



Statement

by

**H.E. Mr. Gebran Bassil
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants
of the Republic of Lebanon**

at the

**Thirty-ninth Annual Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs
of the Group of 77 and China**

New York, September 24, 2015

Check against delivery

*Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations
866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 531, New York, NY 10017*

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to express Lebanon's appreciation for the manner with which the Republic of South Africa has led the Group of 77 and China throughout the year 2015.

I also congratulate the Kingdom of Thailand for their election to the Chairmanship of our Group for next year.

Mr. Chairman,

The unity, which the members of this Group have exhibited in the past months during the negotiations on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, has been essential for preserving the interests of the Group and its member states in the outcome document that will be endorsed by the UN Summit tomorrow. The Group will again need to display that unity and solidarity in the implementation and follow up phases of the Agenda 2030, and during the 70th Session of the General Assembly as our delegations in New York attempt to incorporate the Agenda into the resolutions of the General Assembly.

Also, of immense importance is to maintain our harmony in the negotiation processes leading to the UN Climate Change Summit in Paris at the end of this year and to the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May of next year.

Lebanon attaches particular importance to the outcome of the Humanitarian Summit as it faces the existential challenge of coping with the mass influx of more than 1.5 million Syrians on top of the existing 500 thousand Palestinians, which leads to a total number amounting to 50% of our population, and ends up with a density of 200 refugees/km² despite our small size and scarce resources. Imagine that we bear the load of 2 million over a population of 4 million, while Europe, with a population of 500 million, is debating to bear the load of 112 thousand.

The crisis has had a devastating impact on the security, development, economic activity, social progress and the environment, overstressing the capacity of our national institutions in the fields of healthcare, education, energy, water and sanitation and security.

Lebanon is suffering a kind of double punishment:

- 1) For receiving that unprecedented burden and not being shared.
- 2) For being still classified as a middle-income country due to our huge capacity of absorbing our continuous crises and thus being denied the access to assistance and soft loans.

Mr. Chairman,

We are afraid that if our so long warnings that this refugee crisis cannot be contained by any country or continent, and if our worries that significant extremist violent acts will accompany the waves of refugees are not taken into consideration by a major change of policy in the region, then the adverse impacts cannot be contained by any agenda or institution effort.

In this regard, we note the solidarity that the Group has shown as we succeeded in introducing the forced displacement challenge into the Agenda 2030's Declaration, as well as the need to strengthen the resilience of host communities, particularly in developing countries.

Finally Mr. Chairman,

I convey to you all in the Group of 77 and China, the gratitude of Lebanon for the continued support you have demonstrated towards us, whether on a bilateral basis, or within the United Nations System. We will count on the Group's priceless support again this year, particularly as we attempt to adopt once more the General Assembly Resolution entitled "Oil Slick on Lebanese Shores" and the General Assembly Resolution on the budget of UNIFIL.

Thank you.