



Security Council

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Mission of good offices in Cyprus

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The Security Council, in its resolution [2561 \(2021\)](#), requested me to submit a report by 10 July 2021 on my good offices, in particular on progress towards reaching a consensus starting point for meaningful results-oriented negotiations leading to a settlement. In that resolution, the Council encouraged the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities to provide written updates on the actions that they have taken in support of the relevant parts of the resolution since its adoption, in particular with regard to paragraphs 5, 6 and 8, with a view to reaching a sustainable and comprehensive settlement, and requested me to include the contents of those updates in my report. The updates submitted by the two leaders are contained in annexes I and II to the present report.

2. The present report is focused on developments from 19 December 2020 to 18 June 2021, providing an update on the activities carried out by my mission of good offices under the leadership of my Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus, Elizabeth Spehar. It also includes an update on the consultations conducted by senior United Nations official Jane Holl Lute on my behalf and on the informal five-plus-one meeting that took place in Geneva, under my auspices, from 27 to 29 April 2021.¹

II. Background and context

3. In the period since the previous report on my mission of good offices ([S/2021/5](#)), it was demonstrated that public confidence in the possibility of resuming peace talks and securing a negotiated settlement has continued to fall and that the two communities have become increasingly polarized. The period was characterized by heightened attention paid to the respective responses to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, economic pressures and movements in the political landscape.

4. The four-year absence of fully-fledged negotiations following the inconclusive closing of the Conference on Cyprus in July 2017 has led to increasing concern about the future of the peace process, exacerbated by the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions on movement. With the announcement on

¹ An informal meeting of the Greek Cypriot leader, the Turkish Cypriot leader, the guarantor powers and the United Nations.



24 February that I would convene an informal five-plus-one meeting on Cyprus in Geneva, the focus of the parties turned to positioning in advance of, and preparations for, the meeting. Despite multiple calls from citizens' groups for the two sides to invest in building trust between them and in renewing confidence in the peace process, the negative rhetoric continued. While civil society groups on both sides held a number of marches in support of a mutually agreed solution, the leaders continued their separate outreach efforts, promoting their divergent positions both before and after the informal meeting in Geneva.

5. Against the backdrop of a fluctuating epidemiological situation regarding COVID-19 cases on both sides of the island, greater restrictions were reintroduced during times of high numbers of positive cases and when hospitals, including intensive care units, were under pressure owing to an elevated number of COVID-19 patients. In general, tight restrictions were enforced, with curfews limiting night-time movement on both sides during most of the reporting period, as were testing requirements. Certain implementation problems were reported during shifts in lockdown levels on both sides. In addition to adverse effects on public health, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a significant socioeconomic impact, including in the form of an unprecedented low number of tourist arrivals.

6. On both sides of the island, there was a marked increase in rallies and marches organized to protest a range of grievances. There were also increased public calls for a settlement, as well as petitions and letters sent to the two leaders and the United Nations in advance of the informal meeting held in Geneva. As an example, a large bicomunal march and peace event, "Together for Federation", was held separately (owing to COVID-19 restrictions) on 24 April, on both sides of the divide, in support of a federal solution and against the partition of the island. Representatives of the This Country Is Ours platform read out a joint declaration signed by 120 Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot organizations. Another entity, Unite Cyprus Now, engaged in the organizing and training of youth activists island-wide, running dialogue groups and online webinars and undertaking mobilization activities along with other civil society organizations and groups. The Bi-communal Peace Initiative – United Cyprus, a platform of about 70 organizations, commenced consultations and issued a call to entities, initiatives, personalities and people from across the island to establish a civic constituent assembly that brings together forces with a shared vision for reunification on the island. Finally, the Cyprus Dialogue Forum launched a digital guide on the Cyprus peace process based on open-source material, in English, Greek and Turkish, providing easy access to key documents on the Cyprus peace talks over the decades. The comprehensive guide contains factsheets and infographics that map the core elements of a range of peace proposals submitted to date, in order to facilitate fact-based dialogue across the island. Despite this burst of activity in favour of a solution, the majority of Cypriots on both sides continued to not engage publicly on the matter.

7. In March, to support the call by the Security Council in its resolution [2561 \(2021\)](#) for the two sides to work together on confidence-building measures and to restart and revitalize the work of the technical committees, my Deputy Special Adviser/Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus established regular trilateral meetings with representatives of the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot leaders, supported by my mission of good offices, in a process of continual engagement. Political tensions at various levels persisted during this period. In addition, for as long as the three crossing points remained closed, with uncoordinated and differing restrictive procedures at the crossing points prevailing, movement across the island remained limited. Unauthorized activity continued to occur in and around the buffer zone, causing frequent disputes between the two sides, as described in more detail in my most recent report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus ([S/2021/635](#)).

On a positive note, in addition to advancing confidence-building between the two sides, the regular trilateral meetings also constituted a forum in which to raise issues of concern, such as those arising in and adjacent to the buffer zone. Several issues, such as the harmonization of COVID-19 measures and the reopening of crossing points, were ultimately solved through that format.

8. On 2 June, following extensive discussions by the Technical Committee on Health and between the two sides through the trilateral dialogue with my Deputy Special Adviser and Special Representative, the two leaders decided to harmonize measures related to COVID-19 and to reopen the three remaining crossing points. On 4 June, the crossings reopened, and the new measures were put in place, in a decision that was well received in both communities.

9. The religious leaders who make up the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden, continued to be active during the reporting period, working together in support of religious freedom, reconciliation, co-existence and peace on the island. The religious leaders met in person on 7 June, for the first time in a year, owing to the pandemic. They also issued a statement on the informal five-plus-one meeting, in which they expressed their wish for an end to the current stalemate and the resumption of dialogue on the future of the island and advocated “increased cooperation, dialogue and empathy between our communities, for memories to heal, trust replacing fear and for hope to grow”. In recent months, the religious leaders of Cyprus also demonstrated public unity against various manifestations of hate speech and in relation to cases of desecration and vandalism against places of worship, which occurred on both sides of the divide. The religious leaders continued to visit each other’s places of worship, provided Greek and Turkish language courses for clerics and participated in a webinar on International Women’s Day, during which Cypriot women of faith from both communities were invited to discuss the challenges that women face island-wide, especially during the pandemic, and to share information on community initiatives that they were leading.

10. The leaders and representatives of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties continued to meet under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia, issuing joint statements in which the leaders were urged to demonstrate political will to resume negotiations and to agree on confidence-building measures. More details are provided in my most recent report on UNFICYP.

11. On 12 April, building on many years of discussions between the two communities, including through the Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters and on the common understanding reached by the two leaders on the matter in 2015, the European Commission adopted a “Χαλλούμι/Halloumi/Hellim” protected designation of origin package. The package consisted of two measures, one allowing producers based anywhere on the island of Cyprus to benefit from the protected designation of origin status for Halloumi/Hellim, and the other allowing such products to cross the Green Line, provided that the cheese and milk from which it was made had met all European Union animal and public health standards.

12. During the reporting period, there were repeated instances of Turkish Cypriot and Turkish officials publicly stating their intention to develop Varosha in such a way that would, in their view, strengthen the economy in the north, including through attracting tourism. Those statements and developments on the ground triggered objections from Greek Cypriots, who stressed that ongoing activities in Varosha violated relevant Security Council resolutions, including [550 \(1984\)](#) and [789 \(1992\)](#), as well as the statement, dated 9 October 2020, by the President of the Council ([S/PRST/2020/9](#)) on the issue. As noted in my most recent report on UNFICYP, developments on the ground continued to be observed in the fenced-off town of Varosha.

13. With respect to the regional situation, following a period of heightened tensions over hydrocarbon exploration and maritime zone claims, including the delimitation of maritime boundaries, the current reporting period saw no major developments in that regard. Although those issues are far from resolved, the period was characterized by a lessening of tensions and some renewed momentum created for dialogue, including between the guarantor powers Greece and Turkey.

III. Status of the process: informal five-plus-one meeting held in Geneva

14. During the reporting period, Ms. Lute held numerous discussions, both in person and virtually, with the leaders of the two communities and their representatives, as well as with representatives of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. She was also in contact with representatives of the European Union.

15. I convened an informal five-plus-one meeting on the Cyprus issue at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, from 27 to 29 April 2021, with the objective of determining whether common ground exists for the parties to negotiate a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem within a foreseeable horizon. The idea for such an informal meeting had initially been put forward by Turkey, in the context of the consultations that had been undertaken by Ms. Lute after the Conference on Cyprus closed inconclusively in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, in July 2017. As outlined in my previous report on my mission of good offices in Cyprus, following consultations with Ms. Lute, the sides and the guarantor powers had expressed a willingness to attend such a meeting under my auspices.

16. With the participation of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom, the informal five-plus-one meeting was the first time that the parties had been brought together since the Conference on Cyprus. During the meeting, I held a succession of bilateral and plenary meetings with the parties, in order to exchange informally and openly about the vision for the future and how to chart a path forward. In our deliberations, participants shared their views with me and with each other with openness and frankness, which allowed us to explore the extent of commonality and consider ideas and options for the way forward.

17. As I explained publicly on 29 April, the Turkish Cypriot delegation expressed the position that the many efforts made to solve the Cyprus issue over the years had failed, including the most recent attempt made in Crans-Montana, and that efforts to negotiate a bizonal, bicomunal federation had been exhausted. They believe that the Turkish Cypriots have inherent sovereign equality and should enjoy equal international status. In their view, the solution should be based on two states cooperating with each other. The Greek Cypriot delegation expressed the position that negotiations should resume from where they left off in Crans-Montana and be aimed at achieving a settlement based on a bizonal, bicomunal federation with political equality, on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions, the Joint Declaration of 2014, the existing body of work, the six elements I presented in Crans-Montana, and in line with the European Union *acquis*.

18. Despite our efforts, sufficient common ground could not be found during the informal meeting to allow for the resumption of formal negotiations in relation to the settlement of the Cyprus problem. Notwithstanding the results, it was agreed to continue the dialogue, with the objective of moving in the direction of reaching common ground, so as to allow for the start of formal negotiations.

IV. Status of the process: activities of my mission of good offices

19. My Deputy Special Adviser and my mission of good offices conducted an intensive outreach programme throughout the reporting period, with political parties, economic actors and civil society organizations island-wide, and held regular meetings with European Union officials, the World Bank and the diplomatic community. Views were exchanged on the prospects for the informal five-plus-one meeting, the state of readiness of the parties and the socioeconomic situation on the island. Efforts were also focused on addressing the negative impacts of COVID-19, on furthering confidence-building measures and on the resumption and revitalization of the work of the technical committees.

20. My Deputy Special Adviser also held a number of high-level meetings, including with the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, Dominic Raab, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation of Spain, Maria Aránzazu González Laya, the Minister of European and Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, Ivan Korčok, and the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Josep Borrell, during their respective visits to Cyprus. My mission of good offices has continued to meet regularly with World Bank counterparts, in particular regarding the continued dissemination of the findings of the gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment of a settlement that the mission had completed with the support of the Bank in late 2019, in accordance with the call made by the Security Council in its resolution [2453 \(2019\)](#).

21. A slight revitalization of the work of the technical committees occurred during the reporting period, following a quieter period that had resulted from the impact of COVID-19 and the change in Turkish Cypriot leadership in October 2020, with a new slate of Turkish Cypriot members appointed to various committees in February 2021. My mission of good offices, as part of its efforts towards the resumption and reinvigoration of the activities of the committees, convened regular meetings with representatives of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders to discuss the status of the committees and the way forward. In those meetings, both sides reaffirmed their support for the technical committees and underscored the value of their work to improve the daily lives of Cypriots. Possible cooperation in the area of sports and peacebuilding was also suggested to the two sides.

22. Despite those efforts, they did not always result in the full reactivation of concrete activities. While all the committees, except the Technical Committee on Crossings, resumed their engagement, most of them only met sporadically. The Technical Committee on Broadcasting continued its work with the same members, while the Technical Committees on Culture, Education, the Environment, Gender Equality and Humanitarian Affairs all held introductory meetings among some or all members following changes to the memberships of those committees. While the committees discussed future work, including possible project ideas, there have been delays in the full resumption of the activities of most of the committees, owing to scheduling challenges and the need for familiarization by new members.

23. My mission of good offices, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, organized virtual information sessions on the European Union-funded support facility for the technical committees, held from 22 to 25 February, for the team leaders of all committees, encouraging greater utilization of the funding available for their projects and initiatives and informing them of the practical support also available to them for the preparation and execution of activities. The purpose of the funding mechanism is to assist the technical committees in building capacity and enhancing the impact and visibility of their joint work.

Although projects were in discussion and undergoing implementation in the Technical Committees on Crime and Criminal Matters, Education, the Environment and Health, and the facility helpfully provided translation services for certain committee meetings, the funding remains significantly underutilized. While funding has been extended until the end of April 2022 so as to enable the technical committees to take advantage of the facility further into the future, no new projects were proposed during the reporting period.

24. As called for in Security Council resolution [2561 \(2021\)](#), during the period, the two sides decided to work, as a matter of priority, on addressing the negative impacts of COVID-19, focusing on issues related to health and welfare, contact between the communities and the economic effects of the pandemic. With United Nations facilitation, all technical committees were asked to identify related issues within their respective mandates for the representatives of the two leaders to consider, and the Technical Committee on Health was specifically tasked with discussing a package of measures to be presented to the leaderships of both communities. Emphasis was also placed on the work of the Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters, which met four times after a hiatus of several months. The Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot members of that Committee put forward proposals in areas where the two sides could work together, including ways to address the economic fallout from the pandemic, while also promoting greater economic ties and increased intra-island trade.

25. While the provision of vaccines to European Union member States encountered some delays, the European Commission reported that European Union-approved vaccines would be provided to cover the needs of all Cypriots. The Technical Committee on Health was tasked with overseeing the transfer of vaccines between the two communities. According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, as at 18 June, a total of 831,205 doses had been received by the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus. According to the Technical Committee on Health, 61,050 of those doses had been transferred to the north. Work is ongoing between the sides with respect to the recognition of vaccines for the purposes of future travel, both through the crossings and on and off the island.

26. It was also decided that specific emphasis would be placed on tackling the issue of irregular migration, with the Technical Committees on Gender Equality, Humanitarian Affairs, Crisis Management and Crime and Criminal Matters, meeting to share information as a first step to addressing the situation. On 12 May, the first virtual meeting on irregular migration with experts from both communities took place, facilitated by my mission of good offices and with the attendance of the representative in Cyprus of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Discussions are now ongoing on how to proceed and on whether to set up a standing body to continue regular dialogue on the issue.

27. A total of four committees (the Technical Committees on Health, Cultural Heritage, Broadcasting and Crime and Criminal Matters) remained fully active, with regular meetings and the implementation of ongoing projects. The Technical Committee on Health sustained regular engagement, in particular through frequent interaction between the two co-chairs, who exchanged relevant information on the COVID-19 responses of the respective sides. The co-chairs also helped to ensure the smooth delivery of humanitarian aid, in addition to overseeing vaccine delivery. Weeks of discussions and building on the consensus reached on a set of harmonized COVID-19-related measures devised by the Technical Committee on Health, and the regular engagement of my Deputy Special Adviser with representatives of the two leaders, proved critical to fostering the agreement announced on 2 June on the reopening of the three remaining crossing points and on the harmonization of pandemic-related procedures for all crossings.

28. The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage completed conservation works at several sites, including the historic Afendrika archaeological site, two historic fountains and two Greek Cypriot and two Turkish Cypriot cemeteries, which were part of pilot projects. Several other sites benefited from emergency support works. The Committee also started numerous tendering processes for conservation works and designs island-wide. On 25 May, the Committee was awarded the European Heritage Award/Europa Nostra Award in the category of dedicated service to heritage, for demonstrating a high degree of commitment and civic engagement, coupled with excellence in the safeguarding and enhancement of cultural heritage, monuments and sites.

29. The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, through its subcommittee, the Joint Contact Room (also known as the Joint Communications Room), successfully continued its daily operations, facilitating the handover of two suspects between the sides and the exchange of 151 pieces of information on crime and criminal issues as at 31 May 2021.

30. Contact among the members of the Technical Committee on Gender Equality was reinitiated following changes in its membership, as described in my previous report. In early 2021, the mission facilitated a meeting of the two co-chairs, during which the future work of the Committee was discussed, including the development of an action plan supporting the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace talks, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution [2483 \(2019\)](#) and repeated in subsequent resolutions.

31. The Technical Committee on Education discussed projects under development and started preparations to resume its activities, including the Imagine project, in the upcoming academic year (2021/22).

32. Although the Technical Committee on Crossings did not meet during the reporting period, discussions on the reopening of crossings took place regularly in the context of discussions in the trilateral dialogue described above.

33. While the issue of confidence-building measures has been raised in discussions in the regular trilateral meetings, stand-alone confidence-building measures outside the technical committees were not furthered during the reporting period.

34. Despite ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, my mission of good offices and UNFICYP continued their joint efforts to support the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, including the promotion of the active participation of women in peacemaking, through virtual forums. Those efforts included engagement with and support for women civil society activists and women's organizations and platforms. These actors came together ahead of the informal five-plus-one meeting in Geneva, with a shared vision to encourage the parties to ensure the effective participation of women and the inclusion of a gender perspective at the informal meeting and in the future, should the sides commence full-fledged negotiations. Outreach was undertaken by the intercommunal women's group, Hands Across the Divide, which conducted meetings with decision makers on both sides of the island and with the diplomatic community. Several women's organizations and platforms issued statements and sent letters to the parties in anticipation of the informal five-plus-one meeting. While those initiatives made a positive contribution to the public discourse, they did not have an impact on the level of participation by women in the delegations of the two sides, which was minimal. Nevertheless, the initiatives reflected a growing trend of intercommunal pro-solutionist activity and constitute a positive step towards further sensitizing key stakeholders regarding the perspectives of women in relation to the peace process.

35. On 22 February, my mission of good offices, in partnership with UNFICYP, continued to raise the profile of initiatives (such as on financial literacy for women),

in line with and to promote the results of the gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment called for by the Security Council and conducted by the mission of good offices in partnership with the World Bank. The outcome of the assessment substantiated that delaying a settlement in Cyprus increases both the economic and non-economic costs of the prevailing political status quo. The translation of the assessment into both Greek and Turkish was also completed during the period under review, and both documents were made freely accessible on the website of my mission of good offices.²

36. Increased outreach to the business community on both sides was also conducted, primarily through virtual means, to obtain a better understanding of the corporate landscape and its impact on the peace process. That outreach included not only owners of women-led businesses and representatives of women's business associations, but also embassies with an interest in supporting efforts to promote discussions on the gender-differentiated impact of a settlement and on the necessary policies to be implemented to ensure that a settlement can more effectively benefit both women and men. Engagement with business interlocutors had a special focus on women and young entrepreneurs, and views were solicited from young female members of family-owned businesses, well-established female heads of companies and young female entrepreneurs.

37. During the reporting period, my mission of good offices continued to cooperate with UNFICYP on an environmental peacebuilding initiative and supported activities to highlight and address environmental challenges in the buffer zone and throughout the island, including through outreach to civil society. A photo competition aimed at young people across the island, on the topic "What does water mean to you?", was launched on the occasion of World Water Day, on 22 March in collaboration with the Technical Committee on the Environment and the Embassy of the United States of America, concluding with a panel discussion held on 17 June. During that period, preparations were also made for the launch of a second iteration of the United Nations Youth Champions for Environment and Peace programme.

38. During the reporting period, my mission of good offices commissioned polling exercise conducted in the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities. A majority of respondents from both communities reconfirmed their aspirations for a mutually agreed settlement and expressed the belief that it was imperative to reach one as soon as possible. Despite the desire and urgency expressed, significantly fewer respondents of those polled had confidence that a settlement would, in fact, be reached. The exercise also showed that, while COVID-19-related issues on the island have not negatively affected the image of each community vis-à-vis the other, they have contributed to lowered expectations regarding a solution.

V. Observations

39. The passage of time since the historic opportunity in Crans-Montana has complicated the efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution in Cyprus. I convened the parties in Geneva because I believed that their readiness to participate in an informal five-plus-one meeting offered a valuable opportunity for them to meet and exchange perspectives with a view to determining whether common ground exists to negotiate a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem within a foreseeable horizon. The question before us was, and remains, a critical and difficult one, with potentially far-reaching implications. In an informal meeting convened without preconditions, it is useful that all parties are able to express their positions in an open manner; however, it is clear that, as

² See: <https://uncyprustalks.unmissions.org/launch-un-world-bank-gender-sensitive-socio-economic-impact-assessment-settlement-cyprus>.

Secretary-General, I am guided in the negotiations on Cyprus by relevant Security Council resolutions that have established the United Nations parameters.

40. For more than five decades, the parties have sought the help of the United Nations and the international community to solve the long-standing Cyprus issue. The peace process in Cyprus is *sui generis*; the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots have equal inherent rights and engage in negotiations as equals in the process. The Security Council has made clear in numerous resolutions over nearly 50 years that there is only one sovereign state on the island of Cyprus. At the same time, I note the realities on the island, and that the parties have expressed to me the importance of finding a practicable framework within which genuine political equality would manifest as shared and effective participation in the political and economic life of the island.

41. It is now four years since Crans-Montana, and I reiterate that the issues have become more complicated. While it remains to be seen whether common ground can be reached to resume negotiations for a lasting settlement in Cyprus, it should be recalled that the future of the process remains in the hands of the parties, especially the two Cypriot leaders. As can be seen by the written updates by the two sides annexed to the present report, their positions remain far apart. As we endeavour to support the two sides in seeking common ground, the parties' display of flexibility and political will, and a clear-eyed view of the best interests of the Cypriots, will be of paramount importance.

42. The Security Council has given me a clear mandate that has guided my efforts. I reiterate my determination to continue to assist the parties in reaching a comprehensive settlement within a foreseeable horizon, so as to bring lasting security and well-being to all Cypriots, to the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, who deserve to live in peace and prosperity together in the exercise of their equal inherent rights. Therefore, I urge the parties to engage constructively in the continuing consultations so that meaningful talks can resume.

43. My mission of good offices, under the leadership and guidance of my Deputy Special Adviser, is working on the island to promote rapprochement between the communities and improve the climate. Important work was done to support the two sides in restarting the technical committees, in considering confidence-building measures and in engaging with each other on addressing serious problems on the island, including, as a priority, the negative impacts of COVID-19. The regularity of the trilateral meetings hosted by the Deputy Special Adviser and of related discussions during the reporting period is notable and represents a substantial increase in engagement as compared with the previous period. This is positive, given the current absence of full-fledged negotiations, and I encourage the two sides in Cyprus to continue engaging with the United Nations in that vein.

44. At the same time, despite some progress in the work of the technical committees, I continue to consider that these bodies are significantly underutilized. I strongly urge the sides to work together on confidence-building measures and to revitalize the work of the technical committees so that they can fulfil their potential in improving the daily lives of Cypriots, also in accordance with Security Council resolution [2561 \(2021\)](#). I urge the leaders to move beyond discussion and to provide political support and guidance to all the committees for the full reinvigoration of their work.

45. Pursuant to the call by the Security Council in resolution [2561 \(2021\)](#), I welcome the decision of the two leaders to empower the Technical Committee on Health during the reporting period to reach consensus on a set of harmonized measures governing crossings during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the full reopening of crossing points. The agreement reached by the two leaders, announced on 2 June, on uniform measures and the reopening of the three crossings that had remained closed, is to be heralded.

46. In line with my recent statement to the Security Council on 17 February, on global vaccine equity, I underscore the importance of providing European Union-approved vaccines to both communities and of the equitable sharing of those vaccines, both to ensure public health safety on the island and as a key confidence-building measure.

47. The two economies continue to drift further apart with ever-greater disparities, while intercommunal, person-to-person contact remains limited. Both communities could benefit from greater trade and economic cooperation. The two communities could also benefit from hearing about positive examples of cooperation on the island, in general, and involving youth specifically. The idea of cooperation on sport to bring young people together and promote interaction between the two communities via sports activities, including possibly through the establishment of a technical committee, is worth considering.

48. I welcome the registration by the European Union of the joint Cypriot heritage, Halloumi/Hellim, as a protected designation of origin. That accomplishment has the potential to boost the economies of both communities and increase trade across the Green Line, in compliance with European Union animal and public health standards. I hope for implementation of the protected designation of origin products registration in such a way that fully benefits both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot producers.

49. I continue to monitor developments in and around Cyprus closely. I call on the leaders to address matters of concern between them in an open and constructive manner, especially while consultations continue in order to find common ground to allow for formal negotiations to start. I have repeatedly stressed the need to avoid actions on the island, including in Varosha, that could complicate chances for finding common ground between the parties or that could trigger tensions. I reiterate my concern over developments in the fenced-off area of the town and recall that the position of the United Nations remains unchanged. I further recall the statement dated 9 October 2020 by the President of the Security Council and the relevant Council resolutions related to Varosha, notably resolutions [550 \(1984\)](#) and [789 \(1992\)](#), and the importance of adhering fully to those resolutions. I stress again that natural resources around the island should benefit both communities and constitute a strong incentive for the parties to find a mutually acceptable and durable solution in Cyprus and to engender deeper regional cooperation. I welcome the lessening of tensions and the positive steps taken towards dialogue in the region, including between guarantor powers Greece and Turkey, on issues that divide them.

50. As the years have passed with no settlement on the island, both the sense of fatigue over the situation and scepticism regarding the process have deepened. Cyprus negotiations remain closed and leader-focused, information is insufficiently shared with the public and very few actors are involved. Despite the repeated calls in my reports and in Security Council resolutions to involve civil society actors, including women and young people, peace talks in Cyprus have spanned decades without significant input from civil society, with negotiations for a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus being an exclusively track 1 affair since their inception. It is therefore heartening to see pro-settlement voices in both communities engaged in heightened activism in the period before the informal five-plus-one meeting. I echo the Council's support for greater civic engagement and trust building and urge the leaders to be more explicit in encouraging contact and cooperation between the two communities. The leaders should strongly consider involving underrepresented groups in discussions pertaining to the Cyprus problem and in any resumed peace talks, including women, minorities, young people and persons with disabilities. I emphasize the important support role of the two United Nations missions on the ground in this regard and their mutually reinforcing activities. Both missions will further that engagement.

51. I especially encourage the parties to follow international best practice on the participation of women, as highlighted in consecutive Security Council resolutions since the adoption of its resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). I wish the Cypriot delegations to the informal five-plus-one meeting in April had been more inclusive in that regard, and I urge the parties to ensure the inclusion of at least 30 per cent women in their future delegations and to explore ways to ensure the effective participation of women and the inclusion of a gender perspective in a possible resumed negotiation process. In that regard, I urge the leaders to request the Technical Committee on Gender Equality to undertake, as a matter of priority, the development of an action plan to support the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the peace talks, as also requested by the Council in its resolution [2483 \(2019\)](#) and underlined in subsequent resolutions. In developing such an action plan, the Committee should, inter alia, consider how best to engage, support and sustain linkages with women's civil society groups. I also urge the leaders to seriously consider the implementation of the recommendations of the gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment to address existing barriers to the full economic participation of women, not only to benefit women today, but also to ensure that a future peace agreement will more equally benefit both men and women in Cyprus.

52. The coming months could prove to be decisive for the future of the Cyprus peace process, with possible repercussions on the island, as well as around the Eastern Mediterranean region. While international actors need to be ready to fully play their part, I look first to Cyprus: to the leaders, to truly act in the best interests of their people and to explain clearly to their constituents what is at stake; and to all Cypriots to assume responsibility for their future, from the leaders of the political parties, to the economic actors, to society at large. However, the guarantor powers also have to be ready to support the efforts made to bring this long-standing dispute to a conclusion, to the benefit of all Cypriots. Interested parties need to recognize that, without decisive action now, continuing dynamics in and around Cyprus could render future efforts to reach a mutually agreeable settlement to the Cyprus issue unattainable.

53. I would like to express my gratitude to Elizabeth Spehar for her service as my Deputy Special Adviser on Cyprus and to Ms. Lute for conducting consultations on my behalf. I also express my appreciation to all the women and men serving in my mission of good offices in Cyprus for their dedication and commitment to discharging the responsibilities entrusted to them.

Annex I

Written update by the Greek Cypriot leader to the good offices mission of the Secretary-General, pursuant to and in accordance with Security Council resolution 2561 (2021)

This submission is made in response to the encouragement in UN Security Council Resolution 2561, to “*the leaders of the two communities to provide written updates to the Good Offices Mission of the Secretary General on the actions they have taken in support of the relevant parts of this resolution since its adoption, in particular with regard to paragraphs 5 and 6 and 8, with a view to reaching a sustainable and comprehensive settlement*”.

The present update includes all developments relevant to the effort to resume the peace process in the framework of the Good Offices Mission of the UNSG, irrespective of their inter-state or inter-communal character. References to communities are without prejudice to the Republic of Cyprus as a Member State of the United Nations and references to UNFICYP are made without prejudice to the Republic of Cyprus as the host country of the Force.

I. Efforts to resume the peace process

During the last 4 years, since the inconclusive closing of the Crans Montana Conference on Cyprus in July 2017, our efforts to resume the peace process from the point that it was left and based on agreed Terms of Reference were undermined by an intransigent refusal on the part of Ankara to allow the Cyprus-led process to move forward, despite an agreement in principle between the leaders of the two communities in August 2019, confirmed at a trilateral meeting with the UNSG the following November in Berlin.

Although at Crans Montana we came closer than even before to a strategic agreement and the understanding between the two Cypriot leaders was based on the existing body of work, any attempt to resume and conclude the negotiations was met with resistance by Ankara and a systematic undermining of the agreed framework, as not befitting Turkish views on a settlement in Cyprus.

At the same time, Turkey’s illegal and provocative activities in the territorial sea, the continental shelf and the EEZ of Cyprus, the violations of the military status quo along the Turkish forces ceasefire line and Strovilia, as well as the audacious opening of the beachfront in the fenced area of Varosha, in contravention to relevant UNSC Resolutions, created an extremely negative political climate that gravely jeopardizes the prospects of the peace process and would pave the way for the revival of the old rhetoric for a “two states” solution, now branded as “paradigm shift”.

Given the eventual shift indeed of the Turkish Cypriot position on the form of the settlement of the Cyprus problem from reunification to partition, through the recognition of two states and of sovereign equality and its consequent repositioning outside the UN-established parameters of negotiations, with the open encouragement of Ankara, it is not surprising that the 5+1 meeting in Geneva in April did not result in an agreement for the resumption of negotiations.

While Ankara and the Turkish Cypriot leadership insist that trust between the sides has been lost and any effort to continue the peace process building on what we have already achieved would be futile, their argument on what happened at Crans Montana illustrates exactly that we have exercised full flexibility and constructive approach, presenting at the final stage a comprehensive proposal that went beyond what we had previously accepted, in an attempt to bring positions as close as possible.

Regrettably though, they have now entrenched themselves in their intransigent written positions, setting as a precondition for the resumption of negotiations the recognition of two states in Cyprus and expecting the UN Security Council to ignore all its previous Resolutions on the matter, while denying to the UNSC any other role in the process. This amounts to a significant impediment to the efforts of the UN Secretary General aiming at finding common ground that would allow moving to the next step of the process.

We also note, with grave concern, that Ankara has maintained its hostile rhetoric towards Cyprus and they would not hesitate to repeat threats for use of military force on and around Cyprus, exhibited *inter alia* through the upgrading of the illegal airport at Lefkonoiko, where now Turkish drones are stationed, ready to be used in military operations in Cyprus and in the region, according to statements of Turkish officials at the highest level.

Even more worrisome and with potential devastating effect for the peace process, is the fact that despite the repeated calls by the international community and the UN Security Council in particular, to refrain from creating new *faits accomplis* in the fenced area of Varosha, they carry on their plans for further violations contrary to the relevant UNSC Resolutions, thus further fueling the escalation of tension, under the pretense of disturbing what they call a “comfort zone”.

The Cyprus peace process should not be left to degenerate into strong-arm tactics. There should be no room for intimidation and threats, neither *ultimata* based on demands that are outside the UN established parameters. All these constitute a real obstruction to the efforts for resumption of the Cyprus peace process, at a difficult juncture for the Eastern Mediterranean region, and in disregard of the appeal of the UN Secretary General in Geneva to refrain from such acts.

Yet engaged by geography, we just cannot waver over the peace process. As the prolongation of the status quo is not an option, our resolve to pursue a peaceful settlement becomes stronger, along with our readiness to support the UN Secretary General in his effort to keep the process alive and the window of opportunity open. In this direction, we will continue working with his Special Envoy, Ms. Jane Holl Lute, in preparation of the informal meeting announced by the UNSG at Geneva for the next weeks.

As stated already, we are ready to engage in a constructive manner, taking into account the expressed concerns of the Turkish Cypriot side, within the agreed basis of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, as defined in UN Resolutions with a single sovereignty, citizenship and international personality. In this direction in particular, we have already proposed to work on the idea of decentralisation of the exercise of power, which could provide an opportunity to involve to the extent possible and as close to the people as possible all levels of administration in decision-making and implementation, reduce the number of instances of potential friction and thus further enhance the overall functioning of the state.

Furthermore, we would like to stress our genuine and strong belief that good faith negotiation on issues of substance is the best way forward. Having heard the Turkish Cypriot leader in Geneva, we have already explained that any issue of concern could be discussed, provided that we have a strategic agreement on all issues, including *inter alia* territory and property, as well as security and guarantees, in line with the UN established parameters and the logic and methodology of the framework proposed by the UN Secretary General in Crans Montana.

For substantive negotiations to resume with realistic prospects of success, it is imperative to avoid further escalation of tension. We therefore maintain as a priority the creation of an environment conducive to fruitful talks. To this end, we have submitted to the UN Secretary General a package proposal of game-changing CBMs (incl.

Varosha), designed to contribute in creating the much needed right conditions. We believe that it is time for our willingness to engage constructively to be reciprocated.

Our vision of a peaceful Cyprus firmly remains within the established framework and a settlement of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

As we strive for a meaningful and fruitful process, we need the support of the UN and of the UN Security Council in particular to impress upon all parties the need to refrain from any acts that could undermine the prospects of resumption of negotiations. Our approach should always point to our expectations to establish peace, stability and prosperity in Cyprus and in our region.

II. Effective mechanism for direct military contacts

Given the tension on and around Cyprus, including threats for use of military force emboldened by the upgrading of military capacity in the occupied areas, the necessity for the establishment of a mechanism for direct military contacts, between the opposing forces in Cyprus, facilitated by UNFICYP, becomes urgent.

Even more so, taking into account the continuous violations in the fenced area of Varosha of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, and the obstructions and interference on behalf of the Turkish occupation forces with UNFICYP duties, rendering the latter unable to perform its mandated tasks.

The calls by the UN Security Council to the parties involved to engage in the discussion testify to the urgent need to prevent further deterioration. In this direction, the government of the Republic of Cyprus presented a proposal already in December 2019, outlining a framework for a mechanism for direct military contacts between the opposing forces, namely the National Guard and the Turkish occupation forces, at the level of their Commanders, facilitated by UNFICYP at respective level, in accordance with its mandate, as prescribed by the UN Security Council Resolution [186 \(1964\)](#).

The government of the Republic of Cyprus stands ready to engage in further discussion, while in the meantime expects a firm and decisive stance on behalf of UNFICYP that would effectively deter further provocations by the Turkish occupation army.

III. Committee on Missing Persons

The work of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus remains a fundamental aspect of the peace process and therefore, the support of all parties is indeed considered a *conditio sine qua non*.

In this regard, we would like to stress once more the importance of gaining access to relevant archives of countries and organizations that had a military or police presence in Cyprus in 1963, 1964 and 1974, in a manner that would allow the Committee to be more effective.

In particular, the Turkish military archives, especially of the period around 1974. Turkey has the obligation to exercise due diligence and provide information from its archives in good faith, to help determine the fate of missing persons in Cyprus.

Access to military archives would *inter alia* provide information regarding primary locations of burial of missing persons, as well as secondary locations given that a great number of remains were relocated, rendering the efforts of the Committee extremely difficult.

As pointed out numerous times in the past, it is indeed critical to grant access to these archives and obtain pertinent information to the question of the fate of missing persons, which constitutes one of the grave humanitarian challenges of the conflict.

IV. Crossing-points

Although the COVID-19 pandemic still poses a grave challenge for public health at a global scale, conditions in Cyprus have allowed in recent weeks the gradual lifting of many of the restrictions. Taking into account also progress in the vaccination programme, the Technical Committee on Health was mandated to facilitate exchange of views on the best way to restore the *status quo ante*, i.e. pre-COVID-19 outbreak emergency measures.

It should be noted that the gradual lifting of the restrictions at the crossing points started in June 2020 based on an understanding of the leaders of the two communities. Although we have fully respected this understanding, it is a fact that not the same level of commitment has been manifested from the Turkish Cypriot side, creating tension and distress, primarily to those people, whose daily life was adversely affected.

Having set as a priority the need to address these issues, our efforts focused in recent weeks on further facilitating crossings, while maintaining the highest possible level of protection of public health safety, through the synchronisation of practices followed at the crossing points. Based on the work of experts in the framework of the Technical Committee on Health, an understanding was reached to restore the *status quo ante*, starting from June 2021 onwards.

As announced at the time, the crossing points are expected to facilitate unhindered movement and intercommunal contacts, while we hope this will also contribute in building more trust and a positive *momentum* that would benefit all the Cypriots and also enhance our efforts in the framework of the peace process.

V. Technical Committees

The positive *momentum*, as well as the practical aspect of restoring COVID-19 *status quo ante* will hopefully allow the Technical Committees to intensify their work. It is true that they tried to carry on under adverse circumstances, given the restrictions imposed due to the pandemic but also the change of a substantial number of their members, that admittedly had a distinct impact on their work in the framework of their mandate to mitigate the adverse effects of the *status quo* and the *de facto* division of the island in the daily lives of all Cypriots, amplified by the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As already indicated, the Technical Committee on Health spearheaded efforts to address the additional challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, *inter alia* exchanging real time scientific information, addressing urgent requests concerning medical cases, and facilitating supply of medicines and delivery of vaccines for the Turkish Cypriot community. At the same time, they have managed to guide the project on the *identification and distribution of mosquito vectors* to address the risk for disease transmission, through public awareness and exchange of views and information on necessary measures to protect public health to its final stage.

At the same stage, more or less, is the online platform of the Technical Committee on Environment, which is envisaged to bring closer experts from both communities in order to exchange experience and information, while at the same time identify necessary key environmental projects for future implementation.

A step before its conclusion is also the project concerning the production of supplementary education material (30 lesson plans), a flagship initiative of the Technical Committee on Education. The plans evolve around “the right of children to participate”, discussed via various thematic areas that are based but not restricted to peacebuilding, intercultural dialogue, human rights and anti-racist education. At the same time, planning on the “Imagine” project has focused on the next academic year’s preparation, as circumstances during recent months proved not to be favorable for timely implementation of this year’s planning.

In collaboration and synergy with the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, they have also initiated the *Prevalence, Correlates and prevention of conventional bullying in schools and cyberbullying* project, consisted of research to collect systematic data on stereotypes, prejudice and other factors of bullying, identify both risk and protective factors and use of this information in teachers’ training. One more project that would hopefully benefit from the intensification of the Technical Committees work.

Despite the extraordinary challenges of the recent months, the Joint Contacts Room, under the auspices of the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, has been persistently facilitating exchange of information regarding crimes, based on the principle that no crime should remain unpunished, whenever that may happen.

As an established trusted channel for exchange of sensitive information, we believe that it could prove extremely useful in our efforts to analyse the multifaceted phenomenon of irregular migration and identify sectoral challenges, with the cooperation and synergy between a number of relevant Technical Committees (e.g. Crime and Criminal Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs, Crisis Management, Gender Equality) and the contribution of experts, where needed.

Technical Committee on Entrepreneurship and Commercial Affairs has resumed discussions on a number of issues, with more prominent the vehicles insurances and the recycling. The latter could be further elaborated in cooperation with the Technical Committee on Environment.

Hopefully setting the tone for the coming months, the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage has maintained a steady pace in their work, with 31 projects concluded or in progress in 2021 and a forward looking planning.

While trying to establish better conditions on the ground and a more positive political atmosphere, it is a critical moment for the Technical Committees as well and their efforts to meet expectations, within the framework of their mandate.

We will keep encouraging them to use all tools available, most notably the Support Facility funded by the EU in the framework of the Aid Regulation, in order to continue and enhance their work, bearing in mind their valuable contribution in creating a more positive political environment, in their supplementary role to the substantial negotiations in the context of peace process.

Annex II

Actions taken by the Turkish Cypriot side in support of the relevant parts of Security Council resolution 2561 (2021) adopted on 29 January 2021

I. Actions Taken in Support of Reaching a Sustainable and Comprehensive Settlement

The New Vision for the island of Cyprus

a. Brief Background

As the fifth President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), I have put forward a new vision for the island of Cyprus and the region as a whole. This vision is based on a win-win approach that would be beneficial to both sides on the island, as well as the Eastern Mediterranean region.

The island of Cyprus has been held hostage to the unsustainable status quo, which has been harming the Turkish Cypriot people in every way, in relation to all aspects of their lives.

This injustice must end.

Bearing in mind that repeated UN efforts to realize an equality based bi-communal, bi-zonal federal settlement have failed, we must change the rules of the game in order to open the way for a just and sustainable settlement.

The failed negotiations of more than half a century have resulted in the exhaustion of the bi-zonal and bi-communal federation model as a basis for a settlement.

In addition to a change in the basis for a settlement, the settlement process needs to address the lack of equilibrium between the two sides – a key violation of the principle of equality and an obstruction to an equality based settlement. While the Greek Cypriot side continues to enjoy the hijacked status as the sole representative of the bi-communal partnership Republic of Cyprus since December 1963 and engages in the negotiations in the comfort zone provided by this, Turkish Cypriots have continued to suffer under inhuman isolation despite their ongoing constructive stance. The unjust privileges granted to the Greek Cypriot side by the international community leave no room for them to share power as equals with the Turkish Cypriot side.

The unwavering support of my People to the past negotiation processes is clear from the acceptance of nearly all the UN-proposed settlement plans, including the UN Plan entitled “The Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem” (the “Annan Plan”) of 2004, which for the first time in the history of Cyprus settlement negotiations, was a plan that was submitted for approval by the respective electorate on both sides, in separate simultaneous referenda.

What happened next is very telling; the Turkish Cypriot People continue to suffer under isolation and restrictions, despite our overwhelming support to the internationally backed UN Plan, while the Greek Cypriots, despite their overwhelming rejection of the settlement, have become a member of the EU, thereby bolstering their international status. This situation has further boosted the Greek Cypriot side’s intransigent stance in the negotiation processes.

If this is not injustice, what is?

b. Activities leading up to the Informal 5+UN Meeting in Geneva

I have been sharing my vision at the different meetings I have been conducting with key international counterparts.

I held a teleconference with the UN Secretary-General António Guterres on 25 January 2021, in which, in addition to my vision, I also shared my expectation from the 5+UN informal meeting.

On 25 February 2021, the UNSG sent an invitation expressing his intention to hold the 5+UN informal meeting in Geneva from 27-29 April 2021, stating the purpose of the 5+UN informal meeting to be the determination of whether common ground exists for the parties to start a new, time-framed formal negotiation process for a just, realistic and sustainable settlement in Cyprus within the foreseeable future.

I gave my immediate acceptance to the UNSG's invitation in writing on 1 March 2021, and I expressed my intention to attend the informal 5+UN meeting with an open mind and the necessary determination to explore whether common ground exists that would pave the way for formal negotiations. I underlined that after more than half-century of failed processes for a settlement in Cyprus, we are at a critical juncture. Given the internationally accepted view that the status quo is unsustainable and unacceptable, I underlined the UNSG's principled expression that "this time must be different" and confirmed my determination to transform these words into practice.

I also reiterated that the aim of the Turkish Cypriot Side is to seek a solution based on the inherent sovereign equality and equal international status of the two States on the island, with cooperation between them. I underlined my conviction that the establishment of a cooperative relationship between the two sides on the above basis would not only provide mutual benefits for the two Peoples on the island, but would also contribute to the much needed security, stability and cooperation in our region.

In preparing for the informal 5+UN meeting, I also shared my vision with a number of high-level officials. Among others, I met with the Turkish Foreign Minister H.E. Mr Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu; the UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and First Secretary of State, H.E. Mr Dominic Raab; the EU [High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy](#) H.E. Mr Josep Borrell; UK Minister for European Neighbourhood and the Americas H.E. Ms Wendy Morton, and Ambassadors from numerous countries.

During this period, I also met with the UN Senior Official Jane Holl Lute, on 11 January, 8 March and 11 April in preparation for the Geneva meeting.

Prior to my departure to Geneva, on 26 April 2021, I met with the President of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Mr Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. As a Guarantor Power and one of the participants of the 5+UN informal meeting, President Erdoğan reiterated the full support of the Republic of Turkey to the Turkish Cypriot vision at the highest level.

c. The Informal 5+UN meeting in Geneva

On 27 April 2021, I held my first bilateral meeting in Geneva with the UNSG Guterres. I thanked the UNSG for organizing his first international meeting on Cyprus since the outbreak of the pandemic, as well as his team for the hard work they have put in towards the realisation of the informal meeting.

Using this opportunity, I made it clear that the rules of the game had to be changed, drawing lessons from the failed processes. I reiterated my conviction that the exhausted basis, bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, had to be put aside. I also

pointed at the results of the Presidential elections in the TRNC, which clearly demonstrated the withdrawal of the Turkish Cypriot People's consent from a federal basis. I underlined that my People entrusted me with the mandate to seek a solution based on two States; because a sustainable settlement providing for stability, peaceful co-existence and cooperation in Cyprus and the region can best be achieved through mutual respect and the recognition of the inherent sovereign equality and equal international status of the two States. It is a fact that the result of the usurpation of the bi-communal partnership Republic of Cyprus in December 1963 has been physical separation and the emergence, out of necessity, of administrative, judicial and legislative organs on the island for each of the two distinct Peoples.

The new mandate determined by the democratic will of the Turkish Cypriot People also brought to light the need for a paradigm shift for ending the unsustainable status-quo, which is also acknowledged as such by the UN and the international community at large. I underlined that this could only be achieved through the new basis.

I told the UNSG that:

"We have not come to this point in one day. In the background of where we stand here today, there lies a long and hard struggle on the part of my People. This is a struggle for survival and dignity as an equal co-owner of the island of Cyprus and a co-founding partner of the 1960 Republic of Cyprus, which was destroyed by the Greek Cypriots in 1963. This meant not only destruction of lives, homes and properties, but also the destruction of the bi-communal partnership Republic itself. We were forcibly expelled from that Republic which has since been monopolized and occupied by the Greek Cypriot side, it continues to be so."

Against this background, I reminded that the Turkish Cypriot side nevertheless negotiated in good faith in order to find a settlement to the Cyprus dispute. However, the Greek Cypriot side, as confirmed by their own former foreign minister, has rejected at least 15 major UN documents for a settlement. Among them were the Set of Ideas of 1992, the Confidence-Building Measures package of 1994 and finally the Annan Plan of 2004. In the immediate aftermath of the referenda, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan had written in his report of 28 May 2004 to the Security Council, "what was rejected was the solution itself rather than a mere blueprint" (paragraph 83).

The last instance of this intransigent attitude was in Crans-Montana in 2017, which the UNSG has witnessed personally. It is evident that the deeply rooted ideology of dominance and hegemony on the part of the Greek Cypriot side has not changed.

Under these circumstances, the only way for the Turkish Cypriot People to preserve and protect our existence, identity and equal rights on the island of Cyprus is through respect for our right to self-determination, equal international status and sovereign equality. International law does not sanction differential treatment of the two sides, which are inherently equal.

I told the UNSG that the Turkish Cypriot side considers that the preparation of the conditions for settlement necessitates the recognition of the sovereign equality and equal international status of the two sides and underlined that any negotiation under the existing political asymmetry on the island cannot yield a result, as proven by over 50 years of fruitless negotiations.

In addition to the above, I brought to the attention of UNSG Guterres that the lifting of the isolation and restrictions on the Turkish Cypriot People would significantly contribute to the efforts to prepare the ground for sustainable settlement by levelling the playing field. It would also enhance prospects for cooperation between the authorities of the two sides by helping build confidence between them.

On 28 April 2021 at the first plenary of the 5+UN informal meeting, I addressed the participants on behalf of my People as their President. In my speech, I shared the Turkish Cypriot formula for a just, realistic and sustainable settlement as the common ground to start the new formal process. I explained the reasons, in detail, based on excerpts from numerous reports and official statements, why the bi-zonal, bi-communal federation basis had been exhausted and only served to perpetuate the unsustainable status-quo.

Drawing from my personal experiences starting from 1960's, I shared with the participants those difficult days when my late father, Mr. Rüstem Tatar, the then Auditor-General of the 1960 partnership Republic, could not to go to work because his life was in danger, due to his Turkish Cypriot identity.

In my deliberations, I explained the root-causes of the failure as the Greek Cypriot and Greek vision that Cyprus is an integral part of Hellenism and the unequal status of the two sides that was created in violation of the 1960 Treaties and Constitution after the usurpation of the partnership State in 1963 and its continued occupation. This resulted in a purely Greek Cypriot administration passing itself off internationally as "the sole legitimate government for the whole of Cyprus".

The mere fact of international recognition, no matter how widespread, cannot excuse or confer legitimacy upon the violations of both domestic constitutional law and international treaty law, through which the Greek Cypriot side usurped the name as well as the government of the "Republic of Cyprus".

As one of the parties to the 1960 Treaties (*Treaty of Guarantee, Treaty of Establishment, and the Treaty of Alliance*) and co-founder, as well as co-owner of the partnership state of the Republic of Cyprus, reflecting its inherent sovereign equality and equal status, I clarified that the Turkish Cypriot side, which possesses all the attributes of statehood, is thus entitled to the same rights and status that the Greek Cypriot side is entitled to, and is currently exercising.

At the first plenary I also shared in writing the Turkish Cypriot proposal for a sustainable settlement.

The essence of the Turkish Cypriot proposal is the recognition of the inherent sovereign equality and equal international status of the State of the Turkish Cypriot People, through which a cooperative relationship can be established between the two existing States on the Island. This would pave the way for results-oriented, time-framed negotiations towards a realistic and sustainable settlement.

I explained that for too long, the Turkish Cypriot side has been treated as bystanders or even non-existent, while resolutions, decisions, statements, have been adopted in their absence, in platforms where they were not even represented or heard, while the Greek Cypriot side, having usurped and monopolized the title of government, has given a totally distorted, one-sided view of the situation to the international community.

In our proposal, I pointed out that it is based on concrete experience and the drastically changed local, regional and international environment, together with the current realities on the Island that compelled the Turkish Cypriot Side to put forward a new proposal that would make Cyprus an island of sustainable stability and peaceful co-existence.

I expressed the willingness of the Turkish Cypriot Side to rise to the challenge that *this time must be different* by putting its new vision into clear and practical terms.

Also, in this context, I expressed our readiness to take the necessary steps not only to rectify a grave injustice that continues to be done against the Turkish Cypriot People, but also for removing the root-causes of failure in the way of a sustainable settlement.

The Turkish Cypriots proposal which was presented on 28 April 2021 at Geneva is as follows:

- 1) The UN Secretary-General to take an initiative so that the Security Council adopts a resolution in which the equal international status and sovereign equality of the two sides is secured. Such a resolution will form the new basis for the establishment of a cooperative relationship between the two existing States.
- 2) Once the equal international status and sovereign equality of the two sides is secured through the above-mentioned arrangement, they will enter into results-oriented, time-framed negotiations, on this new basis, under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General to establish a freely-reached and mutually acceptable cooperative agreement.
- 3) The negotiations will focus on the future relationship between the two independent States, property, security and border adjustment, as well as relations with the EU.
- 4) The negotiations will be supported by Turkey, Greece and the UK, as well as, where appropriate, the EU as observer.
- 5) In the context of any agreement the two States will mutually recognize each other; the three Guarantor States will support this.
- 6) Any agreement to be reached as a result of these negotiations will be submitted for approval in separate simultaneous referenda in the two States.

I explained the rationale behind the new Turkish Cypriot proposal first to the UNSG during our second bilateral meeting and then to the participants on the second plenary on 28 April 2021.

The rationale behind the Turkish Cypriot proposal is as follows:

- Negotiations that have continued for over half a century on the same failed basis have shown us results-oriented negotiations should be conducted between equals. Entering into results-oriented, time-framed negotiations only after establishing the equilibrium between the two sides is of crucial importance. Experience has shown that negotiations in Cyprus fail when equality is recognized only at the negotiation table, always leaving the option to one of the Sides to walk away at a whim as the recognized Government knowing that the other Side will continue to suffer under inhuman isolation and restrictions. This is obviously not equality between the two Sides.
- The Turkish Cypriot proposal does not aim at opening a discussion on whether or not Turkish Cypriots have sovereignty, which we do. The proposal is to level the playing field, both at the negotiation table and outside, by securing the equal international status and sovereign equality of the two sides, which is inherent, through a UN Security Council Resolution.
- It is time to acknowledge this fact through the adoption of the new basis with the assistance of the UN Secretary-General in order to establish a freely-reached and mutually acceptable cooperative agreement.
- The formal negotiations can then focus on substance, including the future relationship between the two independent States.
- Concepts like loose federation and decentralised federation put forward after Crans-Montana as ‘new ideas’ are positions that are even more maximalist than what the Greek Cypriot side had put forward in previous rounds of negotiations on the failed basis.

On the final day in Geneva, at the closing of the 5+UN informal meeting, I proposed UN Senior Official Ms Jane Holl Lute to continue her consultations to assess whether common ground exists and gave my consent for the convening of another 5+UN informal meeting within a few months.

In the Press Conference UNSG held following the informal 5+UN meeting on 29 April, he referred to the respective positions of the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots and confirmed that there will be another 5+UN in the near future and Ms Lute would continue her current responsibilities. In explaining the Turkish Cypriot position, UNSG said Turkish Cypriots believe the many efforts made to solve the Cyprus issue over the years have failed, including the most recent attempt made in Crans Montana. UNSG also said Turkish Cypriots believe that efforts to negotiate the bi-zonal, bi-communal federation have been exhausted, and that the Turkish Cypriots have inherent sovereign equality and an equal international status and the solution should be based on two States cooperating with each other. UNSG confirmed that we have not yet found common ground for the initiation of formal negotiations, but he would not give up and he would continue to fight for the security and well-being of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots who deserve to live in peace and prosperity.

II. Actions Taken in Support of Confidence Building as well as Promoting Contacts and Reconciliation

Confidence Building issues and measures

After I assumed my duties as the President, as the Turkish Cypriot Side, I acknowledged the importance of creating confidence between the two Sides and gave instructions towards this goal.

During this period, a mechanism has been introduced by Elizabeth Spehar, the UNSG's Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, where the Special Representative and Negotiator of the two sides, as well as the Coordinators of the Technical Committees, hold separate weekly meetings under the auspices of the UN. At those online meetings, both Sides try to tackle issues with a view to easing the daily lives of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots.

Within the framework of this mechanism the two sides try to address and facilitate the solution to daily issues and challenges. So far, we have achieved positive results in arranging for special Covid-19 related terms for the crossings (return included) of Kato Pirgo area residents to Lefkoşa/Nicosia, ambulance crossings (return included) and the replacement of electric poles in Erenköy/Kokkina. Within the context of this mechanism, we also agreed on making all the crossing points operational as they were in the pre-COVID-19 period, full implementation of Yeşilirmak Agreement and also the main principles for a proposal to be considered as a Confidence-Building Measure (CBM). The agreed principles to be considered in proposing CBMs are as follows:

CBMs:

- must be mutually agreed by the two Sides;
- must be mutually beneficial for two Sides;
- must respect the equality of the two Sides;
- must not involve or imply the extension of one side's authority over the other.

On 2nd June 2021, I have agreed with my counterpart, Mr Anastasiades, to make all the crossing points operational, as of 4th June 2021. This significant development

will help ease the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on the adversely affected economies of the two Sides. As the Turkish Cypriot Side, we are committed to maintaining the channels of cooperation. I am determined to explore and implement mutually beneficial measures that would also help build confidence between the two Sides in good faith and through diplomacy.

On occasion of making all of the crossing points operational I have underlined the importance of cooperation between the two Sides, which needs to be based on equality and mutual respect for it to contribute to peace, stability and prosperity for our island and our region as a whole.

Also, during the reporting period, the two sides have been exchanging views on cooperation on irregular migration with a view to establishing an effective mechanism. It is universally accepted that irregular migration is a global phenomenon and cannot be addressed only at the technical committee level, but necessitates a mechanism where the officials from the relevant Departments and institutions cooperate.

1. Technical Committees

The Turkish Cypriot Side believes that the technical committees are a powerful tool for cooperation and for the creation of a climate of reconciliation between the two Sides on the island. We believe that an active and productive working relationship of the technical committees would contribute to the improvement of the daily lives of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. In line with this approach, I have given utmost importance to the enhancement of the expert capacity of the technical committees.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Technical Committee on Health has been the most active technical committee. In line with the understanding reached between the two Sides, the Technical Committee on Health has been tasked with making all the crossing points operational with the same conditions as in the pre-COVID-19 period. After intensive deliberations, the harmonisation of pandemic related measures governing the crossing of all Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, other citizens and residents, as well as third-country nationals wishing to cross to the other side, have been successfully completed. The Technical Committee on Health has also been implementing the Action “Identification and distribution of vectors of medical importance in Cyprus (ID-VEC)”, which is in its final stages and is expected to be completed soon. We are also supporting the implementation of the second phase of this project.

During the reporting period, the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage (TCCH) continued to meet online once a week. Despite the difficult circumstances caused by COVID-19, the TCCH has intensified its work. The TCCH has completed conservation works at several sites including the historic Afendrika Archeological site and has started numerous tendering processes for conservation works and designs all over the island. Furthermore, the TCCH has completed the conservation works of two more historic Ottoman-era fountains in Girne/Kyrenia, part of the Venetian walls of Lefkoşa/Nicosia and several other sites that benefited from emergency support works of the TCCH. Moreover, the TCCH has completed its pilot projects on two Turkish Cypriot and two Greek Cypriot cemeteries.

The Technical Committee on Environment actively worked on finalizing the website designed to bring the experts from both Sides together to exchange their views and experiences on actions and policies for the protection of the environment. The Turkish Cypriot Side also proposed to start a project for the island-wide protection of endangered species. In honour of World Water Day, the Technical Committee on Environment, the US Embassy and the UN Mission in Cyprus opened a photo contest for young Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots under the theme “The Value of Water: What Does Water Mean to You?”

After a long break due to COVID-19 conditions, the Crisis Management Technical Committee resumed its activities. In order to prevent the reoccurrence of situations that would endanger safety of air travel and the lives of passengers, the Turkish Cypriot Members of this Committee proposed that UN helicopters and other aircraft in the vicinity of Ercan Airport establish direct contact with Ercan Airport Tower Frequency 120.250. This will ensure, among others, that inbound/outbound traffic to Ercan is aware of the ongoing border control by the UN helicopter and vice versa (Approach 127.750. Control 126.700). Furthermore, regarding the Flight Information Region (FIR) Crossing Points; as there is no direct line of communication between Nicosia Air Traffic Control and Ercan Control, aircraft under different control zones may encounter difficulties while avoiding bad weather close to FIR service areas i.e. escaping through a clean air at a specific altitude. Congested air traffic at bad weather might cause safety compromising situations, which may be fatal. Therefore, the Turkish Cypriot Members proposed a direct line of communication between Nicosia Air Traffic Control and Ercan Control. The Committee also discussed organizing joint seminars on forest fires and floods.

The Technical Committee on Broadcasting also continued to discuss the issues within its mandate. The Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot representatives of the Committee continued to exchange information regarding the use of the 700 MHz frequency band. The Turkish Cypriot side also proposed a project that would aim at raising awareness regarding 5G technology and addressing concerns on the effects of 5G wireless communication on human health.

The Technical Committee on Education continued to discuss its ongoing projects. The Committee has proceeded with preparations for the continuation of the “Imagine” program, the Pilot Project on Educational Materials, and the joint project of the Technical Committee on Education and the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters on “Prevalence, Correlates, and Prevention of Conventional Bullying in Schools and Cyberbullying”. Due to the challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, trainings for students under the “Imagine” program were suspended for this semester. However, the Committee has decided to continue online training for teachers.

The Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters is another very active committee. The Committee has been tasked to work on the preparation of the ground on both Sides for the post-pandemic era. The Committee has continued to work on issues such as the lifting of restrictions on crossings in conformity with the Green Line Regulation, IBAN implementation, facilitating contact between the banking systems of the two Sides, facilitating the free movement of commercial vehicles from North Cyprus to South Cyprus, facilitating car insurance policies that would apply throughout the island, island wide GSM Roaming services, Ring Tour (hop on-hop off) for Lefkoşa/Nicosia and joint recycling wherever relevant. All of these aim at improving the everyday lives of ordinary Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, encouraging and facilitating greater interaction and understanding between the two sides and helping build confidence between them.

The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters and the Joint Communications Room in the buffer zone has continued to carry out their daily duties. During the reporting period, the Turkish Cypriot Side submitted 31 request/reply documents and received 47 request/reply documents. On 18 April 2021, the Turkish Cypriot Side handed over another murder suspect to the Greek Cypriot authorities. We hope that our goodwill will be reciprocated by the Greek Cypriot Side by the handing over to the Turkish Cypriot Side of Abdulkakim Alkan, who escaped to the Greek Cypriot Side after committing offences in North Cyprus. A request for the handing over of Abdulkakim Alkan was made on 5 January 2021, which is yet to be fulfilled.

The Technical Committee on Gender Equality also held online meetings. During these meetings, the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot members of the committee started to exchange ideas regarding the development of projects aimed at raising awareness on violence against women, gender sensitive language and the situation of women during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the reporting period the Technical Committees on Humanitarian Matters and Culture also held online meetings and exchanged ideas regarding possible joint activities that can be carried out in the period ahead.

The activities of all Technical Committees were seriously hampered because of negative conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. The Committee on Missing Persons

TRNC authorities continued to support the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) which has been an indispensable tool to help address the years-long anguish of the families of missing persons in Cyprus.

TRNC has been providing information on possible burial sites to the CMP as new facts come to light. All information at the disposal of the Turkish side has already been provided to the CMP in 1998, also recorded in the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council dated 1 December 2000 (S/2000/1138, para. 14). In addition to the investigations conducted by the CMP in various state archives, the Archive Committee that was established in 2016 continued to address the specific requests of the CMP from the relevant archives, with a view to locating the burial sites. Within this context, during the reporting period the Turkish Cypriot Member's Office of the CMP had access to aerial photos that belong to eight different regions, dating from 1974.

The TRNC also continues to arrange for access to the CMP to any area throughout the TRNC, irrespective of whether this necessitates interrupting construction of a major road or access to military areas. In this context, in June 2019, access to 30 additional suspected burial sites in military areas in the TRNC had been granted, with the understanding that excavations will be done according to the excavation planning of the CMP. CMP was conducting excavations, also in two suspected burial sites in the military areas, when excavations in all sites had to be suspended in March 2020 due to COVID-19 measures. During the reporting period, CMP resumed its work, subject to the applicable COVID-19-related measure, also in military areas. In the reporting period CMP completed excavations in one military area on 14 April 2021.

TRNC continues to support CMP financially. In addition to annual financial contributions to the budget of the Office of the Turkish Cypriot Member of the CMP, an amount approximately EUR 1,000,000 per year, the total amount of additional TRNC contributions amount to EUR 433,000. To date, the EU's total contributions, amounting to 30,700,000 EUR, are from the funds the European Union earmarked for the economic development of Turkish Cypriots. Additional funding, including the UN, will enable CMP to accelerate its work.

According to the most recent statistics CMP published, up to 30 April 2021, CMP exhumed 1187 missing persons. The identity of 1006 of these missing persons have been established. 284 of these are Turkish Cypriots and 722 Greek Cypriots. During the reporting period CMP conducted 34 excavations and found the remains of 5 persons. CMP also identified 12 additional missing persons during the reporting period, 2 of whom were Turkish Cypriot and 10 were Greek Cypriot, as well as 2 Greek Cypriot deceased who were not on the CMP's official missing persons list.

3. Hellim/Halloumi

The Turkish Cypriot side participated in the process of registration of Hellim/Halloumi, as a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) in the European Union and its trade across the Green Line in good faith. Hellim/Halloumi is a common traditional cheese product that belongs to both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots.

When I took up office, I, together with my Government, the relevant Chambers and associations, participated in this ongoing process with a view to ensuring its completion in a mutually beneficial and acceptable way.

I have sought to preserve the established mechanism sanctioned in the Green Line Regulation, embedded in EU primary law, which has been designed in full respect of the political positions of both sides, and held a teleconference with EU High Representative/Vice President Mr Josep Borrell Fontelles on 18 January and 16 February 2021, followed by a meeting with him in person on 5 March 2021.

I have consistently expressed my readiness to announce the registration of the PDO, as well as the joint appointment of an independent body, that was required to be in place to conduct the health and safety inspections, together with my Greek Cypriot counterpart, to foster a culture of cooperation in good faith. Unfortunately, the Greek Cypriot Side did not accept this proposal and the legislative instruments were nevertheless enacted, leaving many questions and uncertainties as to their implementation.

4. Isolation and Restrictions

Isolation and restrictions imposed on all aspects of the lives of the Turkish Cypriot People since 1963, from direct trade to cultural and sporting events, direct flights and representation at the international forums, have continued.

The gap between the two sides on economic, social, cultural issues keeps on widening. The technical and financial assistance sought from numerous organizations and the initiatives taken to tackle the negative effects of COVID-19, with a view to contributing to the overall objective of promoting social and economic development of the Turkish Cypriot Side, was either not responded to or failed to come anywhere close to the assistance provided to the Greek Cypriot Side. This failure resulted in further socio-economic disparity between the two Sides.

In his report of 7 January 2020 (S/2020/23) UNSG Guterres underlined that there is need to achieve greater economic and social parity between the two sides and to broaden and deepen economic, cultural, sporting and other forms of cooperation. He added that increased cross-island trade, together with deeper economic, social, cultural, sporting and other ties and contacts, would promote trust between the two sides. With the above in mind he called on the full implementation of European Council regulation (EC) No. 866/2004 (the Green Line Regulation), stating that this would help significantly to increase the volume of trade and should be pursued with renewed vigour.

5. Hydrocarbons

Due to the Greek Cypriot side's claim that their government is the sole owner of the island to the detriment of the Turkish Cypriot side, the hydrocarbon deposits discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean region have become yet another element of contention, further jeopardizing security, stability and cooperation not only in Cyprus, but also the entire region.

As co-owners of hydrocarbon resources, the Turkish Cypriot side believes that, if treated rightly, hydrocarbons could be an element that would contribute to political

settlement, cooperation, security and welfare between the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot sides, as well as the entire region. To this end, the Turkish Cypriot side has proposed the establishment of a joint ad hoc committee for the joint management and exploitation of hydrocarbons, respectively in 2011, 2012, and 2019.

The proposal of the Turkish Cypriot side of July 2019 is still on the table, and I am ready to discuss the matter to contribute to the desired regional cooperation on energy issues. Cooperation in hydrocarbons will also be the litmus test for the real intentions of the Greek Cypriot Side regarding sharing.

The 13 July 2019 proposal envisages the establishment of a joint committee, with the facilitation of the UN, and the EU as an observer, to plan, decide and implement future hydrocarbon activities, including an agreement on revenue-sharing for the exploration and production of off-shore oil and gas resources across the island.

As the Turkish Cypriot Side, I fully support the proposal of Turkey to convene a regional Conference on hydrocarbons. I am ready to attend such a Conference on an equal footing with the Greek Cypriot Side.

In the meantime, the Turkish Cypriot side will continue their own hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation activities until the Greek Cypriot side recognizes their co-ownership rights and agrees to find a mutually acceptable formula for the way forward.

6. Maraş (Varosha)

The Fenced Area of Maraş/Varosha is TRNC territory and is a military area with no current users. We have been receiving an increasing number of applications and claims from the former inhabitants of this area and have now decided to address these claims.

We have accordingly decided to implement a plan that aims at removing the military status of the area so as to enable the European Court of Human Rights-sanctioned Immovable Property Commission (IPC) to deliver restitution decisions in relation to the applicants who request this remedy. We see this as a humanitarian act which will provide economic benefits to both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and provide a unique area where Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, as well as other foreign nationals, can work together for mutual benefit, thus contributing to the building of trust and confidence.

Those who oppose our opening of the Fenced Area of Maraş/Varosha are in fact serving to prevent the former inhabitants from obtaining remedies to their claims.

We consider this process as a confidence building measure that respects the rights of the inhabitants of the area in line with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.