



Security Council

Distr.: General
1 March 2021

Original: English

Letter dated 24 February 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by Ms. Helen Meagher La Lime, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti; and Ms. Vivianne Roc, Director of Plurielles Haiti, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines — on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council, namely, Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia, as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines — the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on “The question concerning Haiti” convened on Monday, 22 February 2021. A statement was also delivered by His Excellency Mr. Jovenel Moïse, President of Haiti.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Barbara Woodward**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, Helen Meagher La Lime**

It is an honour to once more have an opportunity to address you and provide an update on the situation in Haiti. Despite the precarious calm that currently pervades the country, the efforts of part of the opposition to unseat President Moïse by 7 February, as well as the actions taken by the executive in reacting to an alleged coup attempt and to the announcement by a senior judge of his appointment as Haiti's interim Head of State, have further hardened the positions of the principal actors in the political crisis that have for too long affected the lives of the Haitian population. As the country prepares to enter a tense pre-electoral period, the polarization that has defined most of President Moïse's term in office has become even more acute, as signs of a shrinking civic space abound and an already alarming humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate.

The institutional crisis in which the country is plunged since Parliament ceased to function in January 2020, following the expiration of the terms of all Lower Chamber parliamentarians and a majority of senators, without legislative elections having been held, risks growing deeper as relations between the executive and the judicial branches of power appear increasingly fraught, and President Moïse continues to govern by decree.

Whereas, in recent months, the opposition had been unsuccessful in mobilizing much popular support for its campaign to oust the President, the latter's recent issuing of decrees effectively retiring three Court of Cassation judges and appointing their replacements prompted several magistrates' associations to launch an open-ended strike that further threatens to paralyse an already dysfunctional judicial system. In addition, on 14 February, some 3,000 demonstrators marched peacefully in the streets of Port-au-Prince to denounce what they deem to be a looming risk of return to authoritarian rule.

I mentioned that there are mounting concerns over the shrinking of civic space in the country. The overly broad definition of terrorism articulated in a 26 November decree on public security — to include lesser offenses such as vandalism and obstructing roads — along with an increase in both the threats directed at, and attacks on, journalists, lawyers, judges and human rights defenders, all risk chilling the public debate and curtailing such inalienable rights as those of freedom of speech, freedom of the press and peaceful assembly.

Similarly, the humanitarian situation in the country is increasingly dire. The latest estimates indicate that some 4.4 million people will need humanitarian assistance in 2021, overwhelmingly as a result of an increase in acute food insecurity. While factors such as the coronavirus disease pandemic, its economic impact, gang violence and the passage of tropical storm Laura contributed to exacerbating humanitarian needs in 2020, underlying drivers are closely correlated with persistent sociopolitical tensions and chronic development deficits.

It is against this complex and potentially volatile backdrop that progress continues to be made in preparing for the various electoral events scheduled to take place this year. The Provisional Electoral Council has now set up its offices in Haiti's 10 regions, thus enabling logistics and operational planning to start in earnest. Furthermore, the Haitian Government has contributed \$20 million to the United Nations-managed electoral basket fund to finance both the purchase of voting materials and the training of electoral personnel, as well as to cover the operational

and logistics costs for the holding of a referendum on a new constitution, the draft text of which was made public on 1 February.

Yet much remains to be done. The pace and scope of consultations on the constitutional project need to be greatly enhanced. Indeed, while there exists a general consensus among Haitian stakeholders and the general population on the need to change the country's current charter — viewed by many as one of the root causes of Haiti's chronic instability, amid the polarized climate — the process chosen by the Government to enact such change is still perceived by some as lacking legitimacy. All sectors of Haitian society, including political parties, the private sector, civil society, churches, women groups and the diaspora, should be provided with ample opportunity to debate and contribute to the draft text. Moreover, if Haitian voices are to be heard well, additional efforts need to be expended to ensure that more of Haiti's citizens are registered and issued with the new national identification card that will allow them to vote. The Government must provide the Office of National Identification with the support it needs to rapidly scale up its registration drive. Finally, despite the Government's initial contribution, the entire electoral process remains starkly underfunded. This situation requires the urgent attention of Haiti's international partners, lest the legislative, presidential and local polls be delayed.

Above all else, a minimal consensus among relevant political stakeholders would greatly contribute to creating an environment conducive to the holding of the constitutional referendum and subsequent elections. The United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti stands ready, in accordance with its mandate, to support all genuine endeavours to foster such an outcome. The Haitian people deserve the opportunity to express themselves through the ballot box in an appeased climate and to actively decide on the direction their country will take, free from the fear of intimidation and political violence.

In this respect, it can count on an increasingly professional police force, whose close to 15,000 men and women deployed across the country strive to improve public safety. To be sure, meeting the security challenges associated with the holding of the referendum and the elections will represent a crucial test for the Haitian National Police, just as the threats posed by some of its disgruntled officers' association with criminal groups, such as "Fantom 509", continue to detract from its performance. However, with strategic advice from the United Nations and appropriate support from both national authorities and international partners, I am confident that this institution, which lies at the heart of the rule of law and stability in Haiti, will continue to develop its capacity in accordance with international human rights and policing standards.

Conversely, I am deeply concerned with the recent resurgence in kidnappings as well as the persistent impunity and lack of accountability for serious crimes in Haiti. To address these scourges, which greatly contribute to the country's instability, authorities must demonstrate their commitment and capacity to arrest and prosecute both criminals and perpetrators of human rights violations, as well as to take concrete actions to protect citizens.

Despite the large sums and indefatigable efforts invested in Haiti's development over the past 25 years, the country's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals appears to have stalled, and in some cases even backslid. It is evident that development effectiveness and impact in Haiti remain very low. Moving forward, improved collaboration and trust between the Government and international partners on Haiti's structural problems will be essential to better prioritize areas of intervention and develop effective integrated solutions to Haiti's challenges.

Nevertheless, even as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean forecasts that Haiti's economy will contract by 3 per cent in 2021 and that

the worst economic crisis to affect the region in 100 years will adversely impact the country's post-coronavirus disease recovery, only a democratic renewal, resulting from the prompt holding of credible, transparent and participatory elections, can provide Haiti with the opportunity to overcome its protracted political crisis and allow its society and leaders to focus their attention on undertaking the governance and economic reforms necessary to set the country back on the path towards sustainable development.

Annex II

Briefing by the Director of Plurielles Haiti, Ms. Vivianne Roc

[Original: French]

Insecurity is a word I know all too well; I have dealt with it since childhood. I was 6 years old when I had to witness a man's death. All I remember are the shots fired and the man lying on the ground, soaked in his own blood. I was terrified that day. I did not understand what had just happened, and neither did anyone bother to explain it to me.

That was my very first scene of violence but, lamentably, would not be my last. A few months after that incident, my family moved, and, unfortunately, nothing changed; indeed, things got worse. Later, in 2006, we had to abandon our home as quickly as possible because of fighting among gangs. We had to flee, or else we could have become part of the collateral damage. I was just a child at the time, so did not understand why I could no longer go home; all I knew was that I had to accept it and not talk about it, to avoid being singled out at school as a child who lived in a ghetto. For that was my life, and I was terribly ashamed of it.

Day by day, banditry and gang violence became ever-larger features of my life, until they became almost normal. Clashes between gangs are frequent, much more so than those between gangs and law enforcement. The area where I live has become a so-called zone of lawlessness. Everyone knew what was happening there but no one dared speak about it, much less intervene.

There have been more than a few deaths in front of my home. The blood always eventually disappears from the asphalt but never from my memory. Many people have died, including some friends, some neighbours or just someone familiar at a distance.

But, despite all of this, we have stayed, in the hope that the area could change — that, despite all this violence it was a good place to live. That was until last year, when everything got worse and I had to flee my home yet again. Last year I had to live through things I would never wish upon anyone.

