United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Derek Plumbly
Statement following Meeting with Mufti of Tripoli and the North Sheikh Malek Shaar

Tripoli, Lebanon

Tuesday, 12 June 2012

I am grateful to Sheikh Malek Shaar, the Mufti of Tripoli and the North, for meeting me today. We had an open and detailed discussion on the situation in Tripoli.

I told the Mufti that I had been keen to visit Tripoli again following recent developments. I expressed my concern over the incidents of violence that have taken place and at the unnecessary loss of life. The presence and use of arms in civilian and highly populated areas is of particular concern and needs to be resolved.

We agreed that the security measures taken by the Lebanese Army and security forces to date to contain the situation were welcome and must be encouraged and supported. But we also underscored the need for a longer term political steps designed to prevent a recurrence of violence and to reinforce the rule of law. Those responsible for such violence need to know that they can be held accountable.

When I visited Tripoli in April, I noticed the potential for economic and social development. Fulfilling this is also important for peace and stability. In that context, the Government's plans to allocate funds to support much needed development here are of course welcome.

Peace and stability in Tripoli are also important for peace and stability throughout the country, particularly during this period of regional turbulence. I welcomed the role that the Mufti and other local and national authorities have played in trying to defuse tensions here. And of course the United Nations warmly welcomes the National Dialogue session launched by President Sleiman yesterday and the declaration issued after it, which represents a major step at the national level to promote calm. All efforts to bring political players together are very important for Lebanon, and the only way to resolve differences.