaranteed. Switzerland is concerned about the gangs' continuing attacks on medical personnel and critical infrastructure, teachers and humanitarian actors. We echo the Secretary-General's call for their protection. Our long-standing engagement in Haiti has shown that despite the difficult security situation, strengthening communities and Government institutions at the municipal and departmental levels can make a difference. In the south of the country, for example, Switzerland is committed to strengthening local governance of water and sanitation.

Thirdly, in addition to the progress made at the political level, the strengthening of the judicial system must be ramped up without delay. Impunity and

corruption must be addressed to effectively combat the growing autonomy and independence of gangs and break the cycle of violence. The international community must stand with Haitians to meet their needs and support them in their quest for a consensus that can enable them to emerge from the political crisis. That is also vital to creating the conditions for safe and free elections. Switzerland is committed to those efforts.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I welcome Special Representative María Isabel Salvador and wish her the best of luck in her mission. I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Ms. Waly for their briefings and would also like to recognize the presence of Foreign Ministers Génésus of Haiti and Álvarez Gil of the Dominican Republic at today's meeting.

Albania reaffirms its full support for the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti and recognizes the critical role it plays in a context of heightened violence and insecurity. In these trying times, amid a profound political crisis, as the country remains in the grip of vicious gangs that are dominating daily life through rampant warfare and extortion, we stand with the people of Haiti as they struggle with a catastrophic deterioration of human rights and pervasive insecurity. As we heard from the briefers, the cycle of violence is compounding an already disastrous humanitarian situation, worsened by high prices and a shortage of food. Albania fully supports all efforts to restore the rule of law and the functioning of State institutions. In that spirit, we welcomed the recent establishment of the High Transitional Council and the appointment of judges to the Court of Cassation — encouraging steps following the signing of the National Consensus for an Inclusive Transition and Transparent Elections. But they are far from enough and will not resolve the crisis.

It is imperative for Haiti to restore law and order and to combat corruption and the impunity of armed gangs. With their brutal methods of extortion, kidnapping and drug trafficking, the gangs are suffocating the capital and have metastasized throughout the country. It would be naive to think that they exist in isolation. All those responsible for the spread and financing of gangs and their violence, including those within the Haiti elite who are using or profiting from them, should be held accountable. Haiti cannot move ahead with illegality and without legitimacy for its core institutions. We therefore believe that we should make further use of the

sanctions toolbox in order to track gang leaders, as well as arms traffickers and those who benefit from chaos.

Experience has shown that Haiti's police force, which is undermanned, underpaid and under-equipped — conditions that make it vulnerable to penetration by gangs — has been unable to gain the upper hand. The longer that situation lasts, the more powerful the gangs will become, eventually being enabled to dictate their terms and seek a place in the country's political and financial circles. That is why we support the deployment of an international specialized armed force, as the Secretary-General and Haiti's Prime Minister, Ariel Henry, have advocated for. That is the only adequate response to the Haitian people's legitimate demand for international assistance, as armed gangs are expanding their influence, targeting everyone and making normal life impossible, while State authorities are unable to prevent the spread of anarchy and chaos. The Haitian people have been deprived of their most fundamental rights, including the right to normal life, water, food and health care. The restoration of security, which would create an environment conducive to preparing for elections, a return to legitimacy and the building of responsive governance, is a must.

As we heard, Haiti is burning. It needs help, and it needs it now if it is to avoid becoming a failed State owned by gangs, in which law would lose all meaning. Albania continues to believe that only through domestic unity among political actors, regional and international solidarity and a sense of urgency on the part of all can Haiti start to reverse the chaotic situation it is going through and allow people to return to normal life in dignity.

Let me end by reiterating Albania's firm commitment to supporting Haiti and its people in their efforts to overcome the crisis and move towards a stable and sustainable future.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of France, I too would like to thank Ms. María Isabel Salvador for her briefing and wish her every success in her crucial mission. I also thank Ms. Ghada Waly for her briefing and would like to acknowledge the presence at today's meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Haiti and the Dominican Republic and the Permanent Representative of Canada.

France is very concerned about the new escalation of violence that we have witnessed in Haiti over the past few days. The suffering of the Haitian people is intolerable

and the situation continues to deteriorate. We urge the international community to redouble its efforts. The insecurity in Port-au-Prince has reached levels comparable to those in countries in armed conflict. Homicides, kidnapping, sexual violence, recruitment of children by gangs — the list of abuses in Haiti cannot be ignored.

The absolute priority must be to restore security. Collectively, we must support the Haitian National Police much more effectively, as we know they need equipment, funding and training. The Haitian authorities have been appealing to the international community since October of last year. We stand ready, with our partners, to do more to redress the situation on the ground. The United Nations must also provide more support to Haiti in terms of security, via the work of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti.

France hopes that the Council will soon be able to adopt its first sanctions against the criminals destabilizing the country and that the panel of experts will be able to make proposals quickly. However, sanctions alone will not solve anything. At the same time, justice must be restored in Haiti. The fight against impunity must be a priority if we want to put an end to the violence. The appointment of the members of the Court of Cassation is a positive step in that regard.

