



**Check Against Delivery**

**Her Excellency Ms. Louise Blais**  
**Chair of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and**  
**Charge d’Affaires a.i. of Canada to the United Nations**

Merci Monsieur le Président / Madame la Présidente,

Je ferai cette intervention en anglais comme je comprends qu’il n’y a pas de services d’interprétation ce matin.

As Chair of the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, Canada has the honour to introduce the annual resolution entitled “Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti”. This resolution welcomes the Ad Hoc Advisory Group’s annual report on Haiti and decides to extend the mandate of the Group for another year.

Mr. President / Madam President

The Group’s work this year was profoundly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We were fortunate enough to undertake our annual visit to Washington D.C. on March 2<sup>nd</sup> to meet with some of the country’s most important partners, despite the last minute cancellation of the World’s Bank Fragility Forum which we were scheduled to attend. Unfortunately, given the extraordinary circumstances, the Group was unable to undertake its annual visit to Haiti. Despite these challenges, the Group remained active throughout the year, organizing virtual briefings and in-person information sessions in New York. I am pleased to report that, for the first time, the Group also issued two public statements which are annexed to our annual report.

Even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Group had expressed its serious concern at the ongoing and serious political, economic, social and humanitarian challenges facing Haiti. These have a profound effect on the security and stability of the country as well as on its prospects for socio-economic development. It was urgent for Haiti, with the



ongoing support of the UN and its international partners, to act quickly and efficiently to address these difficulties.

The **COVID-19 pandemic** has made a difficult situation even worse. It is likely to deepen the multidimensional crisis facing the country, possibly reversing the development and security gains of the past fifteen years and exacerbating social and political tensions. So if there is one key message I can leave with you this morning, it is this one: now is the time for us all to come together to help Haiti to overcome this unprecedented health, humanitarian and socio-economic crisis.

As part of its recommendations, the Group notably encourages the Government of Haiti to intensify efforts to engage with all sectors of society in a genuine and inclusive national dialogue aimed at addressing the country's political and socio-economic challenges. The Group recommends that the international community adequately and urgently support the Haitian Government's efforts in preventing and responding to the spread of COVID-19 and to increase support for the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan. Finally, the Group also encourages the UN system to continue to improve its coordination and its consultation with the Government of Haiti, and to "act as one".

Mr. President / Madam President

Linked to our focus and concern on the spread of COVID-19 in Haiti, I would also like to note the following three elements:

First, throughout the year, we have observed with worry a continually deteriorating **humanitarian situation** in the country. Humanitarian needs have almost doubled in the past year alone. Some 5.1 million people – approximately half of the country's population – require urgent support. The key driver of rising needs is the spike in food insecurity which is worse than after the 2010 earthquake, putting Haiti among the current 10 world's most severe food crises. This dire situation is compounded by the difficult economic situation including the very high inflation rate which is making staple products unaffordable. We have a collective responsibility



to respond to the 2020 Haiti Humanitarian Response Plan in order to help Haitians and ensure the situation does not continue to worsen.

Second, with the current ongoing political impasse, it is urgent for an **inclusive national dialogue** to be conducted. Without it, it appears clear that no progress on the political, social and economic fronts will be possible. Haitians from all sectors and view points must come together to chart a way forward for their country.

Finally, the question of **sustainable economic development** remains vital. This is a crucial element in order to ensure the future prosperity and stability of Haiti. The country clearly has immense economic potential but more must be done in order to ensure that this potential is truly unlocked and maximized. This is the only way for Haiti to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

In closing, Mr. President / Madam President, allow me to take this opportunity to transmit the sincere thanks and appreciation of our former Permanent Representative Marc-André Blanchard to all of the interlocutors met by the Group and all of the fellow members of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group for their time, interest and commitment. We wish to thank in particular the Haitian authorities as well as our colleague and friend, the former Chargé d'affaires of Haiti to the United Nations, Patrick Saint-Hilaire for his open and productive collaboration during the Group's work. I want to congratulate his successor Mr. Willy Louis. We look forward to continuing to work with you. I also want to express my Group's profound appreciation for the support provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Hélène La Lime, the Deputy Special Representative, Bruno LeMarquis, and all of the UN team in Haiti. I must also mention the invaluable support and advice provided by the ECOSOC team here in New York without whom our Group could not accomplish its mandate.

Thank you.