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Bureau du Coordinateur Spécial
pour le Liban

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DELIVERING AS ONE – FOR LEBANON

Ever since it was founded in 1945, the United Nations has had a long-standing and closely-knit relationship with Lebanon. Lebanon was one of the 51 founding members of the United Nations. Its Ambassador, the remarkable Charles Malek, helped draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 that remains to this day the cornerstone for all human rights legislation and actions throughout the world. In the same year, Beirut became home to the first-ever field office that UNICEF opened, in order to lend assistance to the thousands of Palestinian refugees displaced to Lebanon. In 1950, UNRWA began operating in Lebanon, and UNESCO established its regional office in Beirut. Today, the city hosts the UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia, and in 2010 and 2011, Lebanon will be, for only the second time in its history, the representative of the Arab group in the UN Security Council.

At its most difficult moments, Lebanon has itself been the subject of the Security Council's agenda, a reflection of concern over the wars and suffering that have afflicted the country and its regional environment. The Council's resolutions have persistently called for the protection of Lebanon's sovereignty, its unity, and its people. Most recently, the adoption of resolution 1701 put an end to a tragic war that cost more than 1,000 Lebanese lives and wreaked renewed destruction and suffering on the country. The presence of 12,000 UNIFIL troops deployed throughout south Lebanon since then bears testimony to the concern of the international community with regards to Lebanon, but also its emphasis on matters of peace and security.

And yet, the UN's presence and engagement goes far beyond such matters. Alongside UNIFIL, there are now over 20 UN agencies operating in Lebanon, which over the past year invested some \$250 million in their activities in the country. The work of these agencies is complimentary, based on the recognition that peace and stability cannot hold in Lebanon or anywhere else in the world unless there are parallel steps towards sustainable development and respect for human rights. Based on this, the United Nations is engaged in an effort to ensure the coherence and consistency of our work in its many different dimensions. And so we work to implement Security Council Resolution 1701 and other relevant resolutions, with the presence of UNIFIL troops in south Lebanon and the efforts of my own Office for peace and stability, but we also carry out projects and programmes in fields as varied as child vaccinations, de-mining activities, technical

support for the elections, assistance for refugees, support for small businesses, and reform of the criminal justice system. We also work to promote education for all, develop food safety policies and are engaged in other efforts to advocate socio-economic development.

The wide range of work the United Nations carries out in Lebanon recognises that matters of domestic, regional and international peace are inextricably linked with progress on development. Building on the UN's experience in many countries around the world over many decades now, we are acutely conscious of the fact that conflict – whether domestic or regional – is fuelled by insufficient or unequal development, by disparities and grievances, and by a lack of functioning state institutions and effective state performance. Ultimately, the concept of peace remains just that – an idea – unless people feel that there are tangible improvements in their daily lives. In turn, we also recognise that sustained and sustainable development, for the benefit of all people in a society, is only possible if issues of conflict – whether between communities within a society, or between different countries and societies – are addressed and settled, in a fair and equitable manner.

The United Nations' work in Lebanon follows a clear and coherent logic that goes far beyond the concerns we are often most visibly identified with. In fact, our less visible work is often the most successful part of our engagement. Within Lebanon, key areas of our engagement include recovery and reconstruction, poverty alleviation, capacity-building, provision of services to Palestinian refugees in the country, and support for electoral processes and reforms.

Our activities here are naturally also embedded in our wider regional engagement, through which we aim to support the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace for all people(s) in the Middle East in accordance with UN resolutions. UNIFIL and our work to fully implement Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) is one obvious bridge between the domestic and regional levels, our work to improve the living conditions of Palestinian refugees within Lebanon while simultaneously seeking a just and fair solution to the Palestinian refugee question in the context of a comprehensive peace in the region is another.

We may not be able, on our own, to bring about that comprehensive peace, which we all so desire. Other actors and the parties themselves will have to play their part. But the United Nations is doing its part to ensure that children are vaccinated, mines removed, institutional reforms explored and implemented, labour and employment legislation refined, and respect for human rights enhanced.

The UN Charter opens with the words, “We, the Peoples.” Today, we remain acutely aware of the need to deliver, “as one,” for the benefit of the people of Lebanon. As a new government is formed in Lebanon, we remind all parties of their obligations under different Security Council resolutions as well as international treaties and conventions. We also look forward to working with the new government to improve state performance and the delivery of services. Together, we hope to assure stability, peace and security – not least through the many dimensions of our endeavour to enhance development and prosperity, for the benefit of all the people of Lebanon.
