



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 62nd session of the

General Assembly of the United Nations

New York, 26 September 2007

Mr. President,

Before I begin, I wish to indicate that my statement is complementary to that delivered yesterday by the Prime Minister of Portugal on behalf of the European Union, to which Cyprus fully subscribes.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the 62nd session of the General Assembly and express my sincere gratitude to your predecessor, Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa on the successful completion of her tenure.

As this is the first general debate after the election of the new Secretary-General, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Ban Ki-moon on his appointment to this crucial post and wish him every success. His Report on the work of the Organisation demonstrates not only the broadened spectrum of issues dealt with by the United Nations but also the comprehensive character and vast potential of multilateral diplomacy. Among the aspects of the Organisation's work that present particular interest, we note the disconcerting developments in the Middle East, the modest progress made with respect to the development agenda, the effects of the Organisation's involvement in different crises, particularly in Africa, and the increasing impact of its humanitarian contribution.

We also maintain our focus on the outstanding aspects of United Nations reform and particularly on those pertaining to the Security Council. As a crucial pillar of the Organisation whose activity and output have grown exponentially in recent years, the Council's effectiveness and legitimacy should be enhanced. Moreover, we consider as an integral part of the reform process, the creation of a culture of permanent mutation of the Organisation through which the latter will adapt to future developments as they occur.

A necessary building block towards ensuring the continued relevance and legitimacy of the work and decisions of the Organisation is to guarantee that these decisions are compatible with, and even emanate from, the will of the membership as a whole, in particular through the General Assembly as the universal organ of the United Nations. Being a staunch advocate of the enhancement of the role and authority of the General Assembly, my delegation is particularly pleased that one of the most pressing issues facing the international community today – climate change – is being addressed in this framework with a view to elaborating policy.

Mr. President,

To date, we have ample scientific data and other overwhelmingly convincing evidence suggesting that world climate is changing at the detriment of human and ecological systems as a result of human activity. Thus, our response to this alarming phenomenon should be the focus of our debate rather than the extent to which it exists.

We believe that it is important for us to define, from the outset, the scope of the response we are seeking to formulate. In the face of the quasi irreversibility of the damage done thus far, we should at least put the necessary focus, resources and energy in curbing the galloping deterioration of the situation and urgently decide the first steps to protect our societies from large scale future climate change.

In realising this task, an integrated approach is needed. We must account not only for the future environmental impact should current trends continue but also evaluate the projected consequences in other areas likely to be adversely affected such as security and development.

All of us, Governments and individual citizens alike, are stakeholders in this endeavour. We must act jointly to codify binding commitments, ensure that these are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate to address the problem effectively, and attach to them a firm implementation monitoring mechanism and timeline.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has suggested a number of technological and policy instruments that are available to Governments for mitigation action. We stand ready to support the adoption of a number of sectoral policies and measures the Panel has deemed effective like the use of renewable energy, the use of technology to produce energy cleanly, improved waste and waste-water management and the use of alternative technologies in exploiting human systems like forestry, fisheries and agriculture.

In deciding and enforcing our response, we see no plausible framework other than the United Nations. Aside from its unique position to address the issue because of its global character, its success in confronting a threat with such massive potential as climate change will be a litmus test for the relevance of our Organisation. One could say that climate change is the modern day equivalent of the security threat that necessitated the establishment of the Organisation in 1945. It remains to be seen whether our system can be effective in dealing with contemporary threats to humanity as it has been in dealing with more traditional security deficits.

Mr. President,

Let me now turn to an issue which the United Nations has had a long involvement with and which we aim to keep within the Organisation's priorities until it has been definitively resolved within the framework set out in numerous relevant resolutions of this Organisation.

Cyprus, like the majority of member States, gained its independence after the Organisation's inception. It has relied, since then, on the United Nations to uphold the principles enshrined in its Charter and it has always considered this system of collective security as the only legitimate means to counter acts that are inconsistent with the Organisation's purposes.

