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Office of the Special Coordinator  
for Lebanon

Bureau du Coordinateur Spécial  
pour le Liban

**PRESS RELEASE**

**United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Derek Plumbly Visits  
the Bekaa**

Bekaa, Lebanon

Tuesday, 21 October 2014

The United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Derek Plumbly today said that the United Nations will continue doing all it can to assist Lebanon in confronting the impact of the crisis in Syria, including by seeking additional international assistance to address the Syrian refugee crisis and for the Lebanese Armed Forces. Mr. Plumbly was speaking during a visit today to the Bekaa where he saw for himself something of the present conditions of displaced Syrians there and met representatives of the Lebanese communities hosting them. After that, he met with representatives from the Lebanese army to learn about the situation along Lebanon's eastern border.

The Special Coordinator began his trip with a stop in Zahleh where colleagues from UNHCR briefed him on all the assistance activities taking place in cooperation between the United Nations, the Lebanese authorities and national and international humanitarian partners to address the needs of the almost 400,000 displaced persons from Syria registered with UNHCR throughout the Bekaa and of the local communities hosting them.

Mr. Plumbly, accompanied by the UNHCR Representative in Lebanon Ms. Ninette Kelley, then visited in Majdel Anjar displaced Syrian families at a community center managed by the Italian organization INTERSOS. He listened to their concerns and their hopes to return to their country as soon as circumstances permit. He then visited Marj where UNHCR and UNDP have helped the Lebanese host community and the refugees with projects, including for the development of the local market, for solid waste

management and for the public library. “The burden is enormous for both the Lebanese and the displaced Syrians themselves, the majority of whom are women and children. Today I saw the difficulties both face on a daily basis, on the refugees many of whom arrived in Lebanon with nothing and on the Lebanese who are struggling to make ends meet,” Mr. Plumbly said. “But hope is not gone. A lot has been done in the past three and a half years to provide help where it is urgently needed, and in Berlin next week we will be encouraging the international community to continue to share the burden still more generously.”

The Special Coordinator and Mrs. Kelley then visited Baalbeck where they met with the Governor of North Bekaa Mr. Bashir Khoder and later with representatives of the Union of Municipalities of Baalbeck. In speaking to the press afterwards, Mr. Plumbly highlighted the work of UN agencies in cooperation with municipalities and their plans to build on that.

Finally, the Special Coordinator met with representatives of the Lebanese army in the area of Ras Baalbeck. The discussions focused on the situation along Lebanon’s eastern borders, particularly following recent developments including in Aarsal, and the main security challenges facing the area. Mr. Plumbly paid tribute to the efforts and sacrifices of the Lebanese army to safeguard Lebanon’s safety and security and strongly condemned recent attacks against the army in different Lebanese areas. He reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to continue encouraging additional international assistance for the Lebanese armed forces in the coming period.

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