



**PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS (COPA)
GOOD OFFICES MISSION IN HAITI
NOVEMBER 12 TO 15, 2004**

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

From November 12 to 15, 2004, a delegation of parliamentarians from the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) completed a good offices mission in Haiti with the objective of assessing on site the prevailing social, political, and economic conditions and determining actions to help achieve political stability and improve the socioeconomic climate in the country.

The delegation included Ms. Maria José Maninha, COPA President; Dr. Claire and Mr. Fernando Gabeira, members of the Federal Congress of Brazil; Ms. Charlotte L'Écuyer, Member of the Québec National Assembly (Canada); and Ms. Jhannett Madriz Sotillo, Venezuela's representative to the Andean Parliament and COPA president in 2003–2004.

The delegation was accompanied by COPA attorney Joelson Dias; Mr. Joël Monfils, coordinator of the Québec Secretariat of COPA; and Mr. Fernando Aparício da Silva, advisor to Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Relations.

The good offices mission in Haiti is COPA's third diplomatic initiative in the second half of 2004, following missions to observe Venezuela's recall referendum in August 2004 and Uruguayan presidential elections in October 2004.

Created in 1997, COPA brings together the 35 national parliaments of the Americas as well as the hemisphere's interparliamentary organizations and legislative assemblies of federated states. As in the case for the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas, both the United States Congress and the National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba are members.

According to the COPA by-laws, the organization's main mission is to "foster dialogue on issues related to inter-American cooperation and hemispheric integration, in particular respecting the projects and mechanisms stemming from the Summits of the Heads of State and Government of the Americas, [and] contribute to the strengthening of parliamentary democracy and to the building of a community of the Americas founded on the respect for dignity and human rights, peace, democracy, solidarity between peoples, social justice and gender equity."

In the particular case of Haiti, this initiative is even more crucial. The countries of the Americas must step up their efforts and join international forces already in place in order to identify a peaceful, long term solution to the political crisis that has prevailed since the February 29, 2004 departure of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

It should be pointed out that when the terms of Haiti's representatives and two-thirds of its senators ended, representative Ernst Vilsaint had a seat on the COPA Executive Committee.

It was in March 2004 that COPA first expressed its concern regarding the situation in Haiti. At that time, the COPA Executive Committee, meeting in Brasilia (Brazil), adopted a resolution (attached) calling on the transitional government, all political parties, and civil society representatives to work towards a peaceful solution to the conflict, the strengthening of the rule of law and democratic institutions, and the organization of fair, free, and transparent elections in the reasonably near future.

On September 24 and 25, 2004, at its meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the COPA Executive Committee again addressed the situation in Haiti and expressed its concern regarding the precarious security situation (resolution attached).

At that time, in addition to reiterating its appeal to all Haitians to renounce the violence that compromises security and the establishment of a peaceful political climate in the country, COPA called on the still-armed and active rebel forces to cooperate with the transitional Haitian government and forces of order by surrendering their illegal arms to the authorities.

In the resolution, COPA denounced the decline in the country's socioeconomic conditions, calling on the international community and particularly international financial institutions to meet their commitments with a view to strengthening democracy in Haiti and reducing the poverty that affects a majority of Haitians.

Last, COPA expressed its solidarity with the Haitian people following topical hurricane Jeanne and called on all countries of the Americas to take all possible steps to provide humanitarian aid.

COPA hopes the good offices mission in Haiti has raised the awareness of parliamentarians of the Americas as well as the international community, particularly that of the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS), prompting them to adopt measures which, combined with Haitian initiatives, will help achieve political stability and a socioeconomic turnaround in Haiti.

COPA DELEGATION ACTIVITIES

During its visit to Haiti, the COPA delegation spoke with transitional government representatives, notably prime minister Gérard Latortue and foreign affairs minister Yvon Siméon.

The COPA delegation also visited the facilities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)¹ in the cities of Port-au-Prince and Les Gonaïves. There, it met

¹ The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was established by the United Nations (UN) Security Council in accordance with Resolution 1542 of April 3, 2004.

with the MINUSTAH high command, notably ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés, special representative of the UN Secretary-General², accompanied among others by elections officer Gerardo Le Chevallier; MINUSTAH force commander General Augusto Heleno Ribeiro Pereira and two assistants, Commander Carlos Chagas V. Braga and Colonel Williams J. Soares; General Américo Salvador de Oliveira, commander of the Haiti Brigade and the Brazilian military contingent of MINUSTAH, accompanied by Colonel Antônio Quixadá de Vasconcelos, Haiti Brigade Chief of Staff; and Lieutenant-Colonel Isaías, commander of Haiti Brigade Zone Alpha and the 19th Infantry Battalion; Sea-and-War Captain Nepomuceno, base commander of Rachel de Queiroz, where a group of naval fusiliers also with the Brazilian military contingent is stationed; and Captain Sanchez, commander of the Argentine military contingent of MINUSTAH, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel Ferreyra, battalion commander for the contingent in Les Gonaïves.

Mission members also met with senator Gérald Gilles, as well as former representatives Yves Cristallin and James Desrosin, leaders of the Lavalas Family (Fanmi Lavalas) parliamentary group, the political support base of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Leaders of political groups opposed to Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the Fanmi Lavalas party also met with COPA representatives. These included Mr. Micha Gaillard³, assistant secretary of KONAKOM⁴ (Party of the National Congress of Democratic Movements); Mr. Robert Auguste, President of AKADEM (Ayiti Kapab Demokratik); Mr. Serge Gilles, a former senator of PANPRA (Haitian Revolutionary Progressive Nationalist Party); and Rony Smarth, also of OPL (Struggling People's Organization)⁵.

COPA parliamentarians also spoke with historian Susy Castor, director of Centre de Recherche et de Formation Économique et Sociale pour le Développement (CRESFED) and widow of Mr. Gérard Pierre-Charles, former president of the Struggling People's Organization (OPL). Also present were Mr. William Kennel-Pierre, Architect; Mr. Daniel Pierre-Charles, a sports expert and Secretary of State for Youth; Mr. Edgard Leblanc, a former senator and OPL Coordinator; Mr. Paul Denis, former OPL senator and president of the commission established by the transitional government to investigate acts of corruption committed in the last period of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide's administration; Mr. Paul Lacombe of the private sector, former director of Télécommunications d'Haïti (TELECO); Ms. Tânia Pierre-Charles, a doctor and public health specialist; and Mr. Jacky Lumark, President of the University of Quisqueya.

COPA representatives also met with Mr. Jean-Claude Bajoux, president of the Ecumenical Center for Human Rights.

Professor Ricardo Seintefus, special envoy for the Brazilian government, was also interviewed by COPA parliamentarians.

² In accordance with UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/1542 (2004), the special representative of the UN secretary-general is responsible for the coordination and leadership of all UN agencies, funds, and programs in Haiti.

³ Micha Gaillard was spokesperson of the first government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide during his period in exile.

⁴ KONAKOM is one of four political parties that includes the movement for the coalition of left-wing parties in Haiti, which, according to our sources, was created in December 2004. The party is opposed to Aristide and is one of the two parties that support the transitional government. Characteristics specific to the Haitian left include its support for the establishment of MINUSTAH in the country, particularly the presence of Brazil.

⁵ Rony Smarth was prime minister during the administration of former president René Préval.

Mr. Armando Vito Boisson Cardoso, Brazil's ambassador to Haiti, hosted the COPA delegation together with his spouse at a cocktail gathering in their home attended by Mr. Arnaldo Caiche d'Oliveira, minister-counselor of Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Relations; General Augusto Heleno Ribeiro Pereira, MINUSTAH Force Commander, accompanied by his assistants, Commander Carlos Chagas V. Braga and Colonel Williams J. Soares; General Américo Salvador de Oliveira; Colonel Antônio Quixadá de Vasconcelos; the ambassador of Sweden; and a Canadian embassy representative.