The young woman before you today is outraged by the winds of insecurity that batter her country. She is part of no political movement, makes no public appearances and certainly seeks no notoriety. She is simply tired of living in fear. The little girl inside her is simply fed up of living in fear of getting hit by a bullet, of getting attacked or of being kidnapped. Today I am no longer ashamed of where I come from. I want to be the voice of the young people of the ghetto. I am taking on the realities of my life, and I want to fight and show the way to other young people who share them. My name is Vivianne Roc. I am 23 years old. And I live in Haiti.

Thus I introduce you to Plurielles, an ecofeminist organization of young people that recently joined the United Network of Young Peacebuilders to help improve the climate of peace and security in Haiti. As an organization, Plurielles is devoted to helping women become independent, to gender equity, to youth equality and to promoting peace and volunteer work in Haiti.

Plurielles, believing in youth as an important and essential resource for development, dedicates itself to developing strategies to engage young people and facilitate their participation in the development process. Established in 2010 following the devastating earthquake, the organization focuses its resources on helping young people and their communities build independence with a view to developing plans and activities to solve socioeconomic and environmental problems. Our programming includes large awareness-raising campaigns, skills development

for young people on conflict management, training for community leaders on violence, conflict and the causes of violence.

Plurielles seeks to contribute what it can to this society and to these young people who, like me, have experienced horrific things, to these young people who have things to say, or are even looking for answers and want to emerge from the darkness. A message to young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods: “You are no longer alone: Plurielles, with the help of the United Network of Young Peacebuilders, is there to support you”. There are many young people like me in Haiti who, despite their experiences, obstacles, risks, poverty and the gang culture, are working to uphold the values of peace, equality and social justice. Some do so through organizations such as the Youth Advisory Council, another member of the United Network of Young Peacebuilders.

We face numerous challenges in our work and in everyday lives in Haiti. Allow me therefore to put forward the following several recommendations, which I hope will be given serious consideration by the Haitian Government and the international community.

Rehabilitation centres for young prisoners should be established, to help them learn skills so they can find work, have a place to live after having served their sentences and reintegrate into society.

Social and educational programmes should be developed to allow young people to socialize and learn about subjects such as peacebuilding, human rights and conflict transformation.

Controls should be strengthened against trafficking in illicit arms and substances in Haiti.

Support centres for the victims of gang persecution and violence, also providing psycho-emotional support for those close to them, should be set up.

A call centre for women suffering domestic violence should be set up to provide assistance to them in the fastest way possible.

Funds should be made available to women who have suffered domestic violence to put distance between them and perpetrators and to help them become independent.

Funding should be provided to organizations like mine that work towards more sustainable peace.

Protection networks for young people building peace at the local level should be established so they may continue their important work without fear on a daily basis. Without them, we truly have nothing.

It is thanks to my journey that I have come to be here before you to share my message. I hope my statement touches you and does not put me in danger. While I feel a little of that fear I described earlier, I also feel hopeful, as you can hear in the message of my voice — hopeful that among the powerful are those brave enough to push for the changes needed for lasting peace in Haiti. It is time to speak up for Haiti. You can help us. You must help us. “Nou Bouke”.

Annex III**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Geng Shuang**

[Original: Chinese]

China thanks Special Representative of the Secretary-General Meagher La Lime for her briefing. I listened carefully to the presentations by the representatives of Haitian civil society, and as I will to that of the President of Haiti.

Political gridlock continues in Haiti. The security situation is deteriorating. The coronavirus disease pandemic is complicated by economic and social difficulties. Rising violent crime is intertwined with social unrest. This has brought tremendous suffering to the people. Haiti is still trapped in multiple political, economic social and humanitarian crises. The Haitian people seem to have lost hope for the future. The Haitian Government and leaders should be held primarily responsible for such hopelessness and even despair. For a long time, Haitian political parties have engaged in endless feuds. Politicians have done nothing at all. Corruption and abuse of power persist in defiance of their prohibition, and national governance has almost failed.

This year is a crucial one for Haiti. The Secretary-General describes it in his report (S/2021/133) as a watershed moment for Haiti. The constitutional referendum to be held in April and the subsequent parliamentary presidential and local elections will, to a large extent, shape the development of the Haitian political situation in the future and fate of the Haitian people.

China supports the call of the Secretary-General and strongly urges all political parties in Haiti to put the interests of the country and the people first, abandon self-interest, take up their responsibilities, listen carefully to the views of people of all walks of life and promote the constitutional referendum and elections based on broad political consensus and through dialogue and consultations, so as to create the conditions for the swift restoration of the country's political stability and the achievement of security and development. They should not once again let the Haitians down or fail the expectation and help of the international community.

China appreciates the dedication and contributions of the United Nations to helping the Haitian people and supports the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) in its continued mediation efforts to promote political dialogue in Haiti and the successful holding of elections. At the same time, years of experience and lessons have shown that, unless all political parties in Haiti assume their responsibilities, demonstrate political will and work together for national stability and development, any external efforts and help will be of no avail.

Since the 1990s, the United Nations has invested huge resources in helping Haiti out of crisis. Over the past 30 years, the Security Council successfully deployed the United Nations Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti, and now BINUH. The total cost of those operations has reached nearly \$8 billion. In addition, various agencies of the United Nations system and international donors and partners have throughout devoted enormous effort to helping Haiti restore stability, achieve development and protect human rights. The accumulated investment is a staggering amount. It pains us to see that all those investments seem not to have been cherished and used wisely, and neither have they yielded the desired results.

I would like to stress again that there is no external solution to the Haitian problem. We should learn the lessons, comprehensively assess the situation in the light of what is happening, ponder seriously the future presence of the United Nations in Haiti and avoid endless and fruitless investment.

Annex IV**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Estonia to the United Nations**

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary General Helen Meagher La Lime and Ms. Vivianne Roc for their informative briefings today and for their valuable work. I also welcome the presence of His Excellency President Jovenel Moïse.

Estonia is concerned about the lack of political stability in Haiti. At this critical time, more effort and responsibility are required from all parties to demonstrate their political will. We call on all political actors to resolve their differences through peaceful dialogue.

The elections process and announcement of the electoral calendar provide an opportunity that should be used wisely to overcome long lasting political crisis and restore democracy and stability in Haiti. It is crucial that the referendum on the constitutional amendments in April as well as the legislative and presidential elections later this year be conducted peacefully. The success of the elections requires good technical preparation. It is especially critical to ensure a smooth process of citizen registration.

At the same time, it is important to improve the security situation. Recent reports about the rising level of violence, killings, kidnappings and gang-related criminality are extremely worrisome. We welcome the appointment of the new Director-General ad interim of the Haitian National Police. We urge that efforts be redoubled in order to stop gang-related criminal activities. It is important to protect an already-shrinking civic space by ensuring that people engaging in the public debate can do so without endangering their lives and security.

We recognize the efforts of the General Inspectorate of the Haitian National Police to investigate the allegations. However, while some law-enforcement officials have received administrative sanctions as a result of misconduct, the judiciary has yet to hold Haitian National Police officers accountable, despite the several criminal investigations opened in recent years. We remain concerned by the lack of progress in judicial investigations of the emblematic Grand-Ravine, La Saline, Bel Air and other cases. Strikes by judicial staff and prosecutors seriously affected the right of access to justice. Detention conditions remain dire, despite sustained efforts by stakeholders to improve them.

We stress the importance of enhancing accountability and call on the Government of Haiti to improve the justice system and ensure that all cases are properly investigated and perpetrators brought to justice.

We urge the Government to adopt the national action plan on human rights, which has been pending since 2019.

To conclude, I would like to thank Special Representative Helen Meagher La Lime and her team for their tireless work. We remain hopeful that continued effort by all parties will bring about a better future for Haiti. The Haitian people deserve a stable State with democracy, the rule of law and sustainable development.

