

Member States Briefing on the Humanitarian Situation in Haiti

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Panel Remarks

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

We are all here today to show our support to the people of Haiti. We stand with them as they grieve the loss of their loved ones, their homes and livelihoods. Having just returned from Haiti, I have witnessed the extent of the devastation and how long the road to recovery will be.

The 7.2 magnitude earthquake that hit the southern peninsula on 14 August severely affected the Grand'Anse, Nippes and South departments in the south-western part of the country, with the city of Les Cayes and surrounding rural, hard-to-reach, areas being the most affected. Even though it proved less catastrophic than the 2010 earthquake, the impact of the 14 August earthquake has been overwhelming and heart-wrenching. The most recent reports show that at least 2,207 people have perished, 320 are still missing, more than 12,268 injured, and more than 130,000 houses have been damaged or destroyed. Just two days after the earthquake, on 17 August, Tropical Storm Grace dumped extremely heavy rains in the same areas affected by the earthquake, adding to the plight of the victims and briefly impeding search and rescue operations. More than two weeks after the earthquake, humanitarian assistance is reaching those most in need with greater efficiency and speed, facilitated by enhanced Government-led coordination and robust efforts to negotiate increased humanitarian access into hard-to-reach areas. We deployed an UNDAC team in the days after the quake, supported by the Americas Support Team. Affected communities struggling to cope with the quake's impact continue to receive assistance to address growing needs in emergency shelter, food, safe water and sanitation, and protection services. There are also strong measures in place to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and services for victims of sexual and gender-based violence

(SGBV), amid aggravated vulnerabilities and risks to their physical and psychological well-being.

I thank Prime Minister Ariel Henry and the Haitian Government for their remarkable efforts in coping with this catastrophe. Prime Minister Henry was instrumental in facilitating the safe passage of relief convoys to the worst-affected areas along the main arteries that are frequently controlled by gangs. I am pleased to say that, as of yesterday, a total of 14 convoys representing 155 vehicles including 104 trucks - had managed to deliver much needed humanitarian assistance to affected populations in the South. When I was in Haiti last week, I was impressed with the work of the national authorities, such as the Haiti Civil Protection Agency – which has partnered with organizations on the ground to help clear the debris and provide emergency health services to vulnerable people, especially women, girls, older people and people with disabilities. I saw this for myself in Les Cayes and Maniche, where I travelled together with Bruno.

In Port-au-Prince, under the leadership of the Prime Minister and on behalf of the humanitarian system, we launched a Flash Appeal for US\$187 million to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to 500,000 Haitian women, girls, boys and men. More specifically, the goal is to provide health assistance to 225,000 people, including 72,000 pregnant women; emergency food support to 310,000 people; nutrition to 168,000 children under age 5; education support to 100,000 children; water and sanitation assistance to half a million people; and shelter to almost 400,000 people – to name just some of the targets. It is an expression of our solidarity towards the Haitian people.

We thank Member States for their swift and unwavering support to search-and-rescue efforts and for providing emergency supplies and shelter. Thanks also to our donors' generosity, the Emergency Relief Coordinator allocated \$8 million from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund to help kick-start the provision of immediate, lifesaving humanitarian assistance in the key sectors of Food Security, Shelter/NFIs, Health, WASH, Protection, and Common Services, to address the needs of those most affected by this latest crisis in Haiti.

My mission to Haiti also allowed me to see with my own eyes many of the other vulnerabilities across the country. For example I visited an IDP site in Port-au-Prince, where hundreds of people were sheltering in a school after having been forced to flee in June as a

result of the gangs who burned their homes and terrorized their community. These people – many of whom were disabled and who had originally been displaced following the 2010 earthquake - were living in awful conditions. The school was crowded and dirty. This visit underscored for me just how important it is to support Haiti as so many people suffer the consequences of multiple shocks. I hope we can garner some of that support today.

Thank you.

Concluding Remarks

Humanitarian aid is making a difference, but we need to do more. The volatile security situation and humanitarian access constraints are some of the main challenges to aid delivery in Haiti as they continue to create significant difficulties for national authorities and humanitarian partners. While the humanitarian community welcomes the efforts of all stakeholders in negotiating and securing access to the worst-affected areas, this access will need to be sustained long-term, particularly considering the lack of air and sea assets available to reach affected people in the aftermath of the subsequent disasters they have been affected by.

Let us not forget the lessons learned from the 2010 earthquake and Hurricane Matthew in 2016. We must avoid being confronted with the same bottlenecks and challenges seen in previous emergencies. We need to build risk awareness and reduction into the reconstruction effort. Humanitarian actors must aim to harness and strengthen the efforts of long-standing local response actors on the ground, especially local NGOs, civil society organizations and community leaders, and support the recovery of local economies and livelihoods through local procurement of relief supplies and cash-based assistance, both of which will have important multiplier effects across the economy.

We must look ahead to Haiti's future. People must be able to rebuild their lives. Years of development gains have been wiped out. With your support, we hope this Flash Appeal will be a steppingstone to help Haiti move forward on a more resilient path.

Thank you.