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**United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Michael Williams
Statement After Meeting with Parliament's Human Rights Committee
Beirut, Lebanon**

Wednesday, 22 April 2009

Good morning.

I just wanted to make a short statement on my meeting this morning with the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights. I met with the Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Michel Moussa for the past hour. We had a very good meeting

It was a great opportunity for me and for my colleagues from the UN to review a range of issues related to human rights, including what has been accomplished by the Human Rights Committee under a very difficult situation over the last two years. Inevitably there are remaining challenges but I am confident that those can be addressed.

My presence here today stems from the importance that the United Nations places on the promotion and respect of human rights in any society. Irrespective of their mandates, most United Nations agencies in Lebanon and around the world deal with human rights and consider it a priority.

I congratulated the Human Rights Committee and its chairman, Michel Moussa, on the work it has done, particularly in the preparation of a national action plan on human rights. This is an important milestone for consolidating human rights in this country. It is still a continuing process but what has been accomplished is very positive. I also encouraged the committee to finalize its work on the preparation of a national institution to protect and promote human rights in Lebanon.

The members of the Committee briefed me on the files that they have considered during the past four years. It was also an opportunity to raise important issues with them, such as civil and political rights, economic and social rights. We also discussed the plight of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and also of non-Palestinian refugees. The issue of reporting on treaty obligations was also raised.

In December this year, Lebanon will have an important contribution to make through the Universal Periodic Review when it presents the progress it has made on human rights. This Periodic Review is a cooperative process which, by 2011, will have reviewed the human rights records of every member state of the United Nations. I expressed my hope to the committee that Lebanon will be fully engaged in that process and I am confident that it will be.

It remains only for me to thank the Chairman and the Committee members again for an excellent meeting.

Thank you.