Annex V**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nathalie Broadhurst**

[Original: English and French]

I would like, first of all, to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Meagher La Lime, for her very enlightening presentation, as well as Ms. Roc for her moving testimony, and to welcome the presence among us of President Jovenel Moïse.

France notes with deep concern the deterioration of the situation in Haiti. As we have said on numerous occasions, the solution to the current crisis is political. And as we know, in the absence of elections, the Parliament has not been in session for an entire year. The Haitian authorities govern by decree and some of those decrees are a source of concern, notably the one creating the National Intelligence Agency, the one broadening the charge of terrorism and the one that led to the dismissal of three judges who, according to the Constitution, cannot be removed. I have no reservation; in stating that this situation is not sustainable in the long term.

Elections are slated for this fall, which is a step in the right direction. However, those elections must contribute to a way out of the crisis and not add to the current confusion. In our view, three conditions must be met in order for Haiti to return to the path of stability. First, minimum security conditions must allow for the elections to take place in satisfactory conditions. Secondly, the authorities must speed up the distribution of identification cards to ensure the broadest possible electoral participation. Thirdly, there must be an impartial electoral judge so that the results are accepted by all.

A constitutional revision has also been announced. It is not our place to speak about that process. We only hope that the country's stakeholders will have the opportunity to debate the text, its long-term institutional implications and, above all, ensure that it will not lead to further delays in the various elections.

In terms of security and respect for human rights, the authorities must do more. Allow me to ask this straightforward question: How is it possible that Jimmy Cherizier is still walking free today? Those responsible for the La Saline and Bel Air massacres must be brought to justice. I also note that the investigation into the assassination of Monferrier Dorval is not making progress. The fight against impunity must be the priority of the authorities.

Given the resurgence of violence and, in particular, the increasing number of gang, the Haitian State must redouble its efforts. The resources of the Haitian National Police must be further increased and consolidated, and it must be beyond reproach in ensuring respect for the rule of law.

We must look at the situation with clear eyes. The credibility of State institutions is severely eroded in Haiti today, particularly because of corruption cases that are ruining the population's trust. Almost four million Haitians are living in extreme poverty and suffering from food insecurity, as several of my colleagues have pointed out. This situation can only increase social fractures and tensions.

The work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti team is indispensable, and we pay tribute to them. Their work, in support of political dialogue and governance, is essential.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm that France, in its national capacity, but also through the action of the European Union and the International Organization of La Francophonie, stands — more than ever — alongside Haiti and the Haitians.

Annex VI

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, Ravindra Raguttahalli

At the outset, let me welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Jovenel Moïse, President of Haiti, in the meeting. I would like to join others in thanking Ms. Helen Meagher La Lime, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for her briefing on recent developments in Haiti. I also thank Ms. Vivianne Roc for bringing the perspective of civil society to today's meeting.

Today's briefings provides us with an opportunity to assess the situation in Haiti and the activities of the United Nations mission in fulfilling its Chapter VI mandate, in particular with regard to the six benchmarks concerning the integrated strategic framework.

My delegation takes positive note of all that Haiti has achieved in the last decade, following the devastating earthquake of 2010. Haiti's recovery from the earthquake and cholera epidemic, the holding of elections in 2010 and 2015, the peaceful transfer of power and increased policing capabilities reflect the resilience of the Haitian people. We also acknowledge the significant role played by the international community and bilateral partners in supporting the Haitian recovery.

Nonetheless, the Haitian people continue to suffer from the effects of a multidimensional crisis that, unfortunately, has been prolonged for decades. Today more than ever, they require the unwavering support of the international community. As reflected in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2021/133) and as evident from recent political developments, Haiti is facing serious political and security challenges. In addition, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has also adversely impacted the economic and humanitarian situation. Recent developments reflect the fragile nature of the political situation and the lack of trust among political actors. Moreover, the fact that there is no agreed objective interpretation of Haitian constitutional law has only accentuated political differences, thereby adversely impacting institutional stability, good governance and the rule of law.

This year will be critical for Haiti, in its efforts to build on the democratic gains made in the past decade. Political stability is fundamental to effective governance to stimulate overall socioeconomic development. In order to achieve long-term political stability, it is crucial that all stakeholders engage in national dialogue and work towards conducting peaceful and credible legislative and presidential elections.

In that regard, let me make following observations.

First, we have taken note of the appointment of the Independent Consultative Constitutional Committee. We hope that a consultative process, involving all stakeholders, will be undertaken to reach decisions that adequately reflect the hopes and aspirations of the people of Haiti.

Secondly, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration project being carried out under the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund is helping to address the issue of armed gang violence. We hope for the early implementation of the national community violence reduction strategy by the Haitian authorities. We also welcome steps to strengthen the Haitian National Police so as to empower it to deal with gang violence and improve its community approach.

Thirdly, progress in justice reforms is critical to regain the trust of the people. In that regard, we note the role played by the General Inspectorate of the Haitian National Police with regard to police reform. Similar proactive initiatives in other spheres of public security and criminal justice would also be welcomed.

Fourthly, on benchmark 5 — unemployment, youth and other vulnerable groups — and benchmark 6 — basic social service delivery and resilience — we take note of the activities of the mission to support Government efforts and encourage it to continue its activities, in line with the mandate.

India stands ready to work with the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti and the United Nations country team to carry out their mandate, especially in priority areas such as the delivery of justice, the convening of elections and the reduction of violence, through capacity-building and institution-building activities, with full national ownership. We join the call for all stakeholders to engage in national dialogue to bring political stability, usher in constitutional reforms and conduct elections peacefully in order to promote democratic institutions in the country with the support of international community.

India has a long-standing relationship with Haiti and its people. India has been a major troop-contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping operations in Haiti and contributed three formed police units to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti in 2008 and the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti in 2017. The final batch of the Indian contingent of Assam Rifles departed Haiti in August 2019, and was awarded a medal by the United Nations in recognition of their valuable work in the country.

India contributed to the efforts of the Haitian authorities to deal with the devastating earthquake in 2010. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, India contributed \$5 million to the Government of Haiti for relief measures, including the construction of a housing colony known as Mahatma Gandhi Village, as a token of our solidarity with the people of Haiti. India also provided emergency financial aid to Haiti in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew in October 2016.

In July 2020, a project of \$1 million was approved under the India-United Nations Development Programme fund for the installation of solar pumps in Haiti. India has also been assisting Haiti in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, having provided hydroxychloroquine, essential medicines and protective gear in July, and is now in the process of sending 10,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines. We look forward to continuing our support to the people of Haiti in their efforts to emerge more resilient from the current challenging times.

Annex VII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, Geraldine Byrne Nason**

[Original: English and French]

I would like to join others in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Meagher La Lime, for her briefing. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Moïse, President of the Republic of Haiti. I also welcome Ms. Roc to the Council this afternoon.

That today's meeting has a sense of urgency is undeniable. The situation in Haiti, as described in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/133), deserves — and I would say, demands — the attention of the Council. For too long, the Haitian people have suffered from a series of intertwined and interconnected crises. They are political, constitutional, security, economic and, of course, humanitarian crises.

Given the time constraints, I will focus on three points.

First, there is an unavoidable need for genuine, inclusive dialogue. We are all too aware today that the climate in Haiti remains extremely fraught. For any of us, confidence in the rule of law, in a system of governance, is the bedrock of a functioning democracy. The cancellation of legislative elections, the dissolution of the Parliament and the frequent and wide-reaching use of presidential decrees risk deepening mistrust in the political system and widening gaps among political actors.

The year ahead offers Haiti an opportunity to restore and revitalize its democracy. It is essential that the citizen registration process is conducted transparently and effectively, ensuring that all Haitians eligible to vote are given the opportunity to do so. It is particularly critical that the voices of women and youth be heard.

To be clear, we believe that the Government's ambitious electoral calendar can be successful only if trust and engagement are built across the political spectrum. We urgently call on all parties to engage in an inclusive dialogue. The process of constitutional reform must be sensitively and carefully managed, including through appropriate public consultation. Once again, that consultation should include the voices of women and youth.