France will continue to encourage Haitian actors to pursue an inclusive dialogue. We welcome the efforts made to encourage broader participation in the National Consensus for an Inclusive Transition and Transparent Elections, as well as the installation of the High Transitional Council. The objective remains the organization of democratic elections when the security conditions are met. We urge Haitian political actors to reach the broadest possible agreement for the rapid appointment of a Provisional Electoral Council. The political class must show responsibility to overcome the current impasse.

Finally, and this is my last point, France will remain committed to providing humanitarian aid, in particular in terms of health care and food. In 2023, our humanitarian assistance will reach € million, and given the need, we are working on mobilizing additional funds.

France will continue to support the efforts of the United Nations, the International Organization of la Francophonie and other partners working to assist Haiti. We cannot stand by and let Haiti sink into chaos. We will continue as long as necessary to stand side by side with the Haitian people.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): I would like to extend a warm welcome to Special Representative of the Secretary-General María Isabel Salvador on her first briefing to the Security Council and express our appreciation for her work and thank for her comprehensive report. I also thank Ms. Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. I welcome the presence of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Haiti, Jean Génésus, and of the Dominican Republic, Roberto Álvarez Gil. I also welcome the participation in this meeting of the Permanent Representative of Canada.

The security landscape in Haiti remains fraught with challenges. The escalation of gang violence has become increasingly alarming, with State authorities mostly failing to mount an adequate response. The police face daunting odds as they attempt to combat gangs that are targeting police infrastructure and recruiting minors. It is appalling that the gangs are extending their control to a large part of Port-au-Prince, significantly worsening the dire multidimensional crisis affecting the country. As a result, Haiti is grappling with high levels of internal displacement, a sharp increase in food insecurity and limited access to essential services, such as education and health care.

The prevailing political stalemate, coupled with the humanitarian and security crises, has created a vicious cycle in Haiti in which one crisis reinforces the other. A breakthrough in the political dialogue between the Government and the opposition is therefore essential. At present, Haiti lacks any democratically elected Government representatives. Failing to address that legitimacy vacuum could potentially plunge the nation into a more severe crisis with unpredictable consequences.

As we stated at our meeting in January (see S/PV.9247), we took positive note of the initiative launched on 21 December to build a national consensus for an inclusive transition and transparent elections. We also expressed hope that it would represent the beginning of a comprehensive process of national unity. Since then, some positive steps have been taken to implement the agreement, such as the investiture of the High Transitional Council and the recent appointment of judges to fill vacant seats in the Court de Cassation. Restoring the rule of law is of utmost importance to enable the Haitian people to fully exercise their political and civil rights. We encourage intensified efforts to

ensure a broad and inclusive national political dialogue in order to forge a wider consensus, so that institutional normalcy can be re-established and elections organized.

Brazil is deeply concerned about the fact that incipient advances in the political process can be jeopardized if the deterioration of the security situation is not curbed. The control of gang activities is necessary for creating conditions that enable the organization of credible elections. Brazil stands ready to engage with Council members and other stakeholders to discuss how to respond to those challenges.

We must also ensure that political and economic groups do not exploit the humanitarian crisis for their petty interests in Haiti. We remain hopeful that the sanctions regime adopted last October, by helping to break the link between the political and economic power and the Haitian gangs, will facilitate a peaceful political understanding among key actors in the country and eventually lead to a solution to this vicious cycle. We call upon the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2653 (2022) concerning Haiti to expeditiously initiate its deliberations to impose sanctions with the full backing of the international community.

Brazil firmly believes that Haiti's path to change extends beyond controlling criminal activities. Socioeconomic progress is vital for effectively and sustainably addressing the crisis. Haiti remains a priority for Brazilian international cooperation. We appeal to the international community to strengthen efforts to foster economic and social development, thereby preventing Haiti from relapsing into violence.

In conclusion, we urge all Haitian political actors to deepen their dialogue and to work towards organizing safe and fair elections. Haitian-led solutions can materialize only if Haitian stakeholders engage in good faith and in a spirit of compromise. Brazil has historically contributed to the promotion of peace and stability in Haiti and remains committed to supporting the country, particularly in these challenging times.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I would like to thank Special Representative Salvador for her briefing, and I welcome her to the Chamber for the first time in her new role. I also thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for her briefing and welcome the participation of the Foreign Ministers of Haiti and the Dominican Republic and the Permanent Representative of Canada.

Malta remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Haiti. As detailed in the Secretary-General's report (S/2023/274), violence, including sexual violence, and homicides continue to escalate. Acts of kidnapping continue to intensify, and hunger is at an all-time high, with nearly half of all Haitians experiencing acute food insecurity.

The Haitian people continue to suffer at the hands of armed gangs, as they compete to expand their territorial control, displacing over 100,000 people. The international community must do all it can to support the Haitian National Police and their efforts to bring security and the rule of law to Haiti.

