

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**Office of the
Special Coordinator
for Lebanon**

**Bureau du
Coordinateur Spécial
pour le Liban**

**UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Michael Williams
Statement Following Meeting with Former President Amine Gemayel
Bikfaya, Lebanon
Thursday, 18 June 2009**

Let me say it is a real privilege to be received by President Gemayel in Bikfaya in his home. I had an excellent meeting with him. This is part of a series of meetings I am holding with Lebanon's political leaders after the elections and ahead of the formation of a new government.

We talked about domestic issues, about resolution 1701 – the next report is going to the Security Council by the end of this month, and I am going to New York to brief the Council in early July – and some wider regional issues. We had a very broad discussion.

President Gemayel shared our hopes, I think, for the early formation of a government. This won't be an easy process, but if everyone makes the effort, I hope people can agree on the formation of a government.

Q: Is there any concern about resolution 1701?

A: Well, there is always some concern. There has been some good progress, with the prisoner release last year, and the handover of the cluster munitions data from Israel. But there remain questions, such as the daily intrusions by Israeli aircraft or the enduring occupation of Ghajar. We have discussed these issues with Israel [?] and I hope that they will withdraw soon from Ghajar and also from the Sheb'a Farms area, which we discussed in great detail in our meeting.

Q: What about the delineation of the border?

A: Yes, this is very important. There has been great progress in the bilateral relations between Lebanon and Syria since the meeting between President Assad and President Sleiman last August. There are now full diplomatic relations, with the Ambassadors in place. Syria has just concluded an extensive exercise to delineate the border with Jordan. This took a long time, as these things always do, but we hope that now, the same exercise can happen on the Syrian-Lebanese border. The Lebanese have already appointed three members to the joint commission under William Habib, and I hope that Syria will do the same thing soon so we can see some progress.

* * *

