Statement

by

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Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations

to the United Nations

at the

Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations

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Check Against Delivery
Mr. Chair,

Lebanon aligns itself with the statement delivered by Morocco on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement.

Secretary-General António Guterres described Peacekeeping as a “remarkable exercise in global solidarity”. He is right! Look around this room and you find representatives from around the world, countries that gave their best and bravest to offer the world’s hotspots and most dangerous conflict places and vulnerable peoples their “best chance for peace”, as the SG said.

The deliberations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations reflect the interest and commitment of all member states to the concept of peacekeeping. The commitments made, the efforts of the UN and its DPKO, and the sacrifices of the thousands of peacekeepers where many of them gave their lives to the missions, helped make Peacekeeping an indispensable part of making and transitioning to peace around the world.

Mr. Chair,

UN peacekeeping began in the Middle East in 1948 when the first mission to the ME was established to observe and maintain the ceasefire of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict.

This is to say our region has and will always be a supporter and partner in peacekeeping.

Lebanon continues to be committed to the United Nations’ efforts in preserving peace and security and values the constant support of the UN organization to its sovereignty and stability. In this regard, Lebanon has joined the Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations and supports the Action plan presented by the Secretary-General.

Mr. Chair,

Lebanon emphasizes the importance of strict adherence to the purposes and principles of the UN charter when peacekeeping operations are involved, namely the respect of principles of sovereign equality, political independence and territorial integrity of all States, and non-intervention in their domestic affairs. But as a host country for one of the longest peacekeeping missions in the world, Lebanon has had a very successful and fruitful strategic partnership with UNIFIL, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. UNIFIL celebrated last year its 40th year as a peacekeeping mission in Lebanon. This brings us to a very important reminder: peacekeeping is, and never should be a substitute for permanent peace. They should not become open-ended peacekeeping operations.

The Interim in them should not become permanent because this helps the conflicts to become protracted and not conducive to solutions. These operations should be complemented by the various methods mentioned under Chapter VI of the UN charter to resolve disputes peacefully. The success of any peacekeeping mission depends on its relationship with the host country. In Lebanon, UNIFIL enjoys a very positive relationship with the country through its strategic relationship with the Lebanese Armed Forces and with the local population.
Lebanon highlights the importance of increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping and is happy with the progress that has been made so far to have more female peacekeepers, especially after the adoption of the landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security resolution. This progress is reflected in UNIFIL where we have 494 women peacekeepers or 4.7% of the 10,500 troops. The majority are from Ghana (thank you Ghana) followed by France, Indonesia, Greece, Spain, Italy, Malaysia and Nepal. Thank you all.

I would also like to thank every country represented in this room and has troops serving in UNIFIL, we are grateful to you for helping Lebanon over four decades preserve its security. UNIFIL lost 312 soldiers in this period and we are eternally indebted to their sacrifices.

Mr. Chair,

UNIFIL also works in Lebanon on prevention. Through the Tripartite Committee, UN forces play a vital role in diffusing tension, solve problems and de-escalate and avoid conflict on daily basis on the border. The latest example was last month.

But as I mentioned above. These efforts no matter how valuable they are, should not be substitute for a permanent solution in Lebanon that ends the occupation of the remaining Lebanese territory and moves to a permanent ceasefire which implements resolution 1701 in its entirety.

The success of any peacekeeping operation rests also on the relationship with the host community. In this regard UNIFIL has enjoyed a good relationship with the local population. UNIFIL helps the local civilian population through many projects, like the Quick Impact Projects which address their most urgent needs.

Finally, Lebanon appreciates the visit by the members of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations to Lebanon last year, and hopes that it has shed some light on the actual situation on the ground.

Mr. Chair,

The Peacekeepers are doing their job and making sacrifices to achieve their mandate. What is needed is similar efforts on the political side to solve these conflicts and move from peacekeeping to peace that is so just and sustainable that keeps itself.

I thank you.