



Eighty-fifth session
Bamako, Mali, 7-8 May 2009
Provisional agenda item 6

**RECOMMENDATION BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF A NOMINEE FOR THE POST
OF SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR THE PERIOD 2010-2013**

Addendum 1

Note by the Secretary-General

At the request of the Embassy of Lebanon to Spain, the Secretary-General transmits to the Members of the Council and its Chairman the communication of H.E. Mr. Fawzi Salloukh, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon, concerning Mr. Arab Hoballah's candidature to the post of Secretary-General of the Organization for the period 2010-2013.

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TRANSLATION FROM FRENCH BY UNWTO

Letter from the Embassy of Lebanon

The Embassy of Lebanon in Madrid presents its compliments to the General Secretariat of the World Tourism Organization, to the Chairman of the UNWTO Executive Council as well as to the members of the UNWTO Executive Council and has the honour to transmit to them herewith the letter of H.E. the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Fawzi Salloukh, in relation with the candidature of Mr. Arab Hoballah to the post of Secretary-General of the UNWTO for the period 2010-2013.

Trusting in the good disposition of the General Secretariat of the Organization and thanking it in advance if it would kindly send us a copy of the letter of circulation of the document attached herewith to the authorities concerned, the Embassy of Lebanon in Madrid avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the World Tourism Organization the assurances of its highest consideration.

Madrid, 26 March 2009

Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon

Beirut, 23 March 2009

To the attention of:

The Chairman of the UNWTO Executive Council
The Members of the UNWTO Executive Council
The UNWTO General Secretariat

In reference to my letter of 26 February 2009 in which I informed you of the decision of Lebanon to present the candidature of Mr. **Arab HOBALLAH** to the post of Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization for the period 2010-2013,

and in response to the remark mentioned by the General Secretariat in its Note Verbale CONF/1040/2009 addressed to the Members of the Organization reminding them of the decision of not recommending candidates presented by a Member State having **unjustified** contribution arrears, thus leaving it up to the Executive Council to decide at its next session in Bamako on the admissibility of the candidature of MR. HOBALLAH, who for the time being is considered only as a "potential candidate" as indicated by the General Secretariat in its Note Verbale CONF/1221/2009 addressed to the Embassy of Lebanon in Spain and therefore does not appear on the list with the three other declared candidates,

I have the honour of bringing to your knowledge the following points:

Lebanon has always endeavoured to honour its contributions in the different international bodies of which it is a member, and notably those owed to the World Tourism Organization in view of the historically vital place occupied by the tourism sector in its economy, which was paralysed for a long time due to the tragic events of the war of 1975-1990. Indeed, just before this tragedy, Lebanon was the principal tourism destination of the region thanks to its various natural and human assets, a position that it has made an effort to reclaim ever since the end of the war thus managing to attract in 2005 a number of visitors equalling that of 1974!

In the course of the 1990s, the public finances of Lebanon, constrained by a colossal public debt burden surpassing 150% of its GDP, which it had accumulated during the years of post-war reconstruction when it was putting modern infrastructure into place, became highly dependent on the receipts generated during the summer season by the tourism sector.

Forecasts for the 2006 summer season showed a record number of expected tourists, a trend which was confirmed as early as the first half of June 2006, but the unexpected happened at the height of the season on 12 July 2006 when Israel carried out massive reprisals throughout 33 days, during which the entire national territory was bombarded causing the death of more than 1200 civilians and the destruction of an immense part of the new civil infrastructure that had been put into place, and the annihilation of tens of thousands of dwellings, without counting the resulting loss of income in terms of budgetary receipts. Because of this, the situation of Lebanon's public finances deteriorated considerably.

But moreover, the last budget voted on by the Lebanese parliament dates back to 2005. Since then, for diverse reasons, one of which was the paralysis of the Parliament in 2007 and 2008, no budget has been voted on by it. The budget for the year 2009 is still under discussion in the Council of Ministers. It is quite evident that the government will do whatever is necessary as soon as this budgetary situation is unblocked to settle its contribution arrears.

In this regard, it should be recalled that Lebanon is a founding member of the United Nations and that it has always been very active in all the sister or dependent institutions of the United Nations. It is a privileged centre of culture and of tourism, and it is not by chance that Beirut will be declared this year as the World Book Capital and that Lebanon will be hosting the Francophone Games, and it is not irrational for us to submit the candidature of a well-qualified Lebanese national to the post of Secretary-General of the UNWTO, it is a right to which we are entitled and only goes to show our policy of active participation in international organizations, and in particular, the United Nations in the **Security Council**, where Lebanon will occupy a seat during two years starting at the end of 2009.

Esteemed Representatives of the Member Countries,

Spared from the misfortunes of war, many developed or developing countries are currently experiencing financial difficulties following the most severe world crisis of our time, and the latter will not prevent Lebanon from making the necessary arrangements for the payment of its contribution to the UNWTO for financial year 2007 within the shortest period of time, while also indicating that it will not fail to honour its 2008 arrears as soon as possible, for which reason I request you to confirm the admissibility of the candidature of Mr. Arab HOBALLAH to the post of Secretary-General of the UNWTO, on the same terms as the other three candidates.

Lastly, I would like to mention that Lebanon, whose diaspora has established itself in the four corners of the world, in Latin America as in Africa, in Europe as in Australia, thanks certainly to the spirit of discovery and the curiosity for knowledge of its people, but above all, thanks to their capacity to adapt and to a long tradition of placing a high value on multicultural human contact, will not fail to place its experience and the expertise of its candidate at the service of a prosperous organization and of tourism that promotes the values of fraternity and peace.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants

(Signed)

Fawzi SALLOUKH