During its visit to Port-au-Prince, the COPA delegation stopped at designated "Alpha" and "Bravo" zones under Haiti Brigade responsibility—where its command and part of the Brazilian military contingent of MINUSTAH were stationed—as well as Rachel de Queiroz base, where the Brazilian naval fusilier group was stationed.

From Rachel de Queiroz base, the COPA delegation proceeded in an armored vehicle to the city's port, crossing the entire adjacent region and then Champ de Mars—where the presidential palace and the Cité Soleil and Bel Air neighborhoods are located—and the public market area known as "Hell's Kitchen."

The delegation crossed a good part of the Delmas region and other working class neighborhoods on its way to MINUSTAH military facilities, which it visited in Port-au-Prince from Hôtel Montana, where delegation members stayed. This hotel is near the town of Pétionville, which the delegation also visited.

The COPA delegation then traveled to Les Gonaïves in the Artibonite department, where tropical storm Jeanne caused significant material damage and claimed many victims in September 2004. For this last visit, the delegation traveled by helicopter, given the poor condition of the road between Port-au-Prince and Les Gonaïves, much of which was still flooded at the time.⁶

Before heading to Les Gonaïves, the delegation flew over the city of Port-au-Prince, enabling it to observe the entire metropolitan region.

Brazilian contingent soldiers in MINUSTAH handled security for the COPA delegation, accompanying it in all its travels during its visit to Haiti.

Mr. Nixon Collin drove the vehicle used by the COPA delegation in its travels.

HISTORIC REVIEW OF THE CRISIS IN HAITI SINCE THE FIRST ROUND OF LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS ON MAY 21, 2000

The current political crisis in Haiti began in 2004, the bicentennial of its independence, celebrated on January 1, and of its victory in the war on slavery and colonialism.

Widespread civil disturbance in various regions of Haiti, primarily the city of Les Gonaïves, resulted in president Jean-Bertrand Aristide's departure from the country on February 29, 2004. This led to political instability, a climate of public insecurity, the rapid decline of

⁶ Apart from the helicopter used for the mission, another—also Russian—was made available by the UN for MINUSTAH use. Added to this were other military helicopters belonging to the Chilean contingent of MINUSTAH.

socioeconomic conditions, and the loss of many human lives. Considerable material damage was another unfortunate consequence.

Concurrent to political demonstrations in which participants accused the government of violating human rights and demanded its resignation, criminal activities by individuals and armed groups intensified, spreading panic and insecurity, as well as paralyzing both constitutional order and state institutions.

A number of observers assert that the current crisis is actually just the culmination of political conflicts that have emerged since the 2000 elections—the first round of legislative elections held on May 21, the second round on July 9, and the presidential election on November 26.

Aristide opponents in Democratic Convergence—a party including independent, left-, and right-wing political elements—as well as the international community accused the government, then led by president René Préval, of manipulating the election results. The Interim Electoral Council (CEP) was also accused of violating constitutional rules. The Haitian government attributed this to a simple divergence in the interpretation of the electoral law.

International observers, half sent by the Organization of American States (OAS), denounced ballot counting and seat assignment methods in the first round. They also expressed disapproval that CEP president Léon Manus, who refused to endorse the final results due to vote counting irregularities, was forced to leave the country under the protection of foreign diplomats and seek refuge in the United States.

The opposition then boycotted the second round of legislative elections on July 9, 2000, as well as the presidential election held on November 26, 2000, in which only 10% of eligible voters participated. OAS withdrew its observers for the second round of legislative elections, deeming that first round results had been manipulated in favor of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide's Lavalas Family party.

On February 7, 2001, Jean-Bertrand Aristide became president of Haiti for a term that was to end in 2006.

On December 17, 2001, thirty-odd individuals attacked the presidential palace. Five people were killed in this attempted coup d'état. In retaliation, groups of demonstrators set fire to the offices of Democratic Convergence and three political parties in this coalition. The homes of a number of public figures associated with the opposition were also looted and burned. Journalists covering the attempted coup d'état received threats, and some were forced to seek refuge in the United States and France.

Meanwhile and until the start of the current crisis, the situation in Haiti attracted the attention of the international community. For example, various UN⁷ and OAS⁸ resolutions called

⁷ UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/1542 (2004), "Establishment of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti"; S/RES/1529 (2004) and General Assembly resolutions A/RES/59/17, "Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti" and A/RES/58/311, "Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti"

⁸ OAS Permanent Council resolutions CP/RES. 862 (1401/04), "The Situation in Haiti"; CP/RES. 861 (1400/04) "Support for Public Order and Strengthening Democracy in Haiti"; CP/RES. 822 (1331/02), "Support for Strengthening Democracy in Haiti"; CP/RES. 806 (1303/02) corr. 1, "The Situation in Haiti"; CP/RES. 786

on the parties involved to sign a political accord aimed at finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

A series of international missions were sent to Haiti, notably by OAS and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). However, these initiatives ultimately failed.⁹

On June 12, 2002, a mediation delegation including OAS and CARICOM representatives proposed a preliminary draft accord to the Haitian government and Democratic Convergence.

During this time, the Fanmi Lavalas and Democratic Convergence parties agreed on the need to hold elections in 2003 and form an Interim Electoral Council, as well as on the composition of this council and the rules for nominating members, in accordance with the provisions of the draft OAS accord. The Haitian government then proposed that local and legislative elections be held in the first half of 2003. However, this political accord was not respected.

Another high level OAS and CARICOM delegation visited Haiti again on March 19 and 20, 2003, to ensure that both parties were respecting the commitments set out in the initial accord.

During this time, the Haitian government was also called on to adopt measures to promote disarmament as well as police force modernization and professionalization, particularly to end the impunity of members of the Haitian National Police implicated in acts of violence committed on December 17, 2001¹⁰.

At the same time, OAS notified Haitian civil society and Democratic Convergence that it would not support efforts to remove the president of Haiti through violent confrontation or other actions or initiatives contrary to democratic processes¹¹.

Still in 2003, president Aristide's government named a new director general of the Haitian National Police (PNH) and signed, with the special OAS mission, an agreement on strengthening democracy in Haiti in which it undertook to ensure police professionalization and election security, as well as promote disarmament, justice, and human rights.

Later in 2003, a movement made up of opposition political parties and leaders from civil society and the private sector began to call for Aristide's resignation.

On January 12, 2004, the terms of all representatives and most senators ended, as elections to determine their successors were not held in 2003.

To help restore constitutional order and reach a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Haiti, CARICOM proposed, at its January 31, 2004 meeting in Kingston, Jamaica, a preliminary action plan that called for compliance with OAS resolutions, the negotiation of rules for

(1267/01), "Support for Democracy in Haiti"; and CP/RES. 772 (1247/02) and General Assembly resolutions AG/RES. 1959 (XXXIII-O/03), "Support for Democracy in Haiti"; AG/RES. 1841 (XXXII-O/02), "The Situation in Haiti"; and AG/RES. 1831 (XXXI-O/01), "Support for Democracy in Haiti"

⁹ See, for example, the sixth report of the OAS mission in Haiti on the OAS-CARICOM mission in Haiti from June 5 to 10, 2002 (CP/doc. 3625/02 corr. 3) and the secretary-general's report in response to CP/INF. 4724/02 (CP/doc.3643/02 corr. 1).

¹⁰ OAS General Assembly Resolution AG/RES. 1959 (XXXIII-O/03), "Support for Strengthening Democracy in Haiti"

¹¹ OAS General Assembly Resolution AG/RES. 1959 (XXXIII-O/03), "Support for Strengthening Democracy in Haiti"

demonstrations, the release of detainees, the disarmament of strong-arm groups, the establishment of an extended advisory council, and the appointment of a new government following the nomination of a neutral, independent prime minister who enjoys public trust.

