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**Statement by
H.E. Dr. Yannis Valinakis
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic**

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Monsieur le Président, Excellences,
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Les grands défis et problèmes à l'échelle mondiale et régionale demandent des réponses urgentes et cohérentes. Les responsabilités et le rôle de l'ONU pour assurer une prise de conscience et une unité de direction sont maintenant encore plus importants et accrus. C'est exactement pour cela que le respect des décisions de l'ONU devrait être la première priorité des tous, y compris des ceux qui sont élus pour représenter l'Organisation et ses institutions.

Je voudrais féliciter Sheikha Al-Khalifa, qui fût juste la troisième femme dans l'histoire de l'ONU qui a tenu le poste du Président de cette Assemblée, pour ses efforts visant à promouvoir les buts et les principes sur lesquels notre Organisation a été fondée.

J'exprime aussi notre appréciation au Secrétaire-Général pour ses efforts incessants pour sauvegarder la paix et la sécurité internationale, ainsi que pour maintenir vifs l'autorité et le rôle de l'Organisation à cet égard.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

La Grèce s'aligne entièrement à la déclaration faite par le Premier Ministre du Portugal au nom de l'Union européenne. Nous voudrions, quand même, ajouter quelques mots sur les grandes questions qui se trouvent sur notre agenda pour la période qui suit.

The end of the Cold War ushered in a new era in international relations, which dissipated the threat of military confrontation among the two power blocs. However, the world community still faces violent internal conflicts, civil wars, genocide and other large-scale atrocities that cause immense destruction and suffering to millions of people.

And yet conflicts within and between States are not the only threat to international peace and security. New threats and challenges are emerging. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a serious challenge. Organized crime and human trafficking constitute another threat that can have destabilizing effects and can fuel civil wars. Extreme poverty in many parts of the world, failing states, large scale humanitarian disasters, deadly infectious diseases and environmental degradation and catastrophes have devastating consequences.

We applaud the Secretary-General's initiative to hold a high-level event, last week, to deal with climate change - environmental issues being potentially the greatest threat to our societies. I hope that a global sustained comprehensive approach emerges soon to help save our planet, our future, our children's future.

Controlling and coping with climate change is one of the greatest environmental and development challenges. Without swift action to face the problems arising from those challenges we all risk to pay a high and bitter price.

We should proceed in a timely manner, on a step by step approach, building on national as well as international capacities, in order to address the causes, mitigate the effects and create synergies that will allow for specific and measurable results in the near future.

A clear indication of the importance that Greece attaches to the environment is the fact that the Greek Chairmanship of the Human Security Network has decided to focus on climate change and human security.

Your Excellencies,

This summer my country suffered enormously from devastating wildfires. May I take this opportunity, addressing the international community, to express our deep gratitude and thanks to all those countries and friends who have extended to us their valuable help, assistance and solidarity.

Working for peace is not an easy task. The pursuit of international peace and stability, if it is to be successful, means that threats have to be addressed in a comprehensive way and that many conditions have to be met. Unresolved conflicts have to be energetically confronted, while, at the same time, we have to deal with situations of deep-seated injustice, inequality, ongoing violence, social exclusion, extreme poverty, famine, illiteracy and cultural misunderstanding.

In addressing the deep-rooted structural problems that fuel conflicts, peacebuilding must bridge security and development. Good governance, the rule of law, strong democratic institutions, respect for human rights, development assistance are critical components in reducing today's conflicts.

Terrorism is undeniably one of the most serious threats to peace and security, menacing the foundation, itself, of our democratic societies and actions to combat this threat should be in conformity with international human rights standards and fundamental freedoms. The adoption of the Global Counter- Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly is a major accomplishment and its full implementation should be an absolute priority for Member States. In this respect I would like to emphasize the importance that my country attaches to the conclusion of the ongoing negotiations for the elaboration of a comprehensive Convention against international terrorism which would be a valuable addition to the counter-terrorism legal framework.

In the face of all these threats and challenges that transcend state borders, we need a more comprehensive concept of collective security based on respect and justice as requirements for peace, as well as solidarity as a condition for security, entailing a commitment from all to promote sustainable development. But above all we need a commitment to collective political action requiring the strengthening of the United Nations.

Early, comprehensive and coherent prevention of conflicts lies at the heart of the United Nations mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security. Integrated and long-term strategies to address the root causes of conflicts are necessary. The United Nations should therefore be strengthened in managing, resolving and preventing conflicts and their recurrence. International regional Organizations should also be effective in this regard, while international treaties should be respected.

The United Nations was created on the basis of the resolve of all states that collective action was the only basis for taking measures to address our common –world- problems. We only have common values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations which guide our efforts and give us direction to unite around what is just and right : freedom, democracy, human rights, equality, peaceful resolution of conflicts, respect, multiculturalism, tolerance, open societies, dialogue among neighbours, nations, religions and cultures.

Greece's foreign and security policy is based precisely on these principles and values; we are committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes, the upholding of international law, including international humanitarian law, and promoting good neighbourly relations.

