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Seventy-fifth year

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Provisional

President: Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium)

Members:

China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Estonia	Mr. Jürgenson
France	Mrs. Gueguen
Germany	Mr. Schulz
Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
Niger	Mr. Aougi
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. King
South Africa	Ms. Mogashoa
Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Clay
United States of America	Ms. Norman-Chalet
Viet Nam	Mr. Dinh

Agenda

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti
(S/2020/123)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (S/2020/123)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Haiti to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Helen La Lime, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, and Ms. Marie Yolène Gilles, Executive Director of Fondasyon Je Klere.

Ms. La Lime and Ms. Gilles are joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Port-au-Prince.

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/2020/123, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti.

I now give the floor to Ms. La Lime.

Ms. La Lime: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to again address the Security Council and provide an update on the situation in Haiti.

Since July 2018, the political impasse has paralysed the functioning of Haitian institutions, aggrieved the country's economy and fuelled continued insecurity. Over the course of the past months, I have worked alongside the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States and the Apostolic Nuncio to Haiti to create an environment conducive to reaching a negotiated resolution of the crisis, one that would catalyse a reform effort aimed at restoring the population's confidence in the State, ensuring that the most vulnerable receive much-needed basic services, and laying the groundwork for the timely holding of elections.

During two rounds of negotiations held at the Representation of the Holy See in Haiti in mid-December 2019 and late January 2020, a consensus emerged on the contours of a political agreement articulated around four elements: the criteria for the formation of a Government, the contents of a reform agenda, the sequencing of a Constitutional reform process, and the definition of an electoral calendar. Despite progress regarding the nature of the reforms to be undertaken, including that of the Constitution, political actors have yet to settle on a formula that would lead to the designation by President Moïse of a consensual prime minister and the formation of a new Government.

The lack of agreement on this matter, as well as on the remaining length of President Moïse's term, threatens to needlessly prolong a situation that has already lasted too long. Haiti is about to enter into its second year with a caretaker Government, its economy is forecast to sink deeper into recession, and 4.6 million of its citizens are now estimated to require humanitarian assistance. The effects of the strained economy and the prolonged political polarization risk further affecting the integrity and effectiveness of such key institutions as the Haitian National Police. To avoid a greater deterioration, Haitian leaders need to rise to the occasion and commit to a way out of this impasse that will best serve the interests of their people.

A political agreement notwithstanding, the road towards improved governance through systemic reform will be arduous. Indeed, at the root of the recurring political and socioeconomic crises that Haiti has experienced in its modern history lie such entrenched factors as consistently high levels of poverty, pervasive gender inequalities, limited access to basic social services, severe natural-resource depletion, and the scourge of gangs, corruption and impunity.

Since the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2476 (2019) in June of last year, the peace and security and development pillars of the United Nations have worked tirelessly to develop a joint vision and a holistic approach to our intervention in Haiti. The results of these efforts are reflected in the 13 February report of the Secretary-General before the Council (S/2020/123) and are encapsulated in an integrated strategic framework planning document that articulates a focused strategy aimed at assisting Haitian institutions to address the root causes of instability in the country.

The deployment of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) on 16 October 2019 opened a new chapter in the relations between Haiti and the United Nations, one premised on a deeper and more targeted collaboration. Our collective success will be measured by the progress made in achieving the six benchmarks annexed to the report of the Secretary-General, which focus on facilitating a political consensus; addressing gang violence; strengthening the police, justice and corrections sectors; promoting human rights; helping address unemployment and socioeconomic grievances; and encouraging the presence of the State in communities through the provision of basic services and efforts to enhance resilience.

In that respect, the recently published joint BINUH-Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights public report on allegations of human rights violations and abuses perpetrated in the Port-au-Prince neighbourhood of Bel-Air between 4 and 6 November 2019 provides an example of the cross-cutting nature of the work currently undertaken by the United Nations in Haiti. Not only does the document analyse an example of the expansion of lawlessness in certain neighbourhoods of the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, but it also makes recommendations to State authorities on how to improve access to justice for victims, enhance accountability and interdict the action of criminal gangs.

Only through a combination of strong national will and steadfast international support can Haiti surmount the multifaceted crisis with which it is contending. I remain confident that the United Nations, in its new configuration, is uniquely placed to help State institutions address the factors that catalyse cyclical periods of instability in the country and ensure that Haiti is once again on the path to stability and sustainable development.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. La Lime for her briefing.

I now call on Ms. Gilles.

Ms. Gilles (*spoke in French*): The Fondasyon Je Klere (FJKL), which I have the great honour of representing here, is pleased to participate in this meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Haiti. In accepting the invitation to deliver this briefing on the overall human rights situation in Haiti to the Council under the Belgian presidency, I seek to embrace the values that the FJKL upholds.

The FJKL is an active Haitian human rights organization that prepares Haitians to become responsible leaders and to participate in public life in order to revitalize a nation State that is founded on the principles of human rights and sustainable development.

Our organization conducts a human rights training programme at the national level. The FJKL also aims to promote and protect human rights in Haiti through its programme for the monitoring of public institutions such as Parliament, the judicial and penal systems, the executive and the police. It conducts inquiries and denounce grave human rights violations, and it provides legal assistance to the voiceless and the underprivileged.

Haiti is today facing widespread and systematic violations of human rights. State authorities are failing to uphold both their positive and negative obligations to protect and respect human rights. The right to life has been cheapened. Appalling killings and heinous crimes are committed daily, with total impunity. To date this year we have already noted 31 violent deaths, but the actual figure is likely higher. The State is losing its monopoly of the use of legitimate violence. Entire areas are controlled by armed gangs, which are often better armed and better equipped than law-enforcement authorities.

The authorities, in an attempt to survive politically, often rely on gangs and use gang-warfare strategies. That is what we have been seeing for two years in the Martissant area, some 3 kilometres from the Palais de Justice and less than 5 kilometres from the presidential palace. The same situation exists on national road No. 1 and in the Carrefour Shada area, which is controlled by the Chiens Méchants gang, which has ties to the authorities and whose rival is the Tête de Mort gang.

The same situation prevails in other areas. More than 150 armed gangs are active throughout the country. In Port-au-Prince alone there are 23 active gangs; in Pétion-Ville, 30; in Croix-Des-Bouquets, 17; and in Artibonite, 20. Nearly a third of the national territory is controlled by armed gangs.

Freedom of movement is not guaranteed, nor is the right to the physical integrity and dignity of the human being. Roads are dangerous. As armed-gang fiefdoms have become inaccessible to the police, the gangs have taken full control of the civilian population living in those areas and of those they have kidnapped, who are often subjected to the worst atrocities. They are carrying out numerous appalling acts — murders,

beheadings, rapes, kidnapping for ransom, diversion of supplies, abductions and forcible confinement.

Young university students, schoolchildren and the civilian population, gripped by terror, hesitate to go outside. Kidnapped persons and those seized while using national roads are abused and forced to pay ransoms that further impoverish their families. Women are gang-raped both anally and vaginally. Such scenes are sometimes filmed and posted on social networks by armed gang members with their faces covered, in an act of defiance to law-enforcement authorities, which are powerless in the face of the fast-rising tide of such acts of cruelty. In Haitian culture, gang rape and anal rape are the worst crimes that can be committed against women, so rape is used as a political weapon.

