

JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND BY
PRESIDENT RENE PREVAL.

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PRESIDENT RENE PREVAL

Mister Secretary General, it was exactly one year and one day ago, on August 2nd 2006, that I received here a great friend of Haiti, your distinguished predecessor, Mr. Kofi Annan. Today, it is for me a grand honour to welcome you, as well as your delegation. We are particularly happy to have again in her own country our dear compatriot, your spokesperson, Michele Montas. It is also a great pleasure to see at your side the person who soon will be your special representative in Haiti, Mr. Hedi Annabi. I salute his nomination and I welcome him. I am sure that he, too, will bring his contribution to the reconstruction of this Haiti to which we all work for, the way he has done, too, for one year, the person who will be soon the new Deputy Secretary General of the Department of Peacekeeping, the Ambassador Edmund Mulet.

He will leave Haiti with our respect, our gratitude, and our sincere friendship. Thanks to the leadership of Ambassador Mulet, and, before him, Ambassador Valdes, MINUSTAH has filled up its mission of stabilization of Haiti for these last three years.

Mister Secretary General, within a little more than two months, the mandate of MINUSTAH reaches its term. I take the opportunity of this visit to Haiti and of your presence before this distinguished gathering of journalists to assure you and the members of the Security Council of our total conviction of the need to the continuation of your support and, therefore, of the renewal, next October, of MINUSTAH's mandate.

While we accompany the success of the security and political stabilization, I benefit of the occasion to invite the United Nations to re-create MINUSTAH and to make it an apparatus of support to the reform of justice and to the efforts to improve our basic structures. This will be a priceless contribution to the modernization of our citizens' social life and an indispensable tool to the economic development of our country.

Mister Secretary General, I wish you success for the remaining part of your stay among us. I wish you success in the fulfillment of your mandate, and I hope to have the occasion of meeting you during the next General Assembly of the United Nations, in New York. Welcome.

SECRETARY GENERAL BAN KI-MOON

Tout d'abord permettez moi de remercier le président Preval pour ses aimables paroles.

C'est pour moi un réel plaisir de me trouver ici aujourd'hui. J'ai eu l'occasion d'avoir avec Michèle Montas de riches discussions sur Haïti et je suis heureux de me rendre compte par moi-même des efforts déployés ici.

Lors de notre entretien il y a quelques minutes j'ai notamment félicité le Président Preval et le Premier Ministre Alexis pour leur leadership dans le processus de dialogue et leurs efforts visant à créer une culture politique basée sur le consensus et la participation de tous les secteurs de la nation. Ceci est essentiel pour la stabilité politique du pays.

Je me réjouis également des progrès importants effectués en matière de sécurité. J'aurai voulu avoir fait autant de progrès dans mon français que vous en matière de sécurité mais malheureusement ce n'est pas le cas, et avec votre compréhension, je vais continuer mes propos en anglais.

The UN has never forgotten that Haiti is a founding member of this Organization. We are here at the request of a founding member of the UN that helped build the United Nations. Yours is a country that played a vital role in the struggle to decolonize Africa, which should never be forgotten. Haiti has so much to be proud of in this regard and nobody should see the presence of soldiers and police from other member states as anything but what it is: a committed and friendly engagement to help Haiti establish its own secure and sustainable future free of violence, discord and want. We are not here to impose anything on you.

During our discussion, I've insisted on the importance to consolidate achievements on the security front including by making progress in establishing the rule of law. Haiti can count on UN support in this struggle, as it is a priority in MINUSTAH's mandate.

I also fully support the President fight against corruption. This is a very serious matter which has to be dealt with if any progress is to be made. Corruption undermines institutions and weakens individuals. I think a national campaign against corruption would be very appropriate.

We recognize the importance of the national authorities' initiative on judicial reform. In that context I welcome the decision taken last night by the Senate to approve the law on the Council of the magistrature. I hope the law can now be adopted by the Chamber of Deputies and I encourage all to continue working towards the adoption of the remaining pending legislation.

It's also critical to demonstrate that corrupt practices within the judiciary will no longer be tolerated, especially as we forge ahead with the police vetting.

Tomorrow, I will be meeting with the Presidents of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as with the follow-up Commission on Justice Reform to encourage them on their ongoing efforts to advance this reform agenda.

Despite the success in dismantling the "gangs" and improving public order, the operational improvements remain fragile.

The only way to reach sustainability is for the Haitian National Police to improve capabilities and capacity to provide law and order.

On this issue, cooperation at all levels should continue and the UN is committed to this. MINUSTAH has the capacity to support the development of the institution in order to provide an effective police service to the people of Haiti.

In this regard the vetting process and the internal program of the HNP General Inspector are key elements of the police reform.

I understand that one-third of the Senate is scheduled to be renewed this year according to constitutional provisions, and that indirect elections are also to be held in the coming future.

The United Nations stands ready to assist, in view of the importance of adhering to the democratic process.

MINUSTAH is also here to create the necessary conditions for the Haitian authorities, the UN Agencies, Funds and Programs and the international donors to implement urgently the national strategy aimed at developing the most impoverished areas of the main cities, and especially Port-au-Prince.

As you know, MINUSTAH is here to create the necessary conditions for Haitian authorities and international donors to implement the national strategy for the poorest urban areas.

I commit to promote this long-term engagement to provide the Haitian people with the opportunity they deserve. The international community must not step aside and let spoilers succeed jeopardizing Haiti's progress.

The time has come to rebuild the institutions that have been destroyed by years of neglect, corruption and violence, to strengthen them so that the State is able to deliver the services that the people need

This time, the United Nations, which has been in your country five times in the past, will not leave until the future is secure.

