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**Office of the
Special Coordinator
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**Bureau du
Coordinateur Spécial
pour le Liban**

**United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Michael Williams
Statements During Visit to Sidon, Lebanon
Monday, 23 February 2009**

Statement Following Meeting with Mayor Abdel-Rahman El-Bizri

I am delighted to be here in Sidon on my first official visit to the city. It is Lebanon's third largest city so a visit by the UN Special Coordinator is long overdue.

I am very pleased that I have started the visit of course with the mayor, Mr. Abdel-Rahman El-Bizri. I think we are already good friends. I discovered that he is also really a Londoner because he spent many years as a student and as a doctor working in London.

I am very pleased now that his many talents and experience, not only as a medical practitioner but increasingly as a political practitioner are being put to good use here in the city of Sidon.

So, we had a very good start to our day. I will be meeting with other civil and political leaders. I will have more perhaps to say during the course of the day.

Thank you very much.

Statement Following Meeting with Minister and MP Bahia Hariri

Thank you very much. It is my first official visit to the city of Saida and I just had a very good meeting with Madame Bahia Hariri. We talked about the challenges of development both in the city of Saida and at the national level for Lebanon.

I also met earlier with the Mayor, Mr. Abdelrahman Bizri, we met with senior military leaders here, we have met also with the Lebanese-Palestinian follow-up committee. And I commended Madame Hariri for the very important work she has done as a sort of catalyst for that committee. I think improving the situation of the Palestinians in the Ain El-

Hilweh camp but also elsewhere in Saida and elsewhere in Lebanon is a real priority for the Government, it is also very much a real priority for the United Nations, for all members of the UN family.

Later today too, I still have more meetings with the other Member of Parliament, Mr. Osama Saad. But this has been a very very good introduction to Saida. You have issues here, you have challenges but I am very pleased that the politicians here and the civil leaders seem to be tackling those issues and problems.

Thank you very much.

Statement Following Meeting with MP Osama Saad

Let me say I had a very good meeting now with MP Osama Saad. We discussed the situation in Saida, the general political situation in Lebanon and also regional questions of Palestine and Syria and Arab reconciliation.

It has been very beneficial for me and I am also very privileged to meet Osama Saad. I am conscious from my reading of the role that his late father Maarouf Saad played not only in Lebanon but also in Palestine.

I had a very good visit to Saida today. It is my first official visit to Lebanon's third city. We've had a series of meetings, beginning with the Mayor Mr. Abdelrahman El-Bizri, with Minister Bahia Hariri, with representatives of the Palestinian and Lebanese community and finally with Mr. Osama Saad. This has given us a very comprehensive picture of all the challenges and difficulties of the people of Saida and we want to see them progress economically, socially and politically in the coming months and years.

Thank you very much
