



**Statement**

**by**

**H.E. Ambassador Dona Turk  
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**at the  
General Debate**

**of the  
Second Committee**

**New York, October 10, 2013**

*Check Against Delivery*

*Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations  
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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election to steer the work of the Second Committee during the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly. You can count on my delegation's full support and constructive engagement in the deliberations ahead.

Mr. Chairman,

In the words of Albert Einstein:

*"We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them."*

Indeed, the integrated nature of the problems we face has challenged us to rethink our development strategies. Last year, our world leaders met in Rio de Janeiro to spearhead a new agenda for sustainable development. Today, we must live up to the expectations of new generations and build upon the momentum we have created.

As we embark upon the follow-up processes to Rio+20, it is imperative that we realize the full potential of the mandate laid out before us in *The Future we Want*.

A smooth transition into the post-2015 development agenda is crucial; Lebanon, like many other countries, still faces challenges in the full achievement of the MDG's by the target date. Yet, our Government is determined to seize this opportunity towards enhancing the vitality of productive sectors, such as sustainable agriculture, forestry and ecotourism. Moreover, my country has rich potential for renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, hydro and biomass. Lebanon renews the pledge made at the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Summit to increase its renewable energy share to 12% by 2020, based on the principle that increased energy efficiency and combating climate change are important steps towards a sustainable economy.

Mr. Chairman,

*All* of our nations have endured the impacts of the global financial crisis. Henceforth, we can no longer afford to continue with the practices and trends of the past, which marginalized communities, spiked global prices, and damaged the environment. Therefore, as we pursue economic growth, careful consideration must be given to the *type* of growth that we want. Strong and sustainable economic growth will depend on the proper use and effective management of natural resources, and the empowerment of 'agents for change' including women, youth, and small-scale farmers and producers.

Mr. Chairman,

We should begin by making smart investments –in education and social safeguards, as well as in research and development and knowledge-sharing platforms. Improved decision-making at all levels requires a solid scientific foundation. It is thus essential that our institutional reform enhances the science-policy interface and promotes technology transfer.

Many development actors on the ground are working towards these objectives, from UNEP to regional commissions to UNDP, warranting strengthened coordination. Lebanon welcomes the formation of the universal UNEP Governing Council and its strengthened financial base; we look forward to the robust implementation of its mandate.

Furthermore, we underscore the significant role of regional commissions in the elaboration of the post 2015 agenda. Lebanon commends the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, (ESCWA), and remains committed to advancing development initiatives in the region.

Violence, aggression and conflict reverse critical development gains made and exacerbate the conditions of poverty. Special support is therefore required to meet the development needs of people living in conflict, post-conflict, and occupied nations. The Palestinian people continue to face hardships due to the illegal Israeli occupation in access to resources, land, water, basic services, and employment, and are denied the basic human rights which are fundamental for every society to grow, progress, and develop.

With the escalation of the Syrian conflict, spillovers onto Lebanon have rapidly moved beyond the humanitarian to the economic and social spheres. The Report by the World Bank stated that the conflict may cut real GDP growth by 2.9% points each year, push approximately an additional 170,000 Lebanese into poverty, and double the unemployment rate to above 20%.

Lebanon knows firsthand how acts of aggression can obstruct sustainable development efforts. The Israeli air strike in July 2006 on fuel storage tanks on the Lebanese coast caused the worst environmental disaster in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. My country continues to suffer from the contamination and spread of toxic waste, as serious damage was incurred upon all three dimensions of sustainable development: from livelihood and economic losses, to the destruction of biodiversity, to the hazards and harm inflicted upon the public health of Lebanese civilians.

Lebanon is grateful for the support of friendly nations in the cleanup and rehabilitation phases. The General Assembly has adopted resolutions condemning the attack seven years in a row, yet the calls for Israeli compensation to Lebanon and compliance with its international obligations have remained unheeded.

Mr. Chairman,

Today's generation of youth is more informed and globally-connected than any other preceding generation. As they express their calls for dignity, freedom and a better future in this period of transition, the work of the Second Committee acquires greater value and relevance.

Respect for people and their livelihoods and restoration of the natural world shall form the cornerstone of a new vision, one that is more compatible with a new way of thinking, and must be accompanied by strong political leadership and robust implementation. Only then will we succeed in achieving social equity, economic vitality and environmental stewardship.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.