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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Nana Akufo-Addo	(Ghana)
<i>Members:</i>	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Ikouebe
	Denmark	Mr. Moeller
	France	Mr. Douste-Blazy
	Greece	Ms. Bakoyannis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Pereyra Plasencia
	Qatar	Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr Al-Thani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mrs. Beckett
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 7.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: I should like to acknowledge the presence at the Council table of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, His Excellency Mr. Per Stig Moeller; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, His Excellency Mr. Philippe Douste-Blazy; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Her Excellency Mrs. Dora Bakoyannis; the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr Al-Thani; the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Her Excellency Mrs. Margaret Beckett, M.P.; and the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Her Excellency Ms. Condoleezza Rice.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to all of them.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Israel and Lebanon, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gillerman (Israel) and Mr. Mitri (Lebanon) took seats at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/640, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Denmark, France, Ghana, Greece, Slovakia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of the members to documents S/2006/571, S/2006/578, S/2006/599,

S/2006/621, S/2006/625, S/2006/630 and S/2006/639, containing the text of letters dated 24, 26 and 31 July, and 4, 7, 9 and 11 August 2006, respectively, from Lebanon addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I also wish to draw the attention of members of the Council to documents S/2006/595 and S/2006/626, containing the text of letters dated 29 July and 7 August 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, as well as document S/2006/593, containing the note by the Secretary-General dated 28 July 2006.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I welcome wholeheartedly the draft resolution the Council is about to adopt and I am greatly relieved that it provides for a full and immediate cessation of hostilities. It is absolutely vital that the fighting now stop. Provided it does, I believe that this draft resolution will make it possible to conclude a sustainable and lasting ceasefire agreement in the days ahead, and I hope that this could be the beginning of a process to solve the underlying political problems in the region through peaceful means.

But I would be remiss if I did not tell members how profoundly disappointed I am that the Council did not reach this point much, much earlier, and I am convinced that my disappointment and sense of frustration are shared by hundreds of millions of people around the world. For weeks now, I and many others have been calling repeatedly for an immediate cessation of hostilities, for the sake of the civilian population on both sides who have suffered such terrible, unnecessary pain and loss. All members of the Council must be aware that this inability to act sooner has badly shaken the world's faith in its authority and integrity.

Since 12 July, when Hizbollah launched an unprovoked attack on Israel, killing eight Israeli soldiers and kidnapping two, both Lebanon and Israel have been thrown back into the turmoil of war, death and destruction.

According to the Lebanese Government, over 1,000 Lebanese have been killed and over 3,600 injured. Around a quarter of all of Lebanon's inhabitants, close to a million people, have been displaced. Too many of the victims have been children. In fact, more children than fighters have died in this

conflict. Israeli bombing has turned thousands of homes to rubble. It has also destroyed dozens of bridges and roads, with the result that more than 100,000 people cannot reach safety; nor can relief supplies reach them. Such devastation would be tragic at any time. That it has been inflicted on Lebanon's people just when they were beginning to make real progress towards political reform and economic recovery makes it all the more so.

Israelis, for their part, have been newly awakened to a threat which they had hoped, with good reason, to have escaped when — as the Council certified on my recommendation — they withdrew from Lebanon six years ago. Some 41 Israeli civilians have been killed, and hundreds of thousands have had their lives disrupted — being forced into shelters or to flee their homes — by rocket attacks from Hizbollah, which has launched its fire indiscriminately, to sow the widest possible terror, making no effort to distinguish between civilian and military targets and also endangering civilians on its own side by firing from the midst of heavily populated areas.

Nor has the damage been limited to Lebanon and Israel. A region that could ill afford another chapter of violence and another source of instability has been inflamed further still. Extremists have been given new ammunition. The United Nations itself has been a target of protest and violence, despite the Organization's humanitarian efforts, including those of our valiant peacekeepers in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), to reach people trapped in the crossfire. UNIFIL has had to cope with a situation for which it was neither mandated nor equipped.

I am full of pride and admiration for the courageous men and women who serve under the United Nations flag, and indeed for all the humanitarian workers; they have shown incredible courage since 12 July in carrying out their duties in the midst of intense fighting, which has injured 16 United Nations personnel and, tragically, caused the deaths of five others.

Indeed, UNIFIL's tenacity has made possible the diplomatic solution that you, the members of the Security Council, have just forged. Without it, you would have had to face the difficult prospect of UNIFIL's withdrawal. Indeed, you may yet have to face it in the hours and days ahead if the immediate cessation of hostilities called for in the draft resolution does not hold.

So, this draft resolution comes none too soon, and it marks a vital step forward. I am glad that Council members have been able to resolve their differences, accommodating many points of view, and I hope they will adopt this text unanimously. Having done so, they must work with equal determination to make what they have agreed fully effective on the ground.

First of all, humanitarian convoys and relief workers must be given a real guarantee of safe passage and access to those who need help. As soon as the fighting stops, the daunting challenge of helping people to return to their homes safely and rebuild their lives begins.

Secondly, the draft resolution rightly has at its core Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, consistent with Council resolutions 425 (1978), 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006). The international community must give the Lebanese Government all possible support, so that it can make that sovereignty effective. The Government, acting through its regular armed forces and police, must be able to assert its authority throughout the country and on all its borders, particularly to prevent illegal and destabilizing flows of arms. Only when there is one authority, and one gun, will there be a chance of lasting stability. The Lebanese State, like any other sovereign State, must have a monopoly of the use of force on its own territory.

That implies, of course, a full and swift Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory. We now have a clear scenario for achieving that.

The decision of the Lebanese Government to deploy 15,000 of the country's armed forces to the south is a significant development. But, ready and willing as the army may be to undertake this task, the Government itself has acknowledged the need for help. This makes the Council's decision to strengthen the mandate and the numbers of UNIFIL a vital ingredient of the package.

Now, UNIFIL faces a new task, perhaps even more difficult and dangerous than its previous one. It must be robust and effective and ensure that no vacuum is left between the Israeli withdrawal and the deployment of Lebanese forces. Obviously, if it is to carry out this new mandate, it needs to be augmented with the utmost urgency and provided with sophisticated military capabilities. The Council cannot afford to relax for one minute. I urge its members to consult closely, and at once, with both existing and

potential troop contributors, with a view to generating the additional forces needed as quickly as possible, before the situation on the ground once again spins out of control. And I urge the Council to make sure they have the equipment they will need.

I also appeal to all potential donors to respond swiftly to requests from the Lebanese Government for financial help as it struggles to reconstruct its devastated country.

Some may well be reluctant to do so without solid assurances that, this time, peace is here to stay. Such assurances are indeed essential. And they must rest not only on the cessation of hostilities or the deployment of an expanded peace force, but on the resolution of fundamental underlying political problems, including the release of prisoners, starting with those who have been taken hostage, and a resolution of the Sheba'a farms issue in accordance with resolution 1680 (2006).

I will therefore lose no time in taking up the role assigned to me in today's draft resolution. We have just had a terrible lesson in the dangers of allowing problems to fester. We must by now all know that, unless we address unfinished business, it can and will take us unawares.

The Lebanese Government will meet tomorrow, and the Israeli Cabinet on Sunday, to review the resolution. Over the weekend, I will undertake to establish, with both parties, the exact date and time at which the cessation hostilities will come into effect.

Lebanon has been a victim for too long. Mired in an incomplete political transformation since the end of the civil war, it has remained an arena in which both domestic and regional actors could play out their self-interested schemes. Such exploitation of a vulnerable country is shameful. It has undermined the laudable efforts of many Lebanese citizens to consolidate their country as a sovereign, independent and democratic State.

The country and its people deserve better. They deserve the full support of the United Nations in their effort to cast off the chains of external interference and domestic strife. Doing so will require both the establishment of national consensus among Lebanese and constructive cooperation, based on mutual goodwill and sustained dialogue, by all relevant parties and actors at the regional level, including the Governments of Syria and Iran.

Indeed, over the past five weeks we have been reminded yet again what a fragile, tense, crisis-ridden region the Middle East has become — probably now more complex and difficult than ever before. It is now undergoing changes, shifts and realignments on a scale, and of a strategic significance, not seen since the colonial Powers withdrew at the end of the Second World War. Perhaps even more ominous than the physical destruction are the changes in perception that have been occurring, both inside the region and beyond it. The Middle East, which has long figured at the very top of the Council's agenda, is likely to remain there for years to come.