The courts in Port-au-Prince, the largest jurisdiction in the country, have been closed since September 2019. There has therefore been a considerable increase in incidents involving prolonged preventive detention and the illegal release, without due process, of criminals arrested by the police, as a result of political interventions with respect to Government representatives within the judiciary and unscrupulous prosecutors.

Access to judges, the right to a fair and equitable trial and the right to be tried within a reasonable time frame are now just empty words. Such rights do not exist.

Everyone knows that death squads are a form of State terrorism. We witnessed a wide range of acts similar to those carried out by death squads during the “lock mode” period and when major anti-Government demonstrations are taking place.

People in vehicles with no registration plates are opening fire on demonstrators, as well as on groups of people viewed as opposing the authorities, in Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien and Saint-Marc and many other areas of the country, killing and injuring many.

Beheadings and mutilations of captured political adversaries are filmed and posted on the Internet by armed gangs known to have ties to the authorities.

All of this, and this is just a partial list, reflects the fact that these crimes are being committed with the support, at least tacit, of the Government, and the perpetrators enjoy official impunity.

I wish to draw the Council’s attention to the need for good governance and the fight against corruption in

Haiti. Haiti is one of the rare countries in the world where a man or a woman who has never worked a day in his or her life and who takes up an elective post in Parliament or the executive branch can become a millionaire in two or three years. They can openly display their wealth without any fear. Indeed, in February 2018, as a result of the efforts of the international community, the law on wealth declaration was adopted in order to contribute to transparency in public life. However, an inquiry carried out by FJKL from February 2008 to February 2018 on political figures, civil servants and other public servants who had declared their wealth showed that the implementation of the law deviates from the practices and norms set out therein. Nearly 90 per cent of the individuals working in the executive branch had not filed their assets disclosures upon leaving office, along with 93 per cent of Senators and Deputies.

The management of the PetroCaribe funds, following the performance audit by the Haitian administrative court, is marked by cases of mismanagement, overcharging, theft, corruption, embezzlement, favouritism and illicit enrichment. That funding, at nearly \$4 billion, would represent a significant opportunity for Haiti. Yet the current Head of State was implicated by the court in those acts of corruption, which constitutes the greatest obstacle to the holding of fair and equitable trials on the management of those funds — a trial that the Haitian people very much want to see.

The country has been operating without a budget for two years, with a Government that resigned almost a year ago. The constitutional order broke down in January due to the failure to hold elections on the constitutionally prescribed dates. The country therefore finds itself in an undeclared state of exception, which is liable to reinforce personal power, administrative mismanagement, theft, the plundering of scarce State resources and corruption.

Against that backdrop, the country is facing a grass-roots uprising against the Haitian National Police hierarchy. Just yesterday, police officers attempted to set fire to the law firm of the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Fondasyon Je Klere. They set fire to five vehicles, two generators and motorcycles in the firm’s parking lot. Although the movement is controlled by the mafia sector of the Police, the claims presented are nevertheless fair and deserve consideration. That body, which was established 25 years ago, needs to be

audited. The efforts of the United Nations in recent years to strengthen it have proved to be a bitter failure.

From that perspective, the Fondasyon Je Klere has the following recommendations for the Security Council to help Haiti. First, it must contribute to the success of the transition period in order to ensure a return to democratic order, broken since 13 January. Secondly, the firepower of armed gangs must be weakened. Thirdly, it must help organize the trials of PetroCaribe, the La Saline and Carrefour-Feuilles massacres and cases of rape. Fourthly, we need to effectively wage the fight against corruption. Fifthly, we need to audit the police with a view to boosting its credibility among the people and ensure that it can discharge its mission to protect and serve.

I apologize for going on so long; as they say, I could not be brief.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Gilles for her briefing.

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

Ms. Norman-Chalet (United States of America): I thank Special Representative La Lime for her comprehensive briefing on the situation in Haiti. The United States is grateful for the excellent work that she and her team have done in support of political and economic stability in Haiti. I also thank Executive Director Gilles for her briefing and support for good governance and human rights.

The United States reiterates the essential role of civil society and condemns reprisals against it. In January, we observed the 10-year anniversary of the devastating earthquake that killed more than 200,000 Haitians and 102 United Nations personnel. The United States stands with the people of Haiti, not only as they continue to recover from that tragedy but also as we work together to build a better future.

While today's briefing outlined intense efforts to promote dialogue, the United States remains concerned by the lack of real political progress. The United States has made clear that Haiti's leaders must come together to find an inclusive solution. Political and economic stability will follow only when Haiti's leaders set aside their differences, and both build and support Haiti's State institutions.

Despite months of political gridlock and deteriorating humanitarian and economic conditions, Haiti is operating without a seated Government following the expiration of the terms of most members of Parliament. I therefore repeat that there must be dialogue, and there must be a political accord. Time is of the essence. Haiti must hold legislative elections as soon as technically feasible, ultimately forming a fully functioning Government that is responsive to the needs of its people. The Haitian people must have a voice in selecting their leaders. Furthermore, while constitutional reforms are necessary and welcome, they must not become a pretext to delay elections.

We also reiterate the importance of the efforts of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) and the role of the good offices of Special Representative of the Secretary-General La Lime in bringing the parties together. But we must also stress that only Haiti's leaders, both in the Government and the opposition, can make the decisions that are necessary to break the political impasse and address the underlying drivers of instability.

Many of the benchmark targets and baselines outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/123) will be frozen in place as long as Haiti's political stalemate persists. Political polarization has affected governance and inhibited important decisions by the Government. We acknowledge the additional progress made by the Haitian National Police (HNP) and its increasing professionalization. However, the HNP continues to face increasing operational pressures, budget constraints and governmental inaction. As the Secretary-General's report notes, without timely and sufficient funding, the HNP cannot fulfil its public safety mandate.

We continue to call for accountability for human rights abuses and corruption. In that connection, we reiterate the need for the Government of Haiti to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the La Saline and Bel Air violence. We also note with concern that key social indicators point to rising vulnerability, with food insecurity, a weak health sector and general household resilience all trending in the wrong direction.

In the coming weeks, Haiti's leaders must set aside their differences. While they work to that end, the United States remains committed to the success of BINUH and, above all, to the people of Haiti as they work to address their nation's challenges.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Helen La Lime, and Ms. Marie Yolène Gilles for their briefings. We regret the attack on the office of the foundation run by Ms. Gilles. We hope that the details of that incident will be investigated as soon as possible. Indeed, tomorrow, the Dominican Republic, alongside several members of the Security Council, will hold an Arria Formula meeting on reprisals against women human rights defenders and women peacebuilders who cooperate with the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies.

The Dominican Republic would like to take this opportunity to lend its support to Haiti's President, Jovenel Moïse, in his quest for an inclusive dialogue with the objective of establishing a consensus-based Government. It is of great concern for the Dominican Republic to see the deep social, economic and political crisis in Haiti and the lack of progress in holding a national dialogue that would lead to the formation of a national unity Government capable of taking the country out of this multidimensional crisis.

