



EIGHTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS
April 13 and 14, 2018
Lima, Peru

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ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF HAITI,
HIS EXCELLENCY JOVENEL MOÏSE, AT THE EIGHTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

Lima (Peru), April 13 and 14, 2018

Mr. President,
Your Excellencies the heads of state and government,
Ladies and gentlemen in your various capacities,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen:

I am especially pleased to be with you on the occasion of the Eighth Summits of Heads of State and Government of the Americas, to discuss a topic that is highly important to the future of our nations: democratic governance against corruption.

First, in the name of the Government and people of Haiti and on my own behalf, I wish to thank the people and Government of Peru for the gracious welcome they have extended to the Haitian delegation and to me. We will certainly keep the fondest memory of your beautiful country.

Mr. President,
Your Excellencies the heads of state and government,

My motive in attending this Summit today is to reaffirm my commitment to modernizing my country's public administration. It is also to share my deep conviction that the necessary impetus to Haiti's progress depends above all on sound public governance. Profound reforms are necessary and henceforth are under way in Haiti. This is the condition for our country's renewal.

Since I assumed office on February 7, 2017, I have continually expressed my vision of a Haitian society freed from corruption. I am inspired by the quest to bring about irreversible fractures that are necessary for the country's endogenous development.

I chose prevention, but without neglecting to fight the problem as well. After a year in office, this is what the anticorruption measures taken by my administration have brought about:

- the revision of procurement procedures, establishing benchmark prices to fight contract overbilling;
- strengthened capacity at the National Commission on Public Procurement;
- the elimination of absenteeism within public administration, resulting in the recovery of a considerable number of checks issued to absent staff;
- the systematic organization of competitions to recruit young executives to revitalize public administration.

As guarantor of the proper functioning of institutions and the state, I have taken measures to ensure the independence of the judicial system and increase its efficacy; and to institute means of popularizing the culture of accountability and transparency, mostly in the sphere of public administration. Our efforts have also dealt with strengthening public safety by continuously improving the capacity of the Haitian National Police and restoring the Haitian Armed Forces to aid in the fight against smuggling.

We have also embarked on a determined effort to reform public administration overall, with a view to modernizing our institutions.

I would be remiss if I failed to mention as well the appeal I issued to our friends in the international community to align their support to Haiti with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action. It is incomprehensible that over the past 12 years Haiti has received close to 11 billion dollars in aid while indicators for health, infrastructure, and justice, to name only a few, are in the red. Often my country is pointed to when only a tiny amount of aid actually reaches a population. In fact, this year over 700 million American dollars will be disbursed by international development partners outside formal state channels.

Mr. President,

The country is beginning to reap the benefits of these actions. Since I took office, the cost of state projects has been cut by 90% in some cases. The execution of government-supervised works and the development of the state's human, material, and financial resources have resulted in consistent savings. I intend to pursue this course of action for the rest of my five-year term.

My country must contend with numerous challenges that surely are familiar to you: a low level of human development, environmental degradation, endemic unemployment, heightening of inequity in the distribution of income, difficulties in dispensing justice, lack of socioeconomic integration among youth, etc. My vision took shape under a government strategy that devotes state resources to the people's well-being. This vision also reflects a national consensus, because the Haitian people as a whole have identified corruption as the problem leaders must tackle.

Mr. President,

Corruption is a crime against development that impairs the enjoyment of human rights, as well documented by the report by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). This is why I will not waver in focusing my efforts on seeing that the limited resources of the state are used to address the problems of the population, not to serve the interests of the few.

To wage this battle successfully, Haiti has a whole juridical and institutional arsenal, comprising the *Unité de Lutte contre la Corruption*, or ULCC (anticorruption unit), the *Unité Centrale de Renseignement financiers*, or UCREF (central financial intelligence unit), and the 2014 law on preventing and fighting corruption.

Mr. President,
Your Excellencies the heads of state and government:

We must recognize that corruption has many ramifications. It is a transnational problem with tentacles reaching into every aspect of our lives. The fight against corruption must include an educational component to influence the thinking and behavior of our peoples. Only through education, as a catalyst for lasting development, will we be able to attain the results long desired. Moreover, we must take action for the American Hemisphere we will leave to future generations.

Awareness campaigns and prevention, therefore, are also indispensable ways to fight corruption. My delegation is gratified by their inclusion in the engagement project and information must be available to the public to this end. We will deploy all necessary measures to strengthen the operational structures entrusted with fighting corruption; to recover diverted or unlawfully obtained property and assets; to eradicate impunity; and to improve the legal framework. I advocate that states so affected be given more rapid access to recovered property and assets.

As far as Haiti is concerned, good democratic governance is indivisible from the improvement of our justice system. It is, moreover, the foundation of our collaboration with the MINUJUSTH. Corruption creates a sort of normalization of misdeeds, which we must eradicate through firm and impartial justice.

Mr. President,

If there is one thing of which our region can be proud, it is that the values of representative democracy have triumphed. And if one challenge is the most daunting to our region, it is the scourge of corruption.

Since it strikes everywhere, this scourge is on the order of a pandemic; and, like all pandemics, it will not be fought alone. We need a concerted effort by all parties. For me, this is the deeper meaning of this Eighth Summit of the Americas, in which I am delighted to participate. Before I conclude, I want to note an essential facet of our work plan, i.e., the recognition of democratic governance as a key factor in fighting corruption. We must take care that certain groups or political actors harboring ill intent do not use this very noble cause to destabilize and weaken certain countries in the Americas.

I assure you that my country, Haiti, has made an irreversible change in this sense. We face a long road ahead, with important reforms to be made--in the area of justice and the rule of law in particular, but also in the electoral system, where weakness brings recurring political crises.

Over the course of my term, I pledge my determination in confronting these issues, whose resolution is a vital condition for stability, peace, and economic and social progress. The nation's sectoral assemblies, which I recently launched, are partners in this effort to encourage civic dialogue

on all these issues and to bring about the adoption of a national covenant that makes all of society responsible for the choices to be made and their ramifications, both individually and collectively.

This is how we inextricably link the fight against corruption with democratic governance, in the best interest of my country's development.

Thank you very much.