

Address by
Most Honourable P. J. Patterson, ON, OCC, PC, QC
Special Representative of CARICOM on Haiti
United Nations Security Council
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New York

Mr. President

Mr. Secretary General

Honourable members of the Security Council

Excellencies

Colombia deserves the highest commendation for its timely initiative to promote this open debate of the Security Council on the "Question Concerning Haiti."

I regard it as a singular privilege to have been invited to participate in this debate and to share insights as the Special Representative of CARICOM Heads of Government, a Community of 14 Sovereign nations which includes Haiti.

We gather here 15 months after an earthquake that killed , maimed and dislocated unprecedented numbers of the population in Haiti, decimated the economy and destroyed large sections of the natural and built assets of the country.

And yet two days ago, despite the formidable challenges of holding elections during the turmoil and turbulence associated with such severe catastrophe, the Provincial Electoral Council was still able to announce the preliminary results of the national elections.

The outcome is a testament to what can be achieved through partnership.

The incumbent leadership of Haiti, the operators of the electoral system and political contestants, working together with an array of external support from International and Regional organizations, and a number of committed nations who all combined to overcome formidable odds.

It represents a welcome victory for democracy which must not fail to be rewarded by a premium to enhance the success of reconstruction efforts during this phase of democratic transition and throughout the tenure of the new political administration.

Mr. President

When the Action Plan for the Reconstruction of Haiti was adopted by the International Community at the UN Headquarters in March 2010, we proclaimed with great fanfare that it was to “be led, steered and driven by Haiti.”

It was posited on 4 main pillars

- Territorial
- Economic
- Social
- Institutional

No one can question that these four sectors are mutually reinforcing and vital for optimum development. But if Haiti is really to exercise leadership in the process of reconstruction and the development of its people, we only delude ourselves if we expect the Government of Haiti to deliver a load in the absence of an adequate and administrative capacity.

Before the earthquake, Haiti's institutional capacity was admittedly weak and further decapitated by the disaster.

The restructuring, strengthening and building of Haiti's institutional is the lynchpin and lies at the heart of any plan for National Recovery and Sustainable Development. CARICOM regards strong, robust and flexible institutional capacity as a sine qua non for sustainable development, good governance and security.

The reinforcement of the capacity of the Haitian State is now of the utmost urgency. The pace of progress will be retarded and the most immediate priorities of Haiti will remain at the bottom of the ranking unless the state has the administrative and technical capacity as well as access to the financial resources to provide the public goods and services that are unquestionably the responsibility of all States.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has decided to concentrate its direct support to Haiti in the area of institutional development and augmentation by making available, experienced personnel in different areas of governmental administration; providing opportunities for training in areas of high need and helping to establish regional standards in such areas as in the establishment of a Building Code, Regional Standards for Goods and Professional Services. We seek to work with UN Agencies, and Hemispheric groupings who have expressed an interest in these areas.

We will need to avoid duplication. Our ultimate goals must ensure that when the IHRC's mandate expires, the Haitians have the tools and the capacity to continue.

Now more than ever, the people of Haiti, are entitled to see tangible democratic dividends which have a significant impact on the quality of their lives – in particular – durable shelter for those internally displaced, access to basic services which include water and sanitation, the provisions of jobs.

Throughout its existence, CARICOM has maintained the inseparable links between governance, security and development. Social and economic development are tightly interconnected with security, stability and the rule of law. The recent report of the Secretary General is a useful document which highlights the important role which the UN and MINUSTAH have been playing.

It is within that context, the Community endorses the view that we have reached that juncture where MINUSTAH must be guided to become even more actively engaged with the Agencies of the United Nations in supporting and strengthening the core structures and capacities of Haiti. It should extend beyond security and stability to embrace support for strengthening the institutions of State in order to accelerate economic, social and territorial rebuilding.

We believe that the current MINUSTAH mandate is sufficiently wide and flexible, to permit without requiring any change now, to coordinate its resources with those from other sections of the UN system and the key development partners to assist the Government in addressing key areas for reconstruction and development.

The time has come to turn all our “weapons into plough shares” and contribute to the realization of the bold strategy approved 15 months ago that will result in the economic, social, political and institutional development of Haiti.”

While we recognize and appreciate the accomplishments so far, we are concerned that the pledges made by the International Community have fallen short and the inflows to the Haiti Recovery Fund have been insufficient to make a visible impression on the ordinary Haitian as another Hurricane season draws nigh.

Mr. President,

We contend that there is a compelling need for greater coordination between the multilaterals, the bilateral and the NGOs to fulfill the urgent needs and priorities of the Government of Haiti and its people.

Rest assured that CARICOM remains determined to work for Haiti as we seek, with the help and support of the international community, to rebuild and develop the most populous state within the single Caribbean Community to which we belong.