

Security Council Open Debate on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
Friday, 6th August 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by General Paul Cruz, Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)

Major General Paul Cruz: I thank the Council for giving me the opportunity to clarify some issues. I will begin with engineer participation, which has been reinforced in our mission. We were not only reinforced, but well reinforced by the Japanese and Korean companies of engineers. They are doing remarkable work on main roads that had major damage; they are now repaired. There was a big effort made to remove debris, so we are opening sites, mainly Government facilities, hospitals, schools and orphanages. This process is ongoing. We have had very good reinforcement on those issues.

On the issue of sexual and gender-based violence, one month after the earthquake, when the main camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) were being established — in the area of Port-au-Prince there are now about 900 IDP camps — we began to notice an increase in violence against **women**, and we changed our approach to address this problem. This problem must be addressed from a broader perspective that includes community violence reduction personnel and humanitarian people, as well as the presence of the military, the police and the local police. We encourage various actors in this joint strategy, which exists mainly in the larger camps — such as the Jean-Marie Vincent camp — where we had many problems that were reduced by major operations involving the United Nations police, formed police units, the military and the Haitian National Police. This was carried out not only through a security approach, but also with a view to improving living conditions and to spreading the message that persons most at risk, such as **women** and children, must be protected. This is an ongoing process by which we hope to reduce the number of threats against **women** in the camps, because their lives there are already difficult.

Our deterrence posture is part of what we are doing, mainly in the poorest areas of Port-au-Prince and other cities. My guidance to the military is: “Be there on foot. Stay there as part of the local community. Be part of the community. Be accepted by them, work with them and thus maintain their confidence in our job and our work.” And this has resulted in a very good approach towards the local Haitian people and the local leadership, and it has made our lives much easier than before.

With respect to humanitarian efforts, in the emergency phase we had the challenge of quickly distributing large quantities of food, water and shelter, which was done by a joint operations task centre, where all requests were posted and tasks assigned to the proper sector for appropriate action development, not just towards the military or the police, but also towards all the humanitarian organizations and United Nations agencies that were on board.

But after the emergency phase, under the direction of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Edmond Mulet, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Humanitarian Coordinator established a strategy to bring coherence to the delivery of humanitarian assistance. This delivery needed to be coherent with the Haitian Government’s plan and with that of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission. We studied their documents and, under the direction of the Deputy Special Representative, we prepared a plan for a more coherent delivery of assistance in the recovery phase in order to prepare for the next phase.

Today, our major logistical challenge is debris. We are working on opening the roads and streets of Port-au-Prince. Of course, delays are expected. Progress can be achieved only in a safe and stable environment. Notwithstanding all the things that have happened in Haiti, with the electoral process that is currently being launched, we are optimistic that the country will recover, that it will soon enter a new phase of greater stability and that it will be better in general.