

## **Concluding statement of the international conference on the Support to the Lebanese armed Forces**

Rome, Italy

**17 June 2014**

1. Participants thanked the Government of Italy for hosting the Ministerial Conference on International Support for the Lebanese Armed Forces under the auspices of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the preparatory Senior Officials Meeting held in Rome on 10 April 2014. They recalled the Presidential statements of the Security Council of 10 July 2013 (S/PRST/2013/9), and 29 May 2014 (S/PRST/2014/10), as well as the Chairperson's Summaries issued after the 25 September 2013 inaugural meeting of the International Support Group for Lebanon (SG/2198) and the 5 March 2014 follow-up ministerial meeting hosted by the Government of France in Paris (DSG/7) which stressed the need for strong, sustained, coordinated international support for Lebanon to help it continue to withstand the multiple challenges to its security and stability. Participants noted that the International Support Group had worked to mobilize greater support to Lebanon in key areas, including with regard to assistance for refugees from Syria, support to host communities and Government programs impacted by the Syrian crisis, and support to the Lebanese Armed Forces as it works to address growing threats to Lebanon's security.
2. Participants acknowledged the strong cooperation between the United Nations and the Lebanese Armed Forces and the encouragement of the International Support Group which facilitated the holding of this expanded ministerial meeting in Rome. They welcomed the participation of 43 countries and international and regional bodies in the meeting that was a strong signal of the unity of the international community in support of Lebanon's sovereignty, stability and security.
3. Participants recognized the extraordinary pressures on the Lebanese Armed Forces and acknowledged their effective response to the increased security challenges within Lebanon, their efforts to control the border with Syria and their work with UNIFIL to help maintain calm along the Blue Line. Participants noted that the Lebanese Armed Forces continued to be an essential actor, as well as a symbol of Lebanon's national unity, and highlighted the cooperation among the various security agencies as a key factor in recent security successes including in countering the threat of terrorism. Participants acknowledged the strong backing given by the Government of Prime Minister Tammam Salam to the Lebanese Armed Forces and the security services which has been central to that.
4. Participants underlined the importance of the efforts being made by Lebanon, with the support of the international community, to enhance the effectiveness of the Lebanese Armed Forces to ensure it is better able to carry out its mandated duties, including those related to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), and to address the additional security challenges emerging from the conflict in Syria.
5. Participants highlighted the value of the Lebanese Armed Forces' Capabilities Development Plan and its updated annex and congratulated the LAF on the process it recently completed to further refine, update and prioritize the Plan, including with regard to identifying immediate and short-term needs. While acknowledging the need to address immediate priorities, Participants also underscored the value of long-term planning for the stability of Lebanon and the region. In this context, they congratulated the Lebanese Armed Forces on outlining preliminary elements of a "LAF Vision for 2025," while also encouraging them to elaborate a fully-fledged long-term vision.

6. Participants confirmed their readiness to support the Lebanese Armed Forces during the capabilities building and reinforcement process through the established coordination tools of international assistance: the joint Coordination Mechanism, the Strategic Dialogue between the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL, the Executive Military Commission and existing bilateral mechanisms. Participants welcomed these mechanisms and underlined the importance of their use to ensure that assistance is as focused as possible and to facilitate, in cooperation with the Government of Italy, effective follow-up to this Conference.

7. Participants welcomed the Government of Lebanon's contribution to the LAF for the year 2013 in response to the Capabilities Development Plan and in line with the decision of the Council of Ministers on 19 July 2012 and its commitment to continue such support in 2014. They further welcomed the Government of Lebanon's announcement of its intention to update institutional frameworks with a view to increasing the efficiency of the Lebanese Armed Forces, including in areas such as procurement systems, logistics, standardization and interoperability, and efficient management of international assistance. Participants committed to assisting Lebanon's efforts in this regard.

8. Participants warmly welcomed the additional international support already being given in line with the Capabilities Development Plan from the United States, which has been a long term partner of the Lebanese Armed Forces. The United States intends to provide increased assistance, including on counterterrorism, border security and on other relevant fields. They expressed particular appreciation for the generous offer of assistance by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, implementation of which is now in preparation by the governments of Saudi Arabia, France and Lebanon. Participants also welcomed the announcement at the present ministerial meeting of additional assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces. In particular they welcomed the willingness expressed by Brazil, Cyprus, Egypt, Finland, France, Ghana, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Romania, Spain and Turkey to offer additional specialized training support in a number of domains, as well as reinforced cooperation with the LAF in other relevant security sector. The EU will step up its support to LAF civilian-military cooperation tasks and its engagement in the areas of institutional capacity building, integrated border management, CBRN threat and demining. They acknowledged the important assistance already provided by the UK including in support of the border regiments and welcomed their intention to continue such assistance, and their willingness to partner with other nations in this respect. They encouraged the provision of further assistance, especially in priority areas in the Capabilities Development Plan identified as not yet sufficiently supported.

9. Participants underlined the continuing importance of effective implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and other relevant resolutions to stability in Lebanon and regional peace and security and the particular needs of the Lebanese Armed Forces in southern Lebanon. In this context they underscored the value of the Strategic Dialogue mechanism agreed between the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL and encouraged greater international support through it or through existing bilateral mechanisms as a means to strengthen the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces to assume greater security responsibilities in southern Lebanon and Lebanese territorial waters. They welcomed the offer of the Government of Italy to establish a training center in Lebanon south of the Litani in collaboration with the LAF and UNIFIL and in line with the Strategic Dialogue Plan.

10. Participants stressed that it is vital for Lebanon's continued stability that enhanced support for the Lebanese Armed Forces and for Lebanon more generally is paralleled by action by Lebanon's political leaders to ensure continuity of Lebanese State institutions. Participants expressed deep regret that the election of a new President of the Republic of Lebanon did not take place within the constitutional timeframe. They expressed their full support for the Government of Lebanon to discharge its duties during this interim period in accordance with the constitution, until the election of the new President. Participants underscored the importance, not least for confidence and stability, of the election of a new President without delay.

11. Participants reiterated their strong support to Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence, noting the critical role played by the Lebanese Armed Forces in this context. They underlined the

importance for security and stability in Lebanon of continued respect for the policy of disassociation, and recalled the Security Council's appeals in its Presidential statements in respect of commitment to the Baabda Declaration.

12. Participants look forward to continued engagement of the Lebanese authorities with the international community, in particular the International Support Group, to mobilize further support for Lebanon.