



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
20 June 2019

Original: English

2019 session

26 July 2018–24 July 2019

Agenda item 12 (d)

**Coordination, programme and other questions:
long-term programme of support for Haiti**

Report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti*

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution [2018/19](#), by which the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti was requested to submit a report on its work, with recommendations, as appropriate, to the Council for its consideration at its 2019 session. The report provides the main findings of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti following its visits to Washington, D.C., in April 2019 and to Haiti in May 2019, during which members held discussions with the President of the country and legislative officials, as well as representatives of international financial institutions, regional organizations and civil society.

The Group recognizes that Haiti is characterized by a multidimensional crisis. It remains under significant economic and social stress which, coupled with persistent humanitarian needs, is at the root of the current political instability and deteriorating security situation. The fragile political situation hinders the Government's ability to meet the basic needs of its people and jeopardizes the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Group urges the Government, the opposition and all sectors of society to engage in a constructive and inclusive national dialogue to resolve the political impasse and shape a common vision for the socioeconomic development of the country. The Group also urges the international community to remain collectively engaged with Haiti to ensure a successful transition from a United Nations peacekeeping presence to a more development-oriented configuration, which would bring lasting security, stability and development to the people of Haiti.

* The present report was submitted late owing to the fact that the Ad Hoc Advisory Group's mission to Haiti was undertaken from 22 to 24 May 2019.



I. Introduction

A. Mandate and composition of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti

1. The present report is the fifteenth submitted to the Economic and Social Council by the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti since its reactivation in 2004. The Group, which is chaired by Canada, is composed of the Permanent Representatives of Argentina, the Bahamas, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, France, Haiti, Mexico, Peru, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States of America and Uruguay to the United Nations.
2. In its resolution [2018/19](#), the Economic and Social Council decided to extend the mandate of the Group until the conclusion of the 2019 session, with the purpose of following closely and providing advice on the long-term development strategy of Haiti to promote socioeconomic recovery, reconstruction and stability, with particular attention paid to the need to ensure coherence and sustainability in international support for the country. The Council requested that the Group submit a report on its activities for consideration at its 2019 session.
3. The report provides the main findings of the Group following its visits to Washington, D.C., and Haiti in April and May 2019, respectively, as well as its meetings with various stakeholders in New York throughout 2019.

B. Outline of the activities of the Group

4. On 7 February 2019, the Group held a meeting via videoconference with the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator for Haiti, to discuss the evolving situation in the country following a series of protests by the Haitian population against the deteriorating socioeconomic conditions and the declaration of an economic state of emergency by the President of the country, Jovenel Moïse, on 5 February 2019.
5. On 13 March 2019, the Group participated in a briefing for Member States on the humanitarian situation in Haiti given by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator for Haiti, the Assistant-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, and the Minister Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Haiti to the United Nations, Willy Louis.
6. The Group carried out a visit to Washington, D.C., on 4 April 2019, where members met with representatives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the Inter-American Dialogue and the Organization of American States.
7. From 22 to 24 May 2019, the Group visited Haiti, holding meetings with the President of the country, the President of the Senate, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, the President of the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and leaders of the Commission on the États généraux sectoriels de la nation, as well as representatives of the private sector, human rights organizations and the United Nations. The Group also carried out a field visit to Ouanaminthe in the north-eastern part of Haiti, at the border with the Dominican Republic, where it visited a reception centre, a border police station and a school canteen programme implemented by the World Food Programme and the Industrial Development Company industrial park.
8. Following its visit to the country, on 31 May 2019 and 6 June 2019, the Chair of the Group, Marc-André Blanchard, gave briefings in New York to the Security

Council and the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council, respectively, in which he presented the main findings of the Group's mission to Haiti. On 13 June 2019, the Group held an informal briefing with the entire membership of the Economic and Social Council and also met with the Secretary-General.

9. The Group expresses its appreciation to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, the Deputy-Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and the other members of the United Nations country team and the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) for their support in the organization of the Group's visit and for their valuable insights.

II. Current context of Haiti

A. Political and security situation

10. The political situation in Haiti has been particularly volatile since the Group's most recent report to the Economic and Social Council (E/2018/75). Large-scale protests took place in the second half of 2018 and from 7 to 17 February 2019 owing to the significant rise in fuel prices following the elimination of subsidies by the Government and worsening socioeconomic conditions. The alleged misuse, by Government officials, of funds from the Petrocaribe loan financing programme of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela added to the population's grievances. People took to the streets to demand greater accountability from the Government and better living conditions. The initially peaceful demonstrations, especially those held in February 2019, became violent on some occasions, with protesters vandalizing public and private property, erecting roadblocks, using firearms and paralysing economic activities in several cities across the country. Disturbances resulted in business closures, negatively impacting people's income-generating activities – particularly women who, owing to insecurity, could not work in the markets – and limiting people's access to essential services and goods, including fuel, electricity, domestic gas, water and food. Several hospitals faced a shortage of water, electricity, medicines and basic supplies, while the activities of development and humanitarian organizations had to be temporarily interrupted owing to insecurity.

