



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 Mr. Samir Geagea, Leader of the Lebanese Forces
Party
Beirut, Lebanon**

Friday, 06 May 2011

Good evening,

Let me say how pleased I am to be here today in Maarab. Earlier this afternoon I attended a symposium on women's rights, organized by the Lebanese Forces. I take this opportunity to welcome such events. The United Nations believes very strongly in the efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality, not just here in Lebanon and not just in the Arab world but in all member States. We believe this is absolutely essential for building healthy and strong democracies. And sadly in Lebanon, representation of women in politics is far too low and I hope in its own way the symposium this afternoon can be a contribution towards seeing a greater involvement of women in politics.

After the symposium, I had a discussion with Dr. Samir Geagea about the political situation in Lebanon and in the region. On Lebanon, I stressed to Dr. Geagea, as I have to other political leaders, the belief of the United Nations that a government should be formed sooner rather than later in Lebanon. Every effort should be made by all political leaders to help create the environment in which such a government can be formed.

This afternoon there was a discussion here on one of the problems facing Lebanon's society, namely the role of women. There are many many other urgent issues, social, economic and political that have to be addressed but which are not being addressed because the Lebanese people do not have a government. So I hope in the coming days and certainly not much more than weeks, we can see a government and particularly at this time of tremendous change and political turbulence in the Middle East. I think the Lebanese people need to be protected by a government.

Thank you very much.
