

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

21 March 2007

Report of the Secretary General to the Permanent Council on the situation in Haiti
(June-December 2006)¹

This meeting follows the OAS Special Mission for Strengthening Democracy in Haiti. Some pertinent updates include the recent acceptance of Haiti back into CARICOM, as well as the installation of Haiti's 18-member multiparty Cabinet led by Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis.

OAS Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General made the following comments among others:

- At the end of 2006, the most pressing issue in Haiti is violence. MINUSTAH, OAS, and the Haitian government have been working together to strengthen the national police force, particularly its presence in the capital. So far, the cooperative efforts seem to be making a difference—there has been less violence and fewer losses in the capital. Nationwide, however, Haiti has a total of only 8,058 ill-equipped/ill-trained officers, which hardly meets international standards. Thus, the police reform plan hopes to expand the police force to 14,000 members by 2011.
- The problem of drug trafficking heavily affects Hispaniola. Due to energy and blackout problems in Haiti, as well as a lack of air surveillance, controlling the flow of drugs in and out of the country has been difficult. Haiti and the Dominican Republic are working to address the issue of drug trafficking in a cooperative manner.
- OAS is currently working with the Haitian government to develop a permanent electoral council. The OAS is also helping to develop a civil registry program in order to register new voters into the system. However, the complexity of the electoral system (including a large number of local and municipal elections) makes the cost of elections huge. For example, it costs 24 million USD just to hold senatorial elections.
- OAS is cooperating with Haiti as well, to improve port security and reduce the amount of human trafficking in the country. There are also initiatives to promote tourism through the improvement of airports. The Haitian government is trying to replicate the model of tourism development that has been in place in the Dominican Republic.
- The amount of money pledged for assisting Haiti in various sectors is substantial. Therefore, acquiring funding for developmental programs is not the biggest issue. The capacity to implement programs, however, is what is creating a bottleneck effect in distributing funds efficiently and effectively.
- The government of Haiti and OAS are working towards institutional strengthening. There will be a meeting between the Haitian Minister of Education and the Mayor of New York in order to develop strategies for strengthening the educational system.

¹ This Report was prepared by CSU from notes taken during the meeting. It is intended for internal use only. For easy reference, see full OAS Report: CP/doc.4186/07. It will be posted in PAHO/WHO intranet as well.

- Challenges to the plans for reform include: 1) demonstrating short term delivery; 2) ensuring communication between the government and the public, as well as between cabinets; and 3) coordination within Haiti *and* with international actors in developing human resources and technical expertise.
- The floor was then opened for delegations interventions, among them, HAITI, URUGUAY, VENEZUELA, EL SALVADOR, BOLIVIA, CHILE, USA, CANADA, BRAZIL, BAHAMAS, MEXICO y GUYANA. All of them expressed their solidarity to Haiti. **VENEZUELA** mentioned in particular the creation of a Humanitarian Fund and the disbursement of USD 20 million to support Haiti in the following areas: health, education, water, nutrition and diesel. Relationship between Cuban and Venezuelan doctors was emphasized.