11. In an effort to restore calm and lower tensions, Mr. Moïse tried, on several occasions, to promote a national dialogue to address the political, economic and social difficulties facing the country. In March 2018, he appointed a steering committee of 23 people to lead the national dialogue entitled “États généraux sectoriels de la nation”, which was aimed at formulating a pact for stability and economic and social progress. In November 2018, he asked the Prime Minister, Jean-Henri Céant, to lead the national dialogue. However, these efforts failed to gather the support of opposition parties. More recently, in February 2019, he established a national dialogue facilitation committee, which is expected to submit a report to the President within 90 days with recommendations on how to create favourable conditions for the realization of an inter-Haitian dialogue. Yet, there is a widespread sentiment that even this most recent attempt might not have the desired outcome, thereby increasing a general and already significant lack of trust in national institutions and further exacerbating tensions among the general population. Delays in forming a new government, following the no-confidence motion against Mr. Céant by the parliamentarians of the Lower Chamber on 18 March 2019, have added to the increasing political tensions and deteriorating security situation. As of June 2019, the Parliament had not yet ratified a new government.

12. Various interlocutors stressed the need for an urgent revision of the Constitution and an inclusive and constructive national dialogue among all stakeholders – supported by the United Nations – to resolve the political impasse and shape a common vision for the country. The vision would encompass several issues underlined by the Group in previous reports, such as adopting the necessary economic reforms and measures for social protection, improving the rule of law, combating corruption, enhancing governance and strengthening national institutions. Several interlocutors also emphasized that forming a new government without delay would be instrumental in making progress owing to the interconnectedness between political stability and economic growth. It was noted, for instance, that the prevailing political situation was preventing the prompt adoption of the country's budget for the current fiscal year, jeopardizing possible financial aid from external donors, including a three-year \$229 million extended credit facility from IMF aimed at supporting measures to ease poverty, encourage good governance, raise growth and stabilize the country's economic situation.

13. The Group notes with concern that Haitian women continue to be severely underrepresented in the country's political life. For instance, in the National Assembly, only 1 out of 30 senators and 3 out of 119 members of the Lower Chamber are women. Several interlocutors stressed the importance of increasing women's participation in politics and decision-making to enhance the legitimacy of political processes by making them more democratic and responsive to the concerns and demands of all segments of Haitian society.

B. Economic situation

14. Haiti continues to face serious economic difficulties. It is one of the poorest countries in the developing world, with per capita gross national income of \$1,800 and ranking 168th out of 189 countries in the 2017 human development index. Over 6 million people – namely, 60 per cent of the country's population – live below the poverty line of \$2.41 per day, with more than 2.5 million people – predominantly in rural areas – falling below the extreme poverty line of \$1.23 per day. Haiti is also among the most unequal countries in the world in terms of income distribution, according to the Gini index estimates from the World Bank (60.6). The average life expectancy is approximately 64 years (61 years for males and 65 for females), which is the lowest in the Latin American and Caribbean region (i.e., 75 years average life expectancy).

15. The depreciation of the national currency (gourde) continues to generate high inflation (around 15 per cent as of April 2019 and rising) – driven mainly by rising prices of locally produced food – further penalizing the poorest sectors of the population. Gross domestic product (GDP) grew only modestly during the 2017–2018 fiscal year, by an estimated 1.5 per cent, and its growth is expected to decelerate to 0.4 per cent in 2019. Meanwhile, the fiscal deficit widened from 1.9 per cent of GDP in 2017 to 4.3 per cent of GDP in 2018, driven mainly by losses in the energy sector (increasing by 1 per cent of GDP) and a decline in fiscal revenue (declining by 0.5 per cent of GDP).

16. Various interlocutors stressed the importance of adopting urgent measures to raise tax revenues and improve public spending efficiency. More efforts are needed to significantly widen the taxpayer base considering that many large and medium-sized tax payers might currently not be registered for paying taxes. The Group was informed that an additional 1.5 per cent of GDP could be mobilized if the tax payers base were expanded. The Group was also informed that Haiti could be losing the equivalent of 0.3 per cent of GDP in turnover tax because of exemptions and gaps in recording. Haiti could also be losing more than \$630 million annually in customs duty

owing to largely uncontrolled cross-border trade. Reducing commercial losses of some nationally owned companies could mobilize additional funds; for instance, the Group was informed that just reducing the commercial losses of the public electricity utility Électricité d'Haiti from 40 to 10 per cent could lead to an increase of 1.2 per cent of GDP. The Group acknowledges that implementing fiscal measures – which would refocus public investment towards health, education and social services through the elimination of subsidies – should be complemented by pro-poor social policies.

17. Several interlocutors also underscored that, to promote the country's productivity and economic growth, improving the country's road, port and energy infrastructure was imperative. Such action had to be complemented by the adoption and effective implementation of laws and regulations to improve the business climate, including easier access to credit for small and medium-sized enterprises and microenterprises, a vigorous fight against corruption, increasing efficiency in tax collection, improving public administration and rationalizing current expenditure. It was also noted that more efforts were required to capitalize on the 1.3 million Haitians living abroad. Family remittances from the Haitian diaspora are a big economic asset for the country, having increased from \$810 million in 2001 to \$2.4 billion in 2017, constituting 29 per cent of the GDP of the country and more than 25 per cent of the State budget. Finding a better way to channel the resources in productive investment opportunities should be explored.