The draft resolution that the Council is about to adopt is only one step towards the comprehensive approach that is needed. Other steps will need to be taken — many others. In order to prevent yet another eruption of violence and bloodshed, the international community must now be prepared to offer sustained support and assistance for the political and economic reconstruction of Lebanon, and also to address the broader context of crisis in the region.

In particular, we must not turn our backs on the bloodshed, suffering and hardship that have continued to afflict Palestinian civilians in Gaza and the West Bank, or the danger from Qassam rockets that continues to threaten the Israeli communities bordering the Gaza Strip. Progress in the Middle East peace process would undoubtedly facilitate the resolution of conflicts elsewhere in the region, and vice versa. Therefore, the various crises in the region must henceforth be addressed not in isolation or bilaterally, but as part of a holistic and comprehensive effort, sanctioned and championed by the Council, to bring peace and stability to the region as a whole.

The parallel crises in Lebanon and Gaza over the past few weeks have demonstrated, once again, that there are no military solutions to this conflict. War is not — I repeat, war is not — the continuation of politics by other means. On the contrary, it represents a catastrophic failure of political skill and imagination — a dethronement of peaceful politics from the primacy which it should enjoy. By taking the first step today towards ending the fighting in Lebanon, the Council is belatedly reasserting that primacy — as the founders of this Organization expected it to do.

Only political solutions will be sustainable in the long term. The peace treaties between Israel and Egypt,

and between Israel and Jordan, are expressions of stable political arrangements and agreements. Through these treaties, the leaders of the countries concerned have courageously brought stability and peace to borders that were previously beset with violence, and thus to their peoples. Ultimately, similar arrangements, based on foundations that are well known to all of us, will have to be put in place along all the borders where there is conflict. Only comprehensive solutions can bring lasting peace.

The United Nations stands for a just solution to all these issues. We stand for security for Lebanon, for Israel and for the region. We stand for a comprehensive solution, and must therefore do our utmost to address all the separate but intertwined issues and conflicts in the region, whether manifest or latent. Delays will only mean more lost lives, more shattered hopes and a further decline in the standing and authority of the Council and the Organization.

We must spare the people of Lebanon, of Israel and of the wider region any further bloodshed — both now and in the months and years ahead.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the vote.

I call on Her Excellency Ms. Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State of the United States of America.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): I am pleased to join all here today to support this important draft resolution. We have been brought to this day by the good faith and the hard work of many in the international community. I especially want to thank you, Secretary-General Annan. I want to thank French Foreign Minister Douste-Blazy for his hard work and for his Government's work, as well as the co-sponsors of the draft resolution. But of course we owe the fullest gratitude to Prime Minister Siniora of Lebanon and his Government and to Prime Minister Olmert of Israel and his Government. These democratic leaders have served their people courageously through this extremely trying and tumultuous time.

With the passage of this draft resolution, the international community will help to open a path to lasting peace between Lebanon and Israel that will end the suffering and the violence of the past month. The status quo that precipitated this conflict was unstable.

Since the conflict began, we have sought an immediate end to the fighting. But we have also insisted that a durable ceasefire requires a decisive change from the status quo that produced this war. Today's draft resolution lays the foundation to achieve that goal, for with this draft resolution a new, stronger, Lebanon can emerge, with the world's help. Now the hard and urgent work of implementation begins.

Today's draft resolution accomplishes three important objectives. First, it puts in place a full cessation of hostilities. There is an insistence on an unconditional release of abducted Israeli soldiers. Hizbollah must immediately cease its attacks on Israel, and Israel must halt its offensive military operations in Lebanon, while reserving the right of any sovereign State to defend itself. It is my understanding that the Lebanese Cabinet will vote on Saturday concerning the resolution, and the Government of Israel on Sunday. As the Secretary-General has just noted, he will help the parties to establish a timeline for the implementation of this very important cessation of hostilities.

In addition to respecting the draft resolution's call for a full cessation of hostilities, we believe that all parties should take action to protect civilians, as was called for in the four principles of the 1996 understanding. We urge the Governments of Lebanon and Israel to commit to ending large-scale violence. Hizbollah faces a clear choice between war and peace, and the world should help to ensure that that choice is the right one.

Secondly, this draft resolution will help the democratic Government of Lebanon to expand its sovereign authority, as called for in resolution 1559 (2004). It will do so by creating a new international force that builds on the current United Nations force in Lebanon, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Although it will bear the same name, this will not be the same force; it will be an enhanced UNIFIL. As the Government of Lebanon has requested, this new force will have an expanded mandate, a greater scope of operations, better equipment and much larger numbers — a target of 15,000 soldiers, a sevenfold increase in its current strength.

The Lebanese armed forces, together with the new stabilization force, will deploy to the South of the country to protect the Lebanese people and to ensure that no armed groups like Hizbollah can threaten stability. As that deployment occurs, Israel will

withdraw to behind the Blue Line. Today's draft resolution makes clear that these are parallel processes, and it also calls for the opening of Lebanese harbours and airports, which we expect will be for verifiably civilian purposes.

With the deployment and the withdrawal, a full ceasefire will go into effect. The Council has said that it intends to adopt another draft resolution with further measures to help that ceasefire become permanent. We also look forward to the Secretary-General's proposals to fully implement resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), including the question of disarmament. To further strengthen Lebanon's democracy, the international community will also impose a binding embargo on all weapons heading into that country without the Government's consent. Today, we call upon every State, especially Iran and Syria, to respect the sovereignty of the Lebanese Government and the will of the international community.

Finally, the draft resolution clearly lays out the political principles to secure a lasting peace: no foreign forces, no weapons and no authority in Lebanon other than that of the independent Lebanese Government, which must have complete sovereignty over its entire country. Those principles represent a long-standing international consensus that was first expressed in United Nations resolution 425 (1978), then affirmed in the Taif Accords and reaffirmed in resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006). On 16 July, the Group of Eight leaders endorsed the same political conditions in Saint Petersburg, and 10 days later the Lebanon Core Group supported those principles in the Rome conference.

The draft resolution also offers a way forward to implement resolution 1680 (2006), which addresses the delineation of the Lebanese border, including the Sheba'a farms. We must ensure Israel's security and respect the underlying framework to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with resolution 425 (1978).

Today in no way marks the end of our common efforts. In many respects, the hard work of diplomacy is only just beginning. In many respects, although it is our hope that the draft resolution will lead to the cessation of large-scale hostilities, no one can expect an immediate end to all acts of violence. The conditions of a lasting peace must be nurtured over time, with the good will of the Lebanese and Israeli

Governments and with the sustained commitment of the international community that we have undertaken here.

Our most pressing challenge now is to help thousands of displaced people within Lebanon to return to their homes and rebuild their lives. The reconstruction of Lebanon will be led by the Government of Lebanon, but it will demand the generosity of the entire international community. For its part, the United States will continue working with the Governments of Lebanon and Israel to ease the suffering of the Lebanese people. Let me join the Secretary-General in applauding the extraordinary work of humanitarian workers and United Nations workers who, at great risk to themselves, have taken up the cause of suffering people during this turbulent time.

The United States has already committed substantial resources to the humanitarian efforts in Lebanon and Israel. In the critical days and weeks following a cessation of hostilities, we plan to do even more — beginning now — by increasing our immediate assistance to Lebanon to \$50 million. The United States will coordinate closely with other major donors, with the international financial institutions and with all who are committed to Lebanon's future. We will also encourage the active involvement of the private sector in Lebanon's reconstruction. Through our common efforts, we must help the people of Lebanon to emerge from this conflict more prosperous and stronger than ever.

The past month has been marked by overwhelming suffering, heartache and loss, both in Lebanon and in Israel. The draft resolution is refreshingly clear that this tragedy began six years after Israel withdrew completely from Lebanon and Hizbollah crossed an international boundary, captured and killed Israeli soldiers and began firing thousands of rockets into Israeli cities. Hizbollah and its sponsors have brought devastation upon the people of Lebanon, dragging them into a war that they did not choose and exploiting them as human shields.

The people of the Middle East have lived too long at the mercy of extremists. It is time to build a more hopeful future. The draft resolution shows us the way. It is now the solemn responsibility of the international community to help the people of Lebanon and the people of Israel to transform this tragedy into opportunity — an opportunity to overcome old patterns

of violence and to build a new foundation for stable, sustainable and comprehensive peace.

