

Chairperson's Summary of the Ministerial Meeting of the International Support Group for Lebanon United Nations Headquarters, 26 September 2014

A Ministerial Meeting of the International Support Group for Lebanon chaired by the United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon was held on 26 September 2014 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Statements opening the meeting were made by the Secretary-General, and H. E. Mr. Tammam Salam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Lebanon. Interventions were made by H.E. Mr. Laurent Fabius, Foreign Minister of France; H.E. Mr. William J. Burns, Deputy Secretary of State of the United States of America; H.E. Mr. Mikhail Bogdanov, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation; H.E. Ms. Federica Mogherini, Foreign Minister of Italy; H.E. Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Foreign Minister of Germany; H.E. Mr. Mark Lyall Grant, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom; H.E. Mr. Wang Min, Deputy Permanent Representative of China; H.E. Mr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States; and Mr. Christian Berger, Director, European Union External Action Service. Remarks were also made by Ms. Helen Clark, Chair of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG); Ms. Inger Andersen Vice-President of the World Bank; Mr. T. Alexander Aleinikoff, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees. The United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) also attended the meeting.

Participants thanked the Secretary-General for convening the meeting. They recalled the conclusions of the inaugural meeting of the International Support Group of 25 September 2013 (SG/2198) and subsequent statements including those issued after the follow-up ministerial meeting of the Group in Paris on 5 March 2014 (DSG/7) and the ministerial conference on international support for the Lebanese Armed Forces in Rome on 17 June 2014 (PA/14). They noted that the United Nations' commitment to stability in Lebanon lies at the heart of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and other relevant resolutions. They recalled the Security Council's presidential statement of 10 July 2013 (S/PRST/2013/9) calling for strong, coordinated international support for Lebanon to help it withstand the multiple challenges to its security and stability, and the Council's encouragement of the efforts of the International Support Group in this regard. They underlined, on the first anniversary of the Group's formation, their continued and united commitment to working together to mobilize support for Lebanon's sovereignty and State institutions and to promote efforts to help it address the challenges it faces.

Participants were concerned that the challenges facing Lebanon as a result of the crisis in Syria and the region had grown more severe over the past year and underlined the need for concerted and intensive effort to counter their impact. Participants expressed support and appreciation for the leadership of Prime Minister Tammam Salam and the unity of the Government in the face of these challenges. They condemned the attacks and acts of terrorism, hostage taking and brutal murder by violent extremist groups, including ISIS and Jabhat an Nusra, which have occurred on Lebanese territory in spill-over from the fighting in Syria.

Participants underlined the continuing importance for stability and security of Lebanon's policy of disassociation. Many recalled the Security Council's appeals in its presidential statements in respect of commitment to the Baabda Declaration.

Participants acknowledged the ever more crucial role played by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Lebanese security forces in addressing complex security challenges, including terrorism and the volatile situation on the Lebanon/Syria border, as well as the role played by the LAF in working with UNIFIL to help maintain calm along the Blue Line in implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). They paid tribute to the achievements, bravery and sacrifices of the LAF and the security forces over the year. They welcomed the substantial international assistance forthcoming, or pledged, to strengthen the LAF in line with its five-year capabilities development plan and its Strategic Dialogue with UNIFIL, as well as the broad international support evident at the Rome ministerial meeting. Participants noted that the recent attacks by violent extremist groups in Aarsal had highlighted immediate priority needs on the part of both the LAF and the security forces, including in regard to border control and counter-terrorism. They warmly welcomed the commitment by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, following that attack, to provide \$1 billion dollars in

assistance, additional to its previous commitment of \$3 billion dollars of assistance in cooperation with France. They further welcomed the contributions now being made within that framework or bilaterally by Member States to further enhance the capabilities of the LAF and the security forces. They stressed the urgency of such assistance, noted that some urgently needed supplies were already arriving from the United States and others, and encouraged other Member States in a position to do so to offer assistance to the LAF and the security forces on an expedited basis. They welcomed the coordination mechanisms put in place by the LAF with the United Nations and donors to ensure that assistance is as focused and effective as possible.

Participants acknowledged the extraordinary burden Lebanon continues to bear in hosting almost 1.2 million registered refugees from Syria, more refugees in proportion to its national population than any other country, and noted with concern the heightened tensions that have arisen in some host communities. They noted that, although international humanitarian assistance in Lebanon is substantial, the shortfall in the total amount sought means that many critical needs cannot be addressed. They encouraged expedited assistance for refugees as well as additional support for host communities and Government institutions, and welcomed the commitment of UN agencies and partners to work with the Government and donors on an integrated Lebanon Crisis Response Plan for the coming year to ensure that the needs of the vulnerable are adequately met, and stabilization requirements addressed. They encouraged the Government and UNHCR to cooperate closely to promote the effective management of the refugee presence and the facilitation of their safe return as soon as possible. They acknowledged the importance for Lebanon of expanded resettlement programs for Syrian refugees, and called for sustained effort to secure the resettlement of a greater number in third countries. They looked forward to the international conference the Government of Germany plans to hold in Berlin on 28 October 2014 to address issues relating to the refugee presence in Syria's neighbours and burden sharing, at which Lebanon's particular needs will be highlighted.

Participants again emphasized the importance of economic assistance for Government programs and services impacted by the Syrian crisis, including in key areas such as health, education and poverty reduction. They noted that the Government is updating the Roadmap for Stabilization developed by its predecessor, itemizing interventions to which Lebanon attaches priority. They further noted that the World Bank-managed Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Lebanon is now up and running, and that projects have been approved. Participants welcomed these developments, including the contributions already made to the Fund by several Member States and the World Bank, and encouraged generous and expeditious assistance through it or other development instruments to support the Government's priority stabilization projects and programs. They noted the need for the Government, for its part, to put in place arrangements to ensure fast-track approval for such projects given their priority status.

Participants stressed the importance for stability and security in Lebanon of the continuity of State institutions. They underlined that a successful response to the very serious challenges at present facing Lebanon requires national unity, which is incomplete without a President, whose constitutional role is to act as the symbol of that unity. Participants expressed deep concern that the office of the President has now been vacant for four months, and at the impact of this vacancy at the level of the Head of State on the operation of other State institutions, specifically the Parliament and the Council of Ministers. Participants reiterated that, while the presidential election must remain a Lebanese process, free from foreign interference, it is vital that international support for Lebanon is paralleled by action by Lebanon's political leaders to resolve this issue now in the interest of all in Lebanon. They looked to Lebanon's leaders to show the sense of urgency and flexibility needed to open the way to the election of a president without further delay.

Participants welcomed the opportunity to discuss Lebanon again, at this critical juncture. They looked forward to working together on an on-going basis as partners in the International Support Group for Lebanon. They welcomed the prospect of future Group meetings with broader participation and anticipated that the Group will meet at differing levels as needed. They welcomed the planned meeting of the Group at the initiative of the government of Germany in Berlin on 28 October immediately before the international conference.