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Bureau du Coordinateur Spécial
pour le Liban

**United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Michael C. Williams
UNIFIL Force Commander, Gen. Alberto Asarta Cuevas**

Statement following Meeting with Prime Minister Saad Hariri

Beirut, Lebanon

Thursday, 09 December 2010

Good afternoon.

General Asarta and I just had a very good meeting with the Prime Minister Saad Hariri.

Our discussions focused mainly on the withdrawal of the Israeli military from the northern part of the village of Ghajar. Last week, General Asarta and I travelled to Israel to discuss this issue. Today, we briefed Prime Minister Hariri on the visit and on Israel's decision, in principle, to accept the UN proposal for a withdrawal of military forces from northern Ghajar. We believe that this is an important development and a step forward. At the same time, it is important to highlight this would only be a first step towards resolving the status of Ghajar so that Lebanese sovereignty is fully restored over all Lebanese territory and that the humanitarian requirements of the villagers are met.

General Asarta and I will meet tomorrow with President Michel Sleiman to also debrief the President on this issue.

In our meeting with the Prime Minister, we also talked briefly on the general situation in Lebanon. I have been concerned by the political deadlock that has prevailed in the country. I continue to hope and call on all sides to engage in open dialogue and to use the regular institutions of the state to resolve any differences, irrespective of how sensitive. There can be no alternatives to this.

Thank you very much.