We have embarked upon an ambitious course. Yet it is the right course. It is the only realistic and effective course, and we must see it through, for it is the only way to help the people of Lebanon, the people of Israel and all the people of the Middle East secure the lasting peace that they both desire and deserve.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Philippe Douste-Blazy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France.

Mr. Douste-Blazy (France) (*spoke in French*): Finally, the Security Council is deciding to put an end to the war in Lebanon and Israel. Finally, it is putting an end to the destruction, to the plight of hundreds of thousands of displaced people on both sides of the border, to an economic and humanitarian situation that has grown more and more tragic with each passing day. Today, the international community is shouldering its responsibilities; we are shouldering our responsibilities. Certainly, the time spent in negotiations seemed, for some, to delay the moment of decision, but for France and for the entire Security Council, it was a matter of reaching a long-term comprehensive and political solution.

Since the beginning of the conflict, France has called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, a lifting of the blockade imposed on Lebanese ports and airports, and the return of displaced civilians. We must then create the conditions for a way out of the crisis so that we can swiftly achieve a lasting ceasefire. The stability and equilibrium not only of Lebanon and Israel, but of the entire region, depend on it.

The settlement on which we have worked must, as the President of the French Republic has emphasized, respect a twofold imperative. It must allow Lebanon's sovereignty to be restored throughout its entire territory and it must guarantee Israel's right to security.

France has played a very active part in the search for a solution. France is linked to Lebanon by deep historical and cultural ties and by strong and ongoing relations with the countries of the region. We are also very attached to the sovereignty and the independence of that country. On the strength of that imperative and of our close ties with all the actors, France wishes to reaffirm Israel's right to security.

It is from that perspective, too, and in that spirit that France worked intensively with its partners, including the United States — which I would like to thank for its support, and in particular Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice — to craft a draft resolution that takes all of those elements into account.

Decisive elements have come into play that have enabled the present result. The Council of Ministers of Lebanon announced its intention to deploy its army in southern Lebanon with the support of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). France welcomed that initiative, which it deems to be a major event. It is an historic turning point for that country.

The deployment of Lebanon's army is an essential element for restoring the sovereignty and authority of Lebanon throughout its entire territory. Furthermore, that decision meets a recurrent demand of the international community that is reiterated in many resolutions. We were duty-bound to respect that decision. It was our responsibility to take note of it.

Both Lebanon and Israel submitted certain demands to us. They shared certain expectations with us. France heeded them and the international community responded to them. That is the thrust of today's draft resolution. That seems to us the best guarantee for a lasting ceasefire and for a long-term solution.

The main thing, first of all, is to secure a cessation of hostilities and to immediately start a process that will lead to the deployment of the Lebanese army in the South, with the assistance of a reinforced UNIFIL. That will occur concomitantly with the gradual, progressive withdrawal of the Israeli army south of the Blue Line. It is also essential to begin resolving border issues, particularly that of the Sheba'a farms. That question goes to the heart of the conflict. For the first time, today's draft resolution starts a process, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, to address that question. In that respect, the Security Council has taken due note of the seven-point plan of Mr. Siniora.

Finally, we wanted to set down from this moment the principles and elements of a lasting ceasefire and a comprehensive political solution. Through today's draft resolution, the Security Council is responding to the request of the Lebanese authorities that UNIFIL be strengthened by a proposed 15,000 servicemen. I should like on this occasion to pay solemn tribute to the United Nations personnel in Lebanon who have

demonstrated self-denial and courage in this crisis, some of whom, unfortunately, have paid with their lives for their devotion to the cause of peace.

I should like to make it clear that the mandate that the Security Council is giving UNIFIL is not one that imposes peace. UNIFIL will help the Lebanese Government in several of its missions, including the deployment of its army to the South, humanitarian assistance to the people and assistance to help displaced persons return. It will also be responsible for monitoring the cessation of hostilities, and then for observing compliance by the parties with the permanent ceasefire and the Blue Line.

We call upon all the parties to strictly respect the personnel, equipment and premises of the United Nations, whose security must be guaranteed in all circumstances. France, finally, believes it crucial that many countries respond favourably and expeditiously to the request of the Lebanese authorities by contributing to a reinforced UNIFIL. France is already present in UNIFIL and will consider, alongside its European partners, the possible supplementary support that it may be able to give to the Force.

I express the hope that today will be the first day of restored peace and stability in the Middle East. It is important that what the Security Council is offering Lebanon today, the international community offer the Palestinian people in the future. The lives and the hope of millions of people who are counting on us are at stake. At stake, too, is the future of an entire region that has suffered too much and must find peace once again. The message of the international community is clear. We need to replace a culture of hatred, mistrust and rejection with a culture of trust, mindfulness and dialogue.

The President: I now call on the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr Al-Thani.

Sheikh Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the delegations of France and the United States for their recent efforts to improve the language of the draft resolution submitted by them to the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East.

While thanking them for taking into consideration some of the important points that we have raised regarding the substance of the draft resolution, I

reaffirm our position that, for the sake of stopping the bloodshed of innocents, the Security Council should have adopted a resolution providing for an immediate ceasefire from the very first day of the current hostilities and should have dealt with other questions subsequently.

However, that conviction does not necessarily indicate our satisfaction with the adoption of a draft resolution that lacks balance and overlooks the accumulated, complicated historical, social and geopolitical factors that have culminated in the current situation in the region. The draft resolution fails to adequately take into consideration the interests, unity, stability and territorial integrity of Lebanon. Therefore, we still have some comments regarding the draft resolution.

The draft resolution does not clearly and explicitly address the horrors of destruction caused by the Israeli aggression against innocent civilians and the Lebanese infrastructure. Moreover, it does not clearly spell out Israel's legal and humanitarian responsibility for that destruction or address in a balanced manner the question of the Lebanese prisoners, detainees and abducted persons in Israeli prisons, despite the fact that the exchange of prisoners and detainees is the logical and realistic way to settle this question.

Nevertheless, we have accepted the draft resolution in its present form in order to stop the bloodshed of innocents and to spare Lebanon and the region further horror and destruction.

It is our understanding that, once the draft resolution is adopted, it obligates both parties to halt hostilities and provides for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon, and that any breaches committed between the end of hostilities and the achievement of withdrawal and a ceasefire will be governed by the April Understanding of 1996. In addition, the draft resolution will lead to the reopening of the Lebanese ports and airports and the return of the displaced persons to their homes immediately upon its adoption. It is also our understanding that the draft resolution assigns sole responsibility to the Lebanese Government for dealing with the armed phenomena in the South and that the area between the Blue Line and the Litani river is subject to the exclusive control of the Lebanese Government.

We welcome the fact that the draft resolution is limited to augmenting the United Nations Interim

Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), that its mandate will continue to be subject to the provisions of Chapter VI of the Charter, and that, as I have been assured by the sponsors of the draft, any reference to international forces in the draft resolution means UNIFIL. On this occasion, we call upon the contributing States or those States that intend to contribute to UNIFIL to dispatch their forces promptly.

Furthermore, it is our understanding that the Secretary-General will urgently take all the necessary measures to settle the question of the Sheba'a farms in accordance with the provisions of the seven-point plan endorsed by the Lebanese Government in that regard. We are convinced that it is still possible for the Council to play an effective and substantive role in settling this crisis. We will work with peace-loving States in following up this question in the interest of security and stability in Lebanon.

I would like to single out paragraph 18 of the draft resolution, which stresses the need to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Failure to deal effectively and objectively with this crisis and its root causes has led to a great deal of turbulence and tension in the region, and this has manifested itself in the events unfolding in Lebanon and in Palestine. We have all witnessed — and, regrettably, continue to witness — the continued aggression against Gaza and its inhabitants.

I wish particularly to inform the Council that the Council of the League of Arab States has unanimously adopted a decision to resubmit the question of the Arab-Israeli conflict to the Security Council, now that everyone has recognized the failure of the peace process in its present form. All of the Arab States will submit an official request for the convening of a high-level meeting of the Security Council next September in order to agree on a new track towards the establishment of a just peace in the region within a set time frame.

The Security Council bears a major responsibility towards millions in the region whose lives and future are threatened by the conflict, which is turning their lives into an inferno. The Council must discharge that responsibility effectively, justly and fully.

