



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

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

**At the 61st Session
of the United Nations General Assembly**

New York, 19 September 2006

Madam President,

Before proceeding with my remarks, I wish to indicate that Cyprus as a member of the European Union is represented by, and fully subscribes to, the statement delivered this morning by the President of Finland on behalf of the European Union. I should also like to express my sincere congratulations to you, on your election as President of this session of the General Assembly, and my gratitude to Mr. Jan Eliasson, President of its 60th session, for his tireless efforts during a historic year for the United Nations. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive Report on the work of the Organisation, highlighting the problems, the concerns and the achievements of the United Nations and providing guidance on the way forward.

I would like also to warmly welcome the Republic of Montenegro as the 192nd member of the United Nations.

Madam President.

During the session that followed the High Level Meeting, implementation of its Outcome Document, and more generally the reform process, absorbed an important part of the work of our Organisation. The establishment of the Peace-Building Commission and the Human Rights Council, alongside other important achievements, constitutes an important building block towards a consolidated international system based on effective multilateralism. We should however, not lose sight of the fact that the legitimacy and the relevance of the reform achieved will be judged by its impact on the lives of our peoples. In this respect, let me underline that as a country whose priority lies with upholding the integrity of international law and the full respect for human rights, we have strong interest in seeing a Human Rights Council that fulfils its mandate and leads to human rights improvements on the ground.

Then there are those aspects of reform that continue to elude us, such as Security Council reform and a comprehensive convention against terrorism; aspects of it that remain in progress such as management reform, mandate review and system-wide coherence; and challenges that are increasingly more difficult to tackle, such as disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard I would like to commend you, Madam President, for choosing the realisation of the development goals as the theme of your Presidency in recognition of their enduring importance. My Government considers that concerted, innovative multilateral action to eradicate the scourges deriving from poverty and underdevelopment can yield substantial results. In this connection, Cyprus has joined France, Brazil, Chile, Norway, the UK and other countries in deciding to introduce a special levy on air tickets, the proceeds of which will fund improved access to medication in developing countries.

Madam President,

The urgent need to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East has regrettably once more manifested itself in a very dramatic manner this summer. For almost four weeks, the international community witnessed a violent crisis in Lebanon causing indescribable suffering, devastation and a deplorably high number of casualties among

civilians. We offer our condolences to the Governments of Lebanon and Israel, and to the families of all those affected.

Firmly convinced that there is no military solution to such crises, Cyprus had from the very first moment of the outbreak of violence supported the calls for an immediate ceasefire and joined in the effort to provide assistance both to the Lebanese people and to evacuees. Unfortunately, it took almost a month for the Security Council to discharge its responsibilities effectively towards the peoples of the region, causing disappointment and frustration. In our search for UN-centered effective multilateralism, the lessons learned from this crisis should be a strong guiding force. We hope that the expanded UNIFIL, to whose deployment, operations and support Cyprus has undertaken to contribute, will be effective in preventing future eruptions of violence.

In parallel to the Lebanese crisis, the world continues to witness the deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, with a heavy civilian toll and worsening humanitarian conditions. A year after the positive prospects created by Israeli disengagement from Gaza, the current crises serve as a reminder of the urgent need for a new strategy that would lead to a comprehensive and lasting settlement of all facets of the Middle East Question, on the basis of relevant United Nations Resolutions. In this respect, it is imperative to urgently revert to the implementation of international agreements, including the Road Map, providing for the creation of a viable Palestinian State that will peacefully coexist, side by side, with Israel within agreed borders.

Madam President,

Let me now turn to the Cyprus problem, a problem of invasion and continuing occupation, by Turkish military forces, of 37% the territory of my country for more than thirty-two years now. Mistaken by some for a protracted conflict, the Cyprus problem essentially epitomises the inability of the international community to redress this set of massive violations of international legality. The status quo remains unchanged and the humanitarian and human rights consequences of the forcible division of the island and its people persist. The efforts to establish a separate political and legal entity within the occupied area of Cyprus by the occupying power remains undiminished. Only with respect to investigating the fate of persons missing since the invasion and establishing the circumstances of their disappearance have we recently witnessed some encouraging developments.

In the political field, we have continued to exert efforts on two key axes; coming closer to a negotiating process that would guarantee a peaceful settlement, alleviating the consequences of the invasion and bring about the re-unification of Cyprus, that is, of its territory, people, society, economy and institutions in a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation. The political agenda of projecting a separate political entity in Cyprus has been pursued in recent years under the pretext of a campaign to lift the so-called "isolation" of the Turkish Cypriot Community. However, with the per capita income in the occupied areas of Cyprus currently standing at approximately \$ 11,000 dollars, it is clearly evident that the argument for economic development is exploited for political reasons and is a manifestly unsubstantiated allegation. A recent example of this pattern of behaviour is the refusal of the Turkish side to consider our proposal to increase trading activity by re-opening of the port of Famagusta for exports to other member states of the European Union, in cooperation with the European Commission,

following the return of the now fenced off and derelict city of Famagusta to its lawful inhabitants under the control of the Cyprus Government.