Malta believes the sanctions regime, established by the Council in resolution 2653 (2022), is an important tool for targeting and deterring those who engage or support illicit financial and criminal activities, including the forced recruitment of children and sexual and gender-based violence. The Council should look to update the list of those designated for sanctions as soon as possible, as well as to ensure the full implementation of those measures. As highlighted by UNODC in its March report and again today, that includes strengthening border controls and customs authorities to combat the illicit trafficking of drugs, arms and people, as well as transnational organized crime.

Malta remains deeply concerned by the political crisis in Haiti. We urge the Haitian authorities to engage with civil society groups in order to build the broadest possible consensus on a road map for the necessary political and security conditions that would allow for free and fair elections. That should be a Haitian-led and -owned political process, with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and young people. That will require continued investment in capacity-building for women and youth leaders. It must be a priority of the international community to strengthen Haiti's judicial system to fight corruption and impunity that feed the cycle of violence and insecurity. Those responsible for perpetuating this crisis must be held accountable.

The people of Haiti are suffering from a catastrophic human rights crisis. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, which is being used as a tool by gangs to terrorize, punish and subjugate communities. These actions are utterly reprehensible, and Malta condemns this violence in the strongest possible terms.

Children also suffer some of the most serious abuse in this crisis, being targeted by armed groups for kidnapping, sexual violence and recruitment into their criminal gangs. As we have been briefed by the Special Representative, hundreds of thousands of children struggle to access education, with many schools becoming hotspots for abduction or forced to close. The protection of children and women must be of paramount importance for the international community, and we must urgently take steps to ensure that they are shielded from violence.

We recognize the efforts of humanitarian actors on the ground who continue to work to alleviate the suffering of people in Haiti. As we heard, humanitarians face many access challenges throughout the country. Malta therefore reiterates its calls on all parties to facilitate rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to all people in need. In addition, we remind parties of their obligations under international law with regard to the safety and protection afforded to medical and humanitarian personnel and assets.

In conclusion, the situation in Haiti must remain a priority for the Council, as the country continues to suffer from a multidimensional emergency. We reaffirm our solidarity with Haiti and pledge our collective commitment to support the Haitian people.

Mr. Almazrouei (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I welcome Special Representative María Isabel and wish her immense success in her new role. We fully support her work and that of the United Nations in Haiti, including through the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, as it is a key component in efforts to achieve security and stability in the country. We thank Ms. Waly for her comprehensive briefing. We also welcome the participation of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Haiti and Dominican Republic, as well as the representative of Canada in today's meeting.

As the situation in Haiti remains dire, we underscore that a political solution remains the heart of any holistic approach to addressing the multifaceted challenges in Haiti. It is therefore imperative to continue broadening political dialogue. The success of such efforts will rely on the participation, in good faith, of all relevant stakeholders. Economic recession, political deadlock and unprecedented violence has meant that a daily, terrifying struggle is an all-too-common reality for the people of Haiti. Progress on the political track will

undoubtedly contribute to mitigating this multifaceted and intersecting crisis and to ensuring Haiti's long-term stability.

With that in mind, I would like to make the following points.

First, we remain deeply concerned about the growing levels of violence in Haiti. Departments and regions once considered safe from gang violence are now under threat. Clear signals of that are this week's harrowing reports of people set on fire, as well as Médecins Sans Frontières suspending activities in the capital, which is part of a greater trend of international non-governmental organizations being forced to close down parts of their operations despite the critical need for them.

It must therefore remain a priority to build the capacity and response skills of the Haitian National Police to these challenges, as well as to strengthen anti-corruption measures and tackle the trafficking and proliferation of illegal arms and illicit financial flows. We welcome regional efforts to face domestic and regional challenges, including the Caribbean Community high-level delegation visit in February, as well as the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in that regard.

Secondly, supporting Haitian-led community-based violence-reduction approaches, particularly those that include young people, are just as critical for improving the security situation and tackling humanitarian challenges. With the continued recruitment of children and closure of schools, those approaches are increasingly important as they can mitigate the vulnerability of Haitian young men and women and help them take ownership of their future.

Thirdly, the rule of law represents a guiding compass for states, especially for those facing the widespread and deep insecurity as it is the case in Haiti. The rule of law provides the backbone for justice and accountability, particularly for heinous crimes such as sexual violence. For example, according to United Nations estimates, 30 per cent of Haitian women between the ages of 15 and 30 have been victims of sexual abuse or violence. For survivors of sexual violence who fear retaliation, State institutions built on a strong rule of law must serve as both a safe haven and a vehicle for swift and definitive justice. That is particularly important as current efforts are taken to enhance the judicial sector in Haiti.

In conclusion, Haiti is facing one of the worst humanitarian crises in today's world. It also suffers from an underfunded response to its humanitarian needs. We note the horrific reports of gang violence, increased mass displacement, child recruitment and sexual and gender-based violence, compounded by restricted access to basic services and humanitarian assistance, a multi-year drought and soaring food insecurity, as well as the resurgence of cholera. We reiterate the need to respect and protect women and children in Haiti. We also stress the need to respect and protect hospitals, educational institutions and humanitarian facilities.