18. The Group welcomes the efforts by the Government of Haiti to support the country's development as envisaged in his flagship initiative, "Caravan of change", launched in May 2017, and in implementing its seven national development priorities: reform the State and maintain political stability; transform Haiti into an investment destination; increase agricultural production and improve the environment; build energy, road and port infrastructure; strengthen water and sanitation infrastructure; improve infrastructure and the quality of education; and promote stability through social projects. At the same time, the Group welcomed the extended consultations organized by the Ministry of Planning with the support of the United Nations system to finalize the national road map for the Goals and stresses that more efforts are needed to integrate the 2030 Agenda into the country's national development plans and encourages the international community to play a key supporting role in these efforts.

C. Social indicators

19. The country continues to be characterized by high unemployment rates (14 per cent), especially among young people (36 per cent), income inequalities, lack of clean water and sanitation (42 and 72 per cent of the population, respectively, have no access to clean water or adequate sanitation), and poor basic social services. The Group underlines that people who are socially and economically marginalized are at great risk of being pushed further behind with great chances that their levels of well-being fall in ways from which it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to recover.

20. The Group is concerned about the health indicators in the country. More than 40 per cent of the population continues to lack access to essential health and nutrition services, particularly in rural areas where 60 per cent of the population lacks access to basic health-care services, while the maternal, neonatal, infant and child mortality rates remain the highest in the western hemisphere; for instance, the maternal mortality rate is 359 per 100,000 live births and the under-five mortality rate is 67 per 1,000 live births. Some 47 per cent of infants lack immunization to measles and 21 per cent to diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis. Some 22 per cent of children are stunted,

which can have long-term effects on cognitive development, school achievement, and economic productivity in adulthood. The Government allocates only 6.9 per cent of its GDP to the health sector which, coupled with weak institutional capacity and shortage of qualified medical personnel, makes it particularly challenging for Haitians to enjoy good quality health care.

21. The education sector remains inefficient. Despite progress in primary school enrolment over the years (currently standing at 75 per cent), an average Haitian aged 25 years or older, has less than 5 years of schooling, and over 60 per cent of the population is illiterate (64 per cent of males and 57 per cent of females). The high level of poverty and relatively high school fees – 85 per cent of primary schools are privately owned – make access particularly challenging given that many families cannot afford the average cost of \$80 in tuition per child/per year. The education sector is also characterized by a lack of qualified teachers as over 80 per cent of Haitian educators are not trained or qualified to teach. In recent years, the Government has attempted to improve education through a series of policy measures aimed at stabilizing and improving governance and quality in the education system. However, the implementation of such measures, including the provision of adequate funding, remains too slow. Further support is needed to improve the education sector with the aim of providing Haitians with the opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge and basic skills to succeed in the job market.

22. The Group highlights the power of education for large-scale change and as a catalyst for the country's sustainable social and economic development, which is especially important for a country like Haiti where 34 per cent of the population is under the age of 15. Providing young people with good education, together with economic opportunities, would go a long way to addressing some of the root causes of violent crime among young people, including gang violence, which is highly prevalent in the country. At the same time, concern has been expressed that the vast majority of educated young people feeling frustrated by the deep institutional crisis in governance and the rule of law, wish to leave or are leaving the country. It is striking that, on average, 85 per cent of college graduates leave Haiti to seek better opportunities abroad.

D. Humanitarian needs

23. The humanitarian situation in Haiti remains dire. Some 2.6 million people – almost one in four Haitians – currently need humanitarian assistance. The chronic vulnerability of the Haitian population has been impacted by several factors, including the economic difficulties, sociopolitical tensions and successive shocks faced by the country, such as natural disasters, population movements and epidemics, coupled with the State's limited capacity to provide much-needed basic services to the population. All these factors are preventing progress in reducing humanitarian needs and transitioning towards development.

24. The Group has repeatedly heard concerns that people in the country are hungry. The number of food-insecure people has doubled from 1.3 million in 2018 to 2.6 million this year, according to the analysis carried out by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification in October and December 2018; this includes some 570,000 people in emergency situations (phase 4 of the Classification). Food security is expected to deteriorate even further after June owing to the El Niño phenomenon, which intensifies the effects of the drought, and owing to the difficult economic situation marked by the lowering of people's purchasing power owing to the increase of prices, the depreciation of the national currency and high inflation. In February 2019, the price of the food basket (6 basic products) increased by 11 per cent compared to a monthly basis and 26 per cent compared to an annual basis. Owing to

high levels of poverty and food insecurity, acute malnutrition affects some 39,000 children under the age of 5 who live in areas affected by the 2018 drought and require care to reduce the risk of morbidity and mortality associated with malnutrition. Through its field visit to Ouanaminthe, the Group had the opportunity to witness first-hand the efforts made by the United Nations to address malnutrition through the laudable school canteen programme run by the World Food Programme, which provides a daily hot meal to 300,000 primary school children in 1,243 schools across the country.

