



Statement

by

**H.E. Ambassador Charbel Wehbi
Director of Political and Consular Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants**

at the
Fourth Committee

**Item 53: Comprehensive review of the whole question
of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects**

New York, October 29, 2013

Check Against Delivery

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

At the outset allow me to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau for your election and able leadership. I can assure you of Lebanon's continued support to carrying out successful work of this important committee. I would like to thank the Under Secretary-Generals of DPKO (Department of Peacekeeping Operations) and DFS (Department for Field Support) for their comprehensive briefings. Lebanon values the efforts made towards institutional coherence and addressing resource shortfalls.

Mr. Chairman,

Since its inception, the United Nations has always placed Peacekeeping Operations at the heart of its undertakings to ensure an environment where populations can enjoy the freedom from fear of violence and injustice. Over the years, peacekeeping has shown itself to be an effective tool with the capacity for adaptability.

Last year, we witnessed an active response by the Security Council to urgent requests from the field, from Mali to DRC, and from Iraq to Libya, to just name a few. The international community must optimize the role and comparative advantage of peacekeeping and political missions to bring peace-with-rights, rights to liberty, security and prosperity, to people in war-torn societies.

The evolving nature of conflict and its increasing complexity require greater collaboration: to consolidate expertise from coordination within the UN system, and to identify needs in collaborating with local, national and regional actors, and to align resources with field priorities.

In this context, the work of civil affairs provides a critical link between peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts and the transition to national ownership: in supporting the extension of the state's authority over the entirety of its territory, and in establishing the social conditions conducive to peace. Moreover, peacekeeping operations are not an end but a means to achieve sustainable and durable peace.

Lebanon values building the foundations of goodwill that underpin the relationship between the peacekeepers and the local population, and we are proud of the special ties between UNIFIL (United Nations Interim force for Lebanon) contingents and the people in the south of Lebanon as they engage in community-development initiatives.

Mr. Chairman,

This year, the UMOJA pilot deployment was launched at UNIFIL and UNSCOL (Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon), which is working to more effectively manage resources and to integrate data in high-quality operational efficiency. While noting this new initiative, Lebanon also commends the efforts by DPKO to continue to nominate more women in high positions and leadership roles. Lebanon lauds UNIFIL's female peacekeepers, who have taken up positions such as platoon commanders, medical officers, military police, demining team leaders and more.

Mr. Chairman,

The question of Israeli aggression upon Lebanon has concerned this Organization for over six decades. From the first peacekeeping operation of UNTSO (United Nations Truce Supervision organization), to UNIFIL in 1978 to reinforced UNIFIL in 2006, a journey has begun to ensure full respect of Lebanon's sovereignty territorial integrity, and independence. While reiterating its commitment to the implementation of resolution 1701 in its entirety, Lebanon commends the efforts by the international community to ensure Israel's withdrawal from the remaining Lebanese occupied territories and to put an end to Israeli violations of Lebanon's sovereignty by land air and sea.

In this context, Lebanese armed forces continue to work closely with UNIFIL at the operational level and through the tripartite mechanism. Indeed this cooperation culminated in a strategic dialogue and all these efforts were commended by the Group of Support for Lebanon launched on September 25, 2013. Lebanon looks forward for further activation of coordination mechanism to build up Lebanese army capabilities.

On 12 August, 2013, 18 year old Hisham, a young shepherd, was working on his farm in the village of Hasbaya, when he stepped on an Israeli cluster munition and was killed instantly. Landmines, cluster bombs, and ERWs (explosive remnants of war) continue to pose daily threats and hazards to heavily populated areas. Lebanon remains committed to the efforts of the UN Strategy on Mine Action, towards providing a safe environment for a world free of this deadly menace.

I would like to pay tribute to all the men and women of UNIFIL serving in my country, and laud the commitment of every troop-contributing country.

Mr. Chairman,

Respect for the safety and security of UN peacekeepers is of paramount importance to the implementation of missions' mandates. Crimes such as the 1996 Israeli attack on the UNIFIL quarters in Qana and the 2006 Israeli attack on the post of UNTSO should never be repeated.

Peacekeepers are our soldiers for peace. They make sacrifices every day to protect what this organization was founded to establish: international peace and security. Let us ensure their full support, so that they will continue to carry out their crucial task to deliver security, justice and 'peace-with-rights' on the ground.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.