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PRESS RELEASE

MAJ. GEN. CLAUDIO GRAZIANO APPOINTED UNIFIL FORCE COMMANDER

Naqoura, Lebanon – United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has designated Major-General Claudio Graziano of Italy as UNIFIL Force Commander to succeed Major-General Alain Pellegrini, whose three-year term expires on 17 February.

Major-General Graziano brings more than 30 years military experience to the position. His biography is attached to this press release.

Major-General Pellegrini has been UNIFIL Force Commander and Head of Mission since 13 February 2004. He led UNIFIL throughout the 2006 conflict and, subsequent to the mission's enhanced mandate under Security Council resolution 1701, oversaw the unprecedented rapid deployment of UN peacekeepers. Their sharp rise in numbers from 2,000 in August 2006 to 8,000 less than two months later, enabled the timely withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon and, for the first time in decades, the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces all the way to the Blue Line.

In welcoming the appointment of his successor to the post, Major-General Pellegrini expressed his appreciation to colleagues in peacekeeping and to those who have supported him in contributing to efforts at cementing stability in Lebanon.

"I wish to thank everyone who has supported me in the often difficult but vital work we have undertaken. My first thoughts are with all UNIFIL personnel that I have had the honour to command, especially those who lost their life in the pursuit of peace" Major-General Pellegrini said, adding that he also wished to express his *"deep appreciation to all those Lebanese officials, particularly commanding officers in the Lebanese Army, with whom I have worked."*

Looking ahead to next month's hand-over of command, Major-General Pellegrini said, *"I look forward to welcoming my successor confident that UNIFIL is in good shape, with more than 11,500 peacekeepers, and will be safe hands for the challenging and important time ahead in supporting the peace and contributing to future stability in south Lebanon."*

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Major-General Claudio Graziano Biographical Notes

Major-General Claudio Graziano attended the Military Academy and the Combined Arms Specialization School from 1972 to 1976. He was commissioned as an Infantry Officer in 1974.

In 1976 his initial assignment was Commander of an Alpine Infantry platoon of the Susa Battalion, in Pinerolo near Turin. In 1977 he commanded a platoon of the Anti-tank Company of the Taurinense Alpine Brigade. In that position he participated to some international exercises in Denmark and Norway with NATO's Allied Mobile Force (Land Element) (AMF(L)). In 1980 he moved to Monguello, near Bolzano, at the Tridentina Brigade, where he commanded a mortar and then a rifle (Alpini) Company in the Trento Alpine Infantry Battalion. From 1983 to 1986, he was Commander of a Cadet Company and then of the Headquarters Company at the Alpine Military School in Aosta.

In 1987 he was promoted to the rank of Major and transferred to Rome at the Army General Staff where he served for two years as Staff officer, at the System Development Section, under the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics. In 1990, after being promoted Lieutenant Colonel, Major-General Graziano was employed in the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army as Military Assistant. Later, in June 1992, he was reassigned as Commanding Officer of the Susa Alpine Infantry Battalion in Pinerolo. In that position he deployed with his battalion in the UNITED Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Mozambique (UNOMOZ). At the end of 1993 he was appointed Chief of the Military Assistant Section of the Army Chief of Staff.

Promoted to Colonel in 1996, he took Command of the 2nd Alpine Regiment in Cuneo. In that position he was again in Norway with the AMF(L) for arctic exercises. In 1998 he was reassigned to the Army General Staff as Chief of the Plans and Policy Division. In September 2001 he was appointed Military Attaché at the Italian Embassy in Washington DC. He was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General on 1 January 2002.

Returned from the United States in August 2004, he was assigned to the Alpine Taurinense Brigade in Turin as Commanding General, position he held until February 2006. During this tour, he served in Afghanistan as Commander Kabul Multinational Brigade within ISAF VIII from July 2005 to February 2006.

He was promoted to Major-General on 1 January 2006 and assigned to the Italian Joint Operations Headquarters in March 2006 as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, responsible for planning, deployment and employment of all the Italian Military Contingents operational missions and tasks, both overseas and in country.

Major-General Graziano is a Mountain Warfare and Sky instructor, and is Airborne and Ranger qualified. He attended both the basic and the advanced Command and Staff courses at the Italian Army Staff College. He is also a graduate of the United States Army War College in Carlisle.

Major-General Graziano holds a degree in Strategic Military Studies and two Master Degrees, one in Human Sciences from the Catholic University in Rome and one in Strategic Military Sciences. Most recently he earned a degree in Diplomatic Sciences from the Trieste University.

His awards include the Army Meritorious Service Silver Cross, Knight of Italian

Republic Order of Merit, Ten Years Command Army Medal, Seniority Silver Medal, UN Mission in Mozambique Commemorative Medal, Italian Defence Peacekeeping Commemorative Medal, NATO Medal for ISAF Mission, Italian Medal for Peace Operation in Afghanistan, the US Legion of Merit, the French Golden Medal, the German and the Norwegian Meritorious Service Medals. He was also presented with four Solemn and Six Ordinary Commendations, and two Army Achievements.

Major-General Claudio Graziano is married to Signora Marisa Lanucara. They have made their home in a village by the sea near Rome.