

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

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

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this precious opportunity to present the Security Council with a view of MINUSTAH and its military component, with a focus on humanitarian assistance, which is an important part of the Mission's daily operations.

Since its inception on 1 June 2004, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti has reached a number of milestones. In the midst of ongoing violence in the country, legislative and executive elections were planned that, after having been postponed several times, were held in February 2006. MINUSTAH played a significant role in ensuring that the presidential elections were organized, monitored and carried out in a free and fair manner.

In 2006 and 2007, the military component of MINUSTAH assisted in the restoration and maintenance of the rule of law and public safety and order in Haiti, including in the central areas of Port-au-Prince. The years of 2008 and 2009 were rife with riots and the destruction that the hurricanes wrought upon the nation.

On 12 January 2010, an earthquake levelled entire neighbourhoods in the capital city, delivered a severe blow to a still-weak Haitian economy and infrastructure, and impeded nation-building efforts in the country. The catastrophe also led to a climate of political uncertainty, interrupting a period of relatively smooth progress towards elections that previously been scheduled for February 2010.

In his semi-annual report on the situation in Haiti dated 22 February 2010 (S/2010/200), the Secretary-General provided recommendations on the future role of the United Nations Mission in Haiti. After entering a period of consolidation, MINUSTAH needed a surge effort in order to help the Government preserve the gains of stabilization to date and enable a transition to long-term reconstruction.

Since the earthquake, humanitarian assistance, in conjunction with relief and recovery operations, has represented the primary focus of MINUSTAH and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, alongside international organizations and nongovernmental organizations, with, of course, the full cooperation of all countries represented in this Council and many others.

The Mission as a whole is actively engaged in carrying out stage 2 of this concept of humanitarian relief operations. It must be said that food, water, some form of shelter and emergency medical assistance have been delivered in a stable environment. There have been no major epidemic outbreaks. A strategic plan detailing stage 3, the normalization phase, is currently being developed by MINUSTAH.

Notwithstanding the new mandate bestowed upon the military component of MINUSTAH following the earthquake, humanitarian assistance has always been a key area of focus, along with programmes of violence reduction. Better communication and approaches to dealing with the Haitian people became necessary after incidents that occurred at the beginning of the Mission. Accordingly, coordination of action between civilians and military personnel, and thus of humanitarian assistance, became a priority for the success of the military component's mission in MINUSTAH.

Our activities are not intended to be a vehicle for the Government's development efforts or to replace civilian organizations that have a greater capacity for undertaking development projects. Rather, the humanitarian activities carried out are to support the Mission's goals.

The military component has been providing quick response assistance in the aftermath of such events as hurricanes, floods, building collapses, accidents and security breaches. Besides providing security, the military component's

distribution of the necessities of life, such as water, food, shelter and medical assistance, comprises its ongoing activities in support of United Nations agencies and programmes and non- United Nations organizations.

Naturally, since the earthquake, our focus on these activities has increased exponentially. Through its joint operations and tasking centre, it has been possible for MINUSTAH to coordinate assistance provided by diverse actors. A long list of countries provided immediate assistance that was delivered as fast as possible.

United Nations military had control of security, which allowed the United States Joint Task Force Haiti and troops from Canada, Spain, France and Italy, among others, to carry out their main humanitarian assistance tasks. The military component now has the added responsibility of participating in the security of the camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). We focus on the safety and security of those **women** and children who are most at risk.

Our engineers are working diligently every day to improve the quality of life for communities across Haiti on projects such as removing rubble, clearing roads, rebuilding bridges, cleaning canals, preparing sites for IDP camps, clearing areas to rebuild schools and orphanages, digging wells, and so on.

Since the inception of the Mission, the military component of MINUSTAH has been involved in humanitarian assistance. It has acquired great deal of expertise in these areas, especially following the hurricanes of 2004 and 2008. After the earthquake, it used this expertise to work with the civilian branches of MINUSTAH, the United Nations country team and non-United Nations organizations in completing their tasks. The military force will continue to pursue these activities in order to contribute to the fulfilment of MINUSTAH's mandate to create a secure and stable environment in Haiti.