During the same period, OAS expressed its firm support for the government of Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide in its efforts to restore public order by constitutional means and called on it to respect the commitments and measures put forward by CARICOM¹². CARICOM also called on the democratic political opposition and civil society to act responsibly, denounce the use of violence, and engage in a democratic process in accordance with the CARICOM proposal¹³.

However, Aristide's political opponents rejected CARICOM's Provisional Action Plan, and civil disturbance spread.

On February 5, 2004, a group of armed Aristide opponents seized the central commissariat of the northwestern city of Les Gonaïves after an intense shootout that left many dead. The attack, led by members of Front de résistance révolutionnaire de l'Artibonite, spurred armed insurrection in a number of regions of the country, notably the North, where the rebels were most active. Among the armed rebels were former soldiers from the Haitian army disbanded in 1995. Insurgents seized Cap-Haïtien, the country's second largest city in the North, on February 22, 2004.

The OAS Permanent Council then called on the UN Security Council to take the necessary and appropriate emergency measures, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to resolve the crisis in Haiti¹⁴.

On February 29, 2004, president Jean-Bertrand Aristide left the country.

That same day, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 1529, in which it took note of his resignation as president of Haiti, recognized Boniface Alexandre as acting president in accordance with the Constitution of Haiti, and called on member states to "support the constitutional succession and political process now under way in Haiti."¹⁵

Mr. Boniface Alexandre, President of the Supreme Court, assumed the position of interim president in accordance with the Constitution of Haiti. Alexandre had been Supreme Court president since 2002, when he was appointed by Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

On March 4, 2004, a tripartite council including representatives of the Fanmi Lavalas party, the opposition, and the international community (UN/OAS) was established to choose the seven people who would sit on the "Council of Elders" and appoint the new prime minister. On March 9, 2004, this council appointed Mr. Gérard Latortue as the new interim prime minister of Haiti.

¹² UN Permanent Council Resolution CP/RES. 861 (1400/04) "Support for Public Order and Strengthening Democracy in Haiti"

¹³ Id.

¹⁴ OAS Permanent Council Resolution CP/RES. 862 (1401/04), "The Situation in Haiti"

¹⁵ UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/1529 (2004)

In 1963, Latortue fled Haiti and the Duvalier regime. He returned in 1988 to join the Manigat government as minister of foreign affairs, but was forced out of the country again a few months later following a military coup.

The acting prime minister and the “Council of Elders” selected the members of the current transitional government from among bureaucrats, basing their selections on skill, not political affiliation or partisanship.

Hence, the transitional government is made up of Haitians who had been in the upper echelons of government in the past, but were living abroad. They have agreed not to run for elected positions or accept appointments to public office in the new government.

On June 8, 2004, the OAS General Assembly, meeting in Quito, Ecuador, adopted a resolution recognizing the transitional government of Haiti and urging the OAS Permanent Council to take “all necessary diplomatic initiatives, including good offices, to foster full restoration of democracy in Haiti.”

On August 23, 2004, Haiti, the UN, and OAS signed an accord specifying that presidential, parliamentary, and local elections would be held in 2005.

The Interim Electoral Council has already stated its intention to hold municipal elections on November 6, 2005, the first round of presidential and parliamentary elections on November 27 of the same year, and the second round of presidential elections, if necessary, on December 18, 2005.

CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

On February 29, 2004, the Interim Multilateral Force (IMF), with 3,400 soldiers (1,800 American, 800 French, 460 Canadian, and 340 Chilean), was mandated under a UN Security Council decision to reestablish public order, contain the activities of illegal armed groups, ensure the security of public buildings, and guarantee that humanitarian aid reaches the public.

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was established by Resolution 1542 of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, adopted April 30, 2004.

On June 25, 2004, the IMF’s mandate was transferred to MINUSTAH.

MINUSTAH’s mandate includes the following:

- a) Establish a stable and secure environment
- b) Support the political process, including the holding of elections as soon as possible
- c) Support, monitor, and report on human rights

No other UN mission to date has had as broad a mandate in terms of security, national dialogue, elections, human rights, institutional development, police force organization, and government support in implementing economic measures for the good of the country.

Nevertheless, the mandate conferred upon it by the Security Council prevents MINUSTAH from taking part in humanitarian missions. MINUSTAH also lacks the resources it needs to manage this type of project in cooperation with the Haitian government.

MINUSTAH has a civilian component of 1,622 police officers and a military component of up to 6,700 soldiers.

At the time of the COPA delegation's visit, MINUSTAH included 1,228 civilian police officers and 4,489 soldiers, or 76% and 67% of the target for each category respectively. The lack of military and civilian troops has prevented MINUSTAH from fully achieving its goals.

MINUSTAH has one infantry brigade and two other battalions at its headquarters in Port-au-Prince, as well as infantry battalions in Cap-Haitien, Hinche, Jacmel, Gonaïves, Port-de-Paix, and Les Cayes.

The Brazilian Haiti Brigade is based in Port-au-Prince, where it patrols the streets and searches vehicles as part of the disarmament program, in cooperation with the HNP and CIVPOL. It also escorts convoys to Gonaïves.

The military component is under the direct responsibility of the Special Representative of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, to whom the Force Commander reports directly.

The UN General Assembly allocated MINUSTAH some \$379.05 million U.S. for the period from July 1, 2004, to June 30, 2005, and \$49.26 million U.S. for the period from May 1 to June 30, 2004.¹⁶ The U.S. and Canada are the highest contributors to MINUSTAH.

CURRENT SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN HAITI

A CLIMATE OF INSECURITY

During the COPA delegation's visit to Haiti, reports indicated a recent increase in violence in the country.

Some maintain, however, that given the abject poverty in Haiti, the rate of violence could be even more alarming, notably when compared to the situation in other countries with identical socioeconomic conditions. The crime potential is thus very high.

While the situation in Port-au-Prince is not out of control, security in this city is shaky and volatile, and people live in a constant state of fear.

In the city of Les Gonaïves, the transitional government's lack of initiative, the at-best symbolic presence of police officers, and drug and vehicle trafficking contribute to the observed state of insecurity.

Reports tell of illegally armed individuals and groups in the country's main cities, among them the rebels led by Guy Philippe from his base in Les Gonaïves. There are also many private, armed security officers.

According to reports on Port-au-Prince, violence has reached alarming levels in the Bel Air and Cité Soleil neighborhoods, where the COPA delegation noted that many Aristide sympathizers reside and continue to call for his return, as evidenced by the graffiti and recent posters on the walls.

¹⁶ UN, General Assembly, Resolution A/RES/59/17, "Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti"

With the establishment of a MINUSTAH post and increased patrols in the region, the situation in Bel Air has been brought under control, while violence continues to escalate in Cité Soleil due to gang wars.

The “chimères,” supporters of former president Aristide, are accused of using armed violence and committing acts of terrorism to demand his return to power. This is especially true in the Bel Air neighborhood.

The chimères are armed groups that enjoyed the support of president Jean-Bertrand Aristide’s administration and the Haitian National Police (PNH).

The disintegration and politicization of the police during Aristide’s administration led to the trafficking and proliferation of handguns.

Accusations have been advanced against the former president regarding his involvement in drug trafficking and support for Haiti’s entry into international drug trafficking rings.

At the time of the COPA delegation’s visit, extensive arms and drug trafficking was still occurring. Despite MINUSTAH operations, very few arms have been found to date.

During its visit, the COPA delegation noted that illegally armed groups were still a problem for the transitional government, as they compromise stability and security in certain regions of the country.

Delegation members also noted that accusations of repression, acts of torture, and other serious human rights violations by Aristide administration police forces seemed to compromise the effectiveness of the Haitian National Police (PNH), as people in certain areas would not tolerate its presence. Disregard for the police institution is further aggravating the climate of insecurity in the country, leading former soldiers to intervene and, in some cases, causing clashes between the public and the police.

