

Verbatim of the Joint Press Conference

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL M. KOFI ANNAN
& PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF HAITI M. RENE PRÉVAL

4 août 2006

Haitian President Rene Preval (Translated from Haitian Creole): We appreciate the effort made to visit us, even if its one day, particularly considering the number of countries that the United Nations is helping in solving their problems. All kind of problems. Problems of hunger, sickness, political problems. All kind of problems. In Haiti, despite the difficulties, the United Nations are playing an important role in the stabilization of the country. We are having lot of problems that are bringing lot of criticism. However things go fine. We had democratic elections. He have an elected president. We have an elected parliament. We have a government made of parties who have elected representatives. And efforts are being done. However, Mr. Secretary-General, we have many difficulties in front of us that are bringing criticism and will continue to bring criticism, which are normal. We accept the criticism and the solutions won't be easier. This is normal. Our first problem is the problem of insecurity that bring kidnapping, suffering too many families, problem of still existing armed groups. We have also the problem of hunger, expensive gas price, unemployment, sickness. The government of Mr. Alexis has been in place since two months. This is a short period. But together with me, the government will do its best to solve the problems. The situation is not easy. The situation is not easy but with the United Nations' support we will continue and do our best. We will take this opportunity to compliment Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés for the good work that he did when he was your Special Representative here. We will continue working with your new Special Representative, Mr. Edmond Mulet, and with all the United Nations team. The situation is not easy but we will continue to cooperate with MINUSTAH more and more everyday for the interest of the Haitian people. Once again, Mr. Secretary-General, we say thank you. Thank you for the cooperation. Thank you for this special attention given to Haiti with this visit. Thank you.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. President, when we met in New York, I promised you that I will come and visit. This is my first visit as Secretary-General. I have been to Haiti before. But as Secretary-General, this is my first visit. And I am happy to be able to come here to show my support for you Mr. President and the government and for the people of Haiti. You are right to state that as United Nations we are dealing with many problems around the world. They one that occupies our television screens and the front pages of our newspapers are the Middle East and the problems of Lebanon. You asked me one day if I would be able to come with that crisis in Lebanon. I was determined to come because your problems are important too. And of course, as the U.N., we are used to dealing with many problems at the same time. And you deserve our attention too. I am sorry that I couldn't come yesterday as planned. But it was for technical reasons beyond my control. In fact, I was on the airport on the plane and I had to

debar because the plane had technical problems and couldn't leave. And when we arrived this morning waiting to come out of the plane, waiting for the protocol to get everything ready, someone seating next to me said "God but we are waiting for a bit" and an American woman said "You better get used to it. This is Haiti. You have to do a lot of waiting and things are always late". But the pilot who was a very honest young man said "Yes, but this time we cannot blame Haiti. The problem was New York". Mr. President, let me say that we have achieved a lot together in our partnership with the government and the people of Haiti working with MINUSTAH, the UN agencies programs and funds. As you said earlier, we organized a fair and open election, perhaps one of the best elections. Today, we have an elected president, an elected parliament. And you have been able to put together a broad-based government. A government that is determined to tackle the problems of the country in partnership with the international community. But you have taken the ownership and the lead. It is your program that we are here to support. We do not have our own program. We are here in support of what you want to achieve. You and the people of Haiti. We have achieved a lot but much more remains to be done. We have the program of recovery, we have... [Inaudible]. We need to strengthen state institutions from judiciary to the penal system to professionalizing the police to be able to do something about the security issues that we all complain about and working in partnership with MINUSTAH and the U.N. I think we can do a lot. And Mr. President, I applaud your leadership, your leadership in taking the country forward. I know the population is impatient and that is normal having been through what they have gone through. Now that the elections are behind us, a government is in place and the security situation is better. Yes, we do have the kidnappings and the criminal elements but when we look back three years ago, a year ago and six months ago, we know we have made progress. In discussions in New York with the Member States and donor countries, I try to get everyone to understand that nation-building is a long-term proposition. It does take time, it is hard, it is difficult and it requires everyone to play his or her part. We need to work in partnership: the government, the private sector, the civil society and all of us. Haitians, men and women, can now make individual contribution towards the rebuilding of this nation. To succeed, it is going to take hard work. Hard and sustained work and patience. And I think we all have to get this and I will suggest we all do the little bit we can and help rebuild this country. It is easy to complain. And I know it from my job. You always have those who sit in their arm chairs and complain that those who are trying to do something are not doing enough. I don't think we can afford this in the current situation of Haiti. We all have to chip in and do our work. To reaffirm my own belief that peace-building is a long-term proposition, in my current report before the Security Council, I have asked them to extend the U.N. operations in Haiti for twelve months. Normally, it would have been six months. But I know the work ahead of us. I know what we have to do together. As I am challenging the Member-States to accept that this is a long-term proposition and that we should have a twelve-months prolongation of the Mission, we should strengthen the police side of our activities by appointing additional police trainers and working with the PNH and the government to professionalize the police and to try and work together to do something about the crime that is [inaudible] fear for so many Haitians these days. I hope the Member-States will accept my recommendations. Mr President, let me once again thank you for your cooperation, the cooperation you have extended to the U.N.

and the team, the cooperation you extended to Juan Gabriel Valdés and the way you are working with my new Representative, Mr. Mulet, whom if most of you don't know is here and why don't you should take a look at him...why don't you take stand up and let the press see who you are [laughs and applause]. So, thank you Mr. President. We applaud your leadership and you can count on my support and the support of the United Nations, MINUSTAH, the UN Agencies, funds and programs who are here. And when I talk of support of the U.N., I am not talking of only the programs and agencies that are here but also from New York and in our network of donor countries. So, once again, thank you very much for this warm reception from you and the people of Haiti. And you are off to a good start and you can count on us. *Mèsi anpil* (Many thanks).