We recognize the protection of civil society space, including the right to peaceful protest, as fundamental to a flourishing democracy. We regret the recent arrest of political and community leaders, and call for the protection of journalists and of peaceful protesters. We are particularly concerned about the recent redefinition of terrorism to encompass acts of legitimate protest.

Secondly, as a result of the deteriorating security situation, Haiti's most vulnerable citizens are suffering the most. The reported scale of homicide, rape, abductions and kidnappings is, quite frankly, shocking. Those responsible for such crimes must be held accountable. The impact of the violence and subsequent impunity on women, youth and children are of deep concern. The 95.9 per cent increase in human rights abuses registered by the United Nations mission itself is particularly stark. No community should live — or be expected to live — with that level of violence and fear. We urge the Government to prioritize the adoption of the national action plan on human rights and the endorsement of the national community violence reduction strategy.

Ireland welcomes the reported policing reform gains, but remains concerned about ongoing challenges faced by the judicial and penal systems. An end to impunity and unimpeded access to justice are a prerequisite if there is to be any chance of building trust among the people of Haiti. The removal from office of three Supreme Court judges this month is worrying, and we strongly oppose attempts to undermine the role and independence of the judiciary.

On a more positive note, I want to recognize and welcome the important role of the Peacebuilding Fund in Haiti. The invaluable projects supporting access to legal and judicial aid services for women and youth facilitate their engagement in peacebuilding initiatives. That is really how durable and sustainable peace is achieved — not through all our high-minded statements here, but from the grass roots up and with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and active involvement of young people. The people of Haiti deserve nothing less than a peaceful life, free from violence and intimidation.

My third point relates to the difficulties in the delivery of basic services and the chronic humanitarian needs of more than 4.4 million Haitians, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report. We commend the work of the World Food Programme in helping to keep Haitians from starvation.

The real tragedy, of course, is that we know this suffering is not inevitable. International non-governmental organizations, such as the Irish organization GOAL, report that humanitarian need is driven by violence, insecurity, climate vulnerability and the instability we have discussed here today. Once again, the most vulnerable in society are again forced to carry the heaviest burden.

Education, particularly that of girls, is the catalyst to deliver on peacebuilding, security, and the advancement of gender equality. The approximately one in three girls and boys who are still out of school following the lost school year simply cannot be allowed to fall through the cracks. In her poignant remarks today, Ms. Roc has clearly demonstrated the dynamic at play in Haiti's youth. The international community simply must rise up and meet their impact and promise with our action.

In conclusion, we agree with the Special Representative that 2021 could be a turning point in Haiti. It is crucial that the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti lend its full support to resolve the constitutional and political crisis and fully realize its mandate. Once again, I would like to reiterate our deep support for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations family of agencies and all the actors working with the Haitian people to build a new future based on a peaceful transition of power, a stable political and economic system and, hopefully, a society free of intimidation and violence.

Annex VIII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez**

[Original: Spanish]

I welcome His Excellency President Moïse to the Security Council, and I thank Special Representative Helen Meagher La Lime and Vivianne Roc for their briefings. Listening to the voices of civil society is of the utmost importance to the work of this organ.

Today we address the situation in a sister country of Mexico with which we have deep ties of friendship — the first nation in Latin America and the Caribbean to gain its independence. For my country, the situation in Haiti is a priority issue. Its prosperity and stability are a major issue for the Americas.

The recent political tensions and violence in Haiti are of great concern, and our collective efforts must be directed towards strengthening democracy, leading to political, economic and social stability.

The year 2021 is crucial for Haiti's democratic transition, and we urge the authorities and all national actors, with the support of the international community, to work together to ensure peaceful, transparent, participatory and inclusive electoral processes. We take note of the proposal to hold a constitutional referendum. We hope that the necessary conditions will be guaranteed to allow for the broad participation of Haitian society in a peaceful atmosphere. We urge the authorities to spare no effort or resources to ensure that the referendum is a truly democratic exercise, the outcome of which reflects the popular will of Haitian society.

Given the importance of the electoral processes to be held this year and in order to ensure good governance, democratic transition and stability, in response to the request to the United Nations to provide support to Haiti Mexico can offer, if appropriate, technical training to the Haitian electoral authorities in view of the holding of the upcoming elections.

We value and support the activities of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) in support of the institutional strengthening, stability and development of the country. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/133) reflects the delicate task that the Haitian people are experiencing. We take note of the actions to be taken to bring about meaningful governance reforms in order to overcome structural obstacles to the development and electoral processes. We welcome the One United Nations plan, in which cooperation and close coordination with and within the country team are essential to strengthening Haiti's institutional capacity and promoting sustainable development.

For Mexico, it is very important that BINUH have smooth communication and support the Haitian authorities in their efforts to establish a strategy to address in depth the causes that have led to divisive social protests. The violence that characterizes the gangs is of particular concern. We look forward to the early adoption of the national community violence reduction strategy and urge the establishment of a comprehensive national weapons and ammunition management framework, in accordance with international arms control guidelines.

We welcome the decision of the Government of Haiti to align its national development strategy with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the support provided by United Nations agencies to the priorities defined by the country itself. Given the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease pandemic, Mexico supports the social development component for sustainable recovery, as outlined

in the mandate of BINUH, and the need to successfully balance the development, human rights and security pillars. The work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti of the Economic and Social Council, in which Mexico is an active participant, has helped to clearly identify the severe needs of the Haitian nation.

As part of the technical and scientific cooperation projects promoted by Mexico in Latin America and the Caribbean, we will continue with scholarship programmes to support Haitian student mobility and strengthen our cooperation on civil protection against national disasters.

We are concerned about the human rights situation reflected in the Secretary-General's report, as well as the conclusions presented in the joint report of BINUH and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in particular with regard to accountability and the excessive use of force. The instances of threats to and attacks on human rights defenders and members of civil society are unacceptable, and we underline the need to fully respect freedom of expression.

The strength and independence of the judiciary are another key element in achieving stability in Haiti. The path to consolidating democracy requires judges and courts that speak freely and whose judgments strengthen the rule of law.

The Security Council should spare no effort in ensuring the success of the transition paradigm from a peacekeeping operation to a special political mission. To that end, the coordinated work of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes present on the ground is essential. In that regard, the opening of an office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Haiti should be considered. That would also help to promote and better coordinate efforts among the Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Economic and Social Council.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that it is up to the Haitians alone to decide on the future of Haiti. We reiterate our willingness to help them to overcome the complex situation in which they are embroiled through a democratic process in which the interests of the majority prevail, with full respect for human rights, which will lay the foundations for a future of prosperity, as aspired to by the Haitian liberators 230 years ago.

Annex IX**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations, Trine Skarboevik Heimerback**

I would like to thank the Secretary-General and Special Representative Meagher La Lime for the report (S/2021/133) and for the concrete recommendations therein, which we support.

Haiti's turbulent political situation, which is evolving as we speak, is indeed troubling and a stark reminder of the country's fragile and precarious situation. Haiti's current instability stems from an overly complex political system. There is an urgent need for a nationally owned governance reform to overcome the structural obstacles to stability and development. A genuine commitment to democratic principles must be a prerequisite.

We urge the political actors to commit to dialogue towards a common agenda. The proposed electoral calendar for a constitutional referendum, as well as legislative, municipal, local and presidential elections, is an ambitious plan. Yet, if implemented in an orderly and peaceful manner, it could represent a first step out of the current crisis.

Norway is deeply concerned about Haiti's vulnerability to natural disasters due to climate change and environmental degradation. It impacts livelihoods and leads to poverty and internal displacement, which consequently fuels crime, unrest and further instability. In addition, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Haiti is currently among the most food-insecure countries in the world. A total of 4.4 million Haitians are in need of humanitarian assistance. That is a staggering figure, with far-reaching consequences.

