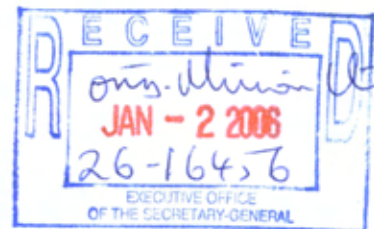


*Permanent Mission of Lebanon
to the United Nations*



Ref: 3524/06

The Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honor to forward a message from H.E. Mr. Fuad Siniora, Prime Minister of Lebanon, to H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, incoming Secretary-General.

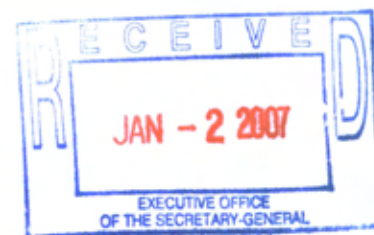
The Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.

New York, December 27, 2006

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon
Secretary-General
United Nations, Rm. 3800
New York, NY 10017



LEBANESE REPUBLIC
President of the Council of Ministers



H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations,
New York

December 26, 2006

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you as you assume your duties as Secretary-General of the United Nations. Your tenure comes at a momentous time in the history of the modern world. The overwhelming problems facing the world today are complex and interconnected, but all revolve around the irrepressible quest for peace, freedom and human dignity.

The Middle East has been a focal point of conflict and violence since before the inception of the United Nations, and the lack of real solutions to its ills has exacerbated tension not only in the region but throughout an ever shrinking world.

Lebanon, which is inextricably linked to its wider environment, has been the theater where so much of these conflicts have been played; once again it is being drawn into a vector of regional and global tensions, thus witnessing a tumultuous and critical moment of its history. After many years of Israeli occupation and Syrian tutelage, we are recovering our independence. We are determined to defend our country, and its right to be immune from foreign interference, without compromising its commitment to the just causes of our region, notably that of Palestine, which is the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Lebanese people deserve to live in freedom, security and stability in the democratic system which they cherish.



The UN has addressed the various issues relevant to Lebanon's legitimate rights and aspirations with remarkable consistence. To be sure, the attention of the international community, from UNSCR 1559 to UNSCR 1701 and the November presidential letter to the Secretary General concerning the special tribunal for Lebanon did not lose momentum. This is crucial not only for Lebanon's future but also for the credibility of the international community. We look at the UN's involvement, be it through the process leading to the establishment of the special tribunal or through the presence of UNIFIL troops in the southern part of the country, as a strong sign of international commitment to Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and Independence.

Since the attempt on the life of Minister Marwan Hamade followed by the terrorist killing of Prime Minister Hariri along with Minister Basil Fuleihan and twenty one other innocent people, and the subsequent political assassinations, the last of which being that of Minister Pierre Gemayel, Lebanon has called for justice and the end of impunity. It is hoped that the special tribunal will reveal the truth about the political crimes perpetrated against politicians, intellectuals and journalists, all so far unresolved, making of Lebanon the victim of more political assassinations than any other country in the region. It will also contribute to safeguarding the right to be free from intimidation, threats and terrorist violence. Much of the present crisis in our country is about respect of democratic norms and institutions as well as consolidation of the rule of law, best illustrated by the setting in place of the tribunal. Notwithstanding foreign interference and other local attempts to impede it, it is a long awaited response to a widely expressed moral and political demand.



This demand is legitimate. It does not seek revenge nor does it intend to unduly politicize a judicial process and use it as an instrument of regime change in any country. To this end, we are following the normal constitutional course, after our Council of Ministers decision approving the agreement with the UN and the statute of the tribunal. We are determined not to spare any effort to overcome the obstacles ahead, yet alternatives should not be discarded.

On another note, and as regards the implementation of UNSCR 1701, only five months ago Israel launched a savage, unwarranted war on Lebanon. I need not repeat nor recount in detail the scale of death and human suffering and enormity of the damage done to our infrastructure and social fabric, the direct and indirect consequences of which will be felt for many years to come, for these are well documented. We worked tirelessly with our partners in government, during and after the onslaught, to address the economic, social, humanitarian and environmental issues facing us to insure the rapid and efficient rehabilitation of our infrastructure and the rebuilding of our homes as well as to help kick start our shell-shocked economy.

One of our major goals today is to translate the cessation of hostilities into a permanent cease fire, whereby Israel must put an end to its over flights in Lebanon, in clear breach of UNSCR 1701, submit the maps of unexploded landmines in our territory, withdraw from the Ghajar village, and return the detainees held in Israeli prisons. We hope that with the active participation of the United Nations under your wise leadership, the international community will help us achieve this goal. As a constant reminder of the brutality and indiscriminate nature of Israel's latest aggression, the casualty toll from unexploded ordnance continues to rise daily as a result of the hundreds of thousands of cluster bombs unleashed by Israel this last summer.



We also believe that the Shebaa Farms should be placed under UN custody, thereby allowing Lebanon to reaffirm the exclusive authority of the state over the entirety of its territory, thereby reviving the 1949 Armistice Agreement with Israel pending a final and just solution to the conflict in the Middle East is found. This idea was elaborated in my seven point plan which has the backing and support of all segments of Lebanese society. It took into account the concerns of Syria as regards its own negotiations with Israel over the Golan Heights by delaying delineation until a final settlement over their ownership is reached. I have been working closely with former Secretary-General Kofi Annan to this end and hope to continue in that same spirit of cooperation and understanding with you, Mr. Secretary-General, for this festering wound provides an excuse for Interventionist policies in addition to impeding the state's ability to exert its authority over the entirety of its territory.

Mr. Secretary-General, we have been exhausted by thirty years of successive conflicts, occupations and external interference. We have struggled to maintain our values, our freedom, and our economy throughout. However, and despite our resilience, we can no longer afford the cost of destruction on our own and are looking forward to the Paris III Conference scheduled for January 25 2007 to help us out of our current economic crisis and reduce our debt overhang. Our target is to achieve sustained and equitable growth, and I believe that failure to achieve these objectives could also jeopardize the broader goals of political and social stability, a strong and vibrant democracy, and a model of convivencia, which would impact the Arab world and the region.

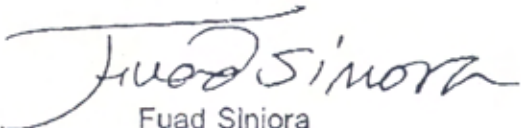
But, as you know, real stability in the region will only be achieved when a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on the relevant UN resolutions, is found. Failing that, moderation will give way



to extremism, and reason to folly. In this regard, I am confident, that your efforts in the search for real and permanent solutions will eventually lead to an equitable and lasting peace in the Middle East.

In conclusion, Mr. Secretary-General, Lebanon is a peace loving country, bound to dialogue and openness as witnessed by its contribution to the Charter of the UN organization. We do not want to be part of any axes or alliances, or be drawn into regional or global conflicts. Nor do we want our country to become the scene of confrontation between external powers. We want good relations with all nations, notably with the Arab countries and especially with Syria, on the basis of mutual respect, independence, and non-interference. Our national interest must take precedence over all other considerations. We are bound by this principle and trust that the international community will continue to stand by us. Only thus will Lebanon fulfill its true mission.

Looking forward to meeting with you in the very near future, please accept, Excellency, my heartfelt wishes for success in your endeavors and the assurances of my highest consideration.


Fuad Siniora