A DECLINE IN SOCIOECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Of the 8.5 million Haitians, 2 million live in the Port-au-Prince area.

Haiti ranks 146th out of 173 countries on the human development index.

Some 40% of the country’s revenue comes from money sent home by Haitians living abroad.

An estimated 52% of Haiti’s population live below the poverty line and 51% suffer from chronic malnutrition.

In the health sector, despite the presence of many Cuban doctors, hospital care is completely disorganized.

The illiteracy rate of the Haitian population is 52.9%.

The proportion of Haitians with HIV/AIDS is among the highest in the world and the highest outside sub-Saharan Africa.

Many Haitians are forced to emigrate to find work, often in difficult conditions.

It has also been reported that following the increased presence of the international community since the crisis began, the number of prostitutes has increased, particularly in the Pétionville area.

Increased rural exodus seems to be a consequence of the past international embargo as well as the decline in agricultural exports.

Roads are in pitiful condition, compromising public mobility and the circulation of agricultural goods.

The United States plans to complete military engineering projects to restore roads in the Les Gonaïves region in March 2005. MINUSTAH's main demands to UN member countries also include additional troops specialized in military engineering.

In a helicopter flight over Port-au-Prince en route to Les Gonaïves, the COPA delegation noted some of the serious environmental problems ravaging the country, such as deforestation, soil erosion, and the obstruction of rivers. In most towns it visited, particularly those where the neediest reside, the delegation observed an absence of basic infrastructures (e.g., open sewers are used), as well as a lack of water and electricity supply systems.

Delegation members also noted the precarious state of commercial and residential properties, as well as a great deal of unfinished construction.

The sanitary and preservation conditions of food sold in the streets and public markets are appalling. So are the uncomfortable working conditions of people who make a living at this business, notably women who continue working past sundown by candlelight. Children were also seen playing barefoot in an open sewer.

On a visit to the most disadvantaged areas of the Haitian capital and the city of Les Gonaïves, the COPA delegation observed that a significant proportion of the population lives in overpopulated, subhuman conditions including makeshift dwellings amid tons of waste, unpaved streets, open sewers, and no water or electrical supply.

Establishing waste collection projects is therefore a priority.

These conditions show that the assistance and humanitarian aid programs implemented by the international community over the years have not reached those in need, which leads us to believe that the financial resources provided to the country have been misallocated, mismanaged, improperly distributed, or poorly controlled.

Several leaders from the Lavalas movement, which is politically removed from Aristide, maintain that the former president pitted the disadvantaged against the bourgeois elite and was an extremely ineffective manager, misusing the resources provided to him.

As the crisis worsened, public services such as government, the police, education, health, and especially justice fell into disarray.

The Donors Conference hosted by the UN in Washington, D.C. on July 19 and 20, 2004, with participants including the World Bank, the European Commission, and the Inter-American Development Bank promised the transitional government of Haiti over a billion dollars in loans and grants for rebuilding the country.

During the COPA delegation's visit to Haiti, the hope was that resources would arrive in short order to quickly help establish an extensive program of socioeconomic rehabilitation and development in the country.

MINUSTAH authorities affirm that even limited economic growth will help stabilize the country.

It is also hoped that governments, particularly those providing resources and personnel to MINUSTAH, will present bilateral projects for socioeconomic cooperation and humanitarian aid.

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY THE COPA DELEGATION

This section contains information on Haiti's political and socioeconomic situation, collected by the COPA delegation during meetings conducted as part of its good offices mission.

THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT

According to prime minister Latortue, the security crisis in Haiti can only be resolved by military and police force. The violence is the result of hardship, loss of hope, and marginalization, as well as the shortage of water, electricity, and jobs, all of which encourage delinquency.

The transitional government maintains that implementing a social and economic development program to help create jobs, generate revenue, and promote investment will bring hope to people living in the most marginalized areas. It recognizes however that humanitarian goodwill alone is not enough.

The prime minister believes the shortcomings observed when MINUSTAH was first created—the mission went in one direction and the police in another—were resolved with the creation of an HNP-MINUSTAH joint group and the decision to hold regular meetings between the transitional government and the special representative of the UN Secretary-General. This was the main reason for the drop in violence in the Bel Air area.

The prime minister admits his government does not expect to end all violence, which would be impossible, but is working to prevent political parties from using the violence to rise to power and criminals from taking political matters into their own hands.

He invites all political parties to take part in the election process, including the Fanmi Lavalas party. He wants to create the conditions for a more democratic society by welcoming participation by all citizens.

He adds that democracy cannot survive unless all Haitians can participate equally in the election process, which requires free and transparent elections.

He hopes the election calendar will be set and work on the voter list will begin before December 2004.

He finds it unfortunate that Parliament is not sitting, but hopes that things will return to normal once the elections are held.

He believes some national governments are still reluctant to adopt measures to help resolve the crisis in Haiti for fear they may be unpopular. He therefore asks elected officials represented by COPA to explain Haiti's plight to their respective assemblies and governments and ask their countries to help.

A FEW POLITICAL GROUPS

THE DEMOCRATIC CONVERGENCE PARTY

Opponents of Jean-Bertrand Aristide have united to form the Democratic Convergence Party. They assert that under his government of torture, they observed corruption, illegal drug trafficking, and violence by armed bands, as well as the systematic repression of political opponents, youth, political parties, and grassroots movements. Aristide sympathizers notably set fire to the home of Victor Benoît and the office of Micha Gaillard, both KONAKOM members.

They hold that Aristide instituted a "bastard" populist government, exploiting the most marginalized segments of the population, in the same way Duvalier played the race card during his reign.

During former president Préval's government, the Chamber and Senate were cast aside. The party considers the 2000 election nothing more than an electoral coup. Nearly everyone elected—72 of 83 members and 26 of 27 senators—was part of the Lavalas movement.

They say they tried to negotiate a way out of the electoral crisis, but failed because of Aristide's wish to keep all power for himself.

The public had gradually begun to understand that this electoral violation was ultimately a violation of human rights.

Representatives of the opposition pointed out that the revolt against Aristide began on December 5, 2003, when an armed pro-Aristide militant group known as the "Chimères" attacked the rector of the State University and fractured his knee.

They maintain that Democratic Convergence was seeking compromise as a matter of principle, and that those who accused the party of being unreasonable came to understand it was no longer possible to negotiate with Aristide.

They refute the accusation, imputed to Aristide, that Democratic Convergence was opposed to the elections. They contested the 2000 election, wanted Aristide to leave the country, but claim they do not aspire to power.

They indicated that Democratic Convergence had only two adversaries: Aristide and the U.S. They pointed out that one week before Aristide's downfall, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Roger F. Noriega led an international delegation asking Democratic Convergence to agree to Aristide's remaining in power and the appointment of an independent prime minister.

Democratic Convergence rejected the proposal that Aristide step down over a six-month transitional period. As a result, they felt "robbed of their wishes" when the U.S. left with Aristide.

The media in the north is said to have played fast and loose with the truth by claiming the rebels had ousted Aristide, when in fact it was Democratic Convergence that had had him removed. They had no relationship to Guy Philippe, who was not connected with Democratic Convergence's cause.

They acknowledge the mistakes they made in 1996, when they insisted that Duvalier supporters, "Macoutes," and former soldiers not be allowed to run for office. Today, they do not believe Lavalas supporters should "be kept out of the game," but that only the "Chimères" should.

They say the "democratic left" is caught between Aristide's anarcho-populism and the return of the old right, and therefore needs firm support from the international community, governments, the public, and Parliament to regain its place.

They are fighting to reestablish the rule of law and "reinstitutionalize" the country.

They emphasize the need for economic cooperation, especially since the Aristide government served only to mint new members of the wealthy. They also need greater political cooperation. They hope legitimate authorities will be elected in well-organized elections so that peace and stability can return. This will be difficult to achieve without the help of the international community.

