

I am particularly proud of being here today for the opening of this seminar. First let me take a few seconds to thank Minister Amorim for his inspiring thoughts on the way forward. This event is yet another example of the important contribution that Brazil is making in Haiti, in what is, without a doubt, a complex and integrated peace operation.

I welcome the presence here today of distinguished representatives from the very countries who are working with the Haitian government and international institutions to build a better future. The contribution of Brazil is evident with the participation of General Carlos Alberto Dos Santos Cruz, who leads MINUSTAH's military arm. The presence of senior Haitian officials, including Secretary of State Euchère-Luc Joseph, demonstrates the principles of co-responsibility.

I believe it is important to remember in the context of this seminar that the international community's participation in peace operations has changed with the times. Indeed, Canada and Canadians have witnessed this change since our first contribution to peacekeeping in 1956.

No single "peacekeeping" mission is alike: Cyprus is not Kosovo; Kosovo is not Haiti; Haiti is not Sudan; and Sudan is not Afghanistan. Our role, and the role of our partners, allies and international organizations, has evolved with changes to the missions themselves and the changing nature of the threat posed to international peace and security. Most importantly, we have changed our approach to international peace operations to reflect our constantly evolving understanding of what constitutes an effective international response to conflict—and how best to lay the foundation for sustainable peace.

Haiti is a longstanding important partner for Canada. The relationship between our two countries is built on strong links between peers, on continued support for development and security in Haiti, on the shared use of French as an official language, and on the presence of a large Haitian community in Canada.

But what is new in the case of MINUSTAH [United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti] is the fact that with the direct involvement of so many hemispheric partners, Haiti has become a concrete example of both the challenges and the opportunities of strengthening hemispheric cooperation in support of peace, security and development in our own region—issues that you will address in your discussions over the coming days.

Haiti is at a critical moment in its history. My government is proud to be working with Brazil and other Latin American countries to help the Haitian government break forever from the destabilizing damage of violence and poverty. Canada welcomes this region's strong contribution to international reconstruction efforts in Haiti, and particularly that of Brazil, whose leadership within MINUSTAH is critical for addressing the important security challenges that affect our ability to deliver improved living conditions for the Haitian people.