



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 Qaemaqam of Akkar and Mayor of Halba
Akkar, Lebanon**

Tuesday, 18 May 2010

Good Morning.

Let me just make a short statement to say how pleased I am to be here today in Akkar. I just had a very good meeting with the Qaemaqam of Akkar, Mr. Tony Moukhaiber and the Mayor of Halba Mr. Said El Halabi. Earlier we also met with the Mufti Sheikh Ousama Rifai.

This is my first visit to Akkar although I have visited many other regions and cities in Lebanon. This visit, like the others, allows me to better understand the regions of Lebanon and in particular their political, economic and social conditions.

We discussed today the situation in Akkar, and particularly here in Halba. Akkar remains one of the more deprived regions of Lebanon. In the past, the United Nations has been quite active through our programmes and agencies here and I have expressed today the commitment of the United Nations as a whole to assist the people of this region with their development initiatives.

Later today, I will be meeting with the Greek-Orthodox Bishop, Bishop Bassilios Mansour, but also with the Members of Parliament from Akkar as well as the local authorities in Kobayat. I will also meet with the representatives of the Hariri Foundation and also with the Issam Fares Foundation to get their views on how to enhance the development of this very important region of Lebanon.

Shoukran and merci

QUESTION: Akkar is a border region that falls along the Syrian border and you are overseeing the implementation of Resolution 1701. Is there any direction or orientation with regards to the control of the borders and the implementation of the Resolution in the north?

SCL MICHAEL WILLIAMS: Today Prime Minister Saad Hariri I believe is visiting Syria today and in Damascus he will have good discussions I am sure with President Assad. I think Lebanon is developing its own border strategy. I know this is the responsibility of

Minister Jean Ogassapian. We and the donors will do all we can to help the Government with technical assistance and perhaps with funding if we can. But the United Nations does not control borders, this is the responsibility of Governments and that is why we believe it is of such importance for the two countries, Lebanon and Syria, to have very good relations and I am confident of that future development.