They add that MINUSTAH, which has nothing to do with an occupation force, guarantees a certain measure of security, although many people wish it had firmer control over the "Chimères."

The stability brought by MINUSTAH is essential for the elections, and for the country to start attracting investment again.

They explain that the political situation in Venezuela is different from that in Haiti and that the disputes between the two countries should be resolved. They are pleased that the Inter-American Union of Electoral Organizations, whose president is from Panama and whose secretary is from Costa Rica, will cooperate in the upcoming elections.

They believe the resignation of the Provisional Electoral Council president, who had an "adversarial personality," will help the electoral process move forward.

THE LAVALAS MOVEMENT

According to its representatives, the Lavalas movement takes all social classes into consideration, particularly the poorest segments of the population. It defends an ideal of social justice among the most underprivileged.

They consider it a sign of courage that the COPA delegation met with representatives of the Fanmi Lavalas party. They say the party's supporters have been persecuted more than any other group since Jean-Bertrand Aristide left the country, especially in poor neighborhoods. This persecution has been primarily at the hands of the transitional government.

A number of former Jean-Bertrand Aristide supporters would rather not debate whether he resigned or was dismissed. They are no longer interested in whether he chose to leave or has since changed his mind.

In their opinion, Aristide is a symbol of hope to much of the population, which is still suffering from lack of development.

They hope that COPA, through its relationship with Latin American and North American governments, will step in to put a stop to the "blind repression" and help bring democracy to Haiti.

What Haiti needs is not a U.S. or Brazilian stabilizing force, but a consensus among themselves. They do not want to get tied up in class warfare. Haitians need a place where all parties have the freedom to speak freely and show themselves publicly.

Supporters of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide admit that mistakes were made and power abused, but they do not believe this justifies excluding the Lavalas party from national dialogue or systematically repressing the masses of poor. They say their wish for Aristide's return is being used as a pretext to justify repression.

In the opinion of Lavalas representatives, the transitional government's talk of dialogue is only an act, since Lavalas supporters are silenced and many have been forced into exile or imprisoned. The country is living in a "full-fledged dictatorship."

Prime minister Latortue is said to be more neutral, but the other government ministers are against the Lavalas movement and the rebels, since, although mistakes were made, Aristide was the democratically elected president.

They informed the COPA delegation that the Chamber of Deputies has been closed since the deputies' terms expired. They claim that fifteen senators are now in prison or exile. Only three are free, but they are not permitted to enter Parliament or assume their duties and no longer have the use of their official vehicles. They continued to receive their salaries until the Senate president was imprisoned.

They are satisfied with the international community's solidarity and hope to go to the polls and maintain their ties with Aristide, who they consider their "spiritual leader," although they recognized the mistakes he made while in power.

They maintain that Fanmi Lavalas is not a one-man show, but has other possible leaders than Aristide who also want the transitional government to recognize their movement's right to exist.

They insist that when Aristide left the country, another classic coup occurred. Haiti's political and economic elite were unable to live in a democratic regime.

Even when Aristide left, no other political leader emerged, since large swaths of the population still support him.

They are in favor of the elections because they are still the majority. They say there cannot be two types of democracy, one for affluent countries and another for less developed countries.

They are against violence and in favor of peace, as well as dialogue with all sectors.

Today, the masses seem more troubled by the attempt to isolate Fanmi Lavalas, which still has the support of 60% to 70% of the population.

They point out that in addition to former prime minister Yvon Neptune, three other Fanmi Lavalas parliamentarians and party leaders were incarcerated in October 2004. These included Senate president Yvon Feuillé, former Chamber member and speaker Rudy Hériveaux, and senator Gérald Gilles, who was later released. Many political prisoners do not know the nature of the crimes of which they have been accused or have not been proven to be the intellectual authors of the crimes.

Even without Aristide, they still want the CARICOM Action Plan to be implemented. They would even agree to a prime minister from the opposition, but in a coalition government, not an anti-Lavalas regime, which is how they view the current transitional government.

They admit certain Aristide sympathizers are extremists and likely responsible for acts of violence. However, they insist that the ideal behind the Lavalas movement has remained unchanged and they still oppose violence.

They hope that all political leaders can come together to excise the desire for revenge, and that the international community will help form a government of consensus truly founded on the rule of law.

They estimate that over 4,500 political prisoners are currently being held, of whom 3,000 were taken prisoner in February 2004 or later.

They claim they are not participating in the Interim Electoral Council because every time they try to take part, the transitional government commits arbitrary actions to keep them out.

They claim the public took to demonstrations to call for president Aristide's return because MINUSTAH has guaranteed its safety, notably from possible assault by the Haitian police.

They believe elections will be impossible if Lavalas supporters are still being held as political prisoners. They hope the international community will not support the elections if this is the case.

They maintain that scarcely 10% of the population voted in the 2000 presidential election because there were no strong candidates running against Aristide and point out that voter turnout was much higher for the legislative elections in May of the same year.

They have not to date observed any human rights violations by the transitional government.

THE STRUGGLING PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATION (OPL)

The Struggling People's Organization (OPL), which was first called the Lavalas Political Organization in 1991, was an organized wing of the Lavalas movement. OPL has gradually detached from Lavalas as a result of political differences.

In 1995, the OPL held speakership of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies as the parliamentary majority. It designated Rosny Smarth as prime minister, who resigned in 1997, marking its final break from the Lavalas movement. OPL then removed the word "Lavalas" from its name, becoming the Struggling People's Organization. OPL has since been one of the main opposition forces to the Lavalas party.

According to OPL representatives, the disorganization of the government and the structural problems in the country are not the only explanations for the situation in Haiti. The Lavalas movement raised high hopes in 1990, but in ten years had succeeded neither in organizing the people nor repairing the state.

Like Somalia, Haiti is seeing "warlords" emerge, with gangs attacking people and stealing aid for their own use.

They hold that the previous government completely destroyed institutions that must now be rebuilt. As an example, they point to Parliament, which has never functioned as it should. Likewise, the people need to be organized in order to better face catastrophes and develop legitimate power structures. Otherwise, humanitarian aid will be of little consequence.

They declare that forces in various segments of Haitian society, including the diaspora and the Lavalas movement, are against the elections. The same is true of the former military forces and unorganized political factions defending their own interests.

Haiti needs solidarity, not international intervention, in the form of support for a legitimate government that can interact with other countries.

They consider the disbandment of the Haitian Armed Forces a consequence of the military coup in 1991. As soon as the forces were demobilized by decree, Aristide is said to have created a political police force, so there were no security forces under his government per se.

They say this is the first time Latin America has shown an interest in the situation in Haiti, which has raised hopes. With the presence of Latin American troops, particularly from Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, they believe new globalization and Haitian cooperation plans are in place. However, they believe this may be a "cause for concern" around the world.

As such, they predict foreign forces alone will not be able to guarantee that elections are held, nor the legitimacy of the electoral process. "Infrastructure intervention," including investment that reaches the poorest Haitians, is necessary for this portion of the population to "feel included."

They observed that international forces are serving as a true police force (for example, conducting a vast and publicly visible recruitment campaign), which has proved that spending is not exclusively at the military level.

They deem the Haitian government incapable of putting a stop to violence by armed groups.

They further believe foreign troops should not be in Haiti, but are necessary due to the “exceptional” circumstances.

They maintain that MINUSTAH would gain credibility if elections were organized.

They point out that the April 2004 agreement stipulates that the transitional government must examine corruption committed during former president Aristide’s regime. They thus maintain it cannot be said the transitional government is “biased” simply because it appointed an independent commission to examine the facts.

They believe that Aristide, like anyone else, should be brought before the court to explain himself for the crimes he is believed to have committed as president. An arrest warrant is justified since the government has solid evidence against him, and Aristide does not deserve impunity.

