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Statement by Ambassador John R. Bolton, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on the Situation in Haiti, in the Security Council, March 27, 2006

Mr. President, let me first welcome Mr. Preval to New York and note that we look forward to his visit to Washington tomorrow. Haiti has made great strides forward over the last year. On February 7th, millions of Haitians went to the polls. Over sixty percent of registered voters cast their ballots, and voted for new, democratic leadership. This was a great day for Haiti and for the many nations that have supported Haiti's return to democracy.

President-elect Preval now has a clear opportunity to lead the Haitian people into a brighter future. We have heard his call for continued support from the international community, and my government is committed to helping the Haitian people move down that road to democracy. By the end of 2006, the United States will have committed nearly a half billion dollars to Haiti's reconstruction and return to democracy since the Interim Cooperation Framework began in July 2004.

Many other donors have been generous as well, but Haiti will still need robust assistance for the next decade to address its many challenges in achieving a stable democracy and creating sustainable economic growth. My government looks forward to the next pledging conference this summer, and I am confident that that conference will show the international community's continued generosity.

The Haitian people have great expectations of their new leader, as does the international community. We take Mr. Preval's assurances to heart that his government will be inclusive, broad-based, and work to respond to the aspirations of all Haiti's citizens.

With the presidential election completed, and run-off legislative elections scheduled for April 21, Haitian authorities, with support from MINUSTAH and the OAS, should redouble their efforts to hold timely local and municipal elections, which are critical to the democratization process. Essential government services at the local level are a foundation of governance in Haiti and the starting point for the selection of the Supreme Court and the Permanent Electoral Council. The logistical and financial issues that affected the first round of elections should not hinder local elections. The United States is prepared to do its part, and we call on the international community to contribute as well.

The United States salutes the contributions made by MINUSTAH by a variety of partners in this hemisphere and around the world, and pays particular tribute to the leadership of Brazil and Canada. While the security situation has improved significantly in recent months, MINUSTAH should redouble its efforts to maintain a secure environment, particularly in conflictive neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince such as Cite Soleil.

Beyond immediate stabilization, however, this Council is right to focus on the vital task of preparing the

Haitian government to face security challenges on its own. The United States reiterates its support for the development and reform of the Haitian National Police. We call upon President-elect Preval's government to cooperate fully with MINUSTAH to vet and train both new recruits and current officers. The professionalization of the police force alone is not enough - the justice system must also be strengthened. All the challenges cannot be addressed overnight, but we are already seeing promising signs, and in particular I would like to commend the leadership of Haitian National Police Director-General Mario Andresol.

While addressing lawlessness, we should also address the lack of basic services and insecurity. The Bel-Air model of stabilization - a civilian-military effort between the Brazilian MINUSTAH contingent and the U.S. Agency for International Development to provide jobs, training and public works projects that improve the lives of Bel-Air's residents can serve as a model for bringing security and development to Haiti's most conflictive areas.

The United States remains fully committed to ensuring the necessary work is accomplished to eliminate obstacles along Haiti's path. We also understand that it is ultimately the responsibility of the government and people of Haiti to consolidate real and lasting democratic reform.

Thank you, Mr. President.