Evidence of low crop yield due to below normal rainfall will likely further contribute to increasing food insecurity. In order to sustain livelihoods and prevent further instability, the Government needs to invest more in food production without delay.

The growing levels of violence, the human rights violations and the abuses are shocking. Norway calls for a comprehensive Government response to address community violence.

Impunity for killings, arson and kidnappings have led to a cycle of injustice and instability. That must stop. We urge the authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice, be they gang members or representatives of the security forces. We also note with concern that grievances and strikes by key judicial actors have exacerbated the challenges to the Haitian prison service, contributing to unacceptable overcrowding. Judicial reform, along with systematic human rights monitoring and reporting, must be prioritized. The situation of women and children also remains alarming. In that respect, protection against sexual and gender-based violence and access to sexual and reproductive health services must be strengthened.

While we welcome the fact that such issues are being brought to the Security Council's attention by the thorough reporting on human rights violations and abuses conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), whose work we support, we would encourage an even stronger focus on gender in the reporting. Norway firmly believes that an inclusive political process, with respect for human rights, including women's rights, is a prerequisite for overcoming the current crisis and paving the way for a more just and stable society.

It is evident that exclusion, neglect and deprivation of rights set the stage for the current conflict. We urge the Haitian Government to endorse the national action

plan on human rights and ensure its implementation, without delay. That entails the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of life, including in political processes.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate that Norway fully supports BINUH and its ongoing work towards consolidating and strengthening the capacity of Haitian institutions. That said, the means for a durable solution remain in the hands of the Haitians themselves.

Annex X**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

[Original: Russian]

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Meagher La Lime for her briefing on a very complex situation in Haiti and the work of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH). We also thank Ms. Vivianne Roc for her briefing and welcome the participation of His Excellency Mr. Jovenel Moïse in today's video-teleconference.

The political turmoil that has persisted in Haiti for several months has been a catalyst for the increased activity of criminal groups, whose victims are from all sectors of society. That particularly affects the ordinary people, who badly need a stable State that is capable of responding to the numerous problems, from natural disasters to epidemiological risks. Foreign nationals also face risks in Haiti. Today we learned the alarming news of the kidnapping of two citizens of the Dominican Republic.

We understand the concern of the protesters for the safety of the civilian population, which is the primary responsibility of the Government. We are convinced that the situation deteriorated primarily due to the lack of consensus among the political circles. That polarization has already led to Parliament suspending its work and has prevented a move towards the practical resolution of the country's current problems, particularly those related to security, to say nothing of humanitarian issues, as well as economic recovery and development.

Let us recall that the situation in Haiti is not unique, in that the key to a settlement is always in a political solution, which is possible only once there is broad internal dialogue among the political forces and society. In that regard, the Security Council has entrusted a special role to BINUH, whose mandate is based on promoting an internal Haitian dialogue.

We anticipate that the work on that track will be intensified in the run-up to this year's major political events, namely, the presidential and parliamentary elections, as well as public discussion of the constitutional reform. During this crucial phase of Haitian history, we need to ensure that all views are duly taken into account.

We welcome the readiness of the Secretary-General to provide electoral support to Haiti at the request of the Government. We know that other countries of the region submitted similar requests. However, the response has not always been the same. We call for uniformity in the criteria for such support.

The last time that the Council discussed the situation in Haiti (see S/2020/979), we warned that, if the practice of unilateral decision-making persisted, it would increase the risk of escalation. The past four months have only confirmed those fears. Increased protest activity and complaints against the executive branch have been fuelled by a vacuum in the legislature and concerns over the independence of the judiciary.

Clearly, a reasonable balance is needed, and it is only through mutually respectful dialogue on the basis of existing legislation that common agreement on that can be reached.

Port-au-Prince needs responsible international assistance in order to avoid further social division and prevent the situation from evolving into a humanitarian crisis on a regional scale. As a member of the Security Council, Russia will continue working to ensure that United Nations assistance results in the genuine normalization of the situation in Haiti, strengthening its sovereignty and self-sufficiency.

Annex XI

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1). We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Helen Meagher La Lime, for her briefing, and we appreciate the efforts of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) in the country's stabilization process. We also express our appreciation to Ms. Vivianne Roc, Director of Plurielles Haiti, for her briefing and welcome His Excellency Mr. Jovenel Moïse, President of the Republic of Haiti.

In a month's time, the world will commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. We will also celebrate the legacy of the people of Haiti as the first black nation to gain independence by overcoming colonialism and slavery.

However, the present situation in Haiti is extremely disquieting. Since our last meeting (see S/2020/979), the status quo in our sister Caribbean nation persists, the political gridlock lingers, the security situation is volatile and the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. Unpredictability looms large, and we are greatly concerned that the deepening political impasse has placed the country on a precipice.

In that regard, we echo the call of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) encouraging all parties to engage in meaningful dialogue in the interest of peace and stability and strongly urging that action be taken to foster a safe environment, a return to normal life and the building of sustainable democratic institutions.

The A3+1 continues to follow very closely the highly polarized situation and is concerned about the non-existence of a Parliament since January 2020 as a result of the failure to convene overdue legislative elections. However, we appreciate the development of an electoral timetable and encourage Haitian political actors to undertake measures, including finalizing logistical arrangements, to ensure the convocation of free, fair, inclusive, transparent and credible elections.

We further underscore the need to uphold the rule of law and electoral processes, and stress the importance of being guided by the letter and spirit of the constitutional order, while placing the needs and interests of the people at the forefront.

It is our contention that any solution to the current crisis must be Haitian-led and Haitian-owned. We understand that there are strongly held divergent views and tensions are high. As such, it is critical that the parties set aside their differences, build consensus and chart a viable way forward. We also call on the political leaders to convene a national dialogue and commence a period of national reconciliation.

As it relates to security, we are dismayed by the upsurge in violence, in particular the scourge of gang-related criminal activities, including kidnappings. We are further perturbed by reports of rogue police officers' involvement in coordinating violent gangs, and we call for full investigation and accountability for those found culpable. We repeat our support for the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission in reducing community violence, and we encourage the Government to swiftly undertake measures to adopt the draft national strategy on community violence reduction. This strategy would enhance the State's security machinery to combat criminal activities.

In addition, we welcome the allocation of resources to the Haitian National Police. Strengthening this critical institution to ensure that it executes its mandate,

including the disruption of criminal networks and syndicates, such as the G9, is pivotal.

The nexus between peace, security and sustainable development is interwoven into Haiti's human rights situation. The A3+1 deplores the persistent human rights violations, including against those groups made most vulnerable, and calls for accountability and an end to impunity. It remains imperative that justice be brought to all victims of atrocities, including the late Monferrier Dorval. In this regard, we underscore the importance of respecting international human rights law.

More specifically, we regret the lack of progress in the judicial investigations into the Livalois, Grand Ravine, La Saline, Bel-Air and Pont-Rouge-Cité Soleil cases, as well as the inability to enforce pending warrants for prominent gang members, such as Jimmy Cherizier.

Indeed, the lack of accountability facilitates the continuation of gang-related violence. We therefore urge the authorities to spare no effort to ensure that justice prevails for the victims. Adopting the national action plan on human rights, endorsed in December 2019 by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights, would assist in this regard.

The socioeconomic and humanitarian realities require the urgent assistance of the international community, with the operationalization of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Accordingly, it is essential that donor countries continue contributing to Haiti's 2021-2022 humanitarian response plan.

The international community has a critical task in providing comprehensive support to assist Haiti in alleviating its complex challenges and legacy of underdevelopment. It is past time that we began the dialogue process on reparations for the legacies of underdevelopment in Haiti.

We know from the lessons of history, ancient and recent, that peace and development are inseparable. The people of Haiti have already suffered enough. They deserve to live in peace. They deserve a future that offers prosperity. We urge all stakeholders, difficult and complex although it may be, to enter into constructive dialogue and work together to build a better Haiti.