In seeking a fair and viable resolution of the core and substantive issues comprising the Cyprus problem, we should avoid inherent shortcomings of the last negotiating effort undertaken by the UN, which diverted attention from basic principles that must be upheld. The withdrawal of foreign troops and settlers, the restitution of property according to its lawful ownership, the settlement of territorial issues in accordance with proportionality principles, the achievement of real and not nominal unification that entails the integration and unification of the economy; genuinely federal institutions and structure, governance provisions that guarantee the effective discharge of Cyprus' obligations towards the European Union and effective implementation of the *acquis communautaire* uniformly throughout the territory of the state, and the effective application of human rights, the Rule of Law and the principles on which the European Union is founded.

The Greek-Cypriots remain committed to reunification through a functional bi-zonal, hi-communal federation. The failure of the last initiative did not alter our commitment, nor our willingness to work resolutely towards the re-unification of our country. The proposed plan was not accepted precisely because it did not provide for the re-unification of our divided country, nor addressed core issues and key concerns in a satisfactory manner. The search for a settlement firmly remains for us in the United Nations framework, within the context of the good-offices mission mandated to the Secretary-General by the Security Council.

Madam President,

I would now like to turn briefly to developments of a political nature that have taken place over the past few months and to our attempts during this time to create the right conditions for the resumption of meaningful negotiations in the framework of the good offices mission of the Secretary-General for a viable settlement of the Cyprus problem. To this end, I wish to emphasise our concurrence with the opinion of the Secretary-General, that good and careful preparation of any negotiating process is necessary before full-fledged negotiations can take place. It was thus agreed that bicomunal discussions at the technical level would commence to address substantive aspects of the Cyprus problem, as well as issues that affect the everyday life of all Cypriots as long as the status quo persists, a process that would be complemented by parallel confidence-building. This expert level process is a sine qua non for the preparation and presentation of issues before the two leaders for the purposes of meaningful negotiation. The method of activation of these technical discussions was agreed to by the two communities during the recent visit of Under Secretary-General Gambari to Cyprus. I wish to express at this point, my sincere gratitude and appreciation for the offices of Mr. Gambari as well as for the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative Mr. Michael Moller.

While sharing the assessment of the Secretary General that a cautious and step-by-step approach is the appropriate way forward given the fragility of the process, we also hold that an effort to avoid another failure with potentially lasting catastrophic consequences demands laying the necessary groundwork. And this groundwork for us includes imperatively some of the core and more complex dimensions of the Cyprus problem, such as determining the lawful population of the island, bringing an end to the unlawful exploitation of properties of Greek Cypriot refugees in the occupied area in accordance with case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, and ensuring the integral and viable character of the economy of the Cypriot state in line with the provisions of the Stability and Growth Pact of the European Union.

At the same time, addressing these core issues, without the satisfactory settlement of which a solution will not be feasible, should facilitate the realisation of the broader objectives of a settlement, which should be based on international law, United Nations resolutions, the High-Level Agreements, the European Union *acquis*, and decisions of the European Court of Human Rights. This entails establishing a bi-communal and bi-zonal federal State of Cyprus with a single sovereignty, international personality, and citizenship. It must also guarantee the independence of Cyprus and its territorial integrity without any foreign troops on its soil and the possibility of foreign interventions. A settlement must aim, through a rational approach and a common vision of the future, at preserving and upholding the character of the State as a working democracy and ensure the reunification of the society and the convergence of allegiances to common institutions. Ethnic origin, political equality as defined in relevant UN Resolutions, and cultural and religious diversity should be safeguarded but not at the expense of fundamental rights of the citizens and the functionality and efficiency of State institutions.

Madam President,

We had hoped that by now, the accession course of Turkey to the European Union would have taken its catalytic effect producing the necessary political will on their behalf and changing their perception of Cyprus from that of an adversary to that of a partner, a valuable neighbour and a potential ally in the European Union. This change in attitude would render completely anachronistic those considerations which lead them to maintain their occupation army in Cyprus and which stoke their confrontational approach. We maintain our expectation of Turkey to at least proceed with the implementation of its legally binding obligations vis-à-vis the European Union. This is a unique opportunity for them to prove their willingness to turn the page by meeting obligations that they undertook years ago. Unfortunately, they have so far persistently refused to adhere to them. Instead, our generous attitude towards Turkey's accession to the EU is met with a blockade against my country in its bid to join several international and regional organisations and with a refusal to open their ports and airports to Cypriot vessels as required.

We still believe that in our relations with Turkey there is only one way forward: creating a future of peace and cooperation and building bridges and mutual understanding, normalising our relations and working hand in hand to achieve the goals of the European Union in our region. This would also allow us to address all outstanding issues to the benefit of all and especially the Turkish Cypriot community, which will have major opportunities to thrive and flourish if Turkey were to accept and acknowledge that they have no vested interests in Cyprus and therefore must relinquish all forms of interference in my country's affairs. I once again invite Turkey to recognise that there is no room for military doctrines with regard to the Cyprus question and to join us in seeking a lasting solution for the benefit of all Cypriots Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots alike, of Turkey and of our entire region.

Thank you, Madam President.