



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement
by H.E. Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos
President of the Republic of Cyprus

at the General Debate of the 59th Session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations

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Mr. President,

I wish to start by conveying to you my most sincere congratulations on your election as President of this session of the General Assembly and wish you every success in steering the work of this august body. I would also like to extend our thanks and appreciation to the President of the Session of the General Assembly, especially for his inspired efforts to promote so vigorously the agenda of United Nations reform and the revitalisation of the General Assembly.

As this is the last Session of the General Assembly ahead of the 2005 Major Event, we must proceed to evaluate the prospect of attaining the ambitious targets we set at the turn of the Millennium. Determining a hierarchy in our priorities and identifying and pursuing specific targets, has been a major step in fostering the values, principles, and objectives embodied in the Millennium Declaration. The Major Event, however, will be the first real assessment of our progress towards the implementation of the Declaration and of the outcome of major world Conferences, and of initiatives such as the one launched by the Presidents of Brazil, France, Chile and the Prime Minister of Spain to eradicate poverty and hunger, as well as the initiative of the Presidents of Finland and Tanzania on the social dimension of globalisation.

Specifically with regard to the Millennium Development Goals, we believe that the ability to make development on the ground an issue of global concern as a result of these pledges, will measure the ability of the United Nations to induce significant change and advances where they are most needed. At the same time, the achievement of these objectives, which form an essential part of the Millennium Declaration, will judge to a great extent the efficacy of the United Nations in pursuing successfully a global and comprehensive agenda, which pertains to the prosperity of the population of a significant number of its member states.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Cyprus supports the strengthening of the United Nations system through the reform process underway, and looks forward to the Report of the High-Level Panel and the recommendations of the Secretary-General. We attach particular importance to the revitalisation of the General Assembly and to the reform of the Security Council, so that, its structure will reflect contemporary political realities and a more balanced geographical representation. In the spirit of these two principles and with the aim of reinforcing the legitimacy and efficacy of the Council, Cyprus is supportive of increasing both permanent and non-permanent membership. In this respect, we believe that the joint French and German position on the enlargement of the Council could provide a basis for achieving the abovementioned objectives.

We share the assessment of the Secretary-General in his Report that our endeavour of consolidating effective multilateralism in a flexible and versatile United Nations, is the best way to address the complete spectrum of global crises and ensure that there exist preventive mechanisms to avert each one. Such consolidation also applies to security deficits and particularly terrorism the underlying causes of which, we have been unable to eliminate despite our concerted efforts. We consider that the conclusion of a United Nations comprehensive convention against terrorism is important in order to facilitate the elimination of the threat posed by terrorism, in the framework of international legality.

Addressing other deficiencies in the international system, particularly the ones which give rise to crisis situations and humanitarian disasters, should also be considered a matter of both urgency and priority. Darfur is one such crisis, which, following many others like it, keeps Africa at the heart of

our concerns. It manifests why we should not only focus the majority of our humanitarian resources and peace-keeping efforts to it but why we should make every possible effort to make sustainable development a global reality. We welcome also the expanding co-operation between the United Nations and regional Organisations, which we consider to be the most effective method of addressing such issues. Of course, we attach particular significance to the collaboration between the United Nations and the European Union in managing crisis situations.

The Middle East is another region which remains volatile despite growing global concern and in spite of many attempts to restore the Peace Process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. So long as violence remains a vivid reality in the region it will not be possible to create those conditions under which peace building can be accomplished. We deem necessary a more active involvement of the Quartet in the efforts to implement the road map and intercept the cycle of violence. More emphasis should also be given to the task of improving living conditions in order to normalise people's lives to the greatest possible extent. Our support remains focused on the end of the occupation and on a just and viable settlement, based on UN Resolutions and for the realisation of the aspirations of the Palestinian people for the establishment of an independent state, living side by side with Israel, in conditions of sustainable peace and security.

Mr. President,

Surely the aspiration of humanity revolves around achieving the full respect of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The collective vision and effort required to fulfil this massive endeavour demands the contribution of all, to the extent of their capabilities. Cyprus is prepared to play its part from its vantage point in the European Union whilst drawing upon its traditional participation in Fora dedicated to promoting agendas pertaining to these values. This affiliation has been a source of support for us since Cyprus' independence, and its impact not only makes us grateful but has also endowed us with sensitivities that will continue to be an integral part of our approach.

I would like to emphasise how proud we are that Cyprus is now a full member of the European Union. The European Union has outlined an extensive set of priorities for this Session of the General Assembly. As the statement delivered by the Dutch Presidency has delineated these priorities, I will not elaborate on them any further.

Mr. President,

This year marks 30 years since the occupation of 37% of Cyprus' territory as a result of the invasion of the island by Turkish troops. It also marks 30 years of relentless efforts by the Greek Cypriots to achieve a just and peaceful settlement, with the support of the international community, to which I would like here to express our deep appreciation.

The Greek Cypriot side has repeatedly demonstrated in the past thirty years, its readiness to move forward by making many painful sacrifices and concessions, while the Turkish Cypriot leadership always lacked the necessary political will. The quest and eagerness of Greek Cypriots for a solution never meant, however, that they would accept any settlement proposed to them nor that they would be ready to embark on an adventure, in all probability condemned to failing, with irreversible consequences.