For many years, the United Nations has made strenuous efforts in trying to broker a solution. It might be that the task has been so arduous because the truth remains that the Cyprus issue, when stripped of niceties of diplomatic terminology, is a question of foreign aggression and continuing occupation of a significant part of a sovereign State, entailing enclaved and missing persons, refugees and massive and enduring violations of human rights.

Cyprus has survived the most difficult circumstances created by the many facets of the problem and has primarily insisted on one thing *vis-à-vis* the involvement of the United Nations in its resolution: the full application of the values this Organisation was founded on and has worked so hard to promote.

So, why does this problem persist after so many years during which the national, regional and international political landscape has undergone dramatic changes? Certainly, it is neither for lack of political will nor for lack of effort on our part.

Rather, the occupying power has not displayed any motivation to solve the problem and this has only been reinforced by the Annan plan which satisfied all Turkish *desiderata*, thus being readily accepted by the Turkish side. Instead, Turkey has used its dominant position to command trade-offs of all sorts.

Secondly, Turkey's long-standing objective of gaining political and military control over Cyprus remains unchanged. Despite declaratory remarks of willingness to solve the Cyprus problem, its actions confirm its dedication to its *ab initio* pursuit of controlling Cyprus through partitioning it geographically in two ethnically clean parts, with Turkey securing rights of suzerainty and the "right" of intervention in Cyprus.

Thirdly, efforts to solve the Cyprus problem have not been filtered through a system of values and norms of international law. They have not been tailored to the roots of the problem or even to the problem itself; rather

their centre of gravity seems to have been the kind of solution the occupying power would want or could, at least, tolerate. In fact, it is clear through the conduct and negotiating positions of Turkey that it has not contemplated a solution outside the boundaries of the *status quo*.

Fourthly, shifting the problem from the context of its origin has led to a problem-solving methodology that divides the distance that separates the parties, caving to the demands of the most powerful party and making its success conditional upon the latter's magnanimity.

Fifthly, the occupying power has insisted on discussing elements to the problem that form neither part of its genesis nor of its solution. The Cyprus problem is not a derivative of bad community relations but one of outside intervention. Persisting, therefore, on a constitutional arrangement, set-up primarily on the basis of ethnic origin - without due respect for the overriding democratic principles of liberty and equality of all citizens - insults their dignity and condemns the viability of any settlement.

Mr. President,

We currently find ourselves engaged in an effort to implement a process consisting of an Agreement concluded and signed by the two communities in Cyprus on 8 July 2006 and complemented by letters exchanged between the leaders of the two communities and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations on 15 November 2006. The surprising laboriousness in implementing this carefully crafted Agreement, the purpose of which is to prepare the ground for subsequent negotiation and is intended to lead to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue, is not inherent to this particular process and we should thus persist on implementing what has been agreed. The pace can only be determined by progress, and as needed, culminating in full-fledged negotiations. Sidelining or circumventing stages of the process will only lead to expediting not the solution, but the confirmation of deadlock.

So what does the future hold for the mission of good offices entrusted to the Secretary-General by the Security Council? On our part, we remain fully committed to it as it is clear to us that we cannot sustain the status quo and must insist on a meaningful and forward-looking process that can elicit concrete results leading to a settlement of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, with the correct meaning of each of these terms. The only process that can take us forward is that established by the 8 July agreed process I outlined above. This process is anticipated to test suggestions, ideas and alternatives at expert level, adequately prepare the ground and submit to the leaders, points that warrant political compromise or agreement. Though the last meeting with the Turkish Cypriot leader did not signal the beginning of the implementation of the Agreement as we had hoped, we will not rescind our efforts to put the 8 July process back on track. The element of time is very important; however only progress through preparing the ground can bring us sooner to an agreed settlement. With a view to achieving progress, I submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, certain ideas and proposals that I hope will contribute to this end.

