

UN Security Council Open Debate on “The Impact of Climate Change and Food Insecurity on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security”

Statement on behalf of the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti

New York, 13 February 2024

Mr. President,

I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti of the Economic and Social Council. The Advisory Group comprises 23 Member States that are committed to accompanying Haiti’s long-term socioeconomic development. These observations are without prejudice to the national position of Brazil on a possible link between climate change and international peace and security.

Haiti is unfortunately a clear example of the interlinkages of climate shocks, food insecurity and institutional fragility, as the country continues to grapple with a complex, multidimensional and extremely serious crisis.

Mr. President, last year, our group sought the perspectives of young Haitians who are deeply affected by the crisis.

A young woman living in Cité Soleil, a Port-Au-Prince neighbourhood in the grip of gang violence, asked us: “why in Haiti is it easier for a young person to get a gun than it is to get food”?

This is the situation in a country with considerable agricultural potential.

Food insecurity in Haiti remains anchored in deep-rooted structural problems, international trade policies, developmental deficits, and low harvests caused by climate shocks that have pushed up food prices.

5.5 million people in Haiti, nearly half the population, require humanitarian assistance and protection; 80 per cent of whom are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity. Children and youth are particularly impacted.

Over 310,000 people are internally displaced, more than half of whom faced displacement within the last year, illustrating the ever-worsening security and humanitarian situation. Others are risking their lives to flee this coastal nation that remains one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world.

Natural disasters associated with the adverse effects of climate change risk exacerbating food insecurity, water scarcity and existing instabilities.

Gang violence is disrupting markets, supply chains, access to local food, as well as the safe movement of people and goods, including agricultural products. Access to schools is jeopardized, which tens of thousands of children depend on to access a daily nutritious meal.

Mr. President, on behalf of the Advisory Group, I wish to underscore five points:

First, there is an urgent need to build resilience in Haiti and to support people in vulnerable situations. We need to intensify our efforts to support Haiti's 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan to ensure that humanitarian and protection needs are met.

UN-supported initiatives, including locally sourced school feeding programs not only provide children with a safe space and reliable meals but they also support local agricultural production.

Second, Haiti requires investments and financing to improve local food production, promote sustainable and climate-smart agricultural practices, develop agricultural value chains that link farmers to markets, upgrade agricultural infrastructure, and strengthen agri-food systems' resilience to climate, agronomic, economic and conflict shocks.

Third, it is critical that we support and advocate for preparedness, disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation measures to increase Haiti's resilience to the disruptive impacts of disasters and climate change.

Fourth, Haiti requires urgent support to restore security including through the Multinational Security Support mission, authorized by the Security Council. At the same time, Haiti needs our assistance to strengthen the capacity of security institutions, judicial and correctional systems as well as measures to create space for dialogue and social cohesion in communities.

Fifth, a comprehensive and sustainable long-term strategy, led and owned by Haiti, is needed to address the drivers of violence, such as political, economic and social inequalities, extreme poverty, high unemployment, human rights violations, impunity, corruption, and weak public institutions.

Across all these lines of effort, coordination and coherence among partners – including the UN, regional organizations, international financial institutions, bilateral donors – and importantly, the meaningful engagement of Haitians, is essential.

Thank you.