

Statement by H.E. Mr. Harold Caballeros
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala
United Nations Security Council Debate: "The question concerning Haiti"
(New York, 3 October 2012)

Esteemed Colleagues,

Allow me to alter the practice by taking the floor at the beginning of our debate instead of at the end. This, because I consider it an honor for Guatemala, as well as a personal honor for me, to preside over this first substantive meeting of the Security Council during the month of October. For us, this is an historic event: the first time that Guatemala takes over the Presidency of the Security Council since the founding of the United Nations. Moreover, our satisfaction is enhanced, given the topic of today's debate: the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Especially, because of Guatemala's commitment with Haiti.

As you know, the countries of our region feel a sense of ownership regarding MINUSTAH. Twelve Latin American countries contribute with troops and police; the Force Commander has always hailed from our region, and most of the time the same can also be said for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We are pleased that Edmond Mulet, from Guatemala, has encumbered this important post. We are also pleased that our troops have been present in Haiti since the establishment of the first Mission in 1993, and continuously since the establishment of MINUSTAH. Guatemala currently has 133 troops in Haiti.

A few weeks ago I had the privilege of making a brief visit to our contingent in Port-au-Prince; an occasion I also took to visit the MINUSTAH Headquarters. As you can imagine, this debate therefore has a strong personal resonance for me, for my country, for my region, and, of course, for the United Nations.

In this regard, I would like to make three brief points.

First, we find that the report of the Secretary-General presents a promising scenario. It combines the necessary caution equated with the necessary hope to continue moving forward. We congratulate Haiti for the swearing-in of a new Government, the publication of a corrected version of the constitutional amendments and the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary; all are important milestones in Haiti's efforts to strengthen its democratic and rule of law institutions.

We appreciate the news received that the establishment of the Permanent Electoral Commission is back on track after some setbacks and we hope that the electoral process in Haiti is resumed after delays of almost one year.

Second, Guatemala will remain committed with Haiti and with United Nations peacekeeping operations for as long as necessary. We support the reconfiguration and consolidation plan of MINUSTAH. We look forward to more details on this new plan. Carrying it out will require intensive coordination among the wide range of national and international stakeholders and will be subject to different development and implementation timelines. With regard to security we note that the level of operational effectiveness of the national police will constitute the main benchmark that should guide the pace of the drawdown of the Mission's uniformed personnel.

We fully support the development of a transition compact that will allow to measure progress in the stabilization process going beyond the work of MINUSTAH into the realms of development and institution building. In this respect we welcome the recent launch of the Aid Coordination Mechanism presented by the Haitian authorities last week in New York during the opening of the general debate.

Third, as a special gesture I would like to recognize the work of Mr. Mariano Fernández as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of MINUSTAH in a time marked by difficulties and challenges. He has carried our work forward in a remarkable manner, as evidenced this morning by his presentation of the Secretary-General report. Guatemala will continue to support his work.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that Guatemala fully identifies with the international community's efforts to assist Haiti in the reconstruction and strengthening of its institutions through a permanent and strategic partnership aimed at bringing a better future for Haiti.

Thank you.

I now resume my capacity as President of the Security Council.