The A3+1 reiterates its support to BINUH, CARICOM and the Organization of American States, and renews its call for these organizations and the wider international community to continue accompanying Haiti in its pursuit of political and socioeconomic stability.

Kenya, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia stand in solidarity with the people of Haiti.

Annex XII**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Jonathan Allen**

The United Kingdom welcomes the work of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) and of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Meagher La Lime, not least her efforts to ensure a more integrated United Nations response to Haiti's multifaceted challenges.

At the same time, we remain deeply concerned by the political, social and humanitarian landscape and the entrenchment of the problems facing the Haitian population.

The persistent political gridlock is deeply troubling. In what should be a year of democratic renewal for the Haitian people, we call upon all political actors to work together to find common ground in order to build the right conditions for the successful conduct of democratic processes.

In this context, we welcome the commitment of BINUH to supporting and facilitating democratic processes in 2021, working closely with key Haitian institutions. We echo the calls made in the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/133) encouraging the national authorities to spare no effort in surmounting the logistical challenges to elections, particularly the registration of citizens.

We share the Secretary-General's concern about the deteriorating human rights situation, particularly the worrisome increase in kidnappings and gang-related violence. I echo the concerns of my colleagues over recent reports of kidnappings of citizens of the Dominican Republic. Any impunity for perpetrators of human rights abuses risks undermining the stability of the country and puts Haitian lives at risk.

We remain worried by the humanitarian situation, particularly the acute vulnerability of women and children, compounded by the economic and health threats presented by the coronavirus disease. We encourage all actors to work in cooperation with the international community and the United Nations to tackle these challenges for the benefit of the Haitian people.

Annex XIII**Statement by the Acting Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs of the Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United Nations, Jeffrey DeLaurentis**

I thank Special Representative Meagher La Lime for her updates on the situation in Haiti and for the extensive efforts by her and her entire team. I thank Ms. Roc for her briefing and for reminding us of the urgent need to focus on the challenges faced by Haiti's young people. We welcome President Moïse to the Security Council and appreciate his participation today.

Let me begin with something we all know — legislative elections were due in Haiti in October 2019. Both before and after that date, members of the Council repeatedly called on Haiti's political stakeholders to come together, to set aside their differences and to find a way forward to address Haiti's most pressing challenges. They chose not to do so. However, the ultimate responsibility for creating an atmosphere conducive to free and fair elections, and then conducting those elections, must rest with the Government.

The United States is disturbed that Haiti's prolonged period of rule by decree continues. We believe decrees should be limited to actions necessary for essential functions, safety and the conduct of elections. However, recent actions unilaterally removing and appointing three Supreme Court judges, creating a national intelligence agency and actions constraining the role of Haiti's independent audit agency risk damaging Haiti's core democratic institutions.

Once again, we urge the Government of Haiti to hold overdue legislative elections as soon as possible in order to restore the Parliament's constitutional role. The Haitian people deserve the opportunity to elect their leaders and to restore Haiti's democratic institutions. While we recognize that an enormous amount of work remains to be done, the year 2021 must be the year of both legislative and presidential elections in Haiti.

At the same time, we applaud the Government of Haiti for its decision in September to increase the budget of the Haitian National Police, which has long suffered from a lack of resources. Despite this increased focus on law enforcement, however, as we have heard, gang violence continues to be a serious problem, as kidnappings rose by over 200 per cent in 2020, and homicides are also on the rise.

We urge Haitian authorities to redouble their efforts to investigate and prosecute violent crime, including sexual and gender-based violence, to strengthen community policing practices and to safeguard the human rights of residents of gang-controlled neighbourhoods.

We are also troubled by an ongoing lack of accountability for human rights violations and abuses. In December, the United States sanctioned three former Haitian officials under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act for their role in the 2018 La Saline attack, in which at least 71 people were killed.

But La Saline, Bel-Air and the assassination of Monferrier Dorval in August all highlight the urgent need to end impunity, beginning with concrete actions to protect citizens from violence through effective policing and timely adjudication of criminal cases. The development and implementation of a national strategy for the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of cases of serious crimes, with support as appropriate, is also worth considering.

The United States continues to encourage and promote the development of an independent, credible and effective judicial sector in Haiti. We are concerned about

executive orders undermining the judiciary and intermittent strikes by key judicial actors, which continue to negatively affect the functioning of the judiciary and limit the numbers of hearings and judicial proceedings held. A fully functioning judicial sector is essential to the tasks of taking on impunity and corruption and to reducing endemically high levels of prolonged pretrial detention.

All of this takes place against the backdrop of an economic downturn in Haiti, further exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic. Economic instability, recurring fuel shortages and acute food insecurity have combined to undermine progress towards development and worsened an already grave humanitarian situation.

On 11 January, the United States announced an additional \$75.5 million in development assistance to Haiti. This new funding will be used to implement United States Agency for International Development programmes in Haiti in a wide range of areas, including health, education, food security, agricultural development, water and sanitation and governance. Together with the Government of Haiti, civil society and our partners, we will continue working towards sustainable development and to help keep Haiti on the path to self-reliance.

Let me conclude by reiterating the need to bring the current period of rule by decree to a swift conclusion. It is only through the presence of a stable, democratic and fully representative Government that issues such as violence, corruption and civil and human rights abuses can be meaningfully addressed.

The United States will continue to stand with Haiti as it builds a better future.

Annex XIV**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Nguyen Phuong Tra**

At the outset, we warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Jovenel Moïse, President of Haiti, to this meeting.

I would like to thank the Special Representative, Ms. Helen Meagher La Lime, for her insightful briefing and all United Nations personnel for their dedication at this very challenging time. I would also like to thank Ms. Vivianne Roc for her information on the latest social developments in Haiti.

We are worried about the lack of progress in various areas in Haiti, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/133). The continued violence and a growing wave of kidnapping, especially gang-related criminality, over parts of the country have exacerbated the existing instability. The divisions within its polity and the failure of dialogue aimed at political agreement have further deepened the current political impasse and continue to be huge impediments for the people of Haiti.

Against this backdrop, I would like to stress the following three points.

First, on security situation, we are concerned about a number of long-standing threats and challenges, especially the recent increase in the level of gang-related violence and kidnappings over parts of Haiti. Women, children and other vulnerable groups remain at risk of violence and continue to be marginalized in the political life of the country. In this connection, we are deeply concerned about a report that a film crew was attacked last weekend in Haiti and two Dominican citizens of the crew were held hostage.

We strongly condemn such ongoing violence and attacks. We urge the Haitian Government and local authorities, while their ongoing efforts to address criminality are commendable, to uphold their responsibilities to dismantle gang groups and criminal organizations. Other measures should also be taken to stop violence and to better protect vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, from the negative impact of both the political impasse and socioeconomic hardship.

For further progress to be attained, we echo the Secretary-General's call on Haitian authorities to establish a comprehensive national weapons and ammunition management framework, in accordance with relevant international arms control instruments, standards and guidelines.

Secondly, on political progress, the polarization among political actors and the unscheduled electoral framework agenda have remained the biggest challenges hindering the constitutional reforms, representing one of the root causes of Haiti's instability and fuelling anti-Government protests.

In this context, the year 2021 is a milestone for Haiti, especially in terms of holding elections. We therefore urge all parties involved to make further efforts to reach a political agreement on the modalities for and timing of the elections acceptable to all Haitian stakeholders, including the political representation of women and youth.

We reiterate our previously stated position in calling on the United Nations and the international community to urgently prioritize resources, without preconditions, for supporting the organization of these elections in a peaceful environment and to increase assistance needed to protect Haitian citizens on the road ahead.

Thirdly, on reconciliation, we would like to stress the importance of national unity for Haiti on the way forward. We call on Haitian authorities and all other parties

concerned to give the highest priority to the interests of the people and demonstrate a spirit of mutual understanding and trust to overcome current differences. We believe that this is the viable path towards finding common ground and a peaceful way out of the political impasse in Haiti.

