International Conference for Lebanon
Rome, July 26
Co-Chairmen Statement

Representatives of Italy and the United States, the United Nations, Canada, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Jordan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom**,** the European Union (High Representative, Finnish Presidency, Commission)**,** and the World Bank met today in Rome along with representatives of Lebanon. Building on the September 19, 2005 ministerial-level Lebanon Core Group meeting in New York, the Lebanon Core Group and other countries concerned for the fate of Lebanon met today to express the international community's deep concern about the situation in Lebanon and the violence in the Middle East, to enjoin urgent and substantial humanitarian assistance, and to discuss concrete steps that would allow a free, independent, and democratic Lebanon to exercise effective control over all of its territory. The Lebanon Core Group and the other participants to the Rome Conference are committed to helping the Lebanese government to address the political, economic, and security challenges that it faces.

The participants pledged their united determination to work in partnership with the international community to provide immediate humanitarian relief to the people of Lebanon, expressing deep concern for civilian casualties and suffering, the destruction of civil infrastructures and the rising number of internally displaced people. Calling Israel to exercise its utmost restraint, they welcomed Israel's announcement of humanitarian corridors to Lebanon, including for humanitarian flights into Beirut International Airport, and within Lebanon that can allow for the rapid delivery of relief aid, and called for their immediate operation.

The Rome Conference participants expressed their determination to work immediately to reach with the utmost urgency a cease-fire that put an end to the current violence and hostilities. That cease-fire must be lasting, permanent and sustainable.

The Rome Conference affirmed that the fundamental condition for lasting security in Lebanon is the Government's full ability to exercise its authority over all its territory. The participants noted that a framework of international decisions, including the G-8 statement of July 16, United Nations Security Council Resolutions 425, 1559 and 1680, the Lebanese national framework embodied in the Taif Accords, and 1949 Armistice Agreement represent the principles that govern the international community's efforts and responsibilities to help support the Government and people of Lebanon.

The participants called for the full implementation of these relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and the Taif Accords, which provide for the deployment of Lebanese Armed Forces to all parts of the country and the disarming of all militias.

An International Force in Lebanon should urgently be authorized under a UN mandate to support the Lebanese Armed Forces in providing a secure environment. The Rome Conference pledged its support for Lebanon's revival and reconstruction. The participants today agreed to the convening of an international donor conference to assist with the revival of Lebanon's economy and called for the provision of reconstruction assistance to the Lebanese Government, with special emphasis on the southern part of the country. In addition, the need for a meeting of partner countries to discuss a joint approach to security assistance for the Lebanese Armed Forces and security services was widely supported.

Participants agreed that any lasting solution to Middle East tensions must be regional. They expressed their full commitment to the people of Lebanon, Israel and throughout the region to act immediately with the international community toward the goal of a comprehensive and sustainable peace.