

Speech

Organization of American States



**LUIGI R. EINAUDI, ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
AT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING
ON HAITI
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Thank you Mr. Minister, Mr. President. I would like to express my gratitude, through you, to Argentina for having convened this meeting and shouldered the responsibility of leadership, which includes acting as the host of the Summit of the Americas to be held in November of this year.

My friend, Foreign Minister Yvon Siméon, ladies and gentlemen:

Haiti is a founding member of the Organization of American States, which has been particularly active in Haiti over the last 15 years. Yesterday, we had the honor of receiving Juan Gabriel Valdés, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, in our Permanent Council, and we had one of the best discussions on the situation in Haiti and on the needs facing the country for the holding of good elections.

In representation of the Permanent Council, I am accompanied by Ambassador Joshua Sears of the Bahamas, the Vice Chairman, and I simply wish to say that we are very pleased to be able to be here.

Our most recent mandate from our own General Assembly refers to support for the elections, to the institutional strengthening of the Haitian state, and the defense of human rights, all of that in cooperation with MINUSTAH and the United Nations. In fact, in the first days of November, Under-Secretary-General Prendergast and I were able to sign a memorandum of understanding which gave the OAS the lead in the voter registration process, and I am very pleased to say that we have received a transfer of \$8.7 million from the Government of the United States, for which we are very grateful, for the undertaking of that work.

Let me make just a few very simple points.

The first one is, I think, that good elections--that is to say, open, participative, nonexclusive elections in which the people can vote and have their votes counted and respected--are central to democratic stability and legitimacy in Haiti. I think there is absolutely no doubt of that among any of us.

The second is that that will not be easy to achieve. There are specific obstacles when one starts trying to organize good elections. I will tell you that I personally have spent almost four years working with the Haitian Government to exactly these ends and advocating continuously that the opposition must be included. Oppositions have changed, and times have changed, but needs remain very similar, and it is very clear that if Haiti is to avoid going from crisis to crisis, it needs, and the international community needs, to develop a program of broad support for state institutions.

In this sense, the effort that the OAS is undertaking in Haiti is an extremely interesting one. Our objective is to contribute to the institutional development of Haiti and to the credibility of democracy in Haiti, and that means that we have developed as careful a program of electoral registration as we could. We are still refining it together with the electoral experts of MINUSTAH and with the Haitian Electoral Council, but it is one that will draw on excellent knowledge from within the Hemisphere.

It is interesting to note that five countries--Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay,

and Peru--have contributed about 80 percent of the personnel for the stabilization force. Well, I would say that there is something close to that in our electoral work, with the support of the United States, Canada and Mexico, with the support of national electoral tribunals of Panama and Paraguay, and with strong support, once again, from Brazil in the establishment of personnel, rules, relationships, and abilities to bring the best technical ability to bear.

We have tried to develop a system that will begin in March that will not be sui generis and floating in the air, but will contribute to institutional development by being tied to and facilitating the development of the civil registry of Haiti, which is an important institution and need in many countries--in all of our countries. Having legal right of existence is the start of the ability to advance. We would like to help to contribute to the inclusion of as many of the four-and-one-half million Haitians whom we propose to register in a way that ensures that their registration will not just serve for a one-time election, but will provide the beginning of that basis for life to which we are all committed.

This will not be easy. There are problems of infrastructure, of security, and of voter education that will need to be handled.

Let me simply say that I think that this is a critical moment. Our technicians, that is to say, the OAS technicians and the technicians of the United Nations working with Juan Gabriel Valdés, are looking at and scrubbing the electoral budget one more time in close cooperation with the Provisional Electoral Council of Haiti.

I think that the member states of the UN--certainly of the OAS--and our observers, who have been very generous with us, will be receiving further indications of the financial support necessary to make this process work effectively.

I believe that the Haitian situation is a unique historical situation. I think also that it is surprisingly representative of a phenomenon in the international scene in which we live, and it is that it is very difficult for local authorities to do things well in a globalized world without international support, and it is very difficult for the international community to achieve things if it is not capable of enlisting the support of the local authorities. As Minister Amorim said, the needs are long-term, but I think the challenge of legitimizing the political situation and increasing the confidence of Haitians and of the international community is a very immediate challenge.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

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