25. The Haitian population is also affected by the cyclical repetition of crises or shock situations linked to natural disasters. Some 37,500 people affected by the dramatic earthquake of January 2010 still live in camps waiting for durable long-term solutions while 157,000 people affected by the more recent earthquake of October 2018 require medium-term assistance. The country also faces hydrometeorological risks, particularly hurricanes. The intensity and frequency of hurricanes in the Caribbean region is expected to increase in the future, making it imperative for countries such as Haiti to ensure they have the necessary level of preparedness. The Group appreciates the ongoing activities by humanitarian and development organizations to support the Haitian institutions, particularly the Directorate of Civil Protection, so that they can successfully lead response efforts. The Group encourages the Government of Haiti to continue its efforts to strengthen its civil protection agency.

26. On a positive note, important progress has been made in the fight against cholera as a result of effective medical case management, epidemiological surveillance, laboratory capacity and community response activities. In 2018, there were 3,786 suspected cholera cases and 41 related deaths, compared with 13,681 suspected cases and 146 related deaths in 2017. For the first 13 weeks of 2019, the number of suspected cholera cases were 27 per cent of those reported during the same period of 2018 (i.e., 262 compared with 995). The zero-transmission target is considered possible by 2020 provided that current efforts and funding against cholera are maintained. The Group welcomes efforts by the United Nations Special Envoy for Haiti to work with United Nations partners, the Government of Haiti, Member States, development banks, civil society and the private sector, to develop social impact bonds as a valuable financing approach to address cholera-related issues. The Group also stresses that, in a country where large sectors of the population lack access to clean water and sanitation, long-term development measures are required to prevent, mitigate and eradicate cholera and other waterborne diseases.

27. The Group notes, following its visit to Ouanaminthe that a significant number of people of Haitian origin have voluntarily returned to Haiti or have been repatriated to Haiti by the Dominican authorities following the adoption of new legislation in the Dominican Republic resulting from the 2010 constitutional reform, which allows only persons born in the country to Dominican nationals or legal residents to have Dominican nationality, excluding people born of the large population of Haitian migrant workers without legal documents. The International Organization for Migration reports that an average of 10,000 people either voluntarily return or are deported to Haiti on a monthly basis and that more than 227,000 people have been registered as deportees/returnees since June 2015. These include more than 4,000 presumed unaccompanied minors. The Group is concerned that deportees arrive in Haiti under precarious conditions, without resources and separated from their families, and might face serious protection problems, especially unaccompanied minor girls and boys. Existing community systems and integrated referencing systems in border areas need to be strengthened to avoid the recrudescence of trafficking in persons, particularly women and children. The Group underscores that the Government of Haiti, with the support of the international community, should provide

the necessary protection and humanitarian assistance to people returning from the Dominican Republic.

28. The Group expresses its preoccupation that, despite the prevailing difficult humanitarian situation, the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan has only received 11 per cent of its \$126.2 million financial requirements to address the needs of the most vulnerable 1.3 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Noting that in 2018 the Haitian Humanitarian Response Plan was the world's least funded, having received only 13 per cent of its \$252.2 million requirements, the Group underscores that additional funding for humanitarian activities is urgently required. Efforts should focus on strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus, namely, meeting both the immediate needs of the population while also investing in medium- to long-term development to reduce chronic vulnerabilities and risks affecting communities and prioritizing reaching those further behind first, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

E. Human rights, rule of law and administration of justice

29. Insecurity and gang violence are a matter of concern with human rights violations frequently reported. Gang violence often ends up in killings, sexual violence and the destruction of property as in the case of the La Saline neighbourhood in Port-au-Prince where, in November 2018, fighting between rival gangs for the control of local markets led to widespread human rights violations and abuses. The Group was informed that investigations into the crimes committed at La Saline carried out by civil society organizations attributed the responsibility of those crimes to criminal gangs with alleged complicity with some State actors. The Group welcomes the opening of investigations by the Government of Haiti and MINUJUSTH, underscoring the importance of establishing the facts as well as adopting the necessary measures to bring about justice through the effective prosecution of all those found guilty of the crimes.

30. Representatives of human rights groups also expressed the view that many Haitians continued to be denied their basic human rights owing to increasing economic precariousness and social inequalities. Some mentioned that Haiti was a two-speed society as only a minority of the population benefited from the creation of wealth while the great majority – especially young people – continued to be marginalized and live in poor conditions, with no access to basic social services and economic opportunities. Many interlocutors expressed concern that a large sector of the youth population, feeling disenfranchised, with no education and economic prospects, might be easily mobilized by political and business forces in furtherance of their narrow interests through the numerous gangs operating in the country. Despite much progress made throughout the years with the support of the United Nations peacekeeping presence, the continuing need to increase the capacity of the Haitian national police to effectively maintain law and order and address gang violence while adhering to human rights standards, was also brought to the fore during discussions with the Group. Mention was made, in particular, of the imbalance between a police force lacking firearms and equipment to effectively carry out its duties and increasingly well-armed gangs now operating not only in Port-au-Prince as in the past but in various other parts of the country.

