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United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Derek Plumbly
Statement following Meeting with Caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati
(Delivered in Arabic)

Beirut, Lebanon

Tuesday, 26 March 2013

Good Morning,

I just had a good meeting with caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati. First, obviously I thanked Mr. Mikati for all the support he and his Government extended during his time in office to the work of the many different United Nations bodies in Lebanon and for his tireless efforts to ensure that Lebanon was able to meet its international obligations.

I know that people are now reflecting on the way ahead in the light of the Prime Minister's announcement last Friday and I do not think it is for me to go deeply into that, but obviously we hope that all concerned will engage in a positive spirit to ensure that Lebanon is able to meet the challenges ahead. I would refer you to the statement of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Friday evening where he stressed the importance of all Lebanese working together with the institutions of the State to maintain calm and stability, to respect Lebanon's policy of disassociation, and support the Lebanese Armed Forces and the security forces.

The United Nations will continue to support preparations for elections in Lebanon, and we welcome the continued efforts of Lebanon's political leaders to reach consensus on an electoral law which would pave the way for free, fair and transparent elections in line with Lebanon's constitutional and legal requirements.

In our meeting today, I discussed with the Prime Minister other aspects of the United Nations' ongoing cooperation with Lebanon. There are many challenges, from those in UNIFIL's area of operations to those connected with our joint effort to address the pressing needs of the ever increasing number of Syrian refugees who have been given refuge in Lebanon. These day to day challenges remain and I am confident that we can count on the continued close cooperation of the Prime Minister and of other ministers in meeting them.

QUESTION: Are you worried for Lebanon after the resignation?

SCL Derek Plumbly: We are entering a new phase. The Secretary-General has commented on this issue. It is not a matter of worry but rather one of the importance of the necessary discussions taking place in order to reach consensus on the way forward.
