



# ECOSOC

## Special Meeting on Haiti



2 DECEMBER 2024  
#HaitiCantWait

### CONCEPT NOTE

## **HAITI'S CHILDREN CANNOT WAIT: SUPPORTING STABILITY, RESILIENCE AND PROSPERITY IN HAITI**

2 December 2024, 10:00 – 13:00  
United Nations Headquarters, ECOSOC Chamber

### **Introduction**

Extreme violence, instability, poverty and malnutrition are jeopardizing the security, well-being and future of Haiti's children and youth -- who comprise nearly half of the country's population. The Economic and Social Council will convene a Special Meeting to bring urgent attention to the dire situation facing young people in Haiti and to mobilize coordinated support and resources for a comprehensive and swift response.

### **Background**

Even before the current crisis, Haiti was the Western Hemisphere's poorest country, having experienced decades of inadequate basic services and a lack of human capital development, combined with extremely high inequality, marginalization and social exclusion.

Nearly 10 months have passed since the violence escalated in February this year, and Haiti continues to experience a complex, multifaceted crisis that encompasses daunting security, political, humanitarian, human rights, and development challenges. Armed gangs are terrorizing the population and expanding their control over Port-au-Prince and increasingly in other regions beyond the capital. The toll on children is especially heavy, with armed gangs regularly committing grave rights violations against children, including killings, maiming, recruitment, and sexual violence. It is estimated that children comprise up to 50 percent of gang members. These abuses continue with impunity.

Armed gangs are strangling major transport routes, destroying livelihoods and hampering essential services. Approximately 5.5 million people in Haiti require humanitarian assistance and protection, with 4.4 million facing acute food insecurity. One in two children are food insecure. More than 700,000 people, including over 365,000 children, are internally displaced, many of whom are put at further risk of violence and exploitation. Moreover, girls in displaced persons sites face the constant threat of gender-based violence.



This year, 300,000 children have lost out on learning with schools being closed, attacked, or repurposed as temporary shelters for displaced people. Children who are out of school are not able to benefit from school meals and are at heightened risk of violence and recruitment by gangs. Additionally, Haiti's health system is facing collapse, due to fuel and medical supplies shortages, attacks on hospitals, and lack of healthcare workers.

Despite the challenges, the United Nations system and partners have been able to deliver humanitarian assistance, including food and cash, to around 1.9 million people in the first half of 2024. However, the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for Haiti, which aims to meet urgent protection and humanitarian needs for 3.6 million people in 2024, remains only 43 percent funded of the required US\$673.8 million.

The [ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti](#) has identified the urgent need to support Haiti's security and stabilization and to provide humanitarian assistance. It has also identified the importance of addressing the root causes of vulnerability and instability in Haiti. This requires a comprehensive approach, taking into account the peace and security, political, humanitarian, and development dimensions of the crisis. It involves strengthening Haitian institutions, in particular the health, education and agricultural sectors, and the rule of law; advancing the political transition and implementing a plan to hold free, fair and transparent elections; and investing in development and resilience.

There is a pressing need to bring the international community's tools and resources to bear to support the country emerge from its crisis and to do so while prioritizing child protection and the meaningful participation of young people in Haiti's transition, recovery and sustainable development.

## **Objectives**

The ECOSOC Special Meeting aims to:

- Bring attention to deteriorating situation and the urgent protection and humanitarian needs of children and youth in Haiti;
- Identify how Member States, the United Nations system, regional and international partners, can assist Haitian-led efforts to address the multifaceted challenges facing the country while prioritizing the needs of children and youth;
- Identify opportunities for partnerships and investments to address the root causes of Haiti's crisis and contribute to a sustainable and resilient future for Haiti's young people.

## Format

The Special Meeting will feature two panel discussions with Member States, observers, UN system entities and civil society organizations. Participants may request to take the floor during the meeting to put questions to the panel (maximum of three minutes). The event will be broadcast live via webcast and on social media using the hashtag #HaitiCantWait.

### **ECOSOC Special Meeting**

#### **HAITI'S CHILDREN CANNOT WAIT: SUPPORTING A PATH TO SAFETY, STABILITY AND PROSPERITY IN HAITI 2 December 2024**

#### **DRAFT PROGRAMME**

10:00	Opening
	Panel 1: Responding to urgent protection and humanitarian needs of children and youth in Haiti
	Interactive discussion
	Panel 2: Investing in a sustainable future for today's children and youth
	Interactive discussion
13:00	Closing