



Statement

by

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to the United Nations**

**at the
Second Committee**

**on the
Oil Slick on Lebanese Shores**

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Check Against Delivery

*Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations
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Allow me to congratulate you Mr. Chairman for your successful stewardship of the Second Committee's work during the 67th Session, and to extend our thanks and appreciation to the Bureau members and the Secretariat for their work and services. Lebanon would like to express deep appreciation to all of our fellow Member States who voted in favor of this important resolution for their continued support.

Mr. Chairman,

This year, when the world leaders met in Rio, they highlighted the importance of sustainable development and reaffirmed the inter-linkages of development issues, notably as they impact the social, economic and environmental fields.

The oil slick that occurred in 2006 upon Lebanese shores was a devastating environmental disaster that caused harm and damage to:

Social development: in terms of public health and safety as well as cultural heritage and archeological sites;

Economic development: from the losses of livelihoods and income in the fisheries and the tourism sectors;

Environmental protection: in the physical and chemical contamination of seawater, land and air as well as depletion of natural resources and destruction of biodiversity.

All of this was the result of the Israeli air strike on the oil storage facilities in the coastal town of Jiyeh on July 15, 2006, targeting a civilian utility plant serving the Lebanese population. This bombardment set ablaze five oil tanks causing an oil slick that covered the entirety of the Lebanese coastline and the worst recorded environmental disaster in the eastern Mediterranean Sea.

Mr. Chairman,

Six years after the attack, the oil slick continues to threaten human health, economic growth and efforts to achieve sustainable development in Lebanon. The inability to contain the spread of oil in the early critical stages, due to the Israeli air and marine blockade, led to the prolonged adverse effects that still exist today.

Six years after the attack, Lebanon is still heavily engaged in the clean-up, waste management, and rehabilitation. The Secretary-General emphasized that full recovery will take several years, and that Lebanon is in need of continued support towards these efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

Year after year, the General Assembly has reiterated its request for the Government of Israel to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to the Government of Lebanon, for costs of repairing the environmental damage caused by the destruction. Professor Richard Steiner, former Executive Director of UNEP, asserted that Israel should participate in a full and independent legal inquiry, establish a reimbursement fund, and implement a comprehensive restoration program. The Government of Israel (and I quote) "did not deem it proper to accede" to these obligations.

Nevertheless, Lebanon, with the support of Member States, will continue its efforts to ensure prompt and adequate compensation.

In this regard, the General Assembly requests the Secretary-General, capitalizing on the useful guidance of the United Nations Compensation Commission, to consider taking appropriate measures to measure and quantify the environmental damage.

Mr. Chairman,

Today's vote and overwhelming support by the second committee reflects our renewed and strengthened commitment towards sustainable development and the rule of law. Indeed, it is our duty to put an end to impunity against internationally wrongful acts, and to uphold 27 principles enshrined in the Rio Declaration of Environment and Development.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our sincere appreciation towards our fellow Member States who continue to support this resolution, for a just cause for sustainable development.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.