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Testimony for Senate Foreign Relations Committee,
Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian
Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues
Haiti: Next Steps on the International Response
July 27, 2023**

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Rubio, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding our efforts to address the security and humanitarian crisis in Haiti. We remain committed to supporting the Haitian people's right to a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous future.

The Haitian people must determine their own future through dialogue and elections. We will support them to do so, working with them, our international partners, and members of Haiti's dedicated diaspora to support Haitian-led efforts to create a better future for the country.

To do so, we support the process of political reconciliation. We train and equip Haiti's police. We also have significantly increased our efforts to implement financial and visa restrictions to promote accountability for those who seek to destabilize the country. We provide development and humanitarian assistance. We encourage private sector-led growth, and we seek to mobilize international security assistance for Haiti.

Haiti remains a top priority for President Biden, for Secretary Blinken and for me. My colleagues from across the interagency and I have visited Port-au-Prince numerous times. We are in daily contact with Haitian stakeholders and diaspora in the United States and the region.

Gang activity—including targeted sexual violence, recruitment of minors widespread kidnappings, and sniper-style killings of neighborhood residents—plagues the Haitian people. Gangs also hamper the Haitian government’s ability to deliver public services and combat poverty.

As we work with our partners to urgently respond to Haiti’s request for a multinational force to support the Haitian National Police, we intend, with Congressional support, to allocate more than \$120 million to strengthen police capacity. This funding will strengthen the Haitian National Police’s counter gang unit through recruitment and training, technical assistance, and equipment. Since 2021, we have donated 100 vehicles, more than 1,000 sets of protective equipment, 37,400 Meals Ready to Eat, and additional equipment for the counter-gang intervention unit. Our funding will also improve Haiti’s overcrowded and deteriorating prisons—both by building infrastructure and by implementing health programs to stem cholera outbreaks. We are also working with DHS to establish a Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit within the police. This will enable

us to partner better with Haiti to investigate and prosecute transnational crimes with a U.S. nexus.

Our financial sanctions and visa restrictions have a chilling effect on political and economic elites who finance gang leaders and foment the ongoing crises in Haiti. The United States has imposed visa restrictions and financial sanctions on more than 50 individuals involved in street gangs, other Haitian criminal organizations, drug trafficking, significant corruption, or gross violations of human rights. We have designated more people than any other country. In addition, we continue to press other nations and international institutions to follow suit. The United States proudly co-sponsored with Mexico the UN resolution creating a new sanctions regime for Haiti – the first in the Western Hemisphere. On July 14, with U.S. support, the United Nations Security Council unanimously renewed the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti.

The United States also supports the Haitian people as they forge a path forward for their country's democratic governance and development, including through the Global Fragility Act. The Act allows us to build long term solutions with Haitians while we address today's acute, multidimensional crisis. We encourage Haiti's political, economic, religious, and civil society actors, to work together to resolve Haiti's political and security challenges.

The United States supports the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)'s efforts to encourage a Haitian-led political dialogue – a process brokered by former prime ministers from the region. On July 6th, I joined Secretary Blinken in Trinidad and Tobago, where he urged Prime Minister Henry to negotiate in earnest with other political forces to achieve a broader political consensus leading to elections as soon as possible.

Haiti has made important progress in resolving its political impasse over the past year, but more must be done and urgently. We welcome the creation of the High Transition Council in Haiti – which is crucial for restoring democratic order and improving security. An even broader and more inclusive leadership structure will provide greater confidence to all Haitians.

On the economic front, we strongly support the HOPE and HELP Acts. During this critical time, producers, and investors in Haiti, those they do business with, and the workers upon whom they rely, need certainty about the uninterrupted continuation of the HOPE/HELP preferences. The garment sector—created largely thanks to the HOPE and HELP Acts—accounted for approximately 90 percent of Haiti's exports, employed more than 34,000 Haitians, and supported more than 205,000 Haitians in 2022. But in the past year, some garment manufacturers have closed their factories and laid off workers—decisions made in part because of

uncertainty about whether Haiti will continue to enjoy those preferences. We must continue to support economic growth, job creation, and investment where possible.

Equally important, we must leverage the enormous talents and expertise of the Haitian diaspora, who remain critical to a brighter, more stable, and secure Haiti.

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Rubio, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I look forward to your questions.