

**Address of Ambassador Mrs Angelina Eichhorst, Head of the
Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon**

Third Beirut Energy Forum

**Hilton Beirut Habtoor Grand Hotel
Thursday, September 13, 2012**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

H.E. Mr. Gibran Bassil, Minister of Energy and Water,
Mr. Robert Watkins, UNDP Resident Representative,
Dr. Christoph Frei, General Secretary of the World Energy Council,
Distinguished participants,

Thank you for inviting me to the opening session of this Forum.

Lebanon's National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2011-2015 confirms the urgency to take action on energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources. The European Union welcomes this strategic approach and the ambitious targets set forward.

Lebanon's ambitions reflect also the efforts requested from the EU's 27 Member States of the European Union in the framework of the well-known "20-20-20" strategy¹.

While the European Union is broadly on track to meet our climate change objectives, we remain ambitious, and in our relations with our partners, we are also very ambitious. Nobody can afford to postpone this action and we know why. Also for Lebanon a shift to sustainable energy production based on renewable sources, energy-efficiency and development of an inclusive green economy, is urgent to help overcome the day-to-day problems that Lebanon faces, such as inconsistent electricity supply.

¹ By 2020, reduction of the greenhouse gases by 20%, increase of the share of renewable energy sources in energy consumption to 20%, 20% increase in energy efficiency.

Since 1995 the European Union and our Southern Mediterranean partners have been cooperating in the field of energy. The framework for this cooperation is guided by the EuroMed Energy Forum in which we promote the integration of energy markets, sustainable development in the energy sector and initiatives of common interest in certain key areas. One good example is the development of the *Mediterranean Solar Plan* in the framework of *the Union for the Mediterranean*.

In its *external energy policy*, the European Union proposes a differentiated and gradual approach with each of its partner countries. As I said, I hope that in the medium-term Lebanon will be a strong partner for us in this regard.

Whilst I want to say that the Minister of Energy has accomplished a lot, work is to be done mainly on legislative frameworks adjustments, increased investments, an upgrade of existing infrastructure and a solid institutional setting here in Lebanon.

Also as Lebanon embarks on the paths of offshore gas exploration consistent efforts and a strong political will are required to ensure that the wealth of Lebanon's seabed is managed effectively and transparently and in a manner that is respectful not only of the environment, but also respectful towards future generations.

New sources of energy should go hand in hand with current efforts to move towards renewable energy sources and improved energy efficiency. This will ensure that natural resources become a boost for development not a curse.

To support these efforts, EU-funded programmes are already being implemented or under preparation. These programmes will be presented in more detail in one of the afternoon sessions, but let me already say that more than 55 million Euros are committed to supporting Lebanon's reforms to tackle climate change. The energy sector will be one of the main beneficiaries of this support.

Also various regional EU-funded programmes are ongoing to facilitate the sharing of experiences, good practices and lessons learnt. One concrete example is the MED ENEC regional programme, supporting this conference, which fosters energy efficiency in the construction sector.

Let me wish you all a very fruitful Forum. This event will hopefully be a stepping-stone for us to reach our joint ambition of reaching levels of more sustainable energy action in Lebanon and the region as a whole.