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SESSION:

Guy Delva (Reuters):

- My first question is for the President regarding the request for a revision of MINUSTAH's mandate. Have you obtained a clear answer from the United Nations?

- My second question is for Mr. Annan. I would ask what the U.N. will do to meet the challenges on the ground because there is a lot of criticisms as you know about the way MINUSTAH have been working even though people also commend MINUSTAH for what they do

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan: Let me start with your first question. I think MINUSTAH and the U.N. operations here are working in partnership with the government and doing as best as they can to support the government. We have the police contingents supporting PNH and helping train them and we have the military contingents. We also have the U.N. programs, funds and agencies: they are working in areas of economic and social development, humanitarian activities, institutions-building alongside our uniform personnel. And they are here with a certain specific mandate. They are not here to take over Haiti. They are not here to replace the government or the leadership of Haiti. In the final analysis, the management and the running of the country is the responsibility of the leaders and the people of Haiti. We are here to support and to assist. But given what Haiti had gone through and the vacuum that had existed, you have a new government, a good government that is trying to get things moving. So, when things go wrong, it is natural that people look around and say: "Oh, these U.N. people with their cars and vehicles and they are so many of them, what are they doing?". You have to start with their mandate and the support role they are playing here. And don't blame them for everything that goes wrong. I know my Haitian friends but you know yourselves better than I do. If we were to do some of the things you are complaining we are not doing, if we were to be overly involved and overly intrusive, you will be the first to say "we are not a colony, we don't want you to get involved in our business". So, we are cut in between. We have a limited mandate and, yet, you want us to do much more and become overly involved and if we did you will be the first to

criticize us. So, let's stop pointing fingers. Let's stop complaining about each other. Let's work in partnership to improve the situation, work in partnership to deal with the criminal elements, work in partnership with the police, with the MINUSTAH to contain the criminal elements. Society has to become engaged. You have to help the police and the law enforcement forces to contain the situation. You all have a role to play. Let's work together. My dear friends excuse me to speak so frankly but I think that is the only way we can understand and help each other and work together. So, I hope tomorrow we will talk together about how our partnership is working and how we can strengthen it...

Péguay Jean (Radio Caraïbes):

Mr. Annan, many sectors of the Haitian society believe MINUSTAH is not efficient on the ground. They are even extremists groups who want MINUSTAH to leave the country. They say some kidnappings have happened few meters from MINUSTAH's patrols. They are more moderate groups who think MINUSTAH's mandate should be revised. What is your reaction as chief of the world organization?

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan: First of all, let me say that I am very pleased that you qualify those who are demanding that MINUSTAH leave as extremists. There may be difficulties but I think by en large the Haitian population knows what MINUSTAH and the U.N. agencies and funds and programs have done and are doing here in Haiti. I have heard about the kidnappings and the criminal events. I don't think any of us can condone these criminals and their activities which terrorize the ordinary population and ordinary people, men and women and children. They should be ashamed to call themselves Haitians when the Nation is at this critical stage trying to rebuild itself. What I can tell you is as Secretary-General of the U.N. I don't get involved at these technical levels but we did discuss at length with the President and the Prime Minister and his Ministers the issue of security and the need for us to take concrete actions to bring it under control. And in my own report to the Security Council, I did make suggestions about increasing the police capacity to be able to contain and eliminate these violent elements and send out the message that impunity will not be allowed to stand. We are determined to work with the government to deal with this problem. But as I said, we need you too. The law enforcement officers alone cannot do. The most effective police that I have come across around the world have had the support of the population and the civil society. Support your police. Support MINUSTAH. Don't give them (the violent elements) refuge. And let's work together.

[Name inaudible] (Radio Megastar):

My question is for President Preval. When you were inaugurated on May 14, 2006, you expressed your hope that MINUSTAH gets involved more in the development of Haiti. With the current prevailing situation of insecurity, has your position remained the same?

Haitian President Rene Preval (Translated from Haitian Creole): Indeed on May 14, after the election. We observed a decrease in the level of insecurity. I think we have lost two opportunities to engage disarmament actions: during the electoral registration period and after the election. We could have taken the opportunity to advance with the

disarmament. We were not in charge prior to the election and after the election we did not have sufficiently solid tools in order to advance. Globally, I think we face two types of insecurity. One which can be localized in Cité Soleil, Grand-Ravine, Martissant and Gonaïves. The other one is more diffuse and can be located all over Port-au-Prince. These are two different problems. So we will treat them in different manners. I think most of the people who are armed in Cité Soleil want to hand over their weapons. They realize that they cannot continue like that. But they want a guarantee. We are open to dialogue. We are ready to open talks with different people. We have started a dialogue to see if the weapons can be handed over in a peaceful manner. There are two types of solution in order to solve this problem: either militarily with all the consequences on those who will conduct the actions, those who will be the targets of the actions and also the population. I don't think that is what we want. What we want is peace and the reinsertion. This is what I am working on. Do I still have the same development language? Yes, I do. But with the new mandate, I have to request more troops specialized on the problems of kidnappings and the problems of armed groups. Guy Delva asked me earlier if I wanted specialized troops. Actually I want police officers specialized in combat against armed street troublemakers in one hand and on the other hand against kidnappers. So I ask for more specialized troops and policemen but for the rest of the country we need the help of MINUSTAH's engineers as they already did for the road from Cap-Haïtien to Fort-Liberté. We are ready to work also with international financial organizations like the World Bank who can give us materials, engineers. And we welcome also their know-how....