They point out that the Lavalas movement opted out of the Provisional Electoral Council of its own will, even after three offers by the transitional government to extend the deadline for appointing its representative.

They maintain that there are no political prisoners in Haiti and that warrants were issued against Fanmi Lavalas party members only after a judge confirmed the proof that they were intellectually responsible for the crimes committed in September 2004.

OTHER INFORMATION

Some pointed out that Aristide’s departure was traumatizing and that the political group that supported him was divided: one side wanted to help rebuild democracy, while the other side wanted to destabilize things.

According to reports, some Fanmi Lavalas militants are not insisting on Aristide’s return as a precondition for participating in talks, but do demand respect for a bargaining position presented earlier to the transitional government and notably including the formation of a new Provisional Electoral Council, the appointment of new leadership for the HNP, the release of political prisoners, the strengthening of public security, an increase in MINUSTAH forces, and the disarming of all illegal groups in the country.

Some assert that if the Lavalas movement were to outright reject the violence committed by certain Aristide supporters, it would facilitate the party’s integration into the political process and the release of the alleged political prisoners.

A number of days before the COPA delegation arrived, former president Aristide’s supporters organized a demonstration in Port-au-Prince calling for his return. According to the estimates of the MINUSTAH military force, there were far fewer demonstrators than expected. Police eventually broke up the demonstration because the organizers did not have a permit. Nevertheless, a reporter sent by an international television network pointed out that it was the first time supporters of former president Aristide had been permitted to publicly call for his return

since the events of February 2004. In her opinion, this had only been possible due to the presence of UN peacekeeping forces.

After the president of the Provisional Electoral Council (PEC) stepped down, which occurred when the COPA delegation was in Haiti, many believed the political tensions in the organization would ease.

MINUSTAH supports the work of the PEC and demanded that all existing political groups be recognized. The transitional government refutes the claim that the Lavalas party has lost the right to participate that it had earlier been accorded. Leaders of the Lavalas movement say they will only take part in the PEC if the political prisoners are released.

Some maintain that certain forces oppose the elections not only because the transition is to their benefit, but also because they are afraid the Lavalas movement will win. Many parties know they will likely fade away as soon as the election results are announced, and are therefore not very interested in the elections.

The public has not been issued voter's cards, nor is there an official voters' list. At the time of the COPA delegation's visit, voter registration had not yet begun. The government was waiting for the parties to start discussions and for the international community to send resources.

At the time, there was also talk about calling a national constituent assembly.

However, some say that because it is composed entirely of experts, the transitional government is lacking "political instinct" and will do nothing more than set the stage for the upcoming elections, without taking any major initiatives that will bind the incoming government.

Some accounts also report a lack of vision in the way the transitional government is running the country in the runup to the elections, suggesting the government cannot survive and will try to deflect blame onto MINUSTAH for the upsurge in violence, all the while asking it to implement social measures.

Some people also denounced the transitional government's lack of experience in negotiations with dissident political groups.

Others maintain that the Government treats representatives of different political forces differently, which will make it more complicated or even impossible to restore security and foster a climate of political reconciliation. For example, the COPA delegation was informed that former members of the Fanmi Lavalas government have been incarcerated, an arrest warrant has been issued for former president Aristide, and a commission has been created to study corruption under the Aristide government.

Nevertheless, the transitional government has shown a number of qualities, including the absence of corruption, respect for human rights, and efforts to prevent the police force from committing human rights violations.

MINUSTAH

Reports attest to the difficulties faced by the Haiti Brigade, notably a lack of accurate or reliable information, which has reduced its combat readiness in a number of situations. The Brigade is also disadvantaged by a lack of personnel specialized in collecting and analyzing information, which is not part of the Security Council's mandate. Some of the public also lost confidence in the Brigade after the failure of infrastructure and humanitarian aid projects overseen by MINUSTAH. Moreover, in some cases the Brigade cannot intervene due to a shortage of troops.

Public support for MINUSTAH is higher, but a "natural impatience" has grown among Haitians and the international community, who hoped the mission would accomplish more in four months in the field.

According to its commanders, MINUSTAH troops were targeted in attacks, and when the COPA delegation visited Haiti, the public asked for more security and social intervention.

Nevertheless, the attacks on MINUSTAH forces do not reflect opposition to UN presence in the country, since they are confined to a few neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince.

MINUSTAH authorities maintain that the international community cannot simply hold "hit and run" elections, but must promote national dialogue to reestablish Haitian institutions. They also emphasize that the participation of Latin American parliamentarians in the process is essential.

The participation of Latin American countries (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, and Peru) in MINUSTAH and the international community's work to resolve the current crisis in Haiti are seen in a positive light. Expectations are enormous, since despite the socioeconomic difficulties facing these countries, they are still working together with Haiti. While respecting Haiti's sovereignty, they are providing the technical and financial assistance it needs to restore political stability.

MINUSTAH leaders hope the mission will have its full complement of forces before it begins disarming and dismantling illegal armed groups. They also hope the international community will free up economic aid for the most underprivileged groups.

MINUSTAH authorities admit that the goal of their mission is not to eliminate the structural violence within Haitian society, a far too ambitious objective at this time. Rather, the goal is to enable the country to run smoothly and prevent violence from compromising its institutions. To do so, those in power must disavow the violence committed by illegally armed groups.

OTHER PLAYERS IN HAITI

Although COPA was unable to meet with their representatives during its mission, it identified two other players whose actions should be taken into account in the political analysis.

FORMER MEMBERS OF THE HAITIAN ARMED FORCES (FAD'H)

President Jean-Bertrand Aristide abolished the Haitian Armed Forces in 1995, after returning to power in October 1994 following the military coup of 1991.

When the current crisis struck, the political instability and climate of insecurity in the streets opened the door to former military members. At the time of the COPA delegation's visit, former soldiers were at times acting as a de facto police force. This was notably the case in a many localities where police forces had been dismantled.

Following the crisis, former military members are said in some cases to have "humiliated" the police with the support of the public, who considered the police part of the system of repression under president Aristide's government.

Many former military members are said to be concentrated in the cities of Cap-Haitien in the North department and Hinche in the Central Plateau department.

In Cap-Haitien, after conflicts with the police forces, former military members were said to have taken over typical police duties such as arrests.

The former military's activities in this city were said to be funded by business people who were afraid the ex-military members would eventually form a private army.

The armed forces were abolished without rescinding the constitutional rule that a pension plan be put into place to pay former soldiers. This makes attempts to reorganize by a number of former soldiers, some of whom were not disarmed, one of the main problems MINUSTAH must now address.

Former high-ranking members of the military are working with the transitional government and hold positions in government departments and the private sector. Lower-ranking members, whose economic circumstances are grim and who still have their weapons, have taken to the streets.

A few days before the COPA delegation arrived, rumors started that the former soldiers were planning to seize the country's police stations. MINUSTAH mobilized a number of contingents to help the police prevent the attacks. After clashes that left two dead, the former military members were still able to seize the Petit Goâve and Cap-Haitien police stations.

A number of illegal armed groups have attempted to unlawfully exercise police powers. The UN Security Council has condemned this situation.¹⁷

According to its mandate from the UN Security Council, MINUSTAH must actively assist the transitional government's security institutions, particularly to help stamp out the activities of all illegal armed groups. Recently, the Brazilian contingent's Haiti Brigade had to occupy the police stations in Thomazeau and Grand Goâve.

A commission made up of the transitional government and representatives of the former members of the military was created in a bid to find a way out of the crisis. On September 12, 2004, the parties came to an agreement acknowledging the legitimacy of the former soldiers'

¹⁷ Statement by the President of the UN Security Council, September 10, 2004 (S/PRST/2004/32).

claims, requiring them to release public buildings and hand in their FAd'H arms and equipment, guaranteeing the soldiers compensation, and paying damages for soldiers who had been victims of political violence. Negotiations have since come to a standstill.

