

DISSEMINATED BY MERCURY PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LLC, A REGISTERED FOREIGN AGENT, ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REP. OF HAITI. MORE INFORMATION ON FILE WITH THE DEPT. OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON DC.

Answers by his excellency Edmond Bocchit, Ambassador of Haiti to the United States:

On the demand that the president steps down

Each President in Haiti is sworn into office for a five-year term. President Moïse was sworn into office in February of 2017, and therefore his term ends in February of 2022 when Haiti's next President assumes responsibilities of the office. The fact that since 1987 Haiti has had 25 Presidents instead of 7 is a testament to the chronic political turmoil which has plagued Haiti's political life and undermined representative democracy in Haiti. President Moïse is not seeking re-election when his term ends, nor will the new constitution allow him to be re-elected. He is very committed to allowing all Haitians the right to choose their next President via democratic elections, upholding the rule of law, and serving out the term in office he was elected to serve.

The whys for rewriting the Constitution

The current constitution of Haiti is dysfunctional at best. It must be changed – and according to a recent public opinion survey, 86% of respondents agree. For the past decade, the idea of changing Haiti's constitution has been a recurring ambition of the country's various political and civil society leadership. The Moïse government is embarking on a bold but necessary process to modernize Haiti's constitution.

The current constitution created an inherent power imbalance between the country's executive, legislative and judicial branches. This has invited disruptions of political life and undermined any semblance of functioning democratic systems. Under Haiti's current constitution, any number of legislators can prevent actions from advancing, even elections from taking place. It comes as no surprise that on five occasions since 1987 Haitian Presidents were left to govern without any parliamentary oversight because legislative elections were not held. Haiti and its people deserve better than this endless cycle of uncertainty, dysfunction and chaos.

The new constitution has been written by an independent committee, with broad input, and will be put to the people in a referendum. It is focused on people's rights and redesigning a government system of balance and also checks. It will provide Haiti's diaspora community with equal rights as citizens and guarantee equal access to government posts. It requires 35% minimum quota reserved for women in public institutions. It lowers the age of participation in government positions to 25 thus allowing Haiti's youth to have greater say. We are confident that the new constitution is more conducive to creating governance that is accountable, transparent, and inclusive.

How can the international community help?

The international community can help by supporting the efforts of the Moise government toward constitutional reform. International partners can offer support in capacity building and observation for our upcoming constitutional referendum and elections. It is time that Haiti breaks away from the cycle of dependence on humanitarian aid – to do so we need a well-functioning democracy that facilitates progress and prosperity. We want to benefit from shared lessons and knowledge to revive Haiti's private sector, invite foreign investment, diversify our economy, and boost tourism.