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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Fernando Carrera Castro, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, in the
United Nations Security Council Debate on
“The question concerning Haiti”
(New York, 20 March 2013)**

Mr. President:

I am pleased to join you in today’s debate. It provides me the first opportunity, since I took office just seven weeks ago as Minister of Foreign Affairs of my country, to take part in a debate of this Council, renewing the political support of my Government to this body. Moreover, the matter that gathers us today – that is, the future of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti – holds a special place in our foreign policy agenda. It pertains to the only peacekeeping operation in our region, and as a troop contributing country to it, we feel a deep sense of connection with the people and the Government of Haiti.

We thank the Russian Federation for organizing this debate, and we commend Special Representative ad interim, Mr. Nigel Fisher, and all the MINUSTAH personnel, for their important work in Haiti at a time when major challenges are being faced. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report that nurtures today’s debate.¹

The content of said report arouses mixed reactions. On the one hand, it reports on gradual progress in certain areas and presents us in the annex with an encouraging plan for the period 2013-2016. On the other hand, we note with concern the persistent uncertainty surrounding the pending elections, sixteen months overdue; that there is a lack of political consensus for a national unity dialogue; and, according to the report, that the rule of law initiatives have yet to produce significant and sustainable changes. For example, the Haitian National Police is still not in a position to assume full responsibility for the provision of internal security throughout the country.

More pointedly, we find, in the first place, that the fundamental short-term priority is to hold local, municipal and legislative elections. Continuing to postpone them can jeopardize the Haitian rule of law. That is why we welcomed the Security Council’s Press Statement of 28 January 2013 (SC/10901) and reiterate the call for the urgent holding of credible, inclusive and transparent elections in accordance with the Constitution. We note with appreciation the recent designation on the part of the Legislative Branch of its designees to the Transitional College of the Permanent Electoral Council, and hope that this process will be completed as soon as possible, and once established it reveals the necessary independence.

In the second place, we support the development of a political pact, and we are concerned that key decision-making on the matter is being undermined by the lack of consensus at the national level. In Guatemala, the current Administration was able to work in an inclusive manner, through the identification of shared priorities and extracting commitments from main stakeholders for the approval of the

¹ (S/2013/139)

“Agreement for Justice and Security in Guatemala”. My country is available to share its experience in this regard.

Thirdly, we agree with the Secretary-General that in order to reverse the increasing trend of the commission of serious crimes in Haiti, it is important that the Government continue to strengthen the rule of law institutions and step up its efforts to combat impunity. The establishment of solid rule of law institutions, including police and the judicial branch, requires that they be allowed to operate independently.

Fourth, we continue harboring concerns regarding the situation of more than 300,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in camps. We encourage the Government, with the support of the international community, to improve the conditions of the remaining IDP camps and to continue advancing with the reconstruction efforts.

In addition, I wish to express our full support to the Secretary-General’s initiative of 11 December 2012 for the elimination of cholera in Haiti. In this regard, we find the appointment of Dr. Paul Farmer, as the Secretary-General Special Adviser for Community-based Medicine and Lessons from Haiti, as particularly suitable. Let me also express our satisfaction with the recent signing of the new integrated strategic framework for the period 2013-2016. In this context, we are concerned that the Haiti’s *flash appeal* from last year is far from meeting its goals.

Moving on to the consolidation plan, we appreciate the concise version that we have received which is still being examined by our national authorities. We note the natural assumption that the Mission mark 2016 as its horizon. While this assumption points in the right direction, we believe that among the criteria to be taken into account for an exit strategy objective conditions that would enable the United Nations to responsibly withdraw from the country must be taken into account. Those conditions for the strategy need to be flexible and adaptable to the realities on the ground.

A specific remark on this matter concerns paragraph 17 of the annex to the report of the Secretary-General. We harbor doubts about the usefulness of projecting figures involving uniformed personnel – and their budgetary implications – based on hypothetical scenarios. Therefore, we would appreciate more information about the criteria used to propose a 30% drawdown, since the application of such a proposal could be premature in relation to the reality on the ground. We are making this point because we consider it important that MINUSTAH count with adequate resources to carry out its mandate.

In the same vein, we think that there is a sequence that must be corrected with regard to the mandate of MINUSTAH, as the budget is approved in May and the mandate is renewed in October. The logical approach would be that the mandate determines the budget and not the other way around. While the consolidation plan is still under development and we do not have any certainty regarding the electoral logistics needs, we trust that further reductions are not applied to uniformed personnel.

Finally, we believe that progress in Haiti depends on a convergence of several factors: adequate resources, effective leadership of MINUSTAH, and political will of the host country, the latter being the most important. If the necessary basis for this convergence is lacking, then any involvement of the United Nations will face major obstacles to achieve success, as well as to maintain a secure environment. Guatemala is proud to have been part of MINUSTAH since its inception, and we will continue our commitment to Haiti as long as necessary.

Thank you, Mr. President