According to the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/123), the progress achieved during the reporting period is very minimal on essentially all the six benchmarks. That, in turn, indicates that the process to improve the country's ability to achieve political stability, peace and security and sustainable development is at a standstill. Due to its profound impact on economic growth and social stability, the political crisis has become the fundamental driver of that stagnation.

This situation is among the reasons that we expressed our disagreement here in the Security Council with regard to the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) in the midst of an elections process that remains undefined, fragile and without an agreed-upon road map. The establishment of new peacekeeping configurations in countries in conflict should not be based solely on cost, but on an objective analysis and the presence of sound institutions capable of assuming the transferred responsibilities.

Despite our repeated warnings to defer the operationalization of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) until after the elections and prioritize finding a solution to the political crisis before the transition, the Council proceeded to withdraw the

peace mission — MINUJUSTH — and establish the political mission on 16 October 2019. Sadly, we can see the chaos that has resulted today: a deep-seated constitutional crisis, rampant violence caused by the illicit trafficking and unmeasured proliferation of small arms, light weapons and ammunition, which are contributing significantly to organized crime — including gangs, in turn leading to assaults, kidnappings and murders — and thereby jeopardizing the security gains achieved over the past 15 years by the peace missions and exposing the population to high levels of insecurity.

It has also led to a humanitarian situation that has been exacerbated by the lack of access to basic services for the majority of the population, including, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, a forecast that, by this coming March, 4.6 million Haitians — approximately 40 per cent of the population — will suffer severe food insecurity, with 2.1 per cent of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

This widespread crisis situation is hardly encouraging for BINUH to fully implement its mandate and move forward a sustainable development agenda. We regret that the situation of insecurity has already claimed the life of a BINUH independent contractor. We hope that the decision to withdraw MINUJUSTH in the conditions I have just referred to, without an adequately equipped police force, will serve as a lesson to illustrate what the Council must not repeat in another country.

In order to help the Haitian people at this unfortunate juncture, BINUH must thoroughly examine the root causes of the crisis and subsequently, while working to improve the current conditions, join forces with the country team and the Government in their activities to eradicate the underlying sources of the problems. Accordingly, strategies and projects will be established on sound foundations serving as a pillar based upon which, in the long term, Haitians can take control of their own destiny.

In conclusion, we thank the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the Caribbean Community, the European Union and the Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See in Haiti for their contribution to the dialogue process. We also acknowledge the work of the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, Ambassador Kelly Craft, in

her search for solutions to the Haitian crisis. We call on all national actors to iron out their differences and work together in the search for peaceful and inclusive solutions that will open up the path leading towards better living conditions for all the people of Haiti. The unity of a country in times of crisis must be the focus of concerted efforts to ensure the well-being of a people. We call on the international community not to lose hope in the transformations that its efforts will bring about and to continue supporting the Haitian people to alleviate the humanitarian crisis that is affecting the best of Haiti — its people.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Permit me, on behalf of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to express our sincerest condolences to the Government and the people of Haiti on the deaths of babies and children in last week's fire at the Orphanage of the Church of Bible Understanding in Port-au-Prince. Our prayers and thoughts are with the families of the victims.

We welcome and thank today's briefers for their very informative presentations.

The current situation in Haiti is unquestionably dire, which today's briefings underscored. The international community has a formidable task in providing comprehensive and sustained support to assist Haiti in the alleviation of its difficulties, specifically the ongoing political impasse, which has paralysed the country. The resolution of Haiti's constitutional crisis is paramount in that regard, and the first step towards restoring some semblance of stability in the country.

Accordingly, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines calls on all Haitian parties to urgently engage in inclusive dialogue in a spirit of good faith, with a view to resolving the protracted crisis. The inability to reach an immediate political settlement by the parties can result in the recurrence of violence. Furthermore, the concomitant breakdown of law and order could have detrimental effects in the region.

Given Haiti's kinship in our Caribbean Community (CARICOM) family and our shared history, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, together with CARICOM, is duty-bound to exhaust all possibilities to assist the people of our sister Caribbean nation in finding a peaceful solution to the present crisis. We remain steadfast in that endeavour.

My delegation is mindful of lingering issues that plague Haiti, in particular the institutional shortcomings relating to the rule of law, including the need to reappoint, or replace, 32 judges and address graft and the limited participation of women in political processes, which is far-removed from the Constitution's mandated quota of 30 per cent of women in the Government.

The prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls and the associated lack of accountability and the impunity by members of the society, as well as those assigned by State and international bodies to protect the Haitian people, are exceedingly tragic. Those situations, coupled with the increase in food insecurity, the exploitation of Haitian children and the adverse effects of climate change require urgent attention. As Haiti navigates uncharted waters, having recently transitioned to the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, the cross-cutting nature of peace, security and development needs to be reflected and prioritized.

Before I conclude, it would be remiss of me not to stress the importance of reparations for Haiti. As we commence the second half of the Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024, let us not lose the opportunity to address the genesis of Haiti's underdevelopment and encourage appropriate recompense for Haiti. The fact that Haiti was made to pay, rather than receive, reparations for its experiences of mass enslavement remains lamentable. More pertinently, given that 80 per cent of its national budget was extracted for reparatory payments up until the mid-twentieth century meant that significant vacuums were created in its efforts at nation-building.

The persistent underdevelopment of Haiti, rooted in those past experiences, remains crucial when considering its current reality.

As the first free black nation in the Western hemisphere, Haiti is a cornerstone of our Caribbean civilization. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stands in solidarity with our Haitian brothers and sisters and remains optimistic that, as the country traverses this new course in its unique history, it can achieve greater success in its goals of bringing hope to its people by building peace, stability and sustainability. We must accompany Haiti in its noble pursuit of prosperity and never abandon its people.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-

General for Haiti and Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, Ms. Helen La Lime, for her briefing. I also welcome to today's meeting Ms. Marie Yolène Gilles, Executive Director of Fondasyon Je Klere, in her capacity as civil society representative. I also thank her for her useful insight on the situation in Haiti, in particular the gravity and extent of human rights violations and sexual and gender-based violence.

The current crisis in Haiti is, first and foremost, a political crisis, and France welcomes the efforts of the Special Representative to help resolve it. We deplore the fact that, despite the involvement of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), the political conference for a solution to the crisis, held from 29 to 31 January, in which the country's political forces, the private sector and civil society took part, was unable to reach an agreement that would allow a return to a regular constitutional and democratic framework. I recall that the legislative elections that had been scheduled for 2019 did not take place and that Haiti now lacks any parliamentary representation, which, given Haiti's political history, cannot be sustained. France again calls on President Jovenel Moïse, and all the country's political forces, in particular the opposition, as well as civil society and the private sector, to engage with determination in a genuine national dialogue that places Haiti's interests above political interests and allows for the holding of free and democratic legislative elections.

Certain root causes have led to the current stalemate in Haiti. I will mention three of them.