On the other hand, we have never viewed our relationship with Turkey as a zero sum game. To the contrary, we consider that a solution to the Cyprus problem and good neighbourly relations between Cyprus and Turkey are a *sine qua non* for the stability of both countries and the wider region. An opportunity to put this doctrine to practice has arisen as a result of Turkey's aspiration to join the European Union. However, the catalytic effect of this accession negotiation process, has not thus far helped relieve the Cyprus problem of artificial and unfounded Turkish concerns and unrealistic policy considerations that have, in any case, been rendered obsolete by the emerging political environment. It seems that, at least until now, not even the allure of accession to the European Union can supersede Turkey's policy objectives regarding Cyprus. We, like others, have linked our endorsement of Turkey's European endeavours with the fulfilment of its European obligations.

Turkey's intentions are not only manifest in the non-resolution of the Cyprus problem after all these years. They transpire from all its actions: the non-normalisation of its relations with Cyprus as a first step to becoming an EU partner, the non-removal of any of its troops from Cypriot soil as a confidence building gesture, the intensification of efforts to project a secessionist entity in Cyprus and its systematic violations of our sovereign air and maritime space and of the military *status quo*. This was recently confirmed by explicit statements of its leadership at the highest political level referring to "a settlement based on two peoples, two democracies, two states and two religions" (sic).

Over the past year, we have also witnessed repeated attempts by the occupying power to illegally explore my country's natural resources and to sabotage our sovereign right to explore and manage these resources. It has carried out unauthorised demolitions of Greek-Cypriot houses in the areas it occupies and it continues to destroy cultural and religious heritage. It has intensified the large-scale illegal exploitation of Greek Cypriot properties in the occupied part of Cyprus, not least because this will skew the terms of a future settlement.

At the same time, Turkey pursues its own strategic objectives in Cyprus at the expense of re-unification and is only guided by its own interests and not those of Turkish-Cypriots. It has ascertained over the years that the occupied part of Cyprus would come completely under its political, economic and military control. We regret to note that Turkey has been trying to involve our friends and neighbours in this ill-conceived effort. Underpinning this strategy, is the intent to legitimise the *faits accomplis* of the invasion and attribute political status to its results. Such strategy could not have been achieved without presenting the Turkish Cypriot community as victims, not of Turkish aggression as is really the case, but of Greek-Cypriots for resisting this *fait accomplis*. A prime example of these tactics has been the ongoing campaign to deceptively suggest that the Turkish Cypriot community is economically disadvantaged because it is isolated. Considering that the per capita income of Turkish Cypriots has doubled over the past three years to the extent that they now enjoy the 59th highest per capita income in the world, one can easily detect the political agenda behind the attempt to link their economic development with the fate of the illegal regime.

Mr. President,

For years now we have been advocating that the road to solving the Cyprus problem is not via the exclusion of the inconvenient truths that underlie it or the by-passing of principles that are, for us, the guarantee that the settlement of the Cyprus problem will continue to be valid and relevant in a constantly changing world.

We insist that a functional and enduring solution is not one that flows from a simplistic formula that merely reflects the power balance of the parties. We are convinced that reaching a settlement well above the lowest common denominator is feasible and the creation of a unified, democratic, inclusive and forward looking society fully assuming its place in the European Union is within reach. We are also convinced that a settlement in the form of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation can be truly comprehensive and need not sacrifice justice for the sake of peace. Lasting peace is elusive without the notion of justice being firmly embedded in its foundation. Justice should be intrinsic in any political settlement package as a natural consequence of striving to preserve the universal values, which this Organisation is the Guardian of.

Equally importantly, we regard the preservation of our interests and those of Turkey in our region not as mutually exclusive but as complementary and interdependent. Our vision must be to inherit to future generations the legacy of friendship, co-operation and good neighbourliness. We are afforded the opportunity to prevent eternalising this feud and we should seize it.

Thank you, Mr. President.