31. Furthermore, impunity, widespread corruption and lack of good governance were repeatedly mentioned as major concerns, preventing the fulfilment of human rights and the achievement of sustainable development in the country. The judiciary's lack of independence is considered one of the drivers of corruption and an obstacle to good governance. Lack of access to justice, particularly for vulnerable groups, including victims of sexual and gender-based violence, is one of the reasons why public confidence in security and justice institutions remains low. The Group stresses

that the rule of law and the administration of justice and efforts to combat human rights violations and corruption are critical in building resilience and promoting sustainable development and should therefore be pursued vigorously.

III. Coherence and sustainability in international support for Haiti¹

A. Change in the United Nations posture in Haiti: from a peacekeeping presence to a more development-oriented configuration

32. The United Nations system is implementing activities under its United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period 2017–2021, which was developed through a human rights-based approach, in a concerted manner with all resident and non-resident agencies of the United Nations and sections of MINUJUSTH, government representatives, civil society and development partners. Five outcome areas of intervention that will make a valuable contribution to the achievement of national priorities and Sustainable Development Goals are identified in the Framework: poverty reduction and employment; social services; gender and protection; resilience; and governance.

33. The United Nations system is currently preparing the Framework report for the period 2017–2018 as well as workplans for the period 2019–2020 corresponding to each outcome area. The work is being undertaken in consultation with the Government of Haiti, at the technical level, as well as civil society and the private sector, and takes into account the prevailing situation in the country and progress made in achieving the Goals. The preparation of joint work plans is also taking into account the activities that will be taken up by the United Nations country team after the departure of MINUJUSTH on 15 October 2019. A considerable resource mobilization effort will be required to ensure that the United Nations country team has sufficient resources to carry out some of the activities currently undertaken by MINUJUSTH. In this regard, the Group was informed that a financing strategy and action plan have been prepared to secure the necessary resources for the United Nations country team to carry out its work.

34. The country is at an important juncture. After more than 15 years of United Nations peacekeeping presence, the United Nations is preparing to transition to a more-development oriented configuration when, on 16 October 2019, a special political mission will replace MINUJUSTH, pursuant to Security Council resolution [2466 \(2019\)](#). The Group welcomes the extended consultations between the Government of Haiti, MINUJUSTH, the United Nations country team, under the leadership of the new empowered Resident Coordinator in accordance with the reform model of the United Nations development system, and key development partners to ensure a smooth transition. The Group also welcomes the request by the Government of Haiti for eligibility for the Peacebuilding Fund to support its efforts to address peacebuilding priorities in the context of the transition. The Group is of the view that, owing to the prevailing socioeconomic and political context, it would be crucial that the special political mission be provided with the necessary broad mandate and resources and be equipped with the necessary expertise and skills not only to support the Government in promoting human rights, governance, the rule of law, democratic institution building and security, but also to effectively help to address the socioeconomic root causes of instability, vulnerability and insecurity that plague the country through effective and sustained collaboration and coordination among the

¹ The information contained in paras. 32 to 40 is drawn largely from that provided to the Group by international organizations based in Washington, D.C.

political, development and humanitarian entities of the United Nations, and the national actors and international partners operating in Haiti in the interest of integration, implementation and accountability. The Group further underscores that, in view of the repositioning of the United Nations development system, the United Nations reform and its focus on conflict prevention and sustaining peace, and in line with the 2030 Agenda, which provides an integrated road map and the pledge that no one will be left behind, the special political mission represents a unique occasion for the United Nations to ensure the delivery of a “One United Nations” approach to a successful transition, with the aim of bringing lasting security, stability and development to the Haitian people. The Group also highlights that, if successful, the transition of the United Nations presence in Haiti could serve as a model in other settings where complex situations prevail, fuelled by long-standing economic, social and political grievances. The Group further stresses the need for the United Nations to ensure that its activities are aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Goals.

B. Engagement of the international community

35. Between 2010 – the year of the large-scale Haitian earthquake, in which more than 300,000 people lost their lives – and 2018, international donors provided more than \$7.5 billion to support Haiti. This includes aid provided to the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the Government of Haiti. Yet, foreign aid has substantially decreased over the course of the years from its peak in 2010 at around \$2 billion, to an estimated \$400 million per year during the period 2017–2021 that will be almost entirely channelled through the Government by the largest donors. In its discussions with the donor community, the Group cautioned against possible disengagement from the international community at a crucial time when insecurity was rising owing to the deteriorating socioeconomic and humanitarian situation.

36. During its meetings with the international financial institutions, the Group took note of the current initiatives undertaken to support the country’s development. IADB continues to be the largest multilateral donor in Haiti, allocating almost \$1 billion to implement projects under its country strategy for the period 2017–2021 aimed at contributing to higher, inclusive and more sustainable growth, supporting the Government’s goals of expanding and sustaining private and public investment as well as enhancing access to basic social services. The Group also took note of the innovative work carried out by IADB on the issue of remittances, including using blockchain technology to improve remittance flow, transparency and efficiency and to reduce overall costs, which would be extremely relevant for Haiti in view of the large influx of family remittances into the country.