The first is corruption. For several months, Haitian civil society has clamoured for transparency to combat corruption, which destroys the trust of citizens in their institutions. The fight against corruption and impunity must be an absolute priority for Haitian politicians in order to rebuild the trust of the people.

The second structural challenge is economic hardship. The stalemate in the fall of 2019 had an even greater impact on the country's economic and social situation, which was already very fragile. The growing financial insecurity of millions of Haitians makes it challenging for the various social forces to find a solution to the political crisis. Haiti's international partners should continue to mobilize in order to provide humanitarian aid to meet the most urgent needs.

The third root cause of the stalemate is insecurity. The Haitian society currently lives in a state of extreme insecurity, in particular as a result of gang

activity, as Ms. Gilles so vividly explained. The need for security goes hand in hand with the fight against impunity. I recall, in particular, the La Saline and Bel Air massacres, which gave rise to damning reports by the United Nations. Those responsible must be found, prosecuted and punished in legal proceedings, in line with international human rights standards. All human rights abuses observed during the fall demonstrations must be investigated, whoever the perpetrators might be. The same goes for the perpetrators of sexual violence, as Ms. Gilles mentioned.

We all know that the multidimensional nature of the crisis in Haiti makes its resolution particularly complex. BINUH's mission, as outlined by the Security Council, remains relevant, namely, providing support for political dialogue and governance and strengthening the rule of law, including in the areas of law enforcement, justice and human rights. France commends the work conducted by BINUH, since its establishment four months ago, together with the entire United Nations country team. The Council should therefore remain on high alert and take appropriate measures, especially if the situation in Haiti continues to deteriorate.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Helen La Lime, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, and Ms. Marie Yolène Gilles, Executive Director of Fondasyon Je Klere, for their briefings.

I thank the Secretary-General for his report on the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) (S/2020/123) four months after its inception, replacing the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti. BINUH has turned the page on 15 years of peacekeeping efforts in the country.

The transition from a peacekeeping mission to a special political mission came at a critical time of difficulties and challenges related to the situation in Haiti and the aspirations of the friendly Haitian people. To ensure a successful transition, BINUH must receive full support and the necessary resources to achieve its objectives and make an effective contribution to stability in the Republic of Haiti.

We monitor with concern the stressful political situation in Haiti, which has become increasingly complex since 13 January, given the constitutional crisis and the institutional vacuum in the country, due to a delay in holding the elections and the end of

the Parliament's mandate, which has hampered the adoption of a budget and the regular functioning of State structures and institutions.

Given that the political crisis is linked to major economic and social challenges, its continuation will have negative impact on the security situation in the country. It will fuel societal violence, encourage impunity and violate human rights. Consequently, the crises will compound the daily suffering of the Haitian people and the country will remain unstable.

Against that backdrop, the United Nations and the Security Council have an important role to play in supporting Haiti with a view to breaking this vicious circle and achieving stability and lasting peace. In that context, my delegation believes that there is a need to encourage constructive dialogue between all the political and civil society components in order to address the root causes of the crisis and envisage the practical solution to overcome it. In that regard, we appreciate the tireless efforts of BINUH towards a convergence of views among the political parties, as well as regional efforts with a view to reducing tensions and encouraging parties concerned to start direct discussions and comprehensive national dialogue to resolve the crisis. Such efforts must be carried out with full respect for the sovereignty of Haiti and independence of its national decisions.

We underline the important role of BINUH in continuing the critical work that was carried out by the United Nations. However, we note that its task does not include the peacekeeping element. That is why Haiti must now be responsible for maintaining security, implementing laws and promoting the role of national security institutions in order to realize security and stability. We also commend the efforts of the Haitian National Police in combating crime. We stress the need to address the logistical challenges that the police face by providing them with equipment and continued training programmes. In that context, the support provided by the United Nations and the international community is crucial. In order to make that effort more effective, there is a need to focus efforts on combating corruption and impunity by allowing access to justice and adopting the necessary legislation with a view to promoting the rule of law.

We believe that one of the conditions for achieving stability in Haiti, in addition to comprehensive socioeconomic development, is success of the

democratic transition. That is why the responsibility for resolving the current crisis in Haiti falls on the shoulders of the Haitians, regardless of their political affiliation. They must engage in political dialogue, reject violence and seek consensus. We reiterate our support for BINUH and its joint work with the United Nations country team in implementing the benchmarks in BINUH's mandate. We hope that its work will allow stability and security to return to that friendly country and that the aspirations of the Haitian people will be met.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Ms. Helen La Lime, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, for her briefing on the situation in the country and the work of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH). We agree with the assessment of the situation in Haiti contained in the first report on the work of the special political mission (see S/2020/123) during an extremely important period for the country.

The withdrawal of the United Nations peacekeeping mission coincided with an uptick in political activity. Disagreements between the branches of State power prevented the appointment of a Government and Parliament and it was not possible to hold timely elections. The lack of a fully functioning Government complicates all aspects of life, from ensuring security to meeting normal business and humanitarian needs.

We welcome the emergence of various initiatives to promote direct public dialogue in order to overcome the crisis. Our consistent position has been that sustainable peace, in any country, can be guaranteed only through a frank and inclusive discussion on resolving critical problems and overcoming differences by taking the views of all parties into account, and Haiti is of course no exception. In that context, the mission's efforts to assist Haitians in establishing dialogue are very important. We believe that this should remain a top priority for the United Nations. In such a critical period in the country's history, resources and time must not be squandered on tasks whose success will ultimately depend on the country's political stability.

We take note of the report's assessment of the work of the Haitian National Police. That institution currently has a special responsibility. At a time when the path of mutual understanding has yet to be taken, society must see police as reliable defenders. It goes without saying, however, that the inalienable right of all Haitians to

peaceful assembly and freedom of expression must be exercised in strict compliance with national legislation.

The challenges facing Haiti are not unique. With the withdrawal of the United Nations peacekeeping mission, Haiti's political leadership and law enforcement agencies have not only gained greater independence from international assistance, but have also assumed full responsibility for the country's fate and the security of its citizens. The Government and society have entered a critical phase of development that will not be any easier than before. Awareness of national responsibility will inevitably lead to an increase in social activity.

At the same time, we must avoid simplistic conclusions about the root causes of what is happening, which is primarily due to chronic and unresolved critical socioeconomic problems, rather than the political ambitions of opponents. Regrettably, Haiti is a clear example of how the foundations of governance are undermined in the heat of political struggle. This should have a sobering effect on those who continue to promote reckless schemes to weaken the foundations of statehood in other Latin American countries, with potential risks for the entire continent. We see no alternative to negotiated settlements in overcoming disagreements in the States of the region that have faced domestic political challenges, whether in Haiti or elsewhere. We categorically reject double standards and interference in Latin American affairs.

What is needed today is responsible international support for Port-au-Prince in order to ease social tensions and prevent Haiti from sliding into a full-fledged internal conflict. The primary task of finding a format and modalities for dialogue that are acceptable to all warring parties comes first. In that context, we welcome the targeted efforts of international mediators, which are in line with the priorities of BINUH. We will continue to work to ensure that the outcome of the Security Council's efforts leads to a genuine normalization of the situation in Haiti and to strengthening its sovereignty and self-sufficiency.