The President: It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution (S/2006/640) before it. If I hear no objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, China, Congo, Denmark, France, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1701 (2006).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

I call on Her Excellency Ms. Dora Bakoyannis, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece.

Ms. Bakoyannis (Greece): For the past month the world has borne witness to another tragic chapter in the history of the Middle East, an unbearable addition to the pain of that long-suffering region. The images of helpless children and mothers, wounded, sick and despondent victims on either side of the conflict, untold destruction and unimaginable pain, have haunted all of us. This has shown once more how much we, as an international community, have failed the hopes and dreams and aspirations of those people.

Greece, from the very first moment of the outbreak of the current crisis, has called for an immediate ceasefire. War is not and cannot be the answer to anything. Violence has never solved any problem. It only serves to breed more violence and to create a new generation full of hatred, devoid of hope and keen on revenge — a nurturing field for extremism and terrorism.

The Middle East has been suffering from this never-ending cycle of vicious wars and unstable peace, broken promises, lost lives and unspeakable tragedy not for years, but for decades. History has proven time and again that neither victory on the battlefield nor blind violence against innocent civilians, neither suicide bombings nor Katyusha rockets, have ever solved, or ever will solve, the problems of the Middle East — or any other region for that matter. These are issues that need political solutions brought about through diplomatic means, in a spirit of compromise, mutual respect and acceptance.

The resolution we have just adopted here today is trying to do precisely that. It offers the basis for a

political solution to this long-lasting — and, admittedly, extremely difficult and complex — problem. It also offers the framework for a political process with concrete goals and specific benchmarks and time frames.

Full respect for the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon is the first and foremost of those benchmarks. Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006) must be fully implemented. After all, it is a matter of principle that all Security Council resolutions must be fully respected and properly implemented.

In the past two years, the international community has done exceptional work in ridding Lebanon of any foreign presence. It is therefore not conceivable that it would accept foreign occupation of any part of Lebanese national territory. Occupation by any foreign force, anywhere in the world, is not admissible in any way or on any pretext. It is imperative for the Lebanese Government to take effective and immediate control of Lebanese territory in its entirety through the withdrawal of the Israeli military forces and the deployment of the Lebanese army. It is also imperative to proceed, as soon as possible, with the delineation of the international borders of Lebanon, including Sheba'a farms. The Secretary-General, in presenting his proposals, should take into consideration the seven points of the Siniora plan.

At the same time, Israel's legitimate security concerns are well understood and need to be properly addressed. We continue, though, to believe that, while preserving the right of self-defence, Israel must respect its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law.

We see today's resolution as a first, but very important, step towards a lasting and sustainable peace. We are fully aware that a lot remains to be done. We need to make sure that this resolution is fully implemented. The bloodshed has to stop, and it has to stop now. The bombings have to stop, and they have to stop now. The suffering of the civilians has to stop, and it has to stop now.

Greece responded immediately to the enormous humanitarian effort under way in Lebanon. But the ongoing hostilities hamper our ability to reach those most in need and to alleviate their pain.

Now that the end of hostilities is hopefully in sight, we stand ready, together with the rest of the international community, and especially the countries of the region, to help in the enormous effort for the reconstruction of a shattered country, the immediate return of refugees to their homes and, hopefully, the dawn of a new day over both Lebanon and Israel.

It is in that respect that this resolution deserves our support and, even more important, deserves our commitment to work very hard in the coming days on the crucial steps that need to follow if we want our efforts to bring tangible results and not end in one more disappointing failure.

It is in that spirit that we call upon all parties to set aside their fears and disappointments and, difficult as it might be, to make the necessary commitment and effort to overcome the current crisis and build a better future for their peoples.

At this particularly critical juncture in the history of the Middle East, we must not lose sight of the bigger picture and allow ourselves to forget the suffering and the plight of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza. The question of Palestine, central to the whole Middle East conflict, should be addressed with the utmost urgency. As long as the Palestine issue remains unresolved, it is clear that there will be no peace in the region.

We must strive to create, as soon as possible, the necessary conditions for the genuine and earnest re-launching of a peace process for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), as well as on the Madrid terms of reference and the principle of land for peace, for the sake of the people in all of the region.

The President: I call now on Her Excellency Mrs. Margaret Beckett, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mrs. Beckett (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom very much welcomes the adoption of this resolution. Its objectives are clear: to bring about full cessation of hostilities, to create the space for an urgent humanitarian relief effort and to begin a process leading to a permanent ceasefire and a durable peace. That last point is crucial. It is why it has taken long and

intensive negotiations to arrive at today's decision. We needed to achieve a resolution that looked beyond the short term and held out the prospect of a lasting solution. That meant agreeing upon a text that took sufficient account of the positions of both parties: the sovereign and elected Governments of Lebanon and of Israel. That was not straightforward; it has taken time and effort. But the United Kingdom firmly believes it was the right thing to do.

The resolution underlines the international community's determination to support the Lebanese people and Government in making a new start, for there can be no going back to the way things were. We have seen the tragic consequences of that all too clearly in the past weeks: hundreds of dead — mostly civilians — thousands wounded and hundreds of thousands displaced. We grieve for and with them, and we offer our condolences to the Governments of Lebanon and of Israel, and to the families of all those affected, for the losses they have suffered. Such tragedies must not be repeated, and we will do all we can to help Lebanon move forward to live in peace and prosperity with all its neighbours.

The immediate priority is to address the humanitarian crisis. United Nations agencies have been working tirelessly, but have faced extremely difficult conditions on the ground. We hope a full cessation of hostilities will allow for rapid expansion of those efforts and those of other relief organizations and bilateral donors; the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) will have an important role to play in that regard.

The United Kingdom will play its full part. We are taking immediate steps to provide practical and other support for the Government of Lebanon. The British team of humanitarian experts and experts in post-conflict reconstruction has been in Lebanon, and Prime Minister Blair has been in touch with Lebanese Prime Minister Siniora about ways in which the United Kingdom can support the recovery effort. The United Kingdom is contributing £6.2 million to meet priority relief needs in Lebanon. Most of that will be channelled through United Nations agencies. We will also support the Red Cross and a number of non-governmental organizations, whose role will be critical.

Faced with a crisis, the international community is often generous in its response. But that very generosity can pose a challenge of coordination. So we

are grateful to the United Nations for the leading role it is playing on that front. We urge all parties to take all necessary measures to ensure that humanitarian relief workers can go about their life-saving business without hindrance or fear of attack.

At the heart of this resolution is the need to pursue the twin objectives of Lebanese sovereignty and Israeli security. We cannot achieve one unless we guarantee the other. And that is why this resolution sets out a framework for establishing peace, security and stability in southern Lebanon on the basis of extending the Government of Lebanon's control throughout its territory and, in particular, through implementation of Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006). For far too long, Lebanon has suffered from occupation, interference and conflict, and it is the civilian population, both in Lebanon and in Israel, which has suffered most. As Prime Minister Siniora has said, this must now end.

But we must also see an end to Hizbollah's random attacks continually directed against Israeli civilians. No country can accept its citizens having to live under the shadow of rockets fired from across the border. Hizbollah faces a historic choice: whether to continue on the path of violence and destruction or to support the aspirations of the Lebanese people for a peaceful future through a political path which is itself a path of peace.

To implement this resolution we look first and foremost to all the parties to respect its terms. But we also look to those with influence to play their part. Hizbollah's backers, notably Syria and Iran, must now consider their positions — whether they want to work with the rest of the international community to build a peaceful future in the region or to oppose those efforts, at a high cost to the region and ultimately to themselves. I look to their leaders now to give full support, both to this resolution and to resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), including by denying support for continued warfare to Hizbollah and refraining from other actions that destabilize the region.

And I cannot make such an observation without referring to the recent remarks about Israel by the President of Iran. Such comments are wholly unacceptable in themselves, and they have the capacity to promote further violence.

Our chief focus today is inevitably on the crisis in Lebanon. But we must, at all costs, as a number of

colleagues have said, not lose sight also of the situation in Gaza, where violence continues to take a heavy toll and where the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people — itself compounded by conflict — continues to cause great concern.