With national institutions lacking the capacity to adequately respond to those calamities, armed gangs continue to expand their criminal enterprises as the country approaches hurricane season, which will inevitably exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. Haiti cannot be forgotten and must remain in our minds as it faces these challenges.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): Let me start by expressing our appreciation to the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. La Lime, for her tireless efforts during her tenure and welcoming the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Salvador, for her first appearance here. Japan looks forward to working with her and her Office.

The work of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti in pivotal areas such as governance, security and human rights is indispensable for the stabilization of Haiti, and we commend its efforts. I also thank Executive Director Wali for her insightful briefing and welcome the participation of the Foreign Ministers of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, as well as the Permanent Representative of Canada.

Japan is deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian and security situation in Haiti. The worsening security situation is alarming, as we observe a rapid increase in the number of cases of kidnapping and violent crime. We deplore that women and children have been subjected to serious crimes, including sexual violence and forced recruitment. Japan underlines the need to protect the most fundamental rights of the people, such as to life, water, food and health, as well as the need to respect the rule of law.

In that regard, strengthening the capacities of the Haitian National Police (HNP) is vital, and Japan notes the initiative taken by the Government to procure necessary equipment. Although the main responsibility

for stability rests with the Haitian authorities, regional and international initiatives should augment national efforts. Japan will continue to support such initiatives as the basket fund managed by the United Nations Development Programme to strengthen the HNP, and we applaud the continued engagement by such regional groups such as the Organization of American States and the Caribbean Community.

Japan also recognizes the role of targeted sanctions in addressing insecurity in Haiti. To that end, Japan welcomes, and will engage constructively in, the discussion to strengthen and broaden sanctions, as appropriate, against those who engage in criminal-gang activities and violence, based on listing requests from Member States and through the Panel of Experts.

As pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/274), addressing security should go hand in hand with resolving political crises, including the holding of free, fair and transparent elections and the establishment of an accountable and effective judicial system. Japan welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the 21 December agreement, including the establishment of the High Transitional Council and the appointment of eight Court of Cassation judges. Concrete and timely implementation of the agreement is essential, and Japan is considering possible support for the elections stipulated in the agreement. To garner further support for the political process, Japan calls on political actors and all stakeholders to participate and achieve progress through dialogue.

In conclusion, I reiterate our support for and solidarity with the people of Haiti.

Mr. Eckersley (United Kingdom): First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and thank her for her briefing. We wish her every success in her new role.

We would also like to take this opportunity to put on record our gratitude to all United Nations staff in Haiti for their work in very challenging circumstances. We would like to thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for her briefing and to welcome the Foreign Ministers of Haiti and the Dominican Republic to the Chamber.

As we have heard today, the situation in Haiti remains bleak, and it is getting worse. Like, I think, all of us in this Chamber, the United Kingdom is deeply

concerned by the deteriorating security situation, the dramatic increase in homicides and kidnappings, the widespread instances of gang rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated by gangs as a means to strike fear into communities, the recruitment of children into gangs, indiscriminate sniper fire in civilian areas and high food insecurity. All of that has contributed to what the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has called a living nightmare. It is a tragedy that the Haitian people — and women and children in particular — continue to experience this horror on a daily basis, and it should be a wake-up call for the international community. We strongly support the High Commissioner's appointment earlier this month of an expert on human rights in Haiti, following the request of the Human Rights Council.

As set out in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/274), it is clear that the Haitian National Police remains over-stretched and under-resourced to tackle the immense security challenges it faces. There needs to be a coordinated international effort to assist Haitian-led efforts to tackle the underlying causes of gang violence. We recognize the need for a response to Haiti's request for further international assistance, and we support further Council discussions on that.

We note the installation of the High Transitional Council as a positive step towards implementing the 21 December political accord. We welcome recent moves towards a broader political dialogue and call once again on all actors to redouble their efforts to reach a consensus. The Security Council should be ready to consider further sanctions designations of those who seek to undermine the peace and stability of Haiti. Above all, we must support every effort for Haitians to come together to overcome the political impasse and to agree a road map that creates the conditions for successful democratic elections and for a better long-term future for Haiti.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Russian Federation.

We welcome the participation in this meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Haiti, Mr. Jean Victor Génés, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Roberto Álvarez Gil. We would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. María Isabel Salvador, for

her briefing, and we are very grateful to the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, for her assessments.

News from Haiti continues to give us cause for grave concern. Haitians are sick and tired of waiting for order to be restored by the security forces. They are therefore taking the law into their own hands. They are lynching their gangs. As we understand it, Port-au-Prince is literally besieged by such armed gangs, if it is not already fully under their control. All exits from the city have been blocked, thereby disrupting supply routes as well as the movement of people around the country.

The population lives in fear for their lives. Abductions, rape and homicides are now becoming the norm. There can be no talk of the national health-care system or the educational system operating as they should. What is happening is very difficult to just describe as a crisis. Rather, this is a genuine humanitarian, socioeconomic and political disaster.