Ms. Mogashoa (South Africa): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this very important meeting to enable Council members to interact, for the first time, on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) since its establishment in October 2019.

The delegation of South Africa aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

My delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the informative and detailed briefings of Ms. Yolène Gilles, Executive Director of the Fondasyon Je Klere, and Ms. La Lime, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of BINUH. We also wish to thank Ms. La Lime for her tireless work and efforts in the region. Finally, we welcome the delegation of Haiti to the Chamber.

Given recent developments in Haiti, I wish to focus my statement on the political situation there, the humanitarian conditions and the work of BINUH since its establishment.

On the political situation, we welcome the efforts of the various parties in Haiti, including consultations with civil society, to come up with solutions to the political impasse and to address the unrest across some parts of Haiti. The efforts to appoint a new Prime Minister and the plans to hold parliamentary elections before the end of 2020 and presidential elections in 2021 signal political will to resolve the crisis. Furthermore, we hope that ongoing efforts to increase the participation and role of women in decision-making processes will soon bear fruit, resulting in a more inclusive Government for Haiti.

We welcome the support of regional bodies and configurations such as the Caribbean Community, the Organization of American States and the Haitian Conference of Catholic Bishops, as well as the role of the Holy See and the European Union, and the ongoing role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Development Programme in facilitating dialogue alongside all Haitian stakeholders.

Despite some progress in overcoming the political stalemate, serious challenges remain. The inability to appoint a Parliament is having a negative impact on the situation on the ground. We also take note with concern of the Secretary-General's assessment that polarizing messages broadcast nationally over radio by both opposition and Government supporters, including incitement to violence, had most likely exacerbated political tensions. In that regard, we urge parties to refrain from actions and rhetoric of a divisive nature that will prolong and further deteriorate any prospect for constructive dialogue and negotiation.

South Africa is concerned about the rising levels of violence, including kidnapping and sexual and gender-based violence against women and children. In addition, the impact of the crisis on the justice system and its institutions continue to hamper much-needed judicial and legal reforms, thereby impacting the monitoring of human rights and the maintenance of international law and human rights standards. We welcome the efforts of the Haitian National Police and the support of BINUH in combating that violence. In particular, we commend the efforts of the Haitian National Police to develop a database of sexual assault complaints in order to accelerate case processing. That is an affirmation that the situation is urgent.

Regarding the humanitarian situation, my delegation remains concerned about the negative impact that the political crisis is having on the economy. Although there have been efforts to address food insecurity, they remain insufficient, especially as the situation on the ground continues to worsen. In particular, the limited access to essential services such as clean drinking water, basic health care and medical services, education and training for children and young adults negatively impacts the population and undermines their right to a decent life.

The crises in Haiti are inextricably interlinked. We therefore urge all parties to continue to engage to agree on a new constitution that reflects the aspirations of all Haitians and will contribute to reforms to address the humanitarian situation.

Let me conclude by highlighting my third and final point on the significant contribution of BINUH. We commend the efforts of BINUH in implementing its mandate, particularly in terms of combating community violence as well as sexual and gender-based violence. We urge the United Nations and all Haitian stakeholders to support BINUH, especially in its advisory capacity in working with local authorities.

South Africa will continue to support the presence of BINUH in Haiti as a contribution to the country's stabilization efforts to overcome the current challenges through an inclusive national dialogue in support of national consensus on the country's priorities. The critical role played by the entire United Nations system in addressing the challenges faced by Haiti, including building the capacity of its various institutions, is essential to Haiti's stability and democratization in the long term.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General La Lime for her briefing. We also listened carefully to the briefing by Ms. Gilles.

Today is the first time that the Security Council has been briefed on the situation in Haiti since the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) was established. China appreciates the work of BINUH in helping Haiti to restore stability. Despite the extensive support of the United Nations to maintain peace and promote development in Haiti, the political crisis in the country is yet to be resolved. As the Secretary-General notes in his report (S/2020/123), the political crisis in Haiti has led to increased political polarization and a vacuum in the functioning of national institutions.

Amid the rampant gang violence and frequent violent incidents, the security situation has become of even greater concern. The deteriorating economy has posed enormous challenges to people's livelihoods and has exacerbated the humanitarian situation, about which China expresses its concern.

China calls on the Haitian authorities to commit to resolving differences properly through consultation, strengthening the rule of law and its own development capacities, settling the current political crisis as soon as possible and creating conditions conducive to necessary reforms. All those involved in the Haitian issue should put the interests of the Haitian people first, respond more vigorously to their demands and try to regain their trust.

The international community, particularly countries with significant influence on Haiti, should step up attention to the political, economic and humanitarian situations in Haiti and help it to maintain stability, promote economic growth, improve people's livelihoods and implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Haiti still has a long way to go to achieve stability and development. We hope that the Haitian Government will chart a course towards greater self-reliance and effectively assume responsibility for maintaining national security and stability and promoting economic and social development.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): I too would first like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General La Lime for her comprehensive briefing and Ms. Gilles for her insightful comments.

This is the first time that the Security Council is discussing the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) as a special political mission and is a good opportunity to take stock of where we stand. I would therefore like to limit my statement to four aspects in that regard, since previous speakers have already covered a great deal.

First, I would like to say that we too are worried about the persistent political deadlock and we urge all political actors to find a lasting solution to break the stalemate and alleviate the suffering of the population. We would like to encourage the Haitian Government and opposition to continue an inclusive national dialogue to reach agreement on arrangements that can build societal consensus on the revision of the Constitution, the implementation of reforms and a realistic electoral framework to allow preparations for credible and transparent elections. I would also like to commend Special Representative of the Secretary-General La Lime, the Organization of American States and the Catholic Church for their efforts to assist the parties to engage in direct talks so as to find a solution to the crisis.

Turning to my second point, we are alarmed that the prolonged political stand-off, aggravated by the ensuing economic downturn, has created an enabling environment for gang-related violence. We know that some political actors and businessmen have close ties with criminal gangs. We strongly condemn all actions that undermine the democratic processes and the rule of law and call on all stakeholders to refrain from acts that could contribute to instability. That includes incitement to violence, hate speech and threats.

We deplore the scant progress made in pursuing accountability for recent human rights violations, such as the events in La Saline, Bel Air and Grand Ravine, and corruption scandals. In that context, we would like to highlight the important role of civil society in urging the authorities to ensure accountability. I thank Ms. Marie Yolène Gillis for a very captivating briefing in that regard. Let me also say that we condemn all attacks on civil society and all reprisals against civil society for speaking out in support of the truth and recalling facts on the ground.

Thirdly, I will comment briefly on the issue of the police. Looking back at the progress achieved over the past 15 years, we welcome and salute the increasing self-sufficiency of the Haitian National

Police (HNP) in providing security across the country, while recognizing that certain gaps still exist, for example, in tackling gang-related crimes and managing large-scale civil unrest. We are concerned by reports that underline a lack of trust in the police. It is key that the Haitian National Police improve its relationship with the population through outreach and community-oriented policing and that BINUH continue its efforts in that regard.

