

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Convenes International Support Group for Lebanon

New York, 25 November, 2013

The United Nations Deputy Secretary-General today convened a meeting of the International Support Group for Lebanon (ISG) to review progress since the inaugural meeting of the Group under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General on 25 September in the presence of H.E. Mr. Michel Sleiman, President of the Republic of Lebanon.

The UN Special Coordinator briefed on developments and presentations were made by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon as well as by representatives of the World Bank, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme.

Participants underlined the continuing need for strong, coordinated support for Lebanon in response to the unprecedented challenges posed by the crisis in Syria. They noted the many ongoing pressures on Lebanon and again underlined the importance of burden sharing.

Participants regretted the lack of progress on government formation and encouraged all Lebanese parties to engage positively in this regard given the urgency of the security, humanitarian and development challenges facing Lebanon. They stressed again the importance of commitment by all Lebanese parties to the Baabda Declaration.

Participants noted that the 25 September inaugural meeting had generated momentum, which was recognized when members of the group met with the President of Lebanon, H.E. Michel Sleiman, in Beirut on 18 October.

Since then, the Roadmap for Stabilization developed by the Government in conjunction with the United Nations and the World Bank to address the most critical economic and social impacts of the crisis in Syria on Lebanon has been approved, and agreement has been reached on a multi-donor trust fund for Lebanon as an additional mechanism for channeling donor support to meet these critical needs, which should be operational in December.

Participants noted that the next UN Regional Response Plan for refugees from Syria, due to be completed in December, would also address the immediate needs of host communities and underlined the importance of the pledging conference the Secretary-General will convene in Kuwait on 15 January 2014.

In relation to the Lebanese Armed Forces' five-year capacities development plan, they noted steps taken to implement coordination mechanisms and welcomed Italy's engagement in this regard.

Participants welcomed France's readiness to hold a meeting of the ISG in Paris.

In addition to the Permanent Representative of Lebanon, the meeting was attended by the original participants in the inaugural ISG meeting – the Permanent Representatives of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Head of Delegation of the European Union and the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States – together with the Permanent Representatives of Italy and Germany, which has

given a lead on admission programmes to receive Syrian refugees. Participants welcomed the prospect of expanding engagement with a range of stakeholders, including through broader high-level meetings.

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