We reiterate our full support for President Abbas and others who are working to resolve the current situation, and we offer our condolences to Palestinians on their losses. Real peace throughout the Middle East can come only on the basis of a lasting, comprehensive settlement. As our Prime Minister said in his speech in Los Angeles on 1 August, we need a new strategy for the Middle East, one that tackles extremism and promotes moderation and reconciliation. Our priority must be to create the conditions for an early resumption of negotiations based on the Quartet road map. There is no military solution to these problems. Negotiation is the only viable way to bring peace and prosperity to the people throughout the Middle East.

Our own Prime Minister has announced this evening his intention to visit the region, in particular Israel and Palestine, over the coming period, and to consult those there — and, of course, members of the Quartet — on what might be the best way forward.

The step we are taking in this resolution today, to bring peace to Lebanon, must be part of a larger process to bring peace to all of the people of the region as a whole. The United Kingdom will do all it can to help bring this about.

The President: I call now on Mr. Per Stig Moeller, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, His Excellency.

Mr. Moeller (Denmark): For four weeks, we have witnessed a violent conflict between Israel and Hizbollah, causing untold suffering and devastation on both sides. I am deeply shocked by the unacceptably high number of casualties among innocent civilians. Almost one million people have fled their homes in southern Lebanon and northern Israel.

In order to stop further human suffering and pave the way for a negotiated political solution, the hostilities must end immediately. There is no military solution to this crisis. To the contrary, further violence and combat will only fuel the hatred and fanaticism that have obstructed a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict for so long. We must not let the extremists win and set the agenda for the future.

Intense diplomatic efforts have been carried out in recent weeks by all parties around this table in order to reach a solution. I am convinced that this resolution is the necessary and indispensable step towards the cessation of the hostilities, a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution to the conflict.

There are several parties responsible for this conflict. Hizbollah is the main cause. We have also called on Syria and Iran to act responsibly and on Israel to show the utmost restraint and to avoid disproportionate action, and have warned it against destroying Lebanon in its fight against Hizbollah.

We mourn the deaths of innocent men, women and children. Our hearts go out to their bereaved families and to the peoples of Lebanon and Israel. The cruelty of war reminds us of our common obligation to maintain international peace and security and to seek solutions by peaceful means to all conflicts. I believe that it is high time to look forward and finally to lay the foundations for a stable and durable peace in that troubled region.

We urge the Governments of Lebanon and Israel to agree to the principles and elements mentioned in the resolution in order to arrive at a long-term solution. We pledge our full support for the efforts of the Secretary-General in that regard and stand ready to assist wherever possible.

We cannot and must not return to the status quo ante. The root causes of the conflict should be addressed urgently. As long as armed forces outside the control of the Government operate in and from Lebanon, instability will prevail.

Denmark stands firmly behind Prime Minister Siniora in Beirut and the fragile Lebanese democracy. The overriding challenge is to safeguard a stable and democratic future for Lebanon and to avoid the strengthening of extremism in general in the region.

One of the main objectives of today's resolution is to ensure the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon in line with resolution 1559 (2004). With a view to achieving those goals, Denmark welcomes the decision of the Government of Lebanon to deploy 15,000 troops in southern Lebanon and supports the enhancement of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon in numbers, equipment, mandate and scope of operations.

The humanitarian efforts carried out by the United Nations and other relief organizations have been essential in saving human lives. It is imperative that they be guaranteed safety and unhindered access. Denmark has contributed to those efforts and to the humanitarian appeal from the United Nations, and we stand ready to extend further assistance.

In conclusion, we have today taken an important first step in trying to end this bloody and senseless conflict. To break the logic of war and replace it with the logic of peace, we have now endorsed a road map for a long-term solution. To get there, however, we are dependent on the political will and strength of all parties. The international community can and must facilitate and support, but in the end, only the parties can make the peace, and they must do so to the benefit of the citizens of their countries. They deserve it. I urge them to do so.

The President: I shall now give the floor to the representative of China.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We wish to welcome you, Sir, and to thank you for personally presiding over today's meeting. We would also like to welcome Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the foreign ministers who are participating in this meeting.

Since the Lebanon-Israel conflict broke out on 12 July, China has repeatedly called upon all the parties to the conflict to practise the utmost restraint, and has called for the immediate cessation of hostilities so as to avoid a further escalation of the situation and a greater humanitarian crisis. It has been nearly a month since the onset of the bloody Lebanon-Israel conflict, which has killed or injured thousands of innocent civilians and forced a million people to flee their homes. In the conflict, even United Nations peacekeepers have not been spared.

China condemns the excessive use of force and attacks on civilians, civilian facilities and United Nations personnel. We strongly advocate early Security Council action to achieve an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire, halt the current conflict, maintain peace and stability in the Middle East, and relieve the humanitarian disaster.

After rounds of difficult negotiations by the parties concerned, the Security Council has finally reached consensus on the resolution on the conflict in

the Middle East. In the course of consultations, China repeatedly emphasized that any Security Council resolution and framework of settlement must respect and reflect the concerns of all parties involved, especially the concerns of Lebanon and the Arab countries. We believe that the resolution before us, integrating the seven-point proposal of the Lebanese Government, embodies some important elements, including its calls for a full cessation of hostilities and for the Lebanese Government to deploy its armed forces throughout the South, together with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), as the Israeli army withdraws behind the Blue Line.

The resolution also lays out detailed provisions for the new mandates of UNIFIL. Those provide a good foundation for future efforts to achieve long-term political solutions to the Lebanon-Israel issue. We note that Lebanon, Israel and the Arab countries hold no objections to the resolution. Given the above considerations, China voted in favour of resolution 1701 (2006).

The adoption of resolution 1701 (2006) is just the first step, and the parties concerned face more arduous tasks. China hopes that the parties will earnestly implement the resolution and, in particular, assisted by Secretary-General Annan, reach consensus at an early date on a comprehensive, lasting and fair framework for the political settlement of the conflict and restore local peace and stability as soon as possible. At the same time, the international community should step up its urgent humanitarian relief efforts for Lebanon and help the Lebanese people to rebuild their homeland.

Finally, I take this opportunity to emphasize that, while focusing attention on the Lebanon-Israel conflict, the international community should not neglect or forget the ongoing sufferings of the Palestinian people. We hope that, with the joint efforts of Israel and the Arab countries, and on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace, the Middle East peace process will be revitalized and a comprehensive, just and lasting peace achieved in the Middle East at an early date.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): Slovakia, as one of the sponsors of resolution 1701 (2006), voted in favour of it because we believe that it provides an important basis for a full cessation of hostilities, for ending the

suffering of civilians in Lebanon and Israel, and for starting the process of a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Lebanese crisis. We consider the resolution to be the first step in addressing fully and urgently all causes that have led to the current crisis.

We are convinced that there is no military solution to the Lebanese crisis, just as there is no military solution to the Middle East conflict in general. In that regard, we urge all parties to abide by the resolution and immediately to stop the hostilities and violence and to reach an agreement on a permanent ceasefire. In our view, a lasting solution can be reached only through peaceful negotiations and the full implementation of all relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

We support the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon. To that end, we believe that they can be best achieved through the full implementation of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), enabling the Government of Lebanon to assume full control over all its territory. That also means taking appropriate measures against the illegal movement of arms and people across its borders and against illegal attacks on the territory of neighbouring States. The international community should assist the Lebanese Government to achieve that goal.

In that regard, we believe that it is necessary to take all steps to expeditiously enhance the strength and mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in order to allow it to cope efficiently and effectively with the tasks envisaged by the resolution. Slovakia is ready to contribute to enhancing UNIFIL's capacities.

Finally, it is of the utmost importance for the international community to take immediate steps to address the extremely difficult humanitarian situation of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons and to assist in their return home.

In conclusion, we would like to underline that this resolution cannot be a substitute for agreement by the parties on the basic principles of a long-term and lasting solution. In that respect, we call once again on all parties to extend their full cooperation in achieving a sustainable and lasting solution to the Lebanese crisis.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Another tragic chapter of the history of the Middle East conflict has now been written. For almost a month, before the eyes of the entire world, innocent civilians in Lebanon and Israel have been dying and hundreds of thousands of Lebanese citizens have been forced to abandon their homes. Serious damage has been done to Lebanon's civilian infrastructure. Personnel of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) have been in an extremely difficult situation and have suffered casualties.

These wounds will take a long time to heal — both in Lebanon and in the memory of the world community. From the very first days of the confrontation between Israel and Lebanon, Russia has insisted on an immediate ceasefire to prevent further casualties and to bring an end to suffering among the civilian population both in Lebanon and in Israel.

