

Joint Statement of the International Support Group for Lebanon 23 September 2020

1. A ministerial meeting of the members of the International Support Group (ISG) for Lebanon co-chaired by the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and H.E. Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, was held on 23 September 2020. Statements opening the virtual meeting were made by the Secretary-General and Foreign Minister Le Drian.

Following the opening statements, H. E. Dr. Hassan Diab, Caretaker Prime Minister and President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Lebanon, delivered remarks. Interventions were made by H.E. Mr. Luigi Di Maio, Foreign Minister of Italy; H.E. Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary General of the League of Arab States ; H.E. Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission ; H.E. the Right Honourable Mr. James Cleverly, Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa, of the United Kingdom ; H.E. Mr. Niels Annen, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, of the Federal Republic of Germany; H.E. David Hale, Under-Secretary of State for political affairs of the United States of America H.E. Ambassador Zhang Jun, Permanent Representative, People's Republic of China ; H.E. Ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation. A presentation was also made by M. Axel Van Trotsenburg, Director of operations of the World Bank.

2. Participants thanked the United Nations Secretary-General and France for convening the meeting and reiterated their condolences to the victims and families of the 4 of August explosions in Beirut. They also paid tribute to the resilience of the Lebanese people, the assistance provided by civil society to those in need and all those volunteers from Lebanon and abroad who supported the emergency response. They expressed their full solidarity with Lebanon and the Lebanese people.

3. Members of the ISG commended the international community for its swift and immediate response with both financial and logistic support to Lebanon and to the Lebanese people in the aftermath of the 4 August explosions and welcomed the commitments made at the international high-level conference in support of Beirut and the Lebanese people co-chaired by the United Nations and France on 9 August 2020 and subsequent commitments through the 14 August UN Emergency Appeal. The pledged support should be timely, sufficient, consistent with the needs of the Lebanese people and delivered with utmost efficiency and transparency to address emergency relief assistance and early recovery activities. Members of the ISG also underscored the importance of close and efficient coordination between the United Nations, governments, donors, humanitarian and development actors and Lebanese state institutions, including the Lebanese Armed Forces in light of their specific role in this response. Members of the ISG welcomed the joint EU-UN and World Bank assessments as a basis for donor engagement and called upon the international community to swiftly scale up its support to Beirut and the Lebanese people in that context. Members of the ISG look forward to a follow-up conference in October in Paris, which will be able to take stock of what has been done so far and to assess the most efficient and transparent way forward to promote early recovery (activities aiming at

restoring public infrastructure, rehabilitating housing, and stabilizing the situation of affected families, as well as support to health and education sectors affected by the explosion).

4. Members of the ISG urged Lebanon's leaders to unite in support of the timely formation of a government able to meet the legitimate aspirations expressed by the Lebanese people and committed to addressing Lebanon's multiple and acute challenges, notably its humanitarian, socio-economic and financial crises, the COVID-19 pandemic, the reconstruction of Beirut and the restoration of Beirut's heritage and historical buildings. Members of the ISG took due note of the approval by the Government of Lebanon of a Financial Recovery Plan, as well as of the Government's decision to request an IMF program, and reiterated, on the basis of the implementation of necessary reforms, its continued commitment to support Lebanon.

5. Members of the ISG strongly urged Lebanese political leaders to undertake critical reforms and welcomed the agreement reached earlier this month by all of Lebanon's political leaders on a comprehensive roadmap of reforms with an implementation timetable in line with their prior commitments, including those made in the context of the CEDRE conference, and which enjoy the support of the ISG and other members of the international community.

Members of the ISG reiterated the need for those reforms to address the challenges of Lebanon and respond to the aspirations peacefully expressed by the Lebanese people.

6. Recalling the ISG statement of 11 December 2019, and recent statements of 30 August and 19 September, members of the ISG urged Lebanon to speedily implement measures to restore economic stability, improve delivery of public services and the credibility of the financial sector, resume effective talks with the IMF and prioritize key governance measures, including credible regulation of key economic sectors, such as the electricity sector, and provide support for the most vulnerable communities in Lebanon, including through social safety nets. Members of the ISG also urged the government and political leaders to undertake credible measures to fight corruption and combat tax evasion, to adopt a capital control law, and other measures that ensure concrete changes are made and guarantee both transparency and full accountability to the Lebanese people. Members of the ISG confirmed their willingness to support Lebanon in undertaking these measures. They looked forward to the ISG meeting along with other regional and international leaders, which France intends to convene in Paris in October on the reform agenda, in support of Lebanon.

7. The ISG called on all actors to maintain the peaceful character of the protests, by avoiding violence and respecting the right to peaceful assembly and protest.

8. Members of the ISG stressed the importance of Lebanon's continued, steadfast commitment to relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including 1559 (2004), 1701 (2006), 1680 (2006), and 2433 (2018), 2485 (2019) and 2539 (2020), the Taif Accords (1989), the Baabda Declaration on the policy of disassociation (2012) and other relevant international obligations, for the country's domestic stability and that of the region.

9. Members of the ISG reaffirmed their continuous strong support for Lebanon and its people, for its stability, security, territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence.

Note to Editors

The International Support Group has brought together the United Nations and the governments of China, France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, together with the European Union and the Arab League. It was launched in September 2013 by the UN Secretary-General with former President Michel Sleiman to help mobilize support and assistance for Lebanon's stability, sovereignty and state institutions and to specifically encourage assistance for the Lebanese Army, Syrian refugees in Lebanon and host communities and government programs and public services impacted by the Syrian crisis.