

## **Speech by Haitian President Rene Garcia Preval during his inauguration at the National Palace in Port-au-Prince**

14 May 2006

Haitian people, Haitian people, respect to you.

In your name, I thank all of the foreigners who have come to share this special moment with us. Thanks and welcome. Welcome to Her Excellency the Honourable Michaëlle Jean, governor-general of Canada.

Welcome to His Excellency, the Very Honourable Perry Christie, prime minister of The Bahamas; His Excellency Richard Tauwhare, governor of Turks and Caicos; His Excellency Jose Alencar, vice-president of Brazil; His Excellency Jose Vicente Rangel Veca, vice-president of Venezuela; His Excellency Dr Michael Eugene Misick, prime minister of Turks and Caicos; Mr Philippe Douste Blazy, foreign minister of France; Mr Carlos Morales Troncoso, foreign minister of the Dominican Republic; Mr Bernardino Leon, foreign minister of Spain; Mr Jeb Bush, governor of the State of Florida; His Excellency Jose Miguel Insulza, secretary-general of the OAS.

Welcome to all other representatives of peasants, presidents, and heads of governments; the representatives of foreign parliaments; and representatives of international organizations.

A special welcome to the representative of the Pope.

On behalf of the Haitian people, I greet the peoples of all other countries, especially our Dominican sisters and brothers, our neighbours. Peace for all peoples living on earth; peace between the two peoples living on the island, Dominicans and Haitians. Peace among you, children of Haiti who are living in Haiti or abroad.

President Boniface Alexandre, Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, cabinet members, you have done everything you could so Haiti could get to this point. It was not easy, but we got there.

Members of the Provisional Electoral Council, your job was not easy, either. Since 1987, elections in Haiti have been trouble. The first one ended in blood. Most of the others ended in challenges. These elections also had their problems, but everybody acknowledges that there was no violence. The people participated en masse, and everybody acknowledges the results.

But the work is not over yet. The [elections for] the territorial collectivities, which are the foundation of the country's economic, social, and political organization, still need to be held. The peasants, in particular, are waiting for these elections like dry land waits for rain so decentralization can start putting an end to exclusion.

Juan Gabriel Valdes, your mission is over. Your job was not easy, either, but you can be happy. The results are before us today.

Valdes, your mission is over. The UN secretary-general will have to replace you quickly, because the mission of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti [Minustah] is not yet over.

Minustah will continue to accompany the Haitian people, but this time we will ask it to help us with more tractors, bulldozers, loaders, trucks to build roads, to make canals to water our lands. These are the materials that are necessary today to stabilize the country. There is no longer any need for tanks. Minustah will also have to help with the professionalization of our police.

Haitian people: We are talking while looking each other in the eye. I am looking you in the eye. Look me in the eye. We have taken a great step with the elections. The president just took the oath. The parliament has been installed, and another government is going to be appointed. What is going on? What are we going to do? I say: What are we going to do? We, Haitians, political parties, people's organizations, employers' organizations, union organizations, women's organizations, the youth, the religious organizations, the socioprofessional organizations, peasants, students, academics, peasants, and so forth. What are we going to do? What has to be done? The answer is simple. The answer is clear to me: We have to make peace. We have to make peace through a permanent dialogue. We must talk to one another so we can decide together where we want to go together, at what speed, and with what means. With the means of people, with the means of money.

If we do not talk to one another, we will fight one another, and there will be no peace. We will fight not because we do not love one another, but just because we do not know what the others want. The dialogue has already begun. Peace has already begun. We must strengthen dialogue so peace can be strengthened. Peace is the key to open all other doors: investment doors to create jobs, jobs that will fight unemployment; doors for more tourists to enter the country; doors for more roads, more schools, more hospitals, and more national production. It is peace that can allow sellers to go up and down.

Haitian people: The dialogue has already begun. Peace has already begun to be established. Let us widen the dialogue. Let us strengthen it. Let us talk with patience, intelligence, and humility, while nobody acts arrogantly.

Haitian people: In four days, it will be 18 May [Flag Day]. We will go to Arcahaie to honour our ancestors Petion and Dessalines, who gave us the example of dialogue in order to establish peace between them. That peace resulted in the creation of Haiti. Today, let us follow their example. Let us use dialogue to establish peace among ourselves, which will result in a Haiti without foreign troops.

Haitian people: The solution of the country's problem is in our hands, as Haitians. The solution begins with dialogue so we can make peace. Nobody can do it for us. We do not need anybody's help to do it, either. Minustah, the IMF, the IDB, the European Union, and bilateral cooperation cannot do it for us. While we thank them in advance for the support they will keep giving us, I am certain, Haitian people, that if we continue to engage in dialogue, if we continue to make peace, we will be able to agree on what we need to do, so that when I leave office on 7 February 2011, we can together admire another Haiti, a Haiti with more roads, more jobs, more food, more schools and more hospitals, a more beautiful Haiti.

Please, help me, help the country, and help yourselves. Thank you very much.