We are convinced that the prime cause of the tragedy that has unfolded in Lebanon, and of the broad-scale humanitarian disaster, was not solely the train of events with which we are all familiar, but also the lack of a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. It is possible that similar events will continue to shake the Middle East until decisive action is taken to resolve the region's fundamental problems. In that context, it is increasingly essential to engage in comprehensive consideration of all aspects of the Middle East situation, without exception, on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

It took an unjustifiably long time to draft the Council resolution we have just adopted. Russia did everything it could to accelerate the process, both in our contacts with the parties and around the negotiating table. It was this that guided us when we proposed our draft resolution yesterday, calling for a humanitarian ceasefire in Lebanon and for urgent diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis.

But, as it proved possible today to produce an agreed text of a broader Security Council draft resolution on Lebanon, the Russian Federation decided to support that text. It reflects Russia's key demand for an immediate cessation hostilities, it takes into account the legitimate demands of Lebanon and it includes provisions that meet the security interests of Israel. We call upon the parties to show the necessary political will and strictly follow the course of action outlined in the resolution.

For its part, Russia will continue steadfastly to promote the achievement of a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East, pursuant to the decisions taken by the Security Council.

The President: I call next on the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country supported and voted in favour of the draft resolution we have just adopted, essentially because the priority in this conflict was and remains to declare an immediate cessation of hostilities and an end to violent confrontation. That has been my country's position ever since the outbreak of this crisis between Israel and Lebanon on 12 July, and we have unequivocally stated that at all relevant meetings of the Security Council and in other international forums.

We regret that the Council took a full month to react in the face of this conflict and to shoulder its responsibilities under the Charter. As I have said, our chief concern throughout the conflict has been and remains the fate of the civilian population. The figures reveal eloquently that it is innocent civilians, both Lebanese and Israeli, who have most suffered the consequences of the violence. International humanitarian law establishes clear obligations for the parties with respect to the protection of civilians. The principles of proportionality and differentiation must be respected in all circumstances. For that reason, Argentina has vigorously denounced all violations of international humanitarian law and of human rights that have taken place in the course of the conflict. We call once again for an immediate end to all attacks on civilian populations.

We now hope that the parties to the conflict will take immediate steps to facilitate access by humanitarian aid agencies to southern Lebanon and to guarantee the safety and freedom of movement of humanitarian aid workers. In the light of the particular social and cultural characteristics of Lebanon, we consider that among the top priorities should be to provide assistance enabling internally displaced persons to return to their homes as soon as possible.

It must be stated that the adoption of this resolution should not be seen as the end of the road, but rather as the beginning of a process that must take us to a solution of the underlying problems that led to this crisis. Here, we are convinced that additional efforts must be made to fully implement all of the

Council's decisions, in particular resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006).

With regard to the implementation of today's resolution, we believe that it is a priority to accelerate preparations for the deployment of additional troops to strengthen the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon so that Israel's withdrawal from Lebanese territory can take place as soon as possible. We are confident that there will be significant contributions of troops over the next few days.

With respect to the proposals to be developed by the Secretary-General in pursuance of paragraph 10 of the resolution, we would ask him to take into account the seven-point plan adopted by the Lebanese Cabinet, in particular with regard to the Sheba'a farms, as also set out in the resolution we have adopted.

The crisis between Israel and Lebanon should not make us lose sight of the serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, in particular in the Gaza Strip. To the contrary: the two matters are very closely linked and, unfortunately, feed off each other. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is extremely grave and continues to deteriorate daily. We hope that, over the next few days, the Security Council will begin to look at this issue with a view to putting an immediate end to hostilities there as well.

Finally, let me stress once again the importance that Argentina attaches to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, prior agreements among the parties, the road map and the principle of land for peace.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): It is almost a month since the hostilities started in the Middle East, engulfing Lebanon and Israel. The fighting has caused an enormous loss of civilian life, heartrending bloodshed and the destruction of infrastructure on both sides. The suffering of people in Lebanon and Israel increases every day that the hostilities continue, and the threat to peace and security in that vital region becomes even greater as the fighting threatens to escalate. Japan therefore strongly welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 1701 (2006) calling for a full and immediate cessation of hostilities by the parties in

conflict and for Israel and Lebanon to support a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution, based on a set of negotiated principles and elements.

We wish to thank the sponsors, in particular France and the United States, for their great efforts in producing this outcome over weeks of hard negotiations involving all the relevant parties under extremely difficult circumstances — especially, in the Council, Ambassador John Bolton of the United States and Ambassador de La Sablière of France.

The package solution contained in the resolution, being a child of political compromise reached through arduous diplomatic exchanges, can satisfy no party 100 per cent. But it does represent a significant step forward, providing a viable framework for an immediate ceasefire and the avoidance of further civilian casualties and destruction, which the international community has been calling for since the onset of the crisis, and for a sustainable solution to the complex problems that have beset the region of southern Lebanon for a long time — if it is backed up with the necessary political will and commitment of all the parties concerned and supported by the international community. In other words, the faithful and complete implementation of the resolution is now of vital importance, and we call on the Governments of Lebanon and Israel and all the concerned parties, based on the resolution, to bring about an immediate ceasefire, to use the utmost restraint, to start implementing the agreed political framework and to exert the maximum effort to restore calm and stability in the region.

We are also deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian situation, particularly in Lebanon. It is imperative to create the necessary environment for Lebanon, with support from the international community, to address the problems of internally displaced persons in their hundreds and thousands, and of refugees in the neighbouring countries, as well as the rehabilitation of the country at the earliest possible date. Here, I pay tribute to all the humanitarian organizations and workers and all observers and troops of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon for their perseverance and dedication.

We regret that it took such a long time for the Council to act in the discharge of its responsibility on this matter. Noting the delay in action, however, does not diminish our appreciation of the sponsors. The

delay was not due to any lack of will or effort on their part, or on the part of any member of the Council.

Be that as it may, having come all the way to this critical juncture in dealing with the issue at hand, and recognizing the need for the Security Council to continue to act actively and in unity, Japan will continue to work and cooperate closely with the other members of the Council and the concerned countries to ensure the effective implementation of the resolution.

Finally, while we need to deal with the Israel-Lebanon conflict with all due attention and speed, we must not forget to deal with the other situations in the Middle East, in particular the Palestinian problem and the increasingly dire humanitarian plight of the Palestinian people.

In conclusion, Japan calls for a broad-based, prompt international contribution and cooperation to achieve the full implementation of the resolution. I wish to state that Japan, for its part, will continue to contribute actively to the efforts to restore peace and to promote medium- and long-term stability and reconstruction in Lebanon and the region as a whole.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): We join in welcoming the foreign ministers who are here today.

We would like to thank the United States and France for their tireless efforts, which made it possible for the Security Council to vote on today's important resolution.

In a Government statement issued on 31 July, Tanzania called for an immediate ceasefire in the hostilities between Israel and Hizbollah in order to put an end to the mounting deaths and the suffering of innocent civilians and also to avert the further destruction of property and civilian infrastructure.

The Government statement urged the international community to intervene to end the bloodshed. It regretted that so many innocent civilians in Lebanon and in Israel had died and that many more were being displaced in Lebanon, and called for urgent action by the Security Council to resolve the crisis. It emphasized the need to implement resolution 1559 (2004) and deeply regretted that so much time had been spent before the Council could act.

It was with the same sense of urgency that we welcomed the efforts that made possible the resolution, which we believe creates the necessary framework for a cessation of hostilities. Our short-term objective has always been to stop further humanitarian casualties and suffering and to allow immediate humanitarian access and assistance. That is still our primary objective tonight.

Our second objective springs from the realization that a political solution to the current crisis must also be sought with urgency. In our view, any expectation that military action will bring about a political solution can only engender grave humanitarian consequences and render it considerably harder to promote a political solution, which must be preferred if sustainable peace is to be attained.

It is also our view that the Government and the entire nation of Lebanon need not be the victims of the events that triggered the current crisis — events which the United Republic of Tanzania has condemned. However, we have always believed that this crisis need not escalate further. It was therefore with a sense of relief that we received the news of the outcome of the efforts that made it possible for us to vote in favour of the resolution.