Last but not least, we commend the tireless efforts of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti and the United Nations country team in Haiti, and we would like to reiterate our support for the Haitian people in the pursuit of peace, security, unity and development in the country.

Annex XV**Statement by the President of Haiti, Jovenel Moïse**

[Original: French]

I am delighted to have been given this opportunity to address the Security Council, this august and important body of the United Nations entrusted with the lofty responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. The many meetings held by the Council on the situation in Haiti reflect the great attention devoted to Haiti by the United Nations. We warmly thank the Security Council and its members for this close attention.

I would like to welcome in particular Ambassador Barbara Woodward of the United Kingdom, which holds the presidency of the Council for the month of February 2021, and to commend the excellent manner in which she is conducting the work of the Council. I also wish her every success in this role.

I would next like to reiterate my profound gratitude to our Organization for the continuous and unfailing support provided to my country in its quest for political stability and sustainable socioeconomic development. In that regard, I enthusiastically welcome the personal commitment of the Secretary-General and reiterate the profound gratitude of the Haitian people to him.

I am equally grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti for her many helpful pieces of advice and her close collaboration with my Administration. I also pay a well-deserved tribute to the United Nations staff deployed in Haiti for the invaluable support provided to the country in all areas.

I extend my sincere thanks to the friendly nations and other partners from the international community that have shown their active solidarity with Haiti and its people in the difficult moments that the country has experienced throughout its recent history and which it continues to experience.

I commend the Secretary-General for the comprehensive and balanced report that he has submitted to the Security Council on the situation in Haiti (S/2021/133), which gives a full picture of the political crisis that continues to hamper the proper functioning of institutions and undermine the stability of the country. The data presented in the report reflect the current reality of the country, and the report's observations seem to me to be very pertinent. My Government has examined them with the utmost interest and taken due note of the recommendations made.

I particularly welcome the fact that the report highlights the various actions taken by my Administration to redress the situation in the country. My statement today will enable me to better clarify the facts contained in the report and share the views of the Government of the Republic on the observations contained therein.

The year 2020 has been one of challenges for my Administration, which had to take extraordinary measures to protect our population against the coronavirus pandemic that began on 19 March 2020. A comprehensive strategy was developed. Very early on, my Government closed the ports and airports and strengthened border control.

Social and economic measures enabled many citizens to comply with the containment and health provisions to stop the spread of the virus. Among these measures were the payment of the salaries of 100,000 schoolteachers, 10,000 university professors and 65,000 assembly workers; the distribution of 23 million masks made in Haiti and food products to more than a million vulnerable families; and direct electronic cash transfers to 300,000 vulnerable families.

In order to strengthen its health system and better support hospitals, dispensaries and health centres, the Government ordered more than 473 tons of medical equipment. Special centres were set up to receive the first cases of coronavirus. The national mobilization to educate the population on the coronavirus and prevention measures to be adopted was a total success.

Today, our country has 12,039 confirmed cases and 9,529 cases have been treated. Unfortunately, 247 Haitians have died from the pandemic. We take this opportunity to express our sincere condolences to the grieving families.

Today, we are one of the three most successful Caribbean countries in managing a pandemic that has increased State social spending and created considerable economic losses. In this regard, we support the proposal by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to cancel \$1 trillion in debt for 64 countries, including our own. We need this relief if there is to be any possibility of economic recovery.

The United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) assisted in the 2016-2017 Haitian elections, which were transparent and met international standards. The Haitian people are grateful for this support, which allowed for a peaceful transfer of power.

While the greatest threat to democracy in the twentieth century was the military coup d'état, in the early twenty-first century election losers, corrupt oligarchs and a pandemic pose the greatest dangers to democratic gains. Although in the last century OAS General Assembly Resolution 1080, adopted in Chile in 1991, and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, established on 11 September 2001 in Peru, put a stop to military coups in Latin America and the Caribbean, today there is a need for reflection and recommendations to confront those who challenge the results of free, honest and transparent elections and the powerful oligarchs who take themselves for God.

Since I was sworn in on 7 February 2017, the refusal of some political actors to accept the results of the free, fair and transparent elections and the repeated violent attempts to interrupt the constitutional order by corrupt oligarchs opposed to economic reforms that favour the people have made the situation of the population and the political environment difficult. The rights of citizens have often been violated by the violence imposed on them — this in a context where a pandemic is raging.

The *Democracy Index 2020* has just been published. It marks a record decline in the state of democracy throughout the world, due in large part to the pandemic. Haiti falls from 4.57 to 4.22 but drops only one place (from one-hundred-fifth to one-hundred-sixth) in the ranking, suggesting relative stability for Haiti, whose score remains the third highest since 2006 and the first publication of the *Index*. The same is true for the *World Press Freedom Index*, which ranks Haiti 83 out of 189. Despite the difficulties we face, democracy is doing well in Haiti.

My Administration has to deal with an economic system that allows the systematic plundering of the State by powerful oligarchs and the impoverishment of the population. To correct this state of affairs, we have proposed dialogue with the sectors concerned to find an operational consensus. They did not want the system to change. We nevertheless carried out reforms in the energy sector, particularly in electricity and the acquisition of petroleum products, and in the management and construction of road infrastructure. We put an end to currency manipulation and changed agricultural policy. We terminated corrupt contracts. These cases have involved more than \$6 billion in interest. We are therefore facing a powerful lobby with great resources.

In response, for almost three years, corrupt oligarchs, in association with the sore losers, have blocked the regular functioning of the Senate of the Republic through violence, preventing the ratification of Governments, a vote on the budget and a vote on the electoral law designed to facilitate the holding of elections for the renewal of political personnel. In addition, the radical and violent opposition's *peyi lòk* operation attacked the fundamental rights of citizens by preventing them from carrying out their activities. *Peyi lòk* also caused serious economic damage, with the loss of almost \$2.4 billion and nearly 80,000 jobs. Moreover, in 2020, the pandemic had serious consequences for the country.

In four years, my Administration has had to face seven attempts to interrupt the constitutional order through violence. The violent attack on our country's Senate on 11 September 2019 by radical opposition gangs, to stop it from fulfilling its constitutional obligations, was outrageous. The creation of numerous gangs by numerous police officers dismissed from service for drug trafficking and other crimes — including the formation of a shadowy terrorist group, Fantom 509, which has attacked the national police, the Office of the Prime Minister, several other Ministries and other State institutions — is among the many dangers that our democracy has had to face in recent months.

The most recent threat we have had to face was the attempted coup d'état on 7 February 2021. Once the police investigation and the judicial procedure are completed, we will share the report with the Organization. At the root of all this was the rejection of the democratic regime and elections as the only way to take over the management of State affairs. That is why the efforts of my Administration to work tirelessly to calm the sociopolitical climate and facilitate a consensus solution through dialogue have been rejected by some who have preferred to opt for political violence, paralysis and chaos, hoping that this strategy would lead to a successful coup d'état to install a transitional Government without a mandate from the people.

In response to this political chaos, the Government implemented a strategy of dismantling the gangs, the primary component of which was the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, which has had limited success. The second component was the strengthening of police capacity and the aggressive dismantling of gangs. Out of 102 existing gangs, the Government has dismantled 64, and work to restore security has been accelerated. The number of kidnappings has fallen considerably, and the population is supporting the work of the National Police. Most of these gangs are supported by corrupt oligarchs.

I understand very well the concerns expressed in the report about insecurity in the country over the past 12 months. It must be acknowledged that the Haitian National Police, with its recently implemented new governance, is working hard to restore order throughout the country. Important changes have been made at the command level of the police. Several gang networks have already been dismantled. Action is being taken throughout the country to neutralize the armed groups and restore security throughout the country. The police have been able to resist corrupt propositions by oligarchs seeking to bring about the institutional implosion of the police, which would profoundly affect the future of our democracy. The remobilization of the army is making progress. It has given its support to police operations against gangs.