In addition, the transitional government claims it has no intention of reorganizing the armed forces, which it claims is the job of the future government that will be elected with the new parliament.

HAITIAN NATIONAL POLICE (HNP)

President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's government was accused of politicizing the Haitian National Police (HNP). Some units are said to have committed gross human rights violations, particularly by trying to repress opposition. In addition, Aristide is believed to have given absurd promotions, thus demobilizing the HNP.

During the COPA delegation's visit, the Haitian National Police (HNP) was in the midst of restructuring. When the current crisis began, the HNP had 2,500 police officers. While today it has 4,000, this is still far below the desirable target of 12,000.

The HNP lacks vehicles, arms, and communications equipment. Many police facilities were destroyed in a number of cities, including Gonaïves, when the current political crisis deteriorated.

In Port-au-Prince and the surrounding area, we observed a strong police presence.

According to information received, the HNP is violent, unreliable, ill prepared, and disorganized. In addition, some police officers act as informants for criminal gangs. However, the HNP appears effective as an escort for activities usually carried out by firefighters and operations supported by a MINUSTAH and CIVPOL military contingent.

The lack of advance coordination between the HNP and MINUSTAH would also appear to be a problem. MINUSTAH has often been surprised with requests for backup after the HNP has already launched an operation and run into trouble.

One of MINUSTAH's tasks is in fact to support the reform and restructuring of the HNP.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

Despite all good intentions, the actions of the transitional government of Haiti and of MINUSTAH, as well as the initiatives taken thus far by the international community to resolve the Haitian crisis, have not been enough to end the political instability and climate of insecurity in the country.

A climate of mistrust remains among the main protagonists of the Haitian crisis regarding the country's complete political stability and its future.

Delays, red tape, undefined priorities, and a lack of planning and coordination between the international community and the transitional government in securing investment and establishing social programs have accelerated the decline of the already disastrous socioeconomic conditions in which the majority of Haitians live, despite efforts to overcome these obstacles.

Unquestionably, the country was already facing many socioeconomic challenges before the crisis worsened. As political instability has increased, the civilian population has again suffered the most and borne the brunt.

Whether coincidental or not, we observe that political tensions and violence in Haiti, the cause of the current crisis, have increased following each UN mission in the country—the UN Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH) in 2000, the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH), and the International Mission for Support in Haiti (MICAH)—and after the 2001 freeze in aid to Haiti by donor countries and international financial institutions.

The abject poverty of a good part of the population, an alarming proportion of which live below the poverty line, only exacerbates the political apathy and lack of credibility, as government initiatives and institutions are quite simply nonexistent or ineffective. Ironically, this causes those who should take a more active role in political life to draw away.

The historic persistence of this socioeconomic climate, aggravated by intensified violence and the proliferation of illegally armed individuals and groups with ties to authorities in power or to regime opponents, makes it virtually impossible to establish and sustain social and political pacts or hold free, transparent elections that ensure alternation in the exercise of power.

We also observe confusion between acts committed for political motives and common offenses committed by armed gangs or individuals, as well as the obvious, deliberate political exploitation of this disorder, in which even nonpolitical crimes are blamed on supporters of the former president or his political opponents.

The constant rumor-mongering by the local and international press, as well as local authorities, plays a major role in spreading this “culture of fear” and maximizing violence.

At a minimum, all factions and all Haitian political parties the COPA delegation met with during its visit to Haiti said they favored the continued presence of MINUSTAH troops, provided they continue to act impartially and respect Haitian sovereignty.

The expectation is that MINUSTAH will continue working towards restoring a climate of security and concrete political stability.

While many claim to reaffirm the inseparability, interdependence, and interrelation of human rights, a reasonable consensus was identified between Haitians and foreigners who met with the COPA delegation that the international community should change the target of its actions so that measures aimed at ensuring the country’s political stability and restoring a climate of security do not take precedence over its socioeconomic recovery.¹⁸

¹⁸ In the spirit of OAS Resolution AG/DEC. 31 (XXXIII-O/03), for example

The groups met with hope that the current paradox in international peacekeeping missions can be resolved this time to the advantage of those in need. While it is true that without a climate of security, no country receives foreign investment, we believe that in the specific case of Haiti, the international community could do even more to create and maintain security as infrastructure projects and social initiatives take shape, as this will truly benefit the most disadvantaged.

Declining socioeconomic and environmental conditions in the country, together with the growing exclusion of an increasingly larger portion of the population, must be battled immediately, effectively, and simultaneously to keep from exacerbating the already severe political instability.

Yet we must also create conditions, particularly cultural, to end the radical polarization that has always undermined democracy and kept power from changing hands. Under Haiti's political culture, groups that attain power seek to strengthen their hold and remain in power indefinitely. They do not merely seek to win elections. Their goal is always to remove any adversary from the political scene or any possible future election, whether by suppressing elections or through electoral fraud.

In fact, Haiti has long been without a true democratic culture, and may never have had one in the past.

However, the current consensus is that stability, peace, and development are concepts directly tied to democracy and that can only be attained through democracy.

This line of thought may be carried even further, in that full, complete democracy is not possible without the participation of all social actors in building the necessary consensus to strengthen it.¹⁹

To achieve a peaceful, long term solution to the political crisis in Haiti, we must initiate a meaningful, sincere dialog between adversaries on ways to achieve complete political stability in the country and improve its socioeconomic climate. To this end, we must work to restore trust in the political process and the functioning of democratic institutions, including partisan organizations, and build consensus for the organization of free, fair, and transparent general elections and the disarmament of illegally armed individuals and groups.

Political stability will not be achieved unless the parties restore trust in the government as the sole entity authorized to promote the exercise of rights, punish abuses that occur, and, within the political process, legitimize both those in power and their opponents.

However, to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis, the parties must be open to dialog and rule out other approaches. Through dialog, they can determine how to achieve their objective, and in so doing take control of their own future and that of their country.

¹⁹ For example, see OAS Resolution AG/DEC. 31 (XXXIII-O/03).

As this solution is expected only to provide a foundation of solidarity, without real intervention, the international community can significantly foster this dialog by acting as mediator and contributing technical and financial assistance. We expect this dialog to create the conditions necessary to restore and strengthen the constitutional order in Haiti, thereby paving the way for the democratic practice of holding free, transparent elections and alternating the exercise of power.

The functioning of democratic institutions must be strengthened and standardized.

A climate of security can be restored only if Haitians regain trust in government institutions and their political leaders—both those in power and those in the opposition—as people capable of undertaking the actions required by the country's socioeconomic conditions or, if voters are dissatisfied, through the political changes necessary to achieve a broader dialog within Haitian society.

Preparations for general elections must be stepped up to lay the groundwork for elections in 2005.

To this end, the international community must spare no effort in allocating the resources needed for the country's socioeconomic recovery.

The transitional government, any new leaders elected, and all groups and individuals who run against them must publicly and clearly undertake to abide by international standards of human rights as well as international resolutions calling for the rule of law and a peaceful, long term solution to the conflict.

One response to the climate of insecurity could no doubt be to establish disarmament programs, reorganize and train police forces, and overhaul and provide training for the legal system. The police must be revamped and professionalized, and its personnel trained in human rights compliance. In this regard, initiatives aimed at eliminating the insecurity caused by violence will be ineffective and purely stopgap unless we also work to help Haitians, particularly the most disadvantaged, guarantee their right to food, leisure, work, education, basic infrastructures, a healthy environment, and sustainable development.

However, promoting dialog, holding elections, and ensuring public disarmament will not lead to long term political stability and security as long as socioeconomic problems continue to affect the vast majority of the Haitian population. According to the COPA delegation, this is the primary obstacle to negotiating a peaceful solution to the political crisis, restoring democracy and the rule of law, and making Haiti governable again.

