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**PRESS RELEASE**

***The international community approves a project to support the organization of elections in Haiti***



***Port-au-Prince, 10 January 2005*** – The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Haitian government and the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) signed, on Monday 10 January, at the office of the Prime Minister, a global agreement concerning an important project to organize general elections in Haiti, in 2005.

The agreement - initialed by the Resident Representative of UNDP in Haiti, Adama Guindo, the Canadian Ambassador, Claude Boucher, the Special representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations in Haiti, Juan Gabriel Valdes, the Prime Minister, Gerard Latortue, and the CEP President, Max Maturin – will provide the groundwork for the preparation of the elections.

Financial assistance, totaling \$44 million, was provided by Canada (up to 17 million Canadian Dollars) and the Haitian government (\$ 3 million). This amount also includes the financial aid pledged by the European Union (\$12 million) as well as the United States (\$15 million); and should be available soon.

“The confirmation of this important assistance marks the strong engagement of the international community towards the establishment of a stable atmosphere for elections and for the return of constitutional order in Haiti. MINUSTAH needs the participation of all Haitians in elections; the Haitian population has a historical responsibility in the outcome of this process,” said Ambassador Valdes.

This agreement “illustrates the excellent cooperation amongst Haitian partners, MINUSTAH, UNDP and the international community, and shows the profound engagement that the United Nations Mission has in contributing towards the achievement of stabilization in Haiti,” affirmed Adama Guindo. The Prime Minister referred to the agreement “as an achievement in the transitional government’s mandate, which underscores the importance of the groundwork for general elections this year.”

“Canada is very satisfied to contribute to this agreement and the outcomes of elections are very important for a successful transition to occur in Haiti”, added the Canadian Ambassador, Claude Boucher. According to the CEP President, Max Mathurin, the approval of this accord “highlights a rebirth of trust among the electoral group and defeats any doubts about financial pledges.”

This is the second agreement of its type. Last year, the American Government released \$US 8.7 in support of the electoral process.

***For additional information, please contact MINUSTAH’s Office of Communication and Public Information at tel.: (509) 510-2563 ext.: 6343 or 510- 3183/84/85 ext.: 6037- 6034-6035 or consult the Mission’s Internet site at <http://www.minustah.org>.***