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**United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Michael Williams
Statement Following Meeting with Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri
Beirut, Lebanon**

Thursday, 13 August 2009

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen

I just had a very good meeting with Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri. Our discussions touched on developments here in Lebanon and in the region.

It was an opportunity for me to raise with Prime Minister-designate Hariri the challenges facing Lebanon now and for the future and to voice the UN's readiness to lend its assistance when requested. I relayed the UN's support – and I firmly believe the support of the international community as a whole -- for the efforts that Mr. Hariri is undertaking to form a new government in consultation with all the political parties in Lebanon. We hope that this process will be completed soon in order to allow the new government to address the many socio-economic and political challenges facing the country.

My talks with Prime Minister-designate Hariri also touched on Security Council Resolution 1701. This week marks the third anniversary of this resolution. During the past three years, a lot has been accomplished in the implementation of resolution 1701, including the longest period of calm across the Blue Line and in southern Lebanon in decades. We are now working with the different sides concerned to make sure that this calm continues to prevail and to ensure that in the future further progress is made in other areas of 1701.

The Lebanese authorities and different Lebanese political parties and groups have repeatedly assured me of their commitment to Resolution 1701. Today I also relayed to Prime Minister-designate Hariri the hope that the new government, when it is formed, would renew that commitment and would work actively towards the full implementation of the resolution.

Thank you very much

Q: What can you say about (inaudible) Hizbullah concerning the implementation of the 1701?

SCL WILLIAMS: I think that the Secretary General made clear in his letter to the Security Council several days ago, we have been concerned by some recent developments in the south which you are maybe all too familiar with and particularly with the arms depot in Khirbat Silim. This has been very worrying because 1701 is quite clear that there shouldn't be any weaponry between the Blue Line and the Litani River. So that has been serious. But I'm convinced that Hizbullah and other groups remain committed to 1701, that they value the stability that 1701 has brought to the people of southern Lebanon when the past three years have known a peace that eluded southern Lebanon for 30 years before 1701. The costs of the war in 2006 were high, very high and very painful. I don't believe anyone wants to see a repeat of that.