We must recognize that currently neither the Haitians nor the international community have a full understanding of how to untangle this knot of Haitian problems or how to help the country not fall into the abyss. Humanitarian organizations, including United Nations bodies, are doing everything they can to save Haitians from hunger and help meet the population's basic needs. The Security Council must address those interrelated political and security problems in Haiti, and that must be done as a matter of priority.

Based on statements of the country's authorities and their Western partners, resolving the country's pressing problems — and this is a long-suffering country — by restoring the legitimate and sustainable power of the State should be achieved through the implementation of the so-called consensus document. Nevertheless, four months have gone by since it was published, and we can see no genuine progress on ensuring a political transition or preparation for transparent elections in the country. Neither do we see any results of the national investigation into the assassination of the President, Mr. Moïse. Almost two years of silence is what we have seen since this awful crime was committed, which only heightens the people's distrust of the authorities. The extradition of the suspects to the United States further saps the hopes for independent court proceedings.

We call on the Haitian parties to stand ready to partake in an inclusive political dialogue based on the

support of broad swathes of Haitian society. However, we cannot impose on Haitians solutions that do not take into account local Haitian realities, as has often been, and still is, the case. We see brazen attempts to interfere in the political process in Haiti in the form of unilateral sanctions against individuals who are not to the liking of some. The crisis facing Haitian statehood is to a large extent the outcome of outside political engineering and neocolonial policy. Fixing the situation this way is not an option. There is also a growing body of evidence suggesting that the institutional crisis and the gang violence in Haiti are two sides of the same coin. We must come to grips with the issue of political and economic actors amalgamating with armed gangs, and on that front we count on the Security Council sanctions committee's Panel of Experts.

A separate issue is the ongoing illegal flow of weapons into Haiti from outside the country. It is clear that the authorities have lost control over the ports and border crossings, which criminals can use freely now. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's report shed some light on the weapons and drug trafficking routes through Haiti, confirming what was already clear: the lion's share of weapons that trafficked into Haiti come from the United States. According to available information, it is not uncommon to find bandits on the streets of Port-au-Prince carrying guns and assault rifles with identifying marks indicating their use by United States troops in Iraq.

The data provided by the customs service of the Dominican Republic helps to indicate the true extent of the ongoing smuggling. In the first half of 2022 alone, customs officers seized 112,000 small arms destined for Haiti. Another concern is the growing trend of using the country as a transit hub for drug flows from Latin America and the Caribbean to the United States. We are convinced that such large-scale operations to stem that scourge would be impossible without the involvement of the American partners of the Haitian gangs. That would clearly be an opportunity to clip the wings of Haitian organized crime.

Special Representative Salvador has without a doubt one of the most complicated areas of work in our global Organization. We are convinced that her expertise and enthusiasm will guide her all the way through the twists and turns of the Haitian file and help her to assist the people of Haiti in the best way possible. We wish her every success in her Office of great responsibility and assure her of our unstinting support.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Haiti.

Mr. Génés (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to commend the Russian Federation on its presidency of the Security Council for the month of April, and I acknowledge the other members of the Council. I extend my greetings to the Foreign Minister of the Dominican Republic, who travelled to be here with us today. I warmly congratulate Ms. María Isabel Salvador on her appointment as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), whom the Council has welcomed today to deliver her first briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/274) on the situation in Haiti, and I wish her every success in her task. My greetings also go to the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. I also welcome the presence at today's meeting of the Permanent Representative of Canada, as well as all the other guests invited to today's important meeting.

I speak today in a context in which the security situation in Haiti has deteriorated considerably over the past 48 hours. The appalling scenes of violence witnessed in the streets of the country's capital reflect the extreme anger of an exasperated people who refuse to accept to passively suffer gang violence any longer. The frightening spectre of violent confrontations is already looming, with harmful consequences that we can imagine. We must act quickly before it is too late. I once again wish to echo the unspeakable suffering of a people deprived of its fundamental right to security and the freedom of movement, held hostage by armed gangs and their backers.

The report of the Secretary-General, which the Special Representative delivered brilliantly, paints a very dark picture of the situation. My Government endorses the Secretary-General's call reaffirming the need for the immediate

“deployment of an international specialized armed force, as articulated in my letter of 8 October 2022 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2022/747). Alongside the strategic and advisory support provided by BINUH to strengthen police capacities, the deployment of such a force remains crucial to the efforts of national authorities to stem

the violence and human rights abuses committed against the Haitian people, restore the rule of law and create conditions conducive to credible elections.” (S/2023/274, para. 72)

There is every reason to be alarmed. Systematic and indiscriminate gang violence has become commonplace. Attacks, destruction, hostage-taking, robberies, assassinations and rapes are the modus operandi of the criminal gangs, which are creating an overall climate of terror in the country. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has expressed its deep concern about the abuses committed by the gangs, which continue to spread uncontrollably, resulting in serious human rights violations, causing massive displacements of people and aggravating the migration issue. Haiti’s Directorate for Civil Protection, as well as the International Organization for Migration, estimates that approximately 128,000 people have been displaced by gang violence. Those terrifying acts also affect neighbouring States and those in the region, especially in terms of migration. Haiti is in danger and needs the urgent help of the United Nations family to exit this zone of turbulence. As a Member of the United Nations, Haiti is seeking the support it so deeply requires.

