



Office of the Special Coordinator  
for Lebanon

Bureau du Coordinateur Spécial  
pour le Liban

**United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Michael Williams  
Statement Following Meeting with caretaker Minister of Energy Gebran Bassil  
Beirut, Lebanon**

Thursday, 03 March 2011

Good afternoon,

I just had an excellent meeting with the Minister of Energy, Mr. Gebran Bassil. We had a very good discussion on many issues, the political situation, the economic challenges that face Lebanon and its people and the formation of a new government.

I shared with the Minister my belief that the government should try to meet the aspirations of all Lebanese people, irrespective of the parties represented in the new Cabinet. I also expressed the expectation of the United Nations that the government would continue to respect Lebanon's international obligations.

We had a very detailed discussion on the issue of oil and gas exploration off Lebanon's shores and the delimitation of Lebanon's maritime borders. I assured the Minister that the United Nations is considering how best it can help Lebanon in this area and especially with regard to the maritime border between Lebanon and Israel. But I also stressed to the Minister that there are many steps that Lebanon itself can take and he agrees with that. For example, Lebanon can move towards defining the maritime borders with other neighbors, for example Cyprus and Syria, through the ratification of agreements that have already been negotiated, or through the negotiation of other agreements. We also look forward to Lebanon accelerating the implementation of the oil and gas exploration law, which Parliament adopted last year. It was a very good meeting. A very full and detailed meeting on all these issues.

I should also say that earlier today I was privileged to have a meeting with President Sleiman where we also discussed many issues, the regional developments and I also briefed the President about the latest report on the Security Council Resolution 1701 and the meeting of the Security Council, which will take place to discuss this issue at the end of the month.

Thank you very much.

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