We are concerned by the Secretary-General's observation that "the Haitian National Police budget has not increased since 2017, leaving the institution unable to address serious financial and operational challenges" (*S/2020/123, para. 27*). We are also concerned about recent events that point to a tendency of polarization inside the HNP, including acts of violence during public demonstrations of police officers. In our view, it is imperative to further augment the capacity of the Haitian National Police and render it more effective so as not to lose the gains achieved by the peacekeeping operations.

Fourthly and lastly, the transition to a non-peacekeeping United Nations presence in Haiti clearly occurred at a time when the country found itself in the midst of a multidimensional crisis. It is therefore even more important that all United Nations actors closely coordinate their activities in order to best support the country in overcoming this crisis.

Germany emphatically supports the new approach to the benchmarks, which reflects the mutually supportive relationship between the peace and security and development pillars of the United Nations system. We welcome the engagement of the Peacebuilding Fund in Haiti as well as the joint work of BINUH and the United Nations country team in developing an integrated strategic framework to identify the United Nations key areas of intervention in Haiti.

Without addressing the root causes of violence and conflict, such as the deeply entrenched socioeconomic disparities, a lack of access to basic services, impunity for crimes, the dire humanitarian situation and continued human rights violations, the return to lasting political stability that Haiti so desperately needs will not be possible.

We very much support the work of BINUH — a strategic political United Nations presence that will advise and assist the Government of Haiti in tackling the many challenges that lie ahead. However, the future of their

country clearly lies, first and foremost, in the hands of the Haitians themselves. The international community stands ready to contribute and assist them in their efforts to renew the social contract between the Haitian State and its citizens.

Mr. Clay (United Kingdom): I would like to thank both the briefers this afternoon.

The United Kingdom welcomes the Secretary-General's first report (S/2020/123) on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH). The United Kingdom is encouraged that BINUH is making a good start despite the complex and challenging operating environments that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and many other Council members this afternoon have described.

First, with regard to the transition from the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti to BINUH, we welcome the pace at which BINUH has staffed its office and the steps taken towards greater United Nations integration. We are looking forward to the finalization of the integrated strategic framework, which is an opportunity to translate the global United Nations reforms into a more strategic approach on the ground in Haiti that will be more able to support Haiti in addressing the root causes of instability.

With respect to the benchmarks and targets, we welcomed the United Nations efforts to establish baselines and incorporate the benchmarks and targets into the integrated strategic framework. Clear delineation of responsibilities will be critical.

Turning to the substance of the Secretary-General's report, the ongoing political impasse in Haiti remains a source of enormous frustration for the Security Council and, above all, for the Haitian people. It is vital that all parties now re-engage in direct talks to find a solution to the political deadlock. The issues of constitutional reform and credible, transparent elections should be a fundamental element of these talks.

With other State institutions paralysed, maintaining the functionality of the Haitian National Police is absolutely critical. We welcome the progress made in this area by previous United Nations mission, but as other speakers have noted, significant challenges remain. In particular, sustainable solutions are needed to resourcing the Haitian National Police, and we encourage the Haitian leadership to address this challenge as a priority.

On the humanitarian front, the United Kingdom is relieved that there have been no new cases of cholera reported since February 2019. However, we remain deeply concerned by the broader humanitarian situation and especially the acute vulnerability of women and children.

The United Kingdom welcomes the validation of the national action plan for human rights. However, we also remain deeply concerned about the overall human rights and rule-of-law situation in Haiti, in particular with regard to prison conditions, pretrial detention, court functionality and the scant progress in pursuing accountability for recent violations. We also share South Africa's concern regarding incitement to violence on Haitian media. Such incitement risks undermining prospects for progress on the political front and puts Haitian lives at risk.

In conclusion, this new United Nations configuration provides, as we see it, the opportunity for a fundamentally new era of United Nations cooperation with Haiti — one geared towards sustaining peace and advancing development. We urge all parties to do everything possible to ensure that this opportunity is not lost.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I join others in thanking the briefers.

Haiti is facing a continuous political crisis, intertwined with social economic challenges that in turn affect the security situation. A great deal of work has been done, but the challenges remain and need to be addressed. We urge all parties to pursue an open and inclusive dialogue, demonstrate political will and take a constructive approach to discussing the most pressing issues as a road map for reform and a constitutional revision process. That is where the solution can be found and that is what the people of Haiti expect from their political leaders.

It is important to define the electoral calendar and create conditions for legislative elections to be held. In that regard, we welcome the United Nations Development Programme training programme to ensure the success of the forthcoming elections and to help increase women's political participation, since the ratio of women parliamentarians in the legislature is ranked among the lowest in the world.

Mobilizing domestic forces and translating the plans into action enables the international community

to support national efforts. Haiti will require continued assistance in the course of achieving stability and development. The Latin American region offers useful experience in terms of how to build effective and sustainable agreements.

We commend the role and efforts of the Haitian National Police in maintaining peace. Recent reports about the rising level of violence, including kidnapping, hijacking, robberies and gang-related criminality, among other things, are extremely worrisome. We condemn the involvement of gangs in the protests and their contribution to escalating violence. Given the complex and challenging environment, the response capability of the Haitian National Police needs to be increased in order to conduct effective operations against gang members and to fulfil their mandate fully.

We welcome the progress in implementing the 2018 legal aid law. However, despite that progress, more needs to be done in pursuing accountability for recent human rights violations and corruption scandals and to effectively fight impunity in Haiti. Progress is also needed in strengthening access to justice and reparation for victims and respect for human rights.

The recent report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Bel Air incident reveals a trend in the resurgence of gang-related violence in Haiti; lack of accountability for serious human rights violations and abuses, including by the police; as well as the absence of the State in certain urban areas, preventing authorities from ensuring protection. It is important to make full use of the accountability system to ensure that all cases are properly investigated and perpetrators brought to justice.

The goal of a stable Haiti with fully functioning, unified State institutions and authority can be achieved only through a Haitian-led and -owned political process.

Finally, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Helen La Lime, and her team for their important work. We encourage everyone to continue their efforts to work together, rebuild mutual trust and ensure stability and development in Haiti.

Mr. Dinh (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2020/123) on the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH). I also want to thank the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Helen La Lime, and Ms. Marie Yolène Gilles for their informative briefings. My delegation wishes to make the following points.

First, we are concerned about the multifaceted difficulties and instability in Haiti, which have had an adverse impact on the livelihood and enjoyment of human rights of the Haitian people. In the context of the current political impasse, we call on political parties in Haiti to engage in national dialogue towards compromise and find a peaceful way out of the political impasse for the sake of the sustained stability and development of Haiti. We welcome the convergence of views on a number of important issues, as expressed by delegates during the recent political conference, and urge all parties concerned to make further efforts to overcome remaining differences.

Secondly, the Government, Parliament and all political parties bear the primary responsibility to serve the people in the country. In this regard, we look forward to bold and necessary measures by the Haitian authorities to address poverty and socioeconomic instability, prevent violence, organized crime and corruption, and ensure security and the rule of law.