We want to commend the Government of Lebanon for its seven-point plan, which was augmented by an offer to deploy 15,000 troops in southern Lebanon to control its territory, in collaboration with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. We also commend the Government of Israel for having given that proposal due consideration.

The international community has an important role to play in support of the resolution. We commend potential troop-contributing countries and urge them to act with urgency, and we appeal for assistance for the return and resettlement of displaced persons and for the reconstruction of Lebanon.

We also believe that the resolution that has been adopted is but a first step. Its relevance and effectiveness will demand the utmost good faith of the parties. That will be critical if the present understanding is to become a building block to a broader comprehensive peace for the Middle East, and especially to a durable solution to the Palestinian question.

The President: I now call on the representative of Peru.

Mr. Pereyra Plasencia (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru voted in favour of this resolution, which

calls for a complete cessation of hostilities and which we trust will mark the beginning of the end to the destruction and the violence that have claimed so many innocent lives in Lebanon and in northern Israel. That is why we urge the parties to the conflict to comply immediately and scrupulously with the cessation of hostilities for which this resolution calls. We are confident that that will enable humanitarian assistance to reach populations in need as soon as possible.

We also ask that the strengthening of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) under the terms authorized by this resolution take place as soon as possible so that the Force can, together with the Lebanese army, move in and fulfil the mandate with which it has been entrusted. That action, in parallel with the withdrawal of the Israeli army, is essential for compliance with this resolution. Likewise, we trust that the principles and elements included in this resolution with a view to a definitive solution can be addressed as soon as possible by the Governments of Lebanon and of Israel.

Finally, Peru expresses its entire willingness to continue to work constructively in the Security Council to contribute to the reaching of a definitive solution to this conflict.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana.

It is an honour for us to preside over this meeting, which has been convened this evening to adopt the resolution on Lebanon for which the world has been waiting. The anxiety that has gripped the world since the outbreak of the conflict and that has led some to accuse the Security Council of inaction can now be laid to rest. And our deepest wish is that today will mark a truly new beginning not only for the people of Israel and Lebanon, but for the entire region.

We wish to join others in expressing our profound gratitude to Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière, Permanent Representative of France, and Ambassador John Bolton, Permanent Representative of the United States of America, their Governments and their respective teams for working tirelessly to achieve the consensus that the resolution before us represents. Their dogged determination to achieve results has enabled the Council to do its duty to the peoples of the world.

The presence in our midst of United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her colleagues

from France, the United Kingdom, Greece, Denmark and the State of Qatar underscores the fact no other body can surpass the Security Council in the force of its moral authority and its sheer diplomatic clout when it acts in unity and remains faithful to its responsibilities. We expect nothing less when we come to grapple with the fundamental question of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the long-standing Middle East question. Clearly, the solution is within the grasp of the Security Council, and we must resolve to work together in a spirit of compromise to bring to a speedy end the pain and suffering of the peoples of that troubled region.

Therefore, I fully share the views of other speakers who have stressed that the adoption of this resolution should lead to the immediate cessation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon in order to bring prompt relief to the 1 million displaced people who are in dire need of humanitarian assistance and those who suffer the rockets and the bombing.

Beyond that, I wish to reiterate that the adoption of this resolution should also be seen, as others have also noted, as an important step in the search for a comprehensive solution to the Middle East question, the core of which is the Palestinian question. In that regard, the President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, and the Ghanaian Government intend to work closely with the other members of the Council in implementing the two-State solution, which entails an independent Palestinian State living side by side with Israel within internationally recognized borders. The international community, especially the Security Council, should leave no stone unturned in tackling this problem and seeing to its successful realization.

It is for those reasons that Ghana, which has consistently supported the international consensus on this question, decided to co-sponsor the present resolution, and we are happy that it has been adopted unanimously. Ghana, as a troop contributor to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, is also happy that the resolution seeks to enhance the Force's capacity and believes that that enhancement will make a significant and positive contribution to the search for peace in the Middle East.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I call now on His Excellency Mr. Tarek Mitri, Minister of Culture and Special Envoy of the Council of Ministers of Lebanon.

Mr. Mitri (Lebanon): Once again, the Security Council is meeting in this Chamber. It has been one long month since the Government of Lebanon began urging — let us say passionately calling out for — a ceasefire that would end the rain of bombs that has devastated our country and end the reign of horror that Israel has visited upon our people. For a month now, as the world has continued to watch and as the international community has continued to vacillate, Israel has besieged and ravaged Lebanon, creating a humanitarian and environmental disaster and shattering our infrastructure and economy.

Israel says that this war is against Hezbollah, not against Lebanon. Actually, the Israeli strategy of terror is inflicted on all Lebanese. The indiscriminate murder of more than 1,100 Lebanese civilians, a third of them children, the massacres and the “cleansing” of villages and the wanton destruction of our infrastructure and economy are nothing short of criminal. One quarter of our population has been displaced, many of them with no homes to return to and most of them desperately low on fuel, food and medical supplies, while homes, hospitals, factories and warehouses have been demolished.

The direct cause of more than 1,000 deaths and thousands of injuries is the obscenely disproportionate and unjustifiable Israeli retaliation. There are many cases documented by human rights organizations that reveal a systematic failure by the Israeli army to distinguish between combatants and civilians. In many cases, the timing and intensity of the attack and the absence of a military target, as well as the subsequent strikes on rescuers, suggest that Israel forces deliberately targeted civilians. Even today, a few hours ago, a convoy of evacuated civilians from the city of Marjayoun, escorted by the Red Cross, was targeted, killing four and injuring 16.

After its first call for a ceasefire, the Lebanese Government offered to the Rome Conference and to the Security Council a comprehensive seven-point plan developed through a process of national consensus, which received the unanimous approval of the Lebanese Council of Ministers as well as the support of political and religious leaders and significant international support.

A ceasefire that is incomplete is not a true ceasefire. A ceasefire that by its terms cannot be implemented is no ceasefire. A ceasefire that retains for one side the right not to cease firing is not a ceasefire. Lebanon has urgently requested a ceasefire that has the possibility of being implemented so that all hostilities should immediately cease — and for good.

No one more than Lebanon wants to assure the Council that we will not be here again in six weeks, six months or even six years. The persistent invasions of Lebanon demonstrate Israel's continuing belief that military actions will remedy the causes of crisis in the region. This pattern of invasions demonstrates the continuing threat facing Lebanon and the need for a political solution rooted in international law, not the result of the use of force — a solution that will lead to long-term stability, as set forth in our seven-point plan.

The people and the Government of Lebanon are deeply appreciative of the efforts of so many in the international community, most significantly, the efforts of the Secretary-General and the members of the Council, who have been working to bring to an immediate end the ravaging of Lebanon. We acknowledge all the valuable work expended by many countries to reach a viable agreement. We appreciate the genuine impatience of many with regard to the delay in reaching agreement on the resolution. Proposals to have a humanitarian truce were a case in point. More important, we are grateful for the support extended to our country and for the support that will accompany us as we, hopefully, rise up from the ruins, reconstruct and heal our injured country.

We appreciate the Security Council's acknowledgment of the Sheba'a farms problem. We hope that the Security Council and the Secretary-General will, in the period ahead, take the necessary steps to resolve that issue, thereby removing one of the underlying causes of the conflict.

I am sure that Council members understand that the Lebanese are eager to see a true cessation of hostilities and expect a strong determination on the Council's part to bring it about immediately. The Lebanese, to be frank, are not confident in the Israeli distinction between what is "defensive" and what is "offensive". The end to military operations should be unqualified.

The lifting of the blockade should also be immediate upon cessation of hostilities. The

consequences of the blockade so far have been such that the international community cannot allow the humanitarian crisis to continue one more moment. Humanitarian aid has been prevented from reaching people in desperate need. Even today, Israel continues to fire upon convoys of people attempting to reach safety and help.

Our Government has decided to deploy the Lebanese armed forces in southern Lebanon as the sole military force, assisted by United Nations forces, the moment Israel starts pulling back to the international borders. To be sure, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) will have to play the determining role that is defined by this resolution. Let me pay tribute here to the UNIFIL personnel for all they have done for the sake of peace and for all that has been done to them.

