

Speech: Ensuring mission transition in Haiti is a success

Thank you Mr President and thank you to Assistant-Secretary-General Bintou Keita both for your briefing but also for the for the handout on benchmarks. It is particularly useful. In this Council, we talk a lot about benchmarks when it comes to Peacekeeping missions but we don't always analyse performance against those benchmarks as clearly as you've done here so thank you very much for that.

Like other speakers today, we continue to appreciate the support that MINUJUSTH has offered to the government of Haiti in its efforts to strengthen the rule of law and further develop the Haitian national police. We also welcome the progress that the mission has made as it works towards its two year exit strategy. And in particular we welcome the joint transition planning with the government, the UN country team and external partners.

Mr. President, I endorse all the points that have already been made today by France and by the Netherlands when it comes to strengthening the police, improving justice, increasing respect for human rights. I'd also echo the points made by Bolivia just now about the importance of tackling sexual violence in Haiti and including sexual exploitation and abuse.

Let me just make three additional points.

First, it's very clear that the political and security situation in Haiti remains extremely fragile as evidenced by the events recently in July and the UN report points to an increase in gang-related violence and raises human rights concerns linked to the police. So we would encourage the Secretary-General, the SRSG and MINUJUSTH to monitor closely such risks to security and stability over the coming 12 months in close cooperation with the Haitian government to avoid backsliding into conflict. In particular the report makes mention of a governance or stability pact and we would strongly encourage the Haitian government to advance this sector based dialogue that report has spoken about to support the identification of clarity steps to agree the pact as an urgent priority.

Second, regarding the benchmarks and the military transition, as I've said we welcome the detailed assessment of progress in the report but we do share the concerns that progress against the benchmarks has been uneven. I was particularly struck by the detail on the benchmark about the number of police officers per thousand citizens. When these Security Council visited last June, I remember there was a particular focus on increasing the number of police officers and at that point there was some optimism that the number would go on increasing. So given the centrality of that particular indicator, it is very concerning that over a year on since the Council's visit the performance on that indicator has actually got worse.

We now have just over 12 months before MINUJUSTH is expected to leave Haiti

so that leaves little time to make sure this transition is a success. And as we have said before, Haitian ownership and delivery of these critical reforms is essential if transition is to be successful. So we believe it's vital that all parties and in particular, the Haitian authorities intensify their efforts to ensure that these benchmarks are met.

Third and finally, we urge the Secretary-General to be realistic and clear about the division of responsibilities across the UN system and to support the UN to fill the gaps identified in capacity and capabilities of the UN country team which will be key to a successful transition. On issues such as the development of draft legislation which will clearly require a longer term support beyond MINUJUSTH 's mandate, we wonder if it may be worth considering whether it makes sense already to transition this work to the UN country team.

We note that the forthcoming UN strategic assessment mission due in February will be critical to facilitating timely planning and implementation of the transition and we look forward to the report of that assessment mission.
Thank you.