Statement

by

H.E. Dr. Amal Mudallali
Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations

at the seventy-second session
of the General Assembly

Item 65: “Peacebuilding and sustaining peace”

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

I would like to thank you, and thank the President of the General Assembly Mr. Lajcak for holding this very timely and important High-Level meeting on sustaining peace.

This meeting is timely and crucial because the stakes have never been higher, and the danger to peace has never been greater than today. Secretary General Mr. Guterres two weeks ago delivered the most alarming warning, talking about chaos in the Middle East, which has become a threat to peace and security, and described the region as facing a true Gordian knot.

Mr. President,

In this volatile world one might ask what can be done to sustain peace when all the roads are blocked to peace.

The answer is to go back to basics, to commit ourselves to the principles of this organization, to the charter of the United Nations which defines its mission as: “To save succeeding generations of the scourge of war”. One of the most courageous leaders of the UN Dag Hammarskjold put it simply “the role of the UN is not to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell”.

The UN has expressed its will and acted to sustain peace over the last few years through a process of commitment and reform.

But to save humanity from hell, what is needed today is peace makers. The world is suffering from a dearth of peacemakers. The disrupters are so many and so loud, while the peacemakers are few and timid. Each one of us needs to act for peace, be the messenger of peace and be bold and loud and to flood every space available especially cyber space with this message and drown the message of hatred, oppression and incitement.

What more can be done to sustain peace?

Lebanon agrees with the Secretary General about the need to renew the focus on conflict prevention, and the role of peace operations and peacekeeping missions in preventing conflict.

UNIFIL in South Lebanon is a good example of that, and we are grateful to UNIFIL. But peacekeeping is not an alternative to peace.

There is a need to address the root causes of conflicts, especially ending occupation, inequality and exclusion, and strengthening the rule of law.

The Lebanese government is committed to sustaining peace and works on many fronts to make this a reality:

The Lebanese Government very recently adopted a National Preventing violent extremism Strategy.

The government introduced economic plans to create jobs for young people and give them hope for the future.
Investment in education is another area where the Lebanese state believes that this is an investment in sustaining peace through raising new generations that are better equipped to join the job market, but also believe in peace.

Sustaining peace is also about promoting a culture of peace. I am proud to note that Lebanon learned lessons from its many painful experiences of war, but the most important lesson is the power of dialogue. Our modern history has taught us that what unites us is far more than what divides us.

**Lebanon** is a living model for constructive dialogue among the various religions and cultures. Pope John Paul II described Lebanon as a message.

It is against this backdrop that our President, H.E. General **Michel Aoun**, had proposed before this esteemed Assembly - in September 2017 - that Lebanon becomes a permanent center for dialogue between civilizations and religions, under the umbrella of the United Nations. We are ready to cooperate with you on this issue to make this vision a reality.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, Listen to the words of former US President **John F. Kennedy**, in talking about the peace he was seeking: (quote): “I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children. Not merely peace in our time but peace for all time”.

This young president was a dreamer? May be we all are dreamers too, as John Lennon said. But I hope some day the whole world will join us and will be as one. In peace.

Thank you.