37. The World Bank also remains engaged in Haiti, having allocated an envelope under the International Development Association’s eighteenth financing replenishment (IDA 18) for the period 2017–2020, which totals \$260 million, compared with \$120 million under its IDA 17 replenishment. A total of \$105 million has already been programmed for the 2018 fiscal year and the rest will be scheduled in 2019 and 2020. With over 24 per cent of the allocated resources, the transport sector is the largest recipient of World Bank funding. Around 17 per cent of the investments have been allocated to the social, urban and resilience sectors, with 14 per cent to the energy sector, 13 per cent to the health sector, 12 per cent to the agricultural and environmental sector and 12 per cent to the water and sanitation sector. The remaining resources are earmarked for the education, governance, trade and competitiveness sectors.

38. The Group also took note of the efforts carried out by IMF, including the IMF-staff level agreement agreed in March 2019 with the former Prime Minister, Mr. Céant which, if implemented, would provide a three-year \$229 million concessional loan to

help to address poverty, promote macroeconomic stability, and encourage good governance. At the time of writing, IMF had announced its cancellation of the agreement, given that prerequisites had not been met. However, IMF has assured that it will remain engaged with Haiti. Any such agreement would need to focus on stabilizing the economy while at the same time ensuring social protection to address the needs of the most vulnerable sectors of the population. The Group was informed that, should the agreement be implemented, it could trigger additional funding from other donors, which would be a welcome step towards overcoming the increasing “donor fatigue” in Haiti. The Group is of the view that it would be important to ensure a good balance of policies, besides restoring macroeconomic stability, to also focus on investment in health and education and reducing poverty, in order to ensure that no one would be left behind.

C. Engagement of other development actors

39. The Group had fruitful discussions with civil society, including the private sector. There was broad understanding that, in order for the country to address the current situation, there was a need for a major political agreement between the Government and all sectors of society. Only a truly inclusive dialogue would help to rebuild trust among all sectors of society and create the conditions for the country’s recovery and sustainable development. Representatives of the private sector also stressed that increasing insecurity, particularly from gang violence, coupled with insufficient progress in fighting corruption and impunity, a lack of infrastructure and effective laws which would promote the business environment, remained a serious obstacle to investment opportunities.

40. The Group is of the view that more efforts should be made by the Government to engage with civil society, including the private sector, to set up a genuine partnership that would help to craft a way forward to address the country’s challenges to recovery, build resilience and create the conditions for sustainable development.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

41. **Exclusion and economic inequalities are the root causes of the country’s current political deadlock and deteriorating security situation. In its visit to Haiti, the Group heard many times that economic precariousness and social exclusion were leading to increasing violence. The difficult economic conditions, coupled with limited public spending, including for social programmes, can only worsen the existing poverty and further marginalize the most vulnerable sectors of the population, with dangerous repercussions for security. In this context, it is necessary to improve the mobilization of domestic resources to facilitate the delivery of much-needed social services through bold fiscal measures as well as to create the conditions for economic development, paying particular attention to the needs of young people.**

42. **In order to build resilience and create the conditions for social development, socioeconomic measures need to be complemented by effective progress on the rule of law and good governance, building strong institutions, reforming the justice sector, combating corruption and promoting and protecting human rights.**

43. **The Group heard many times that the lack of confidence among all segments of Haitian society in the Government and national institutions is at the heart of the crisis. An inclusive national dialogue is a prerequisite for progress on the political, social and economic fronts and should therefore be pursued with**

the utmost urgency. The Group is also of the view that the focus should simultaneously be on meeting the basic needs of the population and addressing the country's humanitarian crisis, while strengthening the capacity of the poorest to survive, on the basis of the principle of reaching those furthest behind first.

44. Efforts are also necessary to combat increasing insecurity, including through a multisectoral approach to address gang violence on the basis of the implementation of community violence reduction programmes, weapons and ammunition management, strengthened rule of law, political and socioeconomic measures, and capacity-building to strengthen the Haitian national police.

45. The United Nations system has an important role to play in helping the Government to address the existing challenges by ensuring a successful transition to a post-MINUJUSTH configuration. In this regard, activities to improve security, governance and the rule of law, and to promote and protect human rights should be complemented by significant support for the national development priorities defined by the Government of Haiti and in line with the 2030 Agenda.

46. The continuous engagement of the international community remains crucial for Haiti to move successfully towards recovery, resilience-building and sustainable development. Such support should be well coordinated, coherent and sustainable to maximize impact.

47. The Group would like to put forward to the Economic and Social Council the recommendations below for consideration.

48. The Group encourages the Government of Haiti to accelerate implementation of its national development plans in line with the 2030 Agenda and, in this regard:

(a) To engage with all sectors of society in an inclusive and constructive national dialogue to chart a way forward in order to address the country's current political and socioeconomic difficulties, rebuild trust and shape a common vision for the country's development;

(b) To accelerate efforts to reform the justice sector, promote the rule of law, implement measures against corruption and impunity and promote full respect for human rights, including by addressing sexual and gender-based violence. In order to do so, prompt action is required to better implement existing laws and adopt the draft penal code, the draft code of criminal procedure and new laws to strengthen anti-corruption institutions;

(c) To ensure the equal and full participation of women in politics and decision-making, including through the use of temporary special measures such as electoral gender quotas;