Thirdly, we commend the work of the United Nations Integrated Office and United Nations country team in Haiti. In this connection, we call on the international community and countries in the region, to continue to support socioeconomic development in Haiti, especially viable projects boosting job creation, women's and youth empowerment, education, capacity-building. We welcome and look forward to deeper cooperation between the United Nations and Haiti through a new partnership, as the Secretary-General stated recently.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): At the outset, we would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Helen La Lime, for her important briefing, and all United Nations personnel for their tireless work and dedication. I would also like to thank Ms. Marie Yolène Gilles for her update on recent developments in the situation in Haiti.

We are confident that the people of Haiti can determine their own future, which the Security Council is supporting through the presence of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) as a special political mission in Haiti. The challenges are tremendous. However, putting in place a functioning

Government also gives the Haitian people the chance it deserves to be an independent and thriving State. On that note, I would like to bring the following three points to the attention of the Council.

First, with regard to inclusive national dialogue, we note with deep concern that the mandates of the lower house of parliament, at least a third of the Senate, and all elected municipal officials expired on 13 January 2020, without any renewal. This basically leaves a vacuum in the promotion of dialogue between executive and legislative bodies. The Marriott and Kinam Accords are important steps in the right direction. However, these agreements are not enough. We need a more sincere, effective and concrete plan for inclusive national dialogue. We share the Secretary-General's concern about the urgent need for constitutional and structural reforms in Haiti to deliver economic opportunities and services to its population and improve the legitimacy of its State institutions.

Secondly, with regard to economic and social challenges, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/123), during the 2018-2019 fiscal year, Haiti's gross national product contracted 0.9 per cent, its national currency depreciated by 22 per cent, and inflation reached 20 per cent by the end of the fiscal year. Right now, 3.7 million Haitians are food insecure, including 1 million people in emergency status. Meanwhile, 2.1 per cent of children are affected by severe acute malnutrition, and 3 million children are unable to go to school. The prolonged political standoff, aggravated by the ensuing economic downturn, is creating a downward spiral that encourages gang violence and other related social issues. We also need to address these challenges immediately in order to prevent any undoing of progress made towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thirdly, with respect to BINUH's benchmarks, 33 per cent time of the Integrated Office's mandate has already elapsed, but it is still far away from achieving most of its benchmarks. We need to accelerate progress by further strengthening BINUH's engagement to reach every level of Haiti's Government. We believe that fulfilment of the benchmarks is not BINUH's responsibility alone. BINUH and the United Nations country team serve as catalysts for the country's improvement. The Government and people of Haiti should exercise full ownership and responsibility in striving to fulfil the benchmarks.

We believe there is still hope for Haiti. We welcome the implementation of the 2018 law on legal aid and the finalization of the new national social protection and promotion policy, which aims to reduce poverty and inequality. We also commend the efforts made by the Haitian National Police to maintain stability in the country, including in the war against gang violence, despite the lack of resources, personnel and equipment.

Much has been done, but there are still, of course, many challenges that need to be addressed. The international community needs to continue encouraging and supporting Haiti so it can achieve stability and prosperity.

Mr. Aougi (Niger) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), Ms. Helen La Lime, and Ms. Marie Yolène Gilles, for their briefings.

Over the past few months, we have followed with concern the evolution of the sociopolitical situation in Haiti. In addition to the disagreements over the formation of a Government since 13 January 2020, the parliament has remained non-functional, following the departure of the members of the Chamber as a result of the failure to hold the elections scheduled for 2019. That is regrettable, as it is precisely a peaceful and inclusive electoral process that could bring about the long-awaited stability in Haiti.

At the same time, the socioeconomic situation remains difficult, with a food crisis that continues to give cause for concern. According to the World Food Programme, a third of Haiti's 11 million people are malnourished, and about 1 million of them are severely malnourished. Regrettably, United Nations specialized agencies are experiencing difficulties in mobilizing the funds needed to finance the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan.

My delegation remains convinced that a solution to the current crisis in Haiti can be achieved only with the will of the Haitian people to find consensual solutions through dialogue. In this regard, the support of the international community and of the United Nations is invaluable in accompanying national efforts aimed at restoring and strengthening the population's confidence in public institutions and at creating acceptable conditions for the restoration of lasting peace and stability in the country, making it possible, *inter alia*,

to attract foreign investment, which the country greatly needs in order to revive its economy.

My delegation encourages the Haitian authorities to make efforts towards national reconciliation and appeals to all stakeholders to refrain from violence and resolve their differences by peaceful means. We urge the authorities to address the underlying causes of instability and poverty and ensure that justice is done for the violence, crimes and human rights violations and that those responsible are held accountable before the courts.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the appeal to the members of the Security Council on the need to find an urgent solution to the political, economic and humanitarian situation being experienced by the Haitian people.

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

We are very concerned about the situation in Haiti. The political impasse has contributed to a socioeconomic and humanitarian crisis that is hitting the most vulnerable hard. Belgium stresses the importance of political responsibility and urgently calls for an inclusive and open dialogue with a view to organizing free, fair and transparent elections.

According to a United Nations survey, nine out of ten Haitians support dialogue. That is a strong message to the political class. Haitian civil society organizations are playing a constructive role, and we commend such organizations as the Fondasyon Je Klere for their important work. The 2018-2019 demonstrations have demonstrated the Haitian people's expectations of good governance and the fight against corruption. This strong involvement of the Haitian people must be taken into account through social dialogue.

The Government must address the root causes of instability and poverty in the country. All parties must refrain from violence and resolve disputes by peaceful means. Political negotiations should be based on the broad consensus that Haiti needs constitutional and structural reforms to provide economic opportunities for its people and improve the legitimacy of its public institutions. Impunity and insecurity are some of the main sources of frustration. The judiciary needs to be reformed, corruption must be combated and human rights protection improved. Only then can the political elite regain the trust of the population.

We note that the Haitian National Police is working in difficult circumstances. There is a need to further strengthen monitoring and accountability systems. Intimidation and attacks against journalists and civil society representatives must stop, and gang violence must be urgently addressed. Noting the attack on the offices of the Fondasyon Je Klere management yesterday, we remind the Haitian authorities of the importance of protecting the voices of civil society from reprisals.

The prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence remains alarming. It is therefore vital to put an end to impunity, and we call for urgent judicial follow-up on the inquiries into the massacres, namely those committed in La Saline and Bel Air, and into the allegations of corruption concerning the PetroCaribe funding scheme. We welcome the fact that the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights are attaching great importance to this issue. We are encouraged by the progress made in the validation of the national action plan for human rights.

Concerning the work of the United Nations, we support the work of BINUH and of the agencies and funds present in Haiti. The transition towards a new institutional presence in Haiti must be a gradual one, and we call on the Haitian parties to make full use of the mission's good offices. We encourage BINUH to work closely not only with other international stakeholders, including the European Union, but also with Haitian civil society. We eagerly await the completion of the integrated strategic framework. The indicators proposed by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2020/123) will allow us to monitor the progress that the country is making in the key areas of the mission's mandate.

In conclusion, Belgium reiterates its commitment to strive alongside the people and the Government of Haiti team to bring about a democratic, peaceful and safe future for the country. We now await tangible measures from the authorities to resolve the political crisis.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Haiti.

