

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

Office of the Special Coordinator
for Lebanon

Bureau du Coordinateur Spécial
pour le Liban

**United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Derek Plumbly,
Remarks at UN Day Function**

Beirut, Lebanon

Friday, 24 October 2014

H.E. Member of Parliament Michel Moussa, representing Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri

H.E. Minister Ramzi Jreige representing H.E. Prime Minister Tamam Salam

Excellences, Ladies and Gentleman,

Ahlan wa sahlan,

It is a very great pleasure to welcome you all here today to commemorate this UN Day. The UN is entering its 70th year. Having come relatively late in life to work in the United Nations, I am always struck by the enormous variety of the things it is engaged in – obviously peace and security through the Security Council and peacekeepers; as the champion of development and the war on poverty; humanitarian work with those who are suffering in regions of conflict; and grappling with global issues such as climate change.

These are just some of the examples. The United Nations is here for all of these things and more, it's an ambitious seven decade experiment in promoting collective peace and security and development and making the world a better place for future generations. It belongs to all of us. Lebanon as a founding member has been at the forefront of this global endeavor since the very beginning. And for almost all this time the United Nations has been here on the ground as a close partner to Lebanon and to the Lebanese people - helping them in difficult times, seeking to promote peace, stability and development.

Once again, as we commemorate United Nations Day now, we do so at a time of turbulence and appalling conflict across the region. It has become a commonplace to say so, but it is true: Lebanon has shown great resilience in the face of this. It has done so thanks to the resolve of its people and the unity of its leaders. That unity, we believe, remains crucial.

So too is the unity and partnership of the international community in support of Lebanon's stability and sovereignty.

It is reflected in UNIFIL which, working with the Lebanese army in implementation of resolution 1701, has helped to maintain calm in the south and along the Blue Line since 2006 – it is reflected in the readiness of so many troop contributing countries to assist in that and to support it.

It is reflected also in the work of the International Support Group for Lebanon which the Secretary-General first convened just over a year ago, and which has met at various levels since to rally support and assistance for Lebanon and to draw attention to the importance of its security and stability.

It is reflected as well in the help we have sought, and which has been forthcoming, for the Lebanese army as they seek to protect Lebanon.

And it has been manifested in the international assistance, totaling almost 2 billion dollars, which has been gathered over the past 24 months for refugees and Lebanese communities and institutions impacted by the war in Syria and the refugee presence.

The United Nations has been at the heart of all of these efforts. I would like to take this opportunity on the Secretary-General's behalf to say thank you to the thousands of UN civilian and military personnel who have seen their responsibilities enormously increased through the crisis and who have worked tirelessly to meet critical needs.

Our gratitude goes too to the many civil society and non-government organizations, in particular the local ones, some of them represented here today, who are the United Nations' partners in the fields in which we work.

Finally our thanks go through you Mr. Minister and your colleagues in Government, and indeed to Members of Parliament, to our most important partners of all, those in government service. We pay tribute to your work to keep Lebanon safe in these deeply difficult times. We hope that we will soon be able to salute the representative of the new President as well!

Sadly my colleague Ross Mountain had to travel urgently and unexpectedly yesterday but Mr. Maurice Saade of FAO, the Acting Resident Coordinator, representing Ross and the Country Team, will say a few words. Then I would encourage you to have a look at the photographs around you taken by the students of the American University of Science and Technology which give a graphic view of the work the UN family is doing across Lebanon and at the material displayed UN agencies which tells more about support the 24 UN agencies represented here are giving to Lebanon and to say thank you to Mr. Gabriel Abdel-Nour and the accompanying student choir who will be performing in a while.

Thank you.