(d) In view of the country's high vulnerability to hurricanes and other natural disasters, to continue efforts to urgently strengthen the Directorate for Civil Protection through the prompt adoption of the draft organic law on the Directorate and by providing the Directorate with the necessary financial and human resources to operate effectively;

(e) To develop a national strategy to successfully address gang violence, including by addressing the structural root causes that hinder the economic empowerment of young people through community violence reduction activities and an effective weapons and ammunition management programme;

(f) To facilitate and better capitalize on domestic and external private sector investment to promote productivity and economic growth, promote innovation, enhance job opportunities and generate the necessary financial resources to deliver education, health and other social services to the population;

(g) In view of the importance of remittances to financing development in Haiti, to implement measures to better leverage remittances in order to maximize their impact on both the livelihoods of recipients and improvements to the fiscal balance in the economy;

(h) To implement social policies specifically targeting the poorest segments of the population, including cash transfers, in order to successfully mitigate the effects of the reduction of subsidies when implementing fiscal policies;

(i) To consider exploring ways to work more closely with the Peacebuilding Fund.

49. The Group recommends that the international community:

(a) Provide support to efforts aimed at creating an inclusive national dialogue involving all sectors of society to resolve the current political crisis and shape a common vision for the socioeconomic development of the country;

(b) Continue to remain collectively engaged in support of Haiti's sustainable development through well-coordinated and coherent activities and working in close cooperation with the Government of Haiti and the United Nations country team under the leadership of the empowered Resident Coordinator;

(c) Continue to explore innovative ways to facilitate remittance flow to Haiti, including by working with the private sector, to help to reduce remittance fees and ease the burden on poorest customers;

(d) Work with the Government of Haiti as well as civil society actors in support of initiatives aimed at improving justice, rule of law and anti-corruption measures, and infrastructure, as ways to facilitate a favourable environment for business development, which would successfully contribute to sustainable development;

(e) Significantly step up contributions to the Humanitarian Response Plan to ensure that the prevailing humanitarian and protection needs in the country are successfully and promptly met;

(f) Provide significant support the United Nations country team through a reinforced Resident Coordinator office to ensure a seamless transition process from MINUJUSTH to a more development-oriented United Nations presence and preserve the hard-won gains made since the initial deployment of the United Nations peacekeeping presence in 2004;

(g) Explore the possibility of holding an event on Haiti at the seventy-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2019.

50. The Group recommends that the United Nations system:

(a) Continue carrying out its activities within the framework of the development priorities defined by the Haitian authorities;

(b) Continue working in close consultation with the Government of Haiti and civil society in the development of workplans for the period 2019–2020;

(c) Effectively transit to the new Resident Coordinator System ensuring that all agencies on the ground align their work with Haitian priorities and in support of the achievement of the Goals and their targets;

(d) Make sure that the special political mission that will replace MINUJUSTH on 16 October 2019 will be properly resourced and mandated to ensure coordination, integration, implementation and accountability among United Nations entities, national actors and international partners geared towards fostering an inclusive, transformative economic development in full cognizance of the country's development priorities and the prioritized targets of the Goals;

(e) Provide the United Nations country team, under the leadership of the empowered Resident Coordinator, with the necessary resources and capacity to take over the tasks currently implemented by MINUJUSTH to improve security, governance, the rule of law and anti-corruption measures, and promote and protect human rights, as well as conduct activities aimed at promoting sustainable development;

(f) Continue its efforts, under the leadership of the United Nations Special Envoy for Haiti, to respond to the humanitarian crisis, including sustaining progress in addressing the cholera outbreak.

Annex

Letter dated 30 May 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General*

I am writing you in my capacity as Chair of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on the long-term social and economic development of Haiti, on behalf of the 10 Member States that took part in the three-day annual mission in Haiti from 22 to 24 May 2019. Some of us, including myself, have personally taken part in the last three missions. Thus, we believe that we can comment with a reasonable depth of understanding of the situation.

This year's visit included a meeting with the President, the Prime Minister designate, the President of the Senate, the President of the National Assembly, the leaders of the United Nations country team, and members of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), including your Special Representative and the Deputy Special Representative. We also met with representatives of human rights organizations, the business sector and the National Commission on Disarmament, Dismantlement and Reinsertion. We met with leaders from the Commission des États généraux sectoriels de la nation. We went on the border with the Dominican Republic to witness first-hand, issues of deportation and border management. We visited a school that is benefiting from a World Food Programme lunch feeding programme in order to better assess the humanitarian situation.

Everyone we met agreed on one point, namely, that exclusion and economic inequalities are the root causes of the political instability and deteriorating security situation ("La précarité économique et l'exclusion entraînent la violence"). We also heard many times, in different ways, that the Police Nationale d'Haiti cannot resolve the situation on its own. It is not sufficiently and adequately equipped to do so, nor does it have the ability to confront the numerous well-armed gangs currently proliferating in Haiti. In addition, we have heard allegations that political and business forces would apparently be the ones commanding gang leaders to mobilize and act, in furtherance of their own narrow interests. If true, this is by no means a case of normal criminal activity: political and economic elites need to realize that this cannot be a viable option for the country.