Mr. Gaspard (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to hail the Belgian presidency and thank it for having invited the Haitian delegation to take part in this Security Council meeting in order for it to express

the views of the Government of the Republic of Haiti on the first report submitted by the Secretary-General (S/2020/123) in accordance with resolution 2476 (2019), which establishes the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH).

I wish also to congratulate the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Helen La Lime, for her excellent briefing and to convey to her words of encouragement from the Haitian authorities, in particular from the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Jovenel Moïse, for the dedication with which she has carried out her tireless work in the Haitian context. I commend also Marie Yolène Gilles for her commitment to human rights in Haiti.

My delegation wishes also to take this opportunity to warmly thank the members of the Security Council for their constructive comments, which reflect the unwavering solidarity of this important organ of the Organization with the Haitian cause.

The presentation of this first report comes at an important time. Indeed, it closes the book on 15 years of the consecutive presence of a peacekeeping operation in Haiti and opens a new chapter in the cooperation between the United Nations and Haiti. The report also comes at a time when the country is facing a severe economic and social crisis, with unpredictable consequences that threaten social cohesion.

The report of the Secretary-General stresses in particular the alarming and accelerating deterioration of the economic and social situation in the country. The gross domestic product, for instance, is estimated to have contracted by 0.9 per cent for 2018/2019. The national currency, as the representative of Indonesia underlined, has depreciated by 22 per cent compared to the United States dollar in 2019. In addition, fiscal revenue is weak and dropped by 4.3 per cent compared to the previous fiscal year, and there has been massive job loss and a corresponding increase in unemployment, in particular among young people.

World Bank predictions are very worrisome, as they foresee economic contraction of 1.4 per cent in 2020 and 0.5 per cent in 2021. And yet the investments made in 2017/2018 in various sectors — agriculture, tourism and infrastructure — had made it possible to forecast growth of 3.4 per cent, according to reports of the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of the Republic of Haiti.

However, that goal could not be reached because of the violence and political upheaval. The year 2018 ended with growth 1.4 per cent lower than forecast. On this point, the Government of the Republic of Haiti has taken due note of all the concerns expressed in the report by the Secretary-General and endorses the main conclusions contained therein.

With regard to political governance, the Haitian Government noted with great satisfaction the focus on the dialogue initiatives launched by the Head of State in order to achieve an agreement among the main actors of the country, in particular those of the opposition, the business sector and civil society. Discussions are continuing this week.

A comprehensive agreement has not yet been reached among all actors. However, it is important to note that significant progress has been achieved in inducing political actors to sit at the negotiating table and engage in dialogue on the need to overcome the current political impasse. On this issue, we welcome the fact that the report has mentioned the main round of negotiations that have already been held by the actors concerned. It is also important to mention that other progress has been achieved, in terms of, for example, the establishment of a new national unity Government; the revision of the Haitian Constitution; and the need to reach an agreement on the issue of elections, in other words, to reach a comprehensive agreement on political governance. In that context, the Haitian delegation also welcomes the role played by BINUH in this process of dialogue. Tangible progress is still possible.

The fight against community violence is a major challenge, because the political crisis has led to a climate of insecurity in the country that threatens to undermine social cohesion. The figures contained in the report clearly demonstrate the scale of the phenomenon and the insufficiency of the measures taken so far and of the resources mobilized to reduce insecurity in Haiti. The Haitian National Police, with 15,000 professional police officers and limited operational capabilities, has done its best to address the situation, but it still requires more training and sufficient resources and equipment in order to be able to effectively protect and serve all segments of the Haitian population. Restoring State authority over the whole territory is more urgent than ever.

It is undeniable that the political crisis has overall had a negative impact on the functioning of the

judiciary, hindering the smooth operation of the courts and consequently aggravating the issue of prolonged pretrial detention. We are aware of the fact that a great deal remains to be done to irreversibly ensure the independence of the judiciary. As an example, I wish to mention the Superior Council of the Judiciary, which represents a vital step towards achieving the independence of the judiciary in Haiti.

The same can be said about the human rights situation. While numerous violations have been reported, it is also true that the country has made significant progress in this area and is abiding by its international commitments by, in particular, cooperating with various regional and international bodies. The recent on-site visit to Haiti by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) is part of that approach. The same goes for the holding of its 175th session, which will take place in Haiti from 1 to 10 March. On the sidelines of that session, consultations will be held between the Government, civil society and IACHR, the objective of which is to establish an ongoing dialogue among those bodies in order to strengthen the Haitian State's prevention and control capacity with regard to human rights violations. Regarding the killings, particularly those at La Saline, it is important to remember that since 4 January 2019 the investigating office has been requisitioned to report. Investigations are mandatory in criminal matters. Three reports were therefore issued by the General Directorate of Judicial Police in January, February and April 2019 based on the evidence examined. On the basis of those reports, 16 people have already been arrested in the context of the investigation. Rulings should be issued shortly. The matter of youth unemployment mentioned in the report is a major and recurrent problem in the country. It is of the utmost concern to the Haitian authorities. I would like to particularly inform Council members of a programme implemented by the President of the Republic with a view to finding lasting solutions to the issue. It notably involves granting loans to enable many young entrepreneurs to start small businesses. The Government of the Republic is encouraged by the emphasis in section IX of the report, entitled "Conduct and discipline", on zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation and abuse committed in the context of the United Nations. Those heinous acts, which have added to the suffering of the country's most vulnerable people, can only tarnish the image of our Organization.

The perpetrators, wherever they come from, must be prosecuted and punished so that the ideals of the United Nations can be fully realized.

In addition, the Republic of Haiti continues to be concerned about the many cases of abandonment by United Nations peacekeepers of fatherless children who live in abject poverty and the thousands of cholera victims who await compensation. In that regard, there is a need for greater rigour and transparency in the Organization's activities, particularly in its efforts to provide assistance to all victims. The Haitian authorities are fully aware of the complexity and fragility of the country's political situation and its negative impact on all aspects of national life. There must be genuine interaction among and an extreme effort by the country's key political actors to find a positive solution to this crisis. All Haitian actors are aware of that. That is the best way to bring together all the country's leading forces, which, despite the tireless efforts of the Head of State, has still not been achieved, since the main responsibility for jointly seeking, in the context of a genuine dialogue, positive and lasting solutions to the issues that undermine the security and the economic, social and environmental stability of our country lies primarily with us and us alone — in short, the genuine civic involvement of all those affected by the crisis.

It is therefore up to us to set and maintain the course. Hence, the urgent need for the country's key political forces to reach an agreement on political, economic, social and institutional governance. The Head of State, His Excellency Jovenel Moïse, is focusing on that. However, to achieve that, the Government is counting on consistent, appropriate and enhanced international support, for the mobilization of adequate resources is critical to realizing the objectives that should restore mutual trust and the security, stability and long-term development of the country. Indeed, the current humanitarian crisis facing the country means that the strong, coordinated, harmonized and unconditional support of its key partners remains important.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite members to consultations to continue our discussions on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.