The promises and announcements of cooperation from our main partners are welcomed by the Government and the people of Haiti, who are waiting for them to materialize. However, as significant as those promises are, they are not enough to respond to the current reality. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to commend the Haitian National Police for the commitment, dedication and courage of our brave officers who face armed gangs every day, without respite, at the risk of their lives and despite the limited means at their disposal. In that context, I reiterate the request made by Prime Minister Ariel Henry in his official letter of 7 October 2022 addressed to the Secretary-General and forwarded to the Security Council.

Must I remind the Council that, historically, the principle of international solidarity has been at the heart of Haiti’s foreign policy since the country was established? Indeed, on many occasions, Haiti has consistently responded to calls for assistance from its brother peoples, whether in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa or Europe, in their legitimate struggle for self-determination and political emancipation.

The use of force, as a first step, is essential to defeating the gangs, restoring order and creating an environment conducive to the proper functioning of the State. However, the Government is aware that the use of legitimate violence alone is not the definitive solution to the problem. Socioeconomic development must be taken into account in order to sustainably address extreme poverty — the source of all ills. There is a clear correlation among underdevelopment, extreme poverty and banditry. Social inequalities and the very uneven distribution of national wealth have created a huge gap between the needy masses of the population and the small minority of property owners — 5 per cent of people — who control 90 per cent of the country’s wealth. Extreme poverty accentuates youth unemployment, marginalizing those in poor neighbourhoods, who are easily drawn into delinquency and crime. That category constitutes a fertile recruiting ground for armed gangs which, worse still, are now recruiting child soldiers.

According to estimates, 80 per cent of the metropolitan area is under the control or influence of armed groups. The same individuals who are terrorizing the population often live in marginalized neighbourhoods of extreme poverty. There are some political and economic actors who are both encouraging and financing the gangs’ criminal activities in order to control and maintain their petty interests. They engage in all kinds of illicit activities, including organized crime and trafficking in drugs, arms and organs. At issue is the burdensome legacy of a complex set of socioeconomic and political factors, coupled with epidemics and natural disasters, which over the past five years has resulted in the contraction of the national economy, with a negative growth rate and an uncontrollable rate of inflation of more than 50 per cent. The humanitarian crisis is also deteriorating, with severe shortages of essential goods. According to estimates, 4.9 million people are in a situation of food insecurity that has reached record levels. Almost half of the population is living below the poverty line on less than \$2 a day. In addition to all of that, we are dealing with the closure of hospitals and the risk of a serious health crisis.

Strong institutions are the engines of democracy. The normal functioning of democratic institutions in the service of good governance is a prerequisite for emerging from this disaster. The Prime Minister is well aware of that and intends to move resolutely towards the process of normalizing political life, despite the

current enormous security challenges. Significant progress has been made in the implementation of the 21 December 2022 agreement known as the National Consensus for an Inclusive Transition and Transparent Elections. Following the establishment of the High Transitional Council and the Court of Cassation, the country's highest judicial body, the focus has shifted to the formation of the Provisional Electoral Council, the independent body responsible for the holding of elections. The High Transitional Council has to choose nine electoral advisers from a list of 20 people proposed by various sectors to form the Provisional Electoral Council. Prime Minister Ariel Henry is eagerly looking forward to handing over the stewardship of the country's destiny to an elected President and legitimate representatives as soon as possible.

With regard to the sanctions regime established pursuant to resolution 2653 (2022) of 21 October 2022, the sanctions imposed by Canada, the United States of America and the Dominican Republic have begun to have positive results, although the gangs are becoming increasingly arrogant and seem to be gaining in strength. I commend the Sanctions Committee established by the same resolution for the work it has already done. In that regard, the Government encourages the Panel of Experts to speed up the work of updating its list of all those responsible for fuelling instability and committing violence against the population through the funding of gangs and corruption. The implementation of the United Nations sanctions will be universal with tangible effects.

The Government is committed to restoring law and order. A secure and stable security environment remains a priority. It continues to be the cornerstone for building a democratic framework that can enable the re-establishment of institutions and address the major socioeconomic challenges. In order to achieve that goal, the Government is counting on robust international support for the Haitian National Police. The deployment of an international force remains key to halting the violence and human rights violations, restoring the rule of law and creating the conditions necessary for the holding of credible elections. I urgently appeal for international cooperation to help secure the country and provide financial support in the medium and long term for addressing the issue of sustainable development and thereby ensuring the reintegration of the marginalized members of society and improving the current living conditions of the vast majority of the population.