Thus, in preparing for elections and promoting disarmament, we must also make emergency investments in infrastructures and social programs, ensuring that the neediest benefit first. Responsibilities for establishing and monitoring projects must be set out clearly, identifying the duties of local governments and civil society.

The only keys to political stability in Haiti are social programs and economic revitalization, a goal for which the international community could create a special fund.

Despite the establishment of MINUSTAH, it is crucial that the UN, OAS, and other international bodies continue to work together towards resolving the crisis in Haiti and seek to better coordinate their joint efforts.

In any case, MINUSTAH should not continue its mission any longer than the international community and Haitian society consider essential to ensuring a stable democratic environment conducive to growth and economic development.

Parliaments and national governments must also publicly and clearly undertake to work towards the prompt restoration of sustainable democracy and the rebuilding of political institutions in Haiti, particularly through the contribution of human and financial resources, loans, and investments in the country.

The Haitian people are relying on international solidarity to help them find a peaceful solution to the current crisis and prevent the further decline of already tenuous humanitarian and socioeconomic conditions.

Further to the above considerations, the delegation visiting Haiti from November 12 to 15, 2004, **proposes** that COPA's Executive Committee, at its next meeting in Havana, Cuba,

- a) Adopt the attached resolution on *"The crisis in Haiti and building a peaceful, long term solution to achieve complete political stability in the country and improve its socioeconomic climate"*;
- b) Send the resolution on *"The crisis in Haiti and building a peaceful, long term solution to achieve complete political stability in the country and improve its socioeconomic climate"* and the final report on its good offices mission in Haiti to parliaments affiliated with COPA and OAS member states; all MINUSTAH participants; multilateral organizations such as OAS and the UN; the World Bank; the European Union; the Inter-American Development Bank; and other appropriate institutions, and urge these bodies to adopt measures in their areas of jurisdiction to promote complete political stability in Haiti and improve its socioeconomic climate;
- c) Deliberate on forming a commission to monitor and gather information on developments in Haiti until general elections in 2005, while suggesting measures COPA might adopt to promote complete political stability in Haiti and improve its socioeconomic climate;
- d) Consider the possibility of appointing a delegation to participate in an election monitoring mission during general elections in Haiti, once an election date is set.

This report was submitted to the following persons:

Ms. Maria José Maninha
Deputy – Brazil, COPA President

Ms. Clair
Deputy – Brazil

Mr. Fernando Gabeira
Deputy – Brazil

Ms. Charlotte L'Écuyer
Member of the Québec National Assembly – Canada

Ms. Jhannett Madriz Sotillo
Member of the Andean Parliament – Venezuela

Port-au-Prince, Haiti, November 15, 2004

APPENDIX I

RESOLUTION (DRAFT)

“THE CRISIS IN HAITI AND BUILDING A PEACEFUL, LONG TERM SOLUTION TO ACHIEVE COMPLETE POLITICAL STABILITY IN THE COUNTRY AND IMPROVE ITS SOCIOECONOMIC CLIMATE”

CONSIDERING the report presented by the delegation of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), presided by Ms. Maria José da Conceição Maninha, following its good offices mission in Haiti from November 12 to 15, 2004, to assess on site the social, political, and economic conditions of the country and better determine how to continue working towards complete political stability and an improved socioeconomic climate;

REGRETTING the loss of many human lives and significant material damage caused by the crisis arising from the exacerbation of political conflicts since the May 21, 2000 election;

DEPLORING that after the political crisis erupted on May 21, 2000, the international community was not more active in preventing developments that led to the current crisis in Haiti;

DEPLORING the impossibility of implementing the Provisional Action Plan proposed by the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM) on January 31, 2004;

THANKING all authorities of the transitional government of Haiti and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), as well as the political and civil society leaders who met with the COPA delegation during its visit to Haiti; Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Brazil's ambassador to Haiti; as well as Brazilian troops in MINUSTAH, particularly the Haiti Brigade and the Naval Forces Group for their logistic and security support;

NOTING that despite all good intentions, the actions of the transitional government of Haiti and of MINUSTAH, as well as the initiatives taken thus far by the international community to resolve the Haitian crisis, have not been enough to end the political instability and climate of insecurity in the country;

OBSERVING that delays, red tape, undefined priorities, and a lack of planning and coordination between the international community and the transitional government in securing investment and establishing social programs have accelerated the decline in the socioeconomic and environmental conditions experienced by the majority of Haitians, despite ongoing efforts to overcome these obstacles;

DEEMING that the parties need to regain trust in government institutions and the political process, and that the Haitian population also needs to rebuild ties with its political leaders;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), through its Executive Committee,

1. **REITERATE** the terms of its previous resolutions on the situation in Haiti, adopted in Brasilia, Brazil, in March 2004, and in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in September 2004;
2. **CONGRATULATE** the UN and OAS for their prompt action following the departure of president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, thereby preventing an even greater loss of human life and a further worsening of the Haitian crisis;
3. **UNDERLINE** MINUSTAH's work in the country, particularly its social initiatives, and primarily the humanitarian aid provided by Argentine troops in Les Gonaïves after tropical storm Jeanne tore through the country in September 2004;
4. **CALL ON** governments with commitments to the UN to quickly make financial resources available and mobilize the troops and police forces promised to MINUSTAH in order to strengthen its numbers as soon as possible and make it more effective;
5. **FIRMLY CONDEMN** acts of violence of any kind or origin committed by armed individuals or groups, as well as the political exploitation of these events—which only serves to aggravate the climate of insecurity experienced by the public—by encouraging anyone on Haitian soil to surrender unregistered or unlicensed arms to the competent authorities;
6. **PROPOSE** that a wide-ranging, open, sincere, democratic, and transparent dialog be initiated in order to build a peaceful, long term solution that achieves complete political stability and improves the socioeconomic climate of the country, that leaders of all political persuasions and from those bodies most representative of civil society be invited to participate in this dialog, and that the transitional government of Haiti and the international community put in place the conditions necessary for this dialog to occur;
7. **APPEAL TO** the transitional government of Haiti to step up preparations for general elections, and to the international community to provide technical assistance and financial resources to ensure these elections are free, fair, transparent, and held on the dates already set in 2005;
8. **ENCOURAGE** political groups and those bodies that best represent civil society to cooperate in holding elections by participating in partisan initiatives and identifying their candidates, monitoring voter registration, and overseeing voting and ballot counting, as well as recognizing the legitimacy of elected officials and those who run in opposition, while adopting a pact of good governance, promoting and defending human rights, and respecting international resolutions calling for the rule of law and alternation in the exercise of power through free and transparent elections;
9. **ENCOURAGE** the transitional government of Haiti to take all possible steps and the international community to provide the necessary technical assistance and financial resources to fight against impunity, notably by adopting measures to ensure the independence and strengthening of legal and police institutions through the professionalization and human rights training of their staff;

10. **CALL ON** the international community and international financial institutions to meet their commitments with regard to the strengthening of democracy in Haiti, primarily by ensuring the sums promised at the Donors Conference make an effective contribution to achieving complete political stability in the country and an improvement in its socioeconomic climate;
11. **SUGGEST** that the international community consider creating a special fund and allocate more financial resources to establishing economic, social, and institutional strengthening programs; and that it also consider ways of eliminating the red tape that makes it difficult to quickly implement programs and ensure that the most disadvantaged individuals and communities benefit first and foremost;
12. **INVITE** parliamentarians and national governments to publicly and clearly undertake to work towards the prompt restoration of sustainable democracy and the rebuilding of political institutions in Haiti, particularly through the contribution of human and financial resources, loans, and investments in the country;
13. **URGE** national governments and international bodies to cooperate with each other and Haitian society to achieve complete political stability in the country and improve its socioeconomic climate by seeking to better coordinate their joint efforts;
14. **DEMONSTRATE** once again the desire of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) to continue working towards complete political stability and financial and humanitarian aid for Haiti's socioeconomic recovery.