As stated in the report,

“The share of the overall national budget for the national police rose to 6.59 per cent. The reinforced police budget ... represents an increase of 53 per cent from the 2019-2020 fiscal year” (*S/2021/133, para. 25*).

Improving the living conditions of police officers has been at the centre of the decisions taken.

We welcome the fact that some friendly countries, such as the United States of America, France and Colombia, are supporting the strengthening of the country's capacity in the fight against kidnapping. With the support of United Nations agencies, we have established a national mechanism for the management of arms and ammunition in accordance with existing national legislation and the international instruments to which Haiti is a party.

We recognize that strengthening the judicial system is an essential part of the fight against insecurity and organized crime. It is in this spirit that the Government recently provided the actors in the system with more binding legal tools to combat this phenomenon. In the absence of a functional parliament, in order to strengthen the rule of law and consolidate the security apparatus, I have had to adopt certain decrees that are part of the fight against organized crime, rampant insecurity and kidnapping. I am the fifth President of Haiti since 1987 to use this tool to meet the needs of our people. I will continue to make limited use of it until the election of a new parliament and the swearing in of the fifty-ninth President of the Republic on 7 February 2022. As an additional part of the efforts aimed at strengthening the judicial system, we have increased the 2020-2021 budget of the Superior Council of the Judiciary by 35 per cent, as compared to the budget of the previous fiscal year.

The serious consequences of this climate of violence on Haitian society, the functioning of institutions and the country's economy have been emphatically highlighted in the joint report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH). The report, entitled "Unrest in Haiti: Their impact on Human Rights and the State's obligation to protect all citizens" and published on 18 January 2021, documents

"human rights violations and abuses that have taken place throughout the Haitian territory in connection with the demonstrations that took place between 6 July 2018 and 10 December 2019".

Within the next two weeks and after the Council of Ministers, my Government will publish the national report on the human rights situation in Haiti. All the cases mentioned have been investigated by the Central Directorate of the Judicial Police. Once the facts were established, these cases were referred to the Government Commissioner who, after his request for information, transferred the file to the Investigating Office which will appoint a judge. Once the case is properly taken up by the judiciary, the Executive has no authority to intervene.

Thanks to the training that Haitian police officers receive from the United Nations, they demonstrate professionalism in the exercise of their duties. Their interventions are always carried out in accordance with the rules of engagement. When there are any deviations, they are referred to the General Inspectorate for the necessary follow-up. It should also be mentioned that gangs often disguise themselves as demonstrators and journalists to attack our police officers on duty. This is dangerous for police officers and peaceful demonstrators alike. My Administration wants to improve its score of 83 out of 189 in the next *World Press Freedom Index*. That is why we remain open to journalists.

Council members have noted that the report mentions the calls by a part of the political opposition for the resignation of the President of the Republic before the end of my constitutional term on 7 February 2022. This request was formulated during the dialogue at the Apostolic Nunciature of Haiti in January 2020 with the intent of forcing a coup d'état. The fear of elections and popular voting explains these coup

attempts to install a transition unsupported by the popular will. The results of the last six elections held in Haiti show that the vast majority of these political actors never manage to exceed the 1 per cent mark. The great challenge for all is how to build a democracy with political actors who are afraid of elections and the results of a popular vote, or how to build a democracy with actors unable to build a coalition so as to become an alternative to the existing options. I won presidential elections against an opposition by soliciting the vote of the people.

This systematic rejection of the transfer of political power through the ballot box is a source of permanent tension in the country and seriously threatens the democracy chosen by the Haitian people after the dictatorship in 1987. We are facing a political opposition that is devoid of both democratic alternatives and of any credible social project for the urban and rural populations. This opposition rejects the electoral path to power. Since we have turned our backs on dictatorship and embraced democracy as a political regime, we owe it to ourselves to submit to all its requirements. Elections are one of the fundamental rules of democracy. An elected representative must be replaced by another elected representative. We want to and must work to safeguard democratic achievements. Transition is always beneficial to a political and economic oligarchy that likes to “swim in troubled waters”, as I often say.

In strict compliance with the five-year constitutional mandate granted to me by the people of Haiti and since my swearing in on 7 February 2017, I have remained committed to ensuring political stability, bringing about lasting change in the living conditions of the population and paving the way for the sustainable socioeconomic development of the nation. It is in that context that I am pursuing the structural and institutional reforms that are essential for consolidating democratic gains, preserving the rule of law and in-depth reform of the State so that it may finally serve the entire population and not just a small group. The ongoing constitutional reform process and the holding of elections at all levels in 2021, with a view to renewing political representation and ensuring that democratic changes in government take place on 7 February 2022, are part of that process.

The elections in April and September will indeed be opportunities to make decisive progress in the democratization process under way in the country. The establishment of the new Provisional Electoral Council, in accordance with the criteria established in the Constitution, has been an important step towards the realization of those elections. According to the electoral calendar proposed by the Provisional Electoral Council, the referendum will take place next June and the first round of elections will be held on 19 September.

I have duly noted the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General in his report regarding the fragile political environment, the security situation and logistical and financial difficulties. Previous administrations have faced similar situations and have nevertheless delivered. My Administration and the Government intend to make every effort to improve the sociopolitical climate so as to ensure that the deadlines are met and that the elections can be held under optimal conditions and with the broadest possible participation of candidates and voters. The Government of Haiti has already contributed \$20 million to the basket fund. By April, another \$20 million will be contributed by the Haitian State.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the international community, in particular the United Nations, through the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), for its support for the electoral process under way in the country, reflected in the signing on 21 January of a protocol on technical and financial support for the electoral process.

Similarly, the constitutional reform that the whole country is calling for is becoming a reality with the creation of the five-member Independent Consultative Committee, responsible for overseeing the drafting of a new constitution, which is the subject of consultations at the grassroots level before being submitted to a referendum in June.

The people of Haiti are writing a new page in their history. The need for a new constitution has been felt for a very long time. As pointed out in the BINUH report, the 1987 Constitution, amended in 2012 and currently in force, is a source of political instability and a major obstacle to the country's development. That is a fact and remains a constant in the discourse of all actors in national life. It is a project of the Haitian people, who aspire to real change. According to the most recent two opinion polls conducted in the country in late 2020, more than 86 per cent of the population aspires to a new constitution.

I am already inviting the population to vote overwhelmingly in favour of the new constitution in the referendum to be held in June. The Independent Consultative Committee, set up on 15 October to oversee the preparation of the draft of the new constitution, has already presented its preliminary draft.

At the beginning of my mandate, I stated unequivocally that my objective was to lay the foundation for Haiti's socioeconomic development and to put a definitive end to the long period of transition that the country has been going through since the end of the dictatorship in 1986, 35 years ago. Therefore, my Government has launched major projects designed to bring substantial and lasting change to the country and the quality of life of our population: roads, electricity, agriculture, the environment, administrative reform, all with the citizens' limited resources and taxes. In that regard, I am asking for the technical and financial support of our partners to make progress more quickly.

The results of that policy were beginning to materialize. However, political instability, especially the violent demonstrations and the lockdowns, have had disastrous consequences for the country's economy. In addition, climate hazards, such as droughts and floods, have had a negative impact on crops and created a food crisis affecting more than 4 million people.

The United Nations and my Government have jointly launched a \$235-million drought response assistance plan. I call on Member States to show solidarity by helping to finance that emergency plan.

With regard to respect for and the protection of human rights, the Government has taken a number of proactive measures to ensure that rights and freedoms in all areas are guaranteed. Freedom of the press is thus respected in all its forms, cases of abuse and human rights violations are investigated and those responsible are prosecuted by the police and judicial authorities.

It will take time and patience to establish lasting peace and security following decades of trauma and shock. With the continued support of the Security Council and the entire international community, we are confident that we can move forward towards a peaceful and prosperous future for all.