The latest effort by the UN Secretary-General to solve the Cyprus problem resulted in a Plan, which, by some was described as a historic opportunity to solve one of the longest standing international problems. I will only briefly outline why, despite the hard work invested in the

process by all involved, the end product of this effort was judged to be inadequate and fell short of minimum expectations from a settlement for Greek Cypriots.

Firstly, the Annan Plan was not the product of negotiation nor did it constitute an agreed solution between the parties. Secondly, the Plan did not place the necessary emphasis on achieving a one State solution with a central government able to guarantee the single sovereign character of Cyprus. Thirdly, it failed to address the serious concerns of the Greek Cypriot Community regarding their security and effective implementation of the Plan.

Mr. President,

In rejecting the Plan as a settlement for the Cyprus problem the Greek Cypriots did not reject the solution or the reunification of their country. They have rejected this particular Plan as not effectively achieving this objective. We remain committed to a solution which will ensure the reunification of the country, its economy, and its people.

We are committed to reaching a solution on the basis of a bizonal, bicomunal federation. However, there are a number of essential parameters the Greek Cypriot Community insist this solution to be founded on. The withdrawal of troops and settlers and the respect of human rights for all Cypriots, the underlying structures for a functioning economy, the functionality and workability of the new state of affairs, the just resolution of land and property issues in accordance with the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, and the respect of the right of return of refugees. To this end, we welcome the recent Pinheiro Progress Report on property restitution in the context of the return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Simultaneously, it pains me to bring to your attention, Mr. President, that certain provisions of the Annan Plan have encouraged an unprecedented unlawful exploitation of occupied properties in northern Cyprus, something alluded to even in statements by officials of the occupying power itself.

The most paramount feature of any settlement is the ability to install a sense of security to the people. The mistakes of the past must not be repeated. Cyprus must in its future course, proceed without any grey areas with regard to its sovereignty or its relation to third states. If the people feel that their needs have not formed the basis of any solution reached or that the characteristics of this solution have been dictated by the interests of third parties, then this solution will unsurprisingly be bypassed. Indeed, the spirit and practice of effective multilateralism not only encompasses, but also derives from, the comprehension and consideration of local realities and particulars, on which it must then proceed to formulate proposals.

This should not be interpreted by third parties as a lack of will to solve the Cyprus problem. Instead, it must be unequivocally understood that the people who will have to live with this solution are in the best position to judge what is suitable for them, that it is imperative for the people to be called upon to ratify any plans that are drawn to this effect, and that their verdict must be respected.

Mr. President,

In the framework of the European Union, and with the aim of promoting reunification and reconciliation, my Government, despite the obstacles placed by the current status quo, is consistently pursuing policies aiming to enhance the economic development of the Turkish Cypriots. While not intended to serve as a substitute for a solution, such policies are in our view the

most effective way to foster the maximum economic integration of the two Communities, and increase contact between them, so as to ensure the viability of a future solution.

Responding to the expanding possibilities on the ground, we have intensified our efforts to ameliorate the situation and seek ways to benefit citizens. In this context, my Government has recently proposed the withdrawal of military forces from sensitive areas and refraining from military exercises, the opening of eight additional crossing points across the cease fire line and the facilitation of the movement of persons, goods and services across the Green Line, as well as the extension of the so far unilateral de-mining process initiated by my Government.

We have also declared our readiness to make special arrangements whereby Turkish Cypriots will utilise Larnaca Port for the export of their goods. Furthermore, subject to the area of Varosha being returned under the control of the Government of Cyprus and to its legitimate inhabitants, we could accommodate the lawful operation of the port of Famagusta.

Mr. President,

The Cyprus problem is not always perceived in its correct parameters. The fact remains that this problem is the result of a military invasion and continued occupation of part of the territory of a sovereign state. This fact should not be conveniently overlooked in people's perception, by concentrating on peripheral parameters. Any initiative to solve the problem must have at its core, this most basic and fundamental fact and be based on the premise that international legality must be served and the occupation lifted.

Unfortunately, the fundamentals of the situation on the ground remain unchanged for the past 30 years since the Turkish invasion in Cyprus. This situation is one comprising of severe violations of the most fundamental human rights. The yet unresolved issues of the missing persons, an issue of a purely humanitarian nature, as well as that of the enclaved of the Karpass peninsula, are in themselves an indication of Cyprus' enduring suffering. This should not only point towards the specifics of the solution to be pursued but must also guide our actions with regard to managing the current status quo. For instance, the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), assigned with the task to manage the status quo inflicted 30 years ago, should remain specific to the situation on the ground.

Mr. President,

The accession of Cyprus to the European Union, in conjunction with the lack of an agreement on the settlement of the Cyprus problem, in spite of our efforts and our preference for a settlement prior to accession, signifies the end of an era and the beginning of a new one. I firmly believe that the new context defined by the accession of my country to the EU and by the expressed will of Turkey to advance on the European path offers a unique opportunity and could have a catalytic effect in reaching a settlement in Cyprus. Our vocation is to be partners and not enemies.

Hence, in this new era, we plea to Turkey, to join us in turning the page and seeking ways to mutually discover, mutually beneficial solutions to the various aspects that compose the Cyprus problem. The mere realisation that peace and stability in our region serve the interests of both our countries is ample evidence to prove that what unites us is stronger than what divides us.

Thank you, Mr. President.