Your Excellencies,

I deeply regret to note that thirty three years after the Turkish invasion in 1974, the Republic of Cyprus remains a divided island. Turkey continues to occupy part of a UN and EU member state with over 40,000 troops, violating UN resolutions and international law.

Our steadfast objective remains the withdrawal of all occupation troops and the reunification of the island, in the context of a bizonal, bicomunal federation. To this end, the relevant UN resolutions and the EU principles and values, provide a clear framework for a comprehensive settlement, agreed upon by the two communities.

Greece has always and consistently welcomed the UN initiatives for finding a just and viable solution. In this vein, we strongly support the rapid implementation of the 8th of July of 2006 Agreement, reached under the auspices of the UN.

We shall continue to do everything possible to assist the two communities to find an agreed solution, not least because it will significantly enhance the development of friendship and cooperation between Greece and Turkey. We strongly urge Turkey to demonstrate the necessary will and flexibility towards this direction.

Your Excellencies,

Our foreign policy is based on the principles of international law and the UN Charter. It is in this spirit that we approach our relations with neighboring Turkey. Greece has taken specific steps and initiatives to continue broadening and strengthening our cooperation with Turkey in all fields. Lately, it has grown even further in the economic field, but also in the energy sector. We believe that a democratic Turkey, with a clear European orientation, meeting the European criteria and requirements set out in the Negotiating Framework with the European Union, can be a factor of stability in our part of the world. That is why we support Turkey's European aspirations. Turkey, however, must make a concrete demonstration of its unequivocal commitment to the principles of good neighbourly relations and peaceful settlement of disputes with all its neighbours. In any case from the outset Greece has repeatedly stated that Turkey's full compliance should lead to full membership.

Your Excellencies,

Good neighbourly relations are the cornerstone upon which the countries of South East Europe must build a common European future of peace, stability and prosperity. The European perspective of the countries of our region has been a strategic choice for Greece. Our vision is to transform our neighbourhood into a region that is like the rest of Europe – an area of peace, democracy and prosperity. As the oldest member of the EU and NATO in the region, my country works intensively and constructively to create the necessary conditions of good neighbourliness, mutual understanding, and stability in the Balkans.

Enhancing regional cooperation, establishing good neighbourly relations and finding mutually acceptable solutions on outstanding issues with neighbouring countries is a fundamental prerequisite for further integration of the aspirant countries of South Eastern Europe into the Euro-atlantic institutions. Provocative acts and statements with irredentist connotations are incompatible with UN principles and common European values. They poison the necessary climate of understanding between our peoples and they act contrary to the European concept.

In this context UN Security Council Resolutions 817 and 845, calling for a mutually acceptable solution on the name issue of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, need to be respected in practice by all.

Our efforts to secure a truly European future for the Balkans will remain inconclusive if we fail to reach a viable and sustainable settlement for Kosovo's future status. We remain convinced that this goal can only be attained: if, first, the achievement of effective compromises between the two parties in the course of the ongoing negotiations is attained and, second, if the legitimization of the settlement through a Resolution of the Security Council is reached. In any case this is par excellence a European problem and the role of the European Union in this is essential.

Your Excellencies,

I cannot think of any other conflict that has held the unwavering attention of so many for so long as the Middle East. We are all well aware of the multifaceted challenges that we face in this part of the world. And we all agree that the nature of these challenges is such that they affect not only the peoples of the region, but the entire international community.

Despite the variances that we observe among us, there is one crucial element that is common to all, and that is the need to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on a two-state solution, which will guarantee security, mutual respect and a fair future for all.

This is our common goal and Greece is deeply committed to it.

Your Excellencies,

The progress Africa has been making in recent years is both substantial and undeniable, characterized by economic growth, crisis management and a will for conflict prevention. The United Nations, deeply involved in peacekeeping and providing developmental assistance, have found in the African Union and the African regional organizations a vital partner for the success of this process. Partnership between the UN and the African Union, as well as the African regional organizations could well be the key to successfully overcome the challenges facing Africa today. In this context, we welcome the creation of UNAMID, which by combining forces of the United Nations and of the African Union shows the way towards the future for Darfur and the continent as a whole.

International development cooperation is one of the priorities of Greek foreign policy. Our national development Agency, Hellenic Aid, implements the UN Millennium Development Goals in the framework set out by the European Union, the principles followed by the Development Assistance Committee of OECD, while centering on our cultural heritage. Our humanitarian and development projects in 46 countries aim at combating poverty, diseases, malnutrition, lack of access to drinking water and dealing with the consequences of natural disasters and conflict situations, while safeguarding the protection of human rights. We strive to tackle the root causes of illegal immigration, human trafficking and terrorism since enforcement measures alone are not enough to address these problems. In 2005, Greece allocated \$ 384,22 million to finance actions to the benefit of our partner countries in the developing world. In Africa, development assistance, ranging from humanitarian aid to HIV/AIDS care and refugee programs, was offered to almost twenty African states.

On all those issues I referred to, my country is committed to assist the United Nations and to cooperate with all individual member states in order to achieve peace and prosperity for all peoples of the world.

Thank you.