To be sure, as I have said, UNIFIL will have to play the determining role that is defined in this resolution. The Government of Lebanon therefore urgently calls on the troop-contributing countries to act swiftly on the strengthening and enhancement of UNIFIL, to enable it to perform its duties as stipulated in the resolution just adopted: to assist, support and accompany the Lebanese population and Lebanese armed forces and to monitor not just the cessation of hostilities but also the ceasefire.

For any political solution to move forward, it must address the root causes of this war, including the continued Israeli occupation of Sheba'a farms and the perennial threat to Lebanon's security, as well as Lebanon's struggle to regain full sovereignty over all its territory. We believe that a political resolution rooted in international law and based on the seven-point plan will lead to long-term stability.

The international community has a moral and political obligation under the terms of the Charter of the United Nations and the accepted norms of international law to defend Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as to protect the Lebanese people under the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Convention and its Protocols, which Israel has repeatedly and wilfully violated.

If Israel were to realize that the peoples of the Middle East cannot be cowed into submission and that they aspire only to live in freedom and dignity, this could also be a stepping stone to a final solution of the

wider Arab-Israeli conflict which has plagued our region for 60 years. The 2002 Arab Summit in Beirut, which called for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace based on the principle of land for peace is the way forward. A political solution cannot, however, be implemented as long as Israel continues to occupy Arab land in Lebanon, Palestine and the Syrian Golan Heights and wages war on innocent people.

The Lebanese Council of Ministers will convene urgently tomorrow to consider this important resolution. We value the attention as well as the decisions of the Security Council, which is entrusted with preserving international security and peace. It is essential that the Security Council act immediately to put an end to the Israeli onslaught on Lebanon.

For the people of Lebanon today, as they look into the future, the stakes could not be higher. That is also the case, I believe, for the world. Success in bringing peace and stability to Lebanon is a sign of the ability and resolve of the international community to assure the peoples of the world that a just peace can prevail.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to the Foreign Ministers who have honoured us with their presence here today. I would also like to express my gratitude to all the members of the Security Council for the long hours and hard work they have invested in this endeavour. I would like especially to commend Ambassadors John Bolton and Jean-Marc de La Sablière for their determination and commitment.

Today, but for the grace of God and the alertness of the British security authorities, we could have been sitting here in the aftermath of a terrorist atrocity greater even than 9/11. The world would have mourned, but in the streets of Tehran, Damascus and parts of Lebanon, there would have been rejoicing, just as there was after 9/11. Mercifully, the plan was foiled. But the threat, and the genocidal ideology that inspired it, remains.

It is that same genocidal ideology, it is that same fanatical terrorism, that Israel has been confronting in Lebanon for the past month and that the Security Council is asked to address today.

For the past month, Israel has been confronting this vile phenomenon as it expresses itself in our

region. But the threat we have been facing is not limited to our region; it has set its sights on the world at large. The terrorists in our region have a gruesome record of diabolical invention in perpetrating their atrocities, but these heinous innovations have been quick to cross borders and continents. Hostage-taking, suicide-bombings and hijackings know no boundaries, as many States represented at this table, among them Argentina, Britain, Greece, Japan, Qatar, Russia and the United States, know only too well. Not only are the countries of the West their targets, but also the moderate regimes in our region, which offer hope of progress and prosperity and the basic freedoms to which the terrorists are so fundamentally opposed.

The stakes could not be higher. Yesterday's foiled plot is a wake-up call that the campaign of terror, motivated by fanatical intent and backed by lethal weapons of destruction, is not limited to any region, but threatens the whole world. The tragedy we have seen in our region over the past weeks, it tells us, is but a preview of the coming attraction, produced by Iran, directed by Syria, acted by terrorist groups, soon to be seen in a theatre near you. Whether we will succeed in defeating this threat depends, in large part, on the resolve we demonstrate today.

It is often said, "Where there's a will, there's a way". But recent years have demonstrated that where there is a way, there is not always a will. The way to avoid the crisis between Israel and Lebanon has been clear: implementation of the unconditional obligations set out in resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), which set out issues for resolution between Lebanon and Syria. The clear path forward required the disarming and disbanding of Hizbollah and other militias, and the exercise by Lebanon, like any sovereign State, of control and authority over all its territory. But the will to implement this way has been lacking, and over the past month the peoples of Israel and Lebanon have paid a heavy price for that inaction.

In the face of the failure to ensure that the obligations set out in those resolutions were implemented, Israel has had no choice but to do what Lebanon has failed to do. As a result, Hizbollah's lethal capabilities have been dealt a major blow: bases have been dismantled and stockpiles of Iranian missiles have been destroyed. Southern Lebanon has been substantially cleared of the infrastructure of terrorism, and the terrorists and their sponsors have learned that a

campaign of brutal terrorism will meet with the forceful response it deserves.

But after six years of inaction which has enabled Hizbollah to serve foreign interests and to dig itself deeply into Lebanese soil, there is much yet to be done. Israel, like any State, has the right and the duty to defend its citizens from Hizbollah's unprovoked attacks, to bring its captive soldiers home and to continue its efforts to complete the task of rooting out the terrorists and removing the threat they present to the Israeli and Lebanese peoples. However, Israel is ready to respond to the calls of the Council and to give another chance to the Government of Lebanon and the international community to create a new reality on the ground.

The responsibility which this resolution places on the international community cannot be overstated. The tragedy of the past month could, and would, have been avoided if the previous resolutions of the Security Council had been heeded and their provisions fully implemented in all their parts. The resolution adopted today is an opportunity to correct the mistakes of the past and to create a genuine new reality in our region. It establishes a binding arms embargo requiring all States to prevent the supply of arms and weapons to militias and terrorists in Lebanon. It provides for a radically different international force with a mandate and the capability to use all necessary means in order to create a new situation in Lebanon in which the borders will be secure, in which Hizbollah will not be rearmed and south Lebanon will be free of armed militias and weapons. It sets out arrangements to ensure that, finally, Lebanese armed forces will deploy throughout Lebanese territory, including along the Blue Line. And it calls for the unconditional release of our boys, Udi Goldwasser and Eldad Regev. I hope that the Security Council will do all it can to make this happen, and I urge the Council to do so.

But a resolution alone will not do anything; it will do nothing. Unless the tools set out in this resolution are used with resolve and decisiveness, we will be back at this table — if not in a week, then in a month or a year — facing an even greater tragedy. For then, the terrorists, supplied, no doubt, with even more lethal weapons by Iran, will be even further emboldened by yet another demonstration of our lack of commitment and will.

Today's resolution brings to an end weeks of intensive negotiations. But it is not the end of the task;

indeed, it is only the beginning. We need to seize this moment and open a new chapter for the region, a chapter in which moderation is not seen as weakness, and a hand stretched out in peace is not perceived as one raised in surrender.

The stakes could not be higher for Lebanon and Israel, or for the region as a whole. These last few weeks have given us a chilling glimpse of what our region could be like if Iran were to succeed in achieving its goal of adding weapons of mass destruction to its lethal arsenal. But in two important resolutions adopted by the Council today and last month, Iran has been sent a clear message: it cannot develop weapons to threaten the region on its own territory, and it cannot fight proxy wars on the territory of others.

President Ahmadinejad of Iran, from whom Hizbollah draws its genocidal ideology, has stated his dogma clearly: "There is nothing more beautiful, holier or more eternal than the death of a martyr". Today more than ever, a united and determined response is required from those who believe that there is nothing more beautiful, holier or more eternal than a child able to grow up living in security and peace.

I turn once again to my Lebanese colleague and, through him, to the Lebanese people. There is no quarrel between our peoples. We have no greater wish than to live next to a peaceful and prosperous State of Lebanon, exercising its independence and sovereign responsibilities like any other State.

The choice that faces the people of Lebanon is clear. It is a choice between those who develop agriculture and make deserts bloom and those who turn towns into bases of terror and barren land. It is a choice between those who work to advance medicine and bring health to body and limb and those who manufacture only weapons of destruction to tear limb from body. It is a choice between those who export innovation and technology and those whose only export is terror.

A few hours ago the sun set on Beirut, and in a few hours' time it will rise over Haifa. This night that bridges those two bleeding cities is the tale of two cities, two peoples and two religions. It will end the Moslem holy day and herald the Jewish sabbath, the holy day of rest and peace. May the sun rise over a new day for both our peoples, a day of peace, tolerance and

prosperity for our children and generations to come — a sabbath of peace. *Shabbat shalom.*

The President: There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the

present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 9.10 p.m.