



**Remarks delivered by the President of the United Nations Staff Union  
at the Commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake**

United Nations Headquarters, 17 January 2020

Mr. Secretary-General, Madame Deputy Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Saint Hilaire, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, families, survivors and dear colleagues;

On behalf of the United Nations Staff Union, I would like to welcome you all to this gathering marking a somber occasion – a wreath-laying ceremony on the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 2010 Haiti earthquake where hundreds of thousands of lives were suddenly taken from us by this devastating natural disaster.

Today, we gather here in the memory of 102 UN colleagues who died in this shocking event on 12 January 2010. Our fallen colleagues were tirelessly working to restore a secure and stable environment in the aftermath of an armed conflict that had spread to several cities across Haiti.

However, the devastating earthquake delivered a severe setback to their efforts and to the country as a whole. We have seen images in those first few days after the earthquake where Haitian citizens and UN staff were left stunned and uprooted, searching for loved ones or colleagues, grieving for those who were missing or deceased and looking for some type of meaning in a tragedy that seemed so blind and random.

Those days of sorrow were also marked by acts of courage and kindness, as many countries responded to the appeals for humanitarian aid, pledged funds and dispatched rescue and medical teams and support personnel. This same courage and resilience in the face of adversity has provided strength for our UN Staff through the years and continues to define who we are as one UN family.

As we commit to the task of recovering and rebuilding a country so overwhelmed, some of the hardest work is still ahead. However, there is nothing we cannot achieve if we stay focused on our common purpose, of which the flag from Hotel Christopher is a reminder at this memorial site; and if we acknowledge the hopes and dreams of the people of Haiti and the world over for peace and unity. We must also always remember the bravery of our colleagues' call to duty, our responsibility to ourselves and our responsibilities and obligations to one another. Haiti will rise above this and prosper anew; and the United Nations will leave behind a country and a nation that is worthy of pride for generations to come.

We will never forget the events that occurred that day, yet we must continue to strive for a secure and stable environment for the people of Haiti and for all that is good and just in our world.