Despite periods of distress and disappointment, hope continues to spring in the hearts of Haitians, who are seeking a better future of freedom and dignity. On behalf of the children who have been deprived of playtime and the right to an education, the women and girls who have been raped and the families of the innocent victims of the gangs' barbarity, I urge Council members to act quickly. The situation is urgent, and Haiti cannot wait any longer.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Álvarez Gil (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We commend Russia for its presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. I would like to reiterate my heartfelt congratulations to Ms. María Isabel Salvador on her appointment as Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, which is so critical to achieving peace and security in the region, and to wish her every success in carrying out her new functions. We assure her of the Dominican Republic's responsible and sustained support.

We are meeting once again today to address the tragic catastrophe that is having such an enormous impact on the lives and physical and mental stability of millions of Haitians, an untenable situation that is not only affecting Haiti but also my country, the Dominican Republic. Despite the disastrous scale of the situation, it has so far been unable to move the emotions or the conscience of those who must make the final decisions in support of Haitians. Pope Francis recently prayed,

“Turn your gaze to Haiti, which has long been experiencing a grave social, economic and humanitarian crisis, and support the efforts of political actors and the international community to seek a definitive solution to this troubled country's many problems.”

I believe firmly that our words have not been falling on deaf ears, but we do not understand why it has taken so long for this vital organ, the Security Council, to do what must be done to respond to Haiti's request for help. There are examples of other initiatives to support countries in crisis for which international assistance has not had to travel such a winding road. Frankly, we are inclined to consider the possibility that as some say, countries receive attention according to discriminatory stratification. Are the Haitian people not victims of an aggression that is breaching peace in the region? Was this venerable Organization not created precisely to address atrocious situations such as the one that Haiti is enduring?

To date, the recurrent pleas of the Haitian authorities for effective cooperation to end the violence, as reiterated here today by Foreign Minister Génésus, have been futile. The response to help the Haitian people to return to a minimum level of normality remains inadequate. In their long ordeal, the humanitarian situation is worsening to such an extent that according to the most recent report of the World Food Programme, which has been cited here today, the Integrated Phase Classification estimates that for the period of March to June this year, 19,200 people are in catastrophic phase 5, while 17 per cent of the population, or some 1.65 million people, are in emergency phase 4, and 31 per cent, or 3 million Haitians, are in crisis phase 3. Almost half of the Haitian population are in a state of crisis. How can we allow such a scandalous humanitarian situation to take place before our very eyes, with those who are most vulnerable — women and children — the worst affected? What more must the Haitian authorities do in their call for assistance to confront the criminal gangs, who are primarily responsible for the current humanitarian disaster?

We are aware of the important work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2653 (2022) concerning Haiti, chaired by the representative of Gabon, Ambassador Michel Biang, to whom we reiterate the full support of the Dominican Government in view of the Committee's future visit to our country. We also recognize the efforts of the Panel of Experts, which recently began its work on the Haitian crisis. We also greatly appreciate the efforts to identify the sectors within Haiti that encourage criminal activities and contribute to insecurity, which will undoubtedly allow for accountability to be established and hopefully lead to the imposition of effective sanctions. For our part, the Dominican Government has imposed entry bans on a number of Haitian nationals in order to safeguard our security and territorial integrity, thereby supporting the efforts of the Security Council. In the same vein, we appreciate Human Rights Council resolution 52/39 approving the appointment of an independent human rights expert for Haiti, which was recently adopted.

In addition to those measures, other steps are needed to put a definitive stop to the source of insecurity, the whereabouts and operations of which are well known. In that regard, we wish to refer to the most recent report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which refers to the alarming increase in the

trafficking of sophisticated firearms to Haiti, as well as ammunition, which is one of the main causes of the increase in violence. According to the report, on which UNODC Executive Director Ms. Ghada Waly briefed us extensively, gang activities have reached unprecedented levels, as has drug trafficking, thereby fuelling Haiti's insecurity crisis in an uncontrolled manner and causing it to spill over its borders. We therefore reiterate our urgent appeal to the members of the Security Council: there is no time to lose. By whatever means it deems appropriate, the Council must implement the measures required to prevent the flow of arms and ammunition into Haiti. State sovereignty carries with it the obligation to protect its own people. When a State is unable to do so fully and the peace and security of a region is endangered, that responsibility falls to the international community. Diplomatic, humanitarian and any other means within its competence should be employed.

In the case of Haiti, the Haitian authorities have repeatedly requested the deployment of a special force to support the Haitian National Police. That is urgent in the light of what continues to happen in the country: one week ago, about 50 people were killed by armed bandits in Source Matelas, in the commune of Cabaret, while the day before yesterday, owing to the failure of law enforcement agencies, about 13 or 14 presumed members of a criminal gang were lynched in the streets of Port-au-Prince. Those tragic episodes, which were dramatically brought to our attention today by Special Representative of the Secretary-General María Isabel Salvador, are occurring again and again and are painfully reminiscent of other situations in which the international community has not reacted with sufficient diligence to avoid greater disasters. We have said it in the past before the Security Council and we say it again today: the situation in Port-au-Prince is comparable to that of an internal armed conflict, the difference in this case being who qualifies as a belligerent. In fact, what we are witnessing today is the dissolution of the Haitian State. The case at hand requires no further evidence. Any decision to evade the provision of urgent and effective assistance to Haiti or to avoid taking measures that are proper and exclusive to this Organization, as mandated by its Charter and by international law, may be considered an abdication of responsibility. The Security Council cannot ignore that.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rae (Canada): I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, which comprises 22 Member States that are committed to accompanying Haiti's long-term socioeconomic development. Since last year, our group expanded to include Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, Kenya and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