Haiti is also going through a deep institutional, governance and rule of law crisis, born out of a worsening economic situation, a gridlocked political process and a pervasive feeling of social exclusion and disenfranchisement. As a testament to that sense of despair, a vast majority of educated young people wish to leave or are leaving the country in throngs, looking for better opportunities abroad.

As mandated by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution [2018/19](#), the Ad Hoc Advisory Group focuses particular attention on the need to ensure coherence and sustainability in international support for Haiti, based on the long-term national development priorities, building upon the Strategic Plan for the Development of Haiti and stressing the need to avoid overlap and duplication with respect to existing mechanisms.

In this regard, we are writing to you because we are concerned by the potential narrowness of the proposed special political mission in terms of its scope and

* The letter, signed by the Chair of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, Marc-André Blanchard (Canada), was agreed upon by the members of the Group who had participated in the visit to Haiti from 22–24 May 2019: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Haiti, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

resources. We feel that the mandate may end up focusing solely on some of the symptoms while failing to address the root causes of the instability, vulnerability and insecurity that plague the country. While it must be recognized that limited progress has been achieved in the areas of security, governance and the rule of law since 2004, 30 years of international presence and significant spending in Haiti seem to provide the opportunity to address the root causes of instability more directly and effectively.

Moreover, the evolution of the situation since July 2018 has further emphasized the precarious and volatile political and economic context in Haiti. Our discussions with numerous stakeholders during the mission have affirmed that conditions for a major change in the posture of the United Nations in Haiti have not yet been satisfied and that a dramatic reduction in the presence of the United Nations could lead to further instability both nationally and regionally.

Now, with the United Nations reform and its focus on prevention and peacebuilding, and with the Agenda 2030 providing an integrated road map and the pledge that no one will be left behind, we feel that the special political mission is a unique occasion to ensure the delivery of a “One United Nations” approach to a successful transition, which will bring lasting security, stability and development on the ground to the people of Haiti. If successful, Haiti’s transition from a peacekeeping operation to long-term stability and development could serve as a model in other settings where complex situations prevail, fueled by longstanding economic, social and political grievances.

To ensure that we deal with Haiti’s biggest and current threats to its security and stability, we propose the following:

First, the events of the past year have highlighted the need for continued efforts to support Haiti to improve governance and the rule of law, including the fight against corruption and impunity. We recommend that the special political mission have a strong rule of law component that is properly resourced and mandated.

Second, in line with the mandate of MINUJUSTH, your letter dated 13 May 2019 to the Security Council made no mention about the urgency of dealing with deep inequalities, exclusion and economic hardship. We find that this is a fundamental issue for the political stability and security of the country, which should thus be adequately included in the mandate of the special political mission. We propose that the special political mission be equipped with robust expertise and skills to ensure coordination, integration, implementation and accountability among the United Nations entities, the national actors and the international partners geared towards fostering an inclusive, transformative economic development focusing on job creation for young people and women, tax and duty collection by the governmental authorities, tackling the scourge of corruption and building sustainable infrastructure, all in full cognizance of the country’s development priorities.

Third, we would like to ensure that on the issues of gang violence and the disenfranchisement of young people, the special political mission is able to help the national police to intervene actively and vigorously in at least three areas: designing, implementing and monitoring a weapon and ammunition rendition intervention program; designing, implementing and monitoring projects and initiatives that will lead to the constructive engagement of young people and the reduction of community violence; and ensuring that the national police is trained, resourced and equipped appropriately to carry out this exceptional task.

Finally, the special political mission needs to be able to support a much-needed and much-awaited inclusive national dialogue. The current Government has tried three times to pursue such a dialogue but so far, each effort has proved insufficient and short-lived.

In the past two years, attempts were made by the President and his Government to address the root causes of instability, vulnerability and insecurity, including widespread corruption, but, for many reasons, including, primarily, the weakness of the current institutions, the implementation has been rendered largely impossible. This has only enhanced an already significant and general lack of trust in the institutions, and exacerbated tensions among the general population. The special political mission should thus be properly equipped to support and ensure that the needed inclusive dialogue occurs. This would be of great assistance to the country, as most agree that the current constitutional framework, which was agreed upon while coming out of a brutal dictatorship, pitting the executive and legislative branches of Government into a protracted and fruitless power struggle, simply does not provide the appropriate checks and balances for the present situation. The country's institutions and governance, the rule of law and human rights would come out strengthened by such a dialogue, if it were successful and skilfully conducted. This may require your continued engagement and good offices to help to overcome the current deadlock and rebuild trust among the various stakeholders.

After all of its efforts, investments and sacrifices, the United Nations cannot fail in Haiti.

With a strong special political mission that is properly resourced, Haiti could be a successful example of transition and present a new way of consolidating peace, with stronger coordination between the mission and the United Nations country team, and clearer goals rooted in the 2030 Agenda, our universal integrated framework.

We would appreciate it if you could offer us the opportunity to discuss this matter in a meeting with you and/or any members of your team that you find appropriate. An in-person meeting would allow us to give you a fuller report of our visit and provide enhanced context to our recommendations.

Many thanks for your consideration.

(Signed) Marc-André **Blanchard**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada
Chair of the United Nations Economic and Social Council
Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti