



**Statement of the Republic of Cyprus in the Fourth Committee of the
United Nations General Assembly at its 75th session on agenda item 54:
Comprehensive Review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all
their aspects
New York, November 2020**

The Republic of Cyprus fully aligns itself with the General Statement of the European Union and, as a host country of a UN peacekeeping operation, would also like to make some additional remarks regarding agenda item 54, entitled “Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations”.

Peacekeeping operations (PKOs) are a fundamental and, most probably, the most effective instrument at the disposal of the United Nations in advancing peace and security. They are the main driving force in creating a conducive environment for promoting peace processes. At a time when the world faces increased tensions, conflicts and threats to international peace and stability, the United Nation’s PKOs have a vital role to play.

Cyprus continues to consider PKOs as the most potent tool at the disposal of the Security Council, as well as the most human-centered and cost-effective way to prevent, manage, de-escalate and stabilize conflict. Cyprus also continues to support the work of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping operations (C34) in promoting, inter alia, better operational structure and cooperation with other partners, including with the European Union and other regional actors with knowledge of local circumstances. Furthermore, and as we acknowledge the need to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping operations, we voice once again our support for the Action for Peacekeeping initiative that aims to ensure that UN PKOs are truly fit for purpose.

Improving the performance of PKOs is strategically essential as they need to be capable of effectively implementing their mandate, protecting civilians, decisively addressing violations of the military status quo, and preventing the creation of facts on the ground, while upholding the resolutions of the Security Council. To ensure this, PKOs need to be sufficiently manned, equipped and financed to fulfil their mandate. Decision-making regarding PKOs should always be based on peacekeeping expertise, the situation on the ground, and the anticipated developments if a PKO is withdrawn prematurely or not deployed when required. These decisions should never be guided by political expediencies or financial constraints and should be combined with rationalization of costs, promoting of prudent spending and implementing a performance-centered approach. In this context, it should be stressed that cost-cutting should not, in any way, impact the PKO’s optimal functioning.

Equitable gender representation within PKOs is an important component that further contributes to the improvement of their efficiency and Cyprus welcomes the increasing

efforts for greater deployment of women in UN PKOs. UNFICYP has been a pioneer in implementing policies directed in promoting gender balance, being the first UN PKO to appoint a woman as its Force Commander. It now has its second female Force Commander and the heads of all three of its components are women.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite its long-running presence, since its 1964 deployment at the request of the Cyprus Government, UNFICYP remains indispensable for the safety and security of Cyprus and the Cypriots. The ongoing foreign occupation of more than a third of Cyprus' territory, the constant attempts by the occupation army to move forward, the daily violations of Cyprus' sovereignty and sovereign rights by the occupying power on land, at sea and in the air, and the numerous violations of relevant UNSC resolutions, make UNFICYP essential in preventing the recurrence of fighting.

Recently, the occupying power has created a new *fait accompli* by opening of the fenced area of Varosha in direct violation of relevant Resolutions of the Security Council and contrary to the latter's warnings against altering the status of Varosha. The far-reaching implications of a violation of this magnitude jeopardise the legacy of UNFICYP as a successful Mission and point to the significance of PKOs acting as a bulwark against the consolidation of the effects of aggression. In this vein, Cyprus would like to stress that PKOs should have unimpeded access and freedom of movement in all areas that are relevant to the conflict they are mandated to oversee, something which is necessary for reporting to the UNSC, enabling the latter to fulfil its responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Cyprus' gratitude to the Member States that have contributed military and police personnel to UNFICYP over all these years and to the men and the women who have served under the blue beret in Cyprus throughout the years.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.