I want to express my gratitude to Ms. Salvador for her presentation today and the meetings we have been able to have together. I very much look forward to her further discussions with the Advisory Group to be held later on today. I also want to thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, whose report has been extremely helpful to us, and we look forward to further collaboration and discussions on the impact of what is taking place and how we can deal with it.

(spoke in French)

I welcome my colleague, Mr. Jean Victor Génésus, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Haiti, and I can assure him that our collaboration will continue.

(spoke in English)

I am also pleased to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, and we look forward to further discussions with his Government about what is taking place.

We can see that Haiti's complex and multidimensional crisis is deepening, with devastating impacts on the daily lives of Haitians. As we have heard, gangs have expanded their control and continue to terrorize the Haitian population. Kidnapping has become a lucrative industry. In fact, as gang members become aware that actions are starting to take hold, they increase their activities in order to increase their profitability. Children and young people are being recruited into gangs. Women and girls and boys are the targets of horrendous sexual violence. Parents cannot trust that their children will return safely home from school. The price of food and fuel is putting further strain on families and businesses. Nearly half of Haiti's population does not have enough to eat and some communities are facing famine-like conditions.

On behalf of the Advisory Group, I would like to emphasize four points. First, all the people to whom we have spoken in Haiti, as well as those in agencies outside it, have emphasized one point, which is that the restoration of security to help alleviate the suffering of

Haitians, allow people to be able to leave their homes, work and go outside and strengthen investor confidence in the country is absolutely critical. That calls for a comprehensive approach that stops the flow of arms and ammunition, strengthens the Haitian National Police and the rule of law, protects human rights and reduces community violence. That is the top priority and steps must be taken to achieve it.

Secondly, we strongly encourage intensified efforts to ensure a broad and more inclusive national political dialogue to chart a way forward that can put the country back on a path to stability and sustainable development, including eventually through the holding of credible, free, fair and transparent elections. But there is still work to be done to create that critical national consensus.

Thirdly, the international community must move swiftly to address the immediate humanitarian needs of Haitians, while investing in the country's sustainable development in order to increase its resilience to shocks in the future. This year's humanitarian response plan sets out the largest appeal for Haiti, more than \$700 million, since the devastating 2010 earthquake, underscoring the scale, severity and urgency of Haiti's humanitarian crisis. Measures must be taken urgently — that is to say, now — to help address Haitians' emergency food needs, while also providing emergency livelihood assistance to build a more resilient and productive food system in the country.

Lastly, immediate measures to restore security must be accompanied by efforts to address the root causes of violence in the country, which are extreme poverty, corruption, impunity and collusion between the political and economic spheres. Sanctions are one important tool to help break the power of armed gangs, and we encourage the work being done in that regard by the Panel of Experts and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2653 (2022) concerning Haiti. We must also fight corruption and impunity in Haiti by restoring the rule of law through the strengthening of its institutions, particularly the judicial and correctional systems. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in its entirety, is the best way to address the root causes of violence in Haiti, as well as to sustain peace.

While we have of course heard these words used before by many present here today, it bears repeating that the solutions to the crisis must be Haitian-owned.

However, we, the partners, friends and neighbours of Haiti, must mobilize with urgency to scale up our coordinated support. Words must be followed by deeds. A comprehensive approach that is informed by the interlinkages among peace, humanitarian action and development is required for Haiti to one day come off the Council's regular agenda, and hopefully soon. Above all, we owe it to the people of Haiti, all of us, to work collectively and constructively to support their country through its crisis.

(spoke in French)

I would also like to once again explain the position both of the Committee and my Government. Canada firmly believes that we must act, not just talk. That is why our Government announced its decision to increase its support to the Haitian National Police, including training and direct assistance for equipment. We will also increase our contribution to peace and humanitarian assistance. We announced more than \$100 million this year, in addition to the money we have already spent, and our intensive dialogue with the Haitian authorities is ongoing.

At the same time, I can assure the Council that we will continue the cooperation efforts with all the States in the region that we have already begun working on with our colleagues, and we are following the discussions here in the Council with great interest. I can assure you, Mr. President, that Canada remains willing to participate in all discussions to find concrete and specific solutions to the issues.

We commend Ms. Salvador and Mr. O'Neill, and I also thank my colleague from Gabon for his work on the issue of sanctions. We support the efforts of our colleagues from the United States and Ecuador and thank them for their work. I believe that our work of showing solidarity, providing support and engaging in cooperation must continue. We owe it to the Haitian population and to all the countries in the region to ensure their security.

The President *(spoke in Russian)*: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.