

ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti calls on the international community to urgently support Haiti's humanitarian efforts

3 November 2022

The ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti is deeply concerned about the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Haiti, where approximately half of the population needs humanitarian assistance and a new cholera outbreak compounds the already dire situation.

We are alarmed that the continuing blockade by armed gangs of roads, ports, and the main oil terminal, will lead to many preventable deaths because of lack of access to clean water and proper sanitation, basic health care and food. Gang violence and shortages of fuel, medicine, oxygen and life-saving equipment, as well as restrictions on the movement of health workers, are disrupting Haitians' access to critical health care. Pregnant women and their newborns are significantly at risk. Most poor households, already made vulnerable by inflation and low-paying jobs, continue to suffer disproportionately. Alarming, hunger has reached a catastrophic level in the capital's Cité Soleil neighbourhood.

We unreservedly condemn the fuel blockade by armed gangs, which has had a devastating impact across Haiti, undermining the health and safety of thousands of people in Port-au-Prince and millions across the country. We call for the immediate end of the blockage of the Varreux terminal, the reestablishment of access to much needed basic services, including hospitals, water and sanitation, and the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need.

Amidst the humanitarian crisis, we remain extremely concerned about targeted violence and kidnapping. We are deeply concerned that armed gangs are using sexual violence as a weapon to instill fear, punish, subjugate, and inflict pain on local populations. We strongly condemn such acts and urge Haitian authorities to hold those responsible to account and ensure that victims and survivors are provided support. We are deeply concerned that gang violence, kidnapping and intimidation have displaced people from their homes, including 96,000 people between June and August alone.

Children are severely affected by the multiple crises in Haiti. The siege of parts of the capital and other communities by armed gangs have led to the closure of schools with over 3 million children unable to attend school. Children are most at risk from the spread of cholera. More than half of the cases of cholera are among children as high levels of malnutrition make them more vulnerable than adults. We strongly condemn the targeting of children for abductions, sexual violence, and recruitment by armed gangs. Haiti's future prosperity and sustainable development depends on the development of its youth.

The Group welcomes the efforts by the Government of Haiti, with support from the UN as well as other international, national, and local civil society organizations, to address the humanitarian needs of the population and mount an effective cholera response based on the national authorities' experience and expertise.

We call on the international community to demonstrate its solidarity with the Haitian people and strengthen their support to the humanitarian and cholera response in Haiti, including by contributing to the 2022 Haiti Humanitarian Response Plan which has only received 36 per cent of its \$373.2 million requirements and to any forthcoming humanitarian appeals, as well as to help address the other multidimensional challenges faced by the country.

The international community must act quickly to support Haitian-led efforts to restore security in the country to enable the flow of humanitarian assistance, help alleviate the suffering of the population and help create the conditions for the country's long-term development.

We further call on the international community to ensure that efforts to address the political and security situation are accompanied by comprehensive social and economic development to build Haiti's self-reliance and resilience and ensure the sustainability of any assistance provided.

We strongly support UN Security Council resolution 2653 which established a new sanctions regime for Haiti. If effectively implemented, this regime will hold accountable the gang, political and business leaders who have contributed to this humanitarian crisis and those who finance them.

We continue to encourage the national authorities, Haitian civil society, political representatives, and the private sector to actively engage in an inclusive national dialogue to successfully address the political crisis and work constructively towards the holding of credible, free, fair and transparent legislative and presidential elections.

The Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti is composed of Argentina, the Bahamas, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Canada (Chair), Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, France, Haiti, Kenya, Mexico, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States of America, and Uruguay. The President of ECOSOC is an ex officio member of the Group. It was initially formed in 1999 and its mandate is to follow closely and provide advice on the long-term development strategy of the country.