

Speech: Moving from Peacekeeping to Development in Haiti

Thank you very much Mr President, and may I join colleagues in congratulating you on your Presidency and thanking the Netherlands for theirs. Thank you also to the Under-Secretary-General for his briefing, and it was very good to have news of his visit in March and to see how much the mandate is being actively implemented.

The United Kingdom welcomes the continued progress in Haiti. We're particularly interested in the development of the National Police, the Penal Chain Committee initiative, efforts to strengthen the rule of law, and like other speakers, we applaud the work of the New Approach to Cholera.

It's very good to see the dedication and support that MINUJUSTH has offered to the Government of Haiti in its task. We have been very interested in the way that the Government is establishing a solid and sustainable foundation for long-term political stability, security and development in Haiti. As the Under-Secretary-General said, Mr President, this is a real vote of confidence in the country.

It's good to hear of the active implementation of the Mission for Justice Support, and we now look to the Mission to deliver a smooth transition to a non-peacekeeping UN presence.

In particular, we support the Mission's efforts to hand over responsibility for rule of law, human rights and security sector reforms to the UN Country Team and to the Government of Haiti by October 2019, and we want to ensure the transition is a success. To this end, the United Kingdom urges the Government and the UN to take the following three steps:

Firstly, the Government needs to take ownership for the delivery of critical reforms that will have a lasting impact on security and development. In particular, Mr President, I would highlight the need to protect the independence of the Haitian police; to pass new legislation to empower the judiciary; to ensure human rights are protected through strong state institutions; and to empower women to be political leaders.

Secondly, we look to the UN to be a well-integrated organisation on the ground to ensure an effective transition by implementing the Joint Work Plan. In particular, there should be a strong focus on collaboration between the Country Team and the Mission; support from the Peacebuilding Fund, as other colleagues have said; flexible and coordinated partnerships between mobile teams and the Country Team; close coordination with other international and bilateral partners; and I join others in looking for an overall focus on what progress can be made on the Sustainable Development Goals. The May report to the Secretary-General is eagerly awaited, Mr President. We hope it will set out the progress needed to deliver an integrated and sustainable transition in the next eighteen months.

Thirdly, the two-year exit strategy needs to demonstrate clear progress against the benchmarks the Secretary-General has set. The responsibilities from the Mission to the Country Team is complex one, and makes the transition a more complex than it inherently is. We hope the Mission, in consultation with the Government, will be able to develop the indicators needed under these benchmarks. Using clear and realistic milestones will enable us to track progress, and while noting that many colleagues and the Under-Secretary-General spoke about the fragility of the transition, we believed that if there are such milestones and benchmarks, it will reduce the risk associated with the exit strategy. In particular, the exit strategy needs also to be clearly aligned with the UN Development Assistance Framework.

In conclusion, Mr President, it is critical that Mission and Government work together in the spirit of solidarity, mutual respect and trust. Where the United Kingdom can help, you can count on us to do so.

And I would like at this point, if I may, just to mention the history of sexual exploitation and abuse that has sadly happened in Haiti, and to say that we will work with the Secretary-General to ensure a zero-tolerance policy throughout the whole of the UN.

There is now a limited time available to meet the transition target of October 2019. We hope for the adoption of a clear transition plan that will set out how we will move from peacekeeping to development, and we thought what the Under-Secretary-General said on this was very encouraging. We do however urge the Secretary-General to be realistic and clear about division of responsibilities across the UN system. It is ultimately the Government of Haiti's leadership that will make the transition a success.

But as other speakers have noted, where we are now does presents us with an enormous opportunity, not just for the Government of Haiti but for a success for the UN family and in peacekeeping generally.

Thank you.