Q: From 2004- 2006, we all agree that the security situation has improved but when we look more deeply at things, as you said yourself, the situation remains fragile. According to you, how long does Minustah have to remain in Haiti?

And the second part of the question, you have chosen Edmund Mulet for the post of Assistant Secretary-General of Peacekeeping operations. Do you think that his mission here is completed and if so, how will (the work) of Mr Annabi, be different?

Ban Ki-Moon : First of all, my position is that the United Nations should consolidate the gains achieved thus far through the contribution of MINUSTAH and we must provide the opportunity, the window of opportunity for President Preval and his government to carry on, on the basis of the support of the international community, and on the basis of security, political security, social security; the reforms which he has been carrying out on justice and penal services reform, of Haitian national police, his fight against corruption and his rule of law. All this should be consolidated. Therefore I believe that the United Nations will agree to the extension of Minustah's mandate here. I am going to recommend the extension of a 12-month mandate when the Security Council discusses this matter in October.

For the second part of your question about the appointment of Ambassador Mulet as the Assistant Secretary-general for Peacekeeping operations and his successor Mr Annabi, as President Preval has mentioned in his remarks, Ambassador Mulet has made a great contribution to the security and peace and political harmonisation of this great country through Minustah and I appreciate and I commend his contribution. I am sure with his experience and wisdom he will make another great contribution in the newly-restructured department of peacekeeping operations. We are now in the process of deploying another mission in Darfur and there is again demand from other areas where conflicts are still going on. And as far as Mr Annabi is concerned, you will know that he has been working in that position as Assistant Secretary-general for Peacekeeping operations since 1997, for ten years, and he has again made a great contribution to strengthening the capacity of peacekeeping operations and structuring these peacekeeping operations. With this extensive knowledge and experience I am sure that not only will he become a great successor to

Mr Mulet but he will make another great contribution and improvement to MINUSTAH here.

René Preval: I support your statement about the usefulness of MINUSTAH. My position is clear. If we ask the Haitian population if they are glad to have troops of foreign countries in our grounds, I am sure that the answer will be NO. However, I am equally sure that, asked if they would like the departure of MINUSTAH, I am sure that the answer is NOT RIGHT NOW, because the population had been benefiting from the contribution of MINUSTAH in the creation of a safe climate, in the professionalizing of the police. We should assume our situation, we should assume the difficulties, and we equally should assume that we need help. We don't take positions "Flag Raven", of bad faith nationalism. We should first consider what is better for our country in relation to our capability. Our capacities are weak; what is good for our country is to ask to the United Nations Organization, to which we belong, to come to our help, to come to reinforce the police, to come to help us to reinforce the security. And we will evaluate progressively what shape this assistance will take and how much time it will last.

Q: My question has two parts, M. Ban. Some sectors of national life are against the renewal of MINUSTAH's mandate, at the same time, President Rene Preval wants the renewal of that mandate, but we cannot ignore the desires of other sectors of national life.

We know that the UN has put into place a committee in charge of those cases of rapes committed by Minustah soldiers. Have you received information verifying the involvement of these soldiers?

Ban Ki-Moon : First of all, on any policy matter, there may be pros and cons within national society, any organisations....and that is the democratic process. The decision of the UN Security Council was that for the benefit and interest of peace and security not only in Haiti but also in the region, it was necessary to have peace-keeping operations here. That was the decision and nobody will deny that Minustah, since its deployment here in 2004, has been making a great and enormous contribution to stabilisation in the political, social, economic areas. I am quite confident that the Security Council will look at this aspect and as I said earlier whatever gains have been made by Minustah's contribution to the political stabilisation [and] social security, that should be solidified so that President Preval will have a window of opportunity to carry out his policies of reform, to carry out his social-economic development (programmes). I am going to recommend that direction.

On the sexual abuse cases, I am deeply concerned about such (occurrences) among peacekeeping missions around the world. The United Nations policy is zero tolerance in sexual abuses cases. Whenever there was such, an allegation of such cases, I have instructed a thorough investigation and taken necessary actions by repatriating the soldiers concerned and asking the sending countries to have them responsible through their own judiciary systems. I am going to strengthen this system and I have again in Haiti, this afternoon, when I was meeting with our staff; emphasised the importance of strictly adhering to the highest levels of code of conduct, the highest level of ethical standards and I am again emphasising that my policy is zero tolerance on this.

Q: My question is about Darfur. As you are now gearing up to prepare for the very big operation in Darfur, what lessons do you think you can learn from the Minustah and use it for the potentially successful operations in Darfur?

Ban Ki-Moon : Each and every mission of peacekeeping has been decided and mandated by the Security Council, according to the unique and different circumstances and situation and background (of different countries). I think while the basic purpose of peacekeeping around the world is the same: to secure (the) peace and security of that particular country, there seems to be some difference between Minustah and (the) peacekeeping mission in Darfur. There were a few hundred thousand people killed, there was (a) serious humanitarian situation, there was very serious environmental degradation and the situation was very serious and I am encouraged by the unanimous adoption yesterday by the Security Council to allow (a) 26 thousand-strong peacekeeping operation. I am going to expedite the implementation of this. Whatever good lessons, experience which we have gained in Minustah and elsewhere will be fully utilised in our implementing (of) this peacekeeping operation in Darfur.

From this Friday to Sunday there is going to be a pre-negotiation in Arusha, Tanzania inviting all the rebel group leaders. This is a part of (an) ongoing political process which will complement the peacekeeping operations in Darfur. I think peacekeeping operations through this deployment of hybrid operations should be accompanied hand-in-hand by the political process involving all rebel group leaders as well as other major stakeholders in the region. I am going to step up this political process while implementing hybrid operations. And at the same time, I (will) also try my best efforts to facilitate humanitarian support for those people who are suffering from basic daily needs in Darfur.