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

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Demetris CHRISTOFIAS
President of the Republic of Cyprus
at the
General Debate of the 64th Session of the
General Assembly of the United Nations**

New York, 24 September 2009

Please check against delivery

Mr. President,

I wish to extend to you sincere congratulations on your election as President of the 64th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations and to also express appreciation for the excellent work done by your predecessor Mr. Miguel d' Escoto Brockmann.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organisation and to congratulate him for his initiative to convene the High-level Summit on Climate Change.

Since its independence the Republic of Cyprus has been committed to multilateral diplomacy and the strengthening of the role of the United Nations.

World stability and welfare have been threatened by the recent global economic crisis. The crisis showed the weaknesses of our collective oversight systems. It is only through collective international action and not through economic nationalism that we can overcome such challenges. The same is true of action against disease and poverty, as well as the prevention of further damage to the environment, which affects the lives of us all.

The most important lesson to be learnt from the financial crisis is that the economy cannot be seen in isolation from the needs of society.

Despite the remarkable development of production forces, that could have secured decent living conditions for all, in many parts of the world, people are still deprived of basic goods such as drinking water and health care as well as access to education and work.

The magnitude of the financial crisis shows that it is a crisis of the system and of its most extreme manifestation- neo-liberalism and market lawlessness. In its present form, globalization is not the realization of the vision of philosophers and social revolutionaries for global brotherhood and prosperity for all. This is because globalization is driven by the pursuit of excessive profits. As a result the rich are becoming richer and the poor poorer.

Mr. President,

More than half way to the 2015 deadline for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, the financial crisis is forcing states and institutions to re-assess global priorities. The UN is the most important international body able to tackle the effects of the global financial crisis, and to act collectively and effectively, to prevent their most dire consequences.

The world today is facing multiple challenges and threats: climate change, depletion of resources, human rights abuses, failure to protect vulnerable populations, increased regional and interstate conflict, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, pandemics.

From this podium we have heard the desperate voice of those who live on small island states, the despairing appeal of youth and the dramatic warnings of scientists about climate change. If we do not take measures now we face the risk of extinction. We join our voice and lend our support to the proposals for taking concrete action. We must take measures now. Tomorrow will be too late. The December Meeting in Copenhagen must become an historic turning point towards addressing effectively catastrophic climate changes.

Mr. President,

Since its independence, the Republic of Cyprus has relied heavily on the principles of the United Nations in maintaining its independence, its sovereignty and its territorial integrity.

After the twin crime of a military coup and foreign invasion of Cyprus in 1974, when military force attempted to obliterate our statehood and violated the integrity of our state, the United Nations responded with a number of important resolutions, expressing the international community's moral and legal support to the Republic of Cyprus.

The plethora of Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions on Cyprus, provided my country with the necessary support to continue its struggle for a solution to its political problem, on the basis of those resolutions, the principles of the UN Charter and of international law.

Shortly after my election in office, I undertook the initiative to bring the stalemate to an end. As a result of that, we embarked a year ago, on the basis of the UN Security Council resolutions, and under the auspices of the Good Offices Mission of the Secretary-General, on intensive negotiations with the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, Mr. Mehmet Ali Talat. Trusting the sincerity of Mr. Talat's intentions, we have engaged in a common effort to bring an end to the division of our country.

We agreed that the process would be in the hands of the Cypriots without arbitration and artificial timetables.

There has been some progress achieved in the negotiations. But not such as to make us confident that we are close to a final solution to the Cyprus problem.

Our goal is the restoration of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and unity of the Republic of Cyprus, the common homeland of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. It is also our goal to restore the human rights and basic freedoms of all citizens of the Republic of Cyprus regardless of their ethnic background.

We are committed to the evolution of the unitary state into a federal state consisting of two largely autonomous regions. One region will be administered by the Greek-Cypriot community and the other by the Turkish-Cypriot community. Given the fact that in Cyprus the population lived intermingled throughout the island, this constituted for us a great historical concession made by the late President Makarios to our Turkish Cypriot compatriots.

We remain true to this commitment. The United Federal Republic of Cyprus must safeguard the unity of the state and its institutions, as well as of the economy and the people.

Unfortunately, despite our common efforts, the Turkish Cypriot side, supported by Turkey, continues to present positions and proposals which lead us outside the framework of the United Nations Resolutions on Cyprus with regard to the termination of military occupation, the illegal possession of properties and the presence of settlers. Possible acceptance of these positions would lead to an acceptance of many of the consequences of the occupation and to violations of international Conventions on human rights, basic freedoms and the principles on which federations are built. It is clear that such a solution would be neither viable,

nor functional, and would not ensure the continuing unity of the state and the country.

We sincerely hope that during the second round of negotiations, which has just started, there will be a reconsideration of Turkish positions, so that we can, as soon as possible, reach an agreed solution which we can then present to the people in separate simultaneous referenda.

This solution must be by the Cypriots, for the Cypriots. It is evident that we will not present the people with a solution originating from outside and neither can we accept arbitration and exercise of pressure through artificial time-tables. These preconditions were agreed with the Secretary-General under whose auspices the negotiations are taking place. I would like to take this opportunity to thank once again the Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his Good Offices Mission and for the role of the United Nations as a facilitator in the negotiating process.

After the 1974 invasion and the occupation of 37% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, Turkey has become a key player for the solution of the Cyprus problem. The success of our efforts for a solution of the problem depends on Turkey's political will and the policies it implements. It is not enough for the Turkish leadership to publicly state that it supports the negotiating process.

Turkey should contribute in a practical way to a solution of a bizonal, bicomunal federation with political equality as defined in the relevant Security Council resolutions. Instead Turkey pursues a confederal solution.

A good will measure on the part of Turkey would have been the implementation of SC Resolution 550 of 1984 which stipulates the transfer of the occupied ghost-town of Varoshia to the administration of the United Nations and the return of its legal inhabitants to their homes and properties. In addition, Turkey should proceed with the normalization of its relations with the Republic of Cyprus as well as with its recognition as stipulated by the decisions of the European Union.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I ask you: Is it not a paradox for a country that is a member of the Security Council not to recognize the Republic of Cyprus, a member-state of the United Nations, the European Union and of all international organizations?

Is it not a paradox for a member of the Security Council to maintain occupation troops for 35 years on the territory of another UN member state, and a member state of the European Union?

Is it not a paradox to undermine the unity and the territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus by promoting the creation of a second state on the island in violation of Security Council Resolution 541 of 1983 which unanimously condemns the illegal UDI, calling it null and void, and calls on all states to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus?

Yes, it is a paradox and it is also illegal. In fact it is an anomaly! Cyprus has never sought nor wishes to have hostile relations with its neighbour, Turkey. But it is our responsibility to defend the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of our state.

Nevertheless, I would like from this august body to express my readiness to initiate dialogue with the Turkish leadership, in parallel to our negotiations with the Turkish Cypriot leader, to share ideas about the future, which would greatly enhance the chances of a positive outcome to the negotiations.

Cyprus has consistently supported the accession of Turkey to the European Union, in the belief that the whole adaptation process and Turkey's eventual membership would benefit our neighbours, our region and us. However, this support is not unconditional. Turkey should fulfil its obligations towards the Republic of Cyprus as well as towards the European Union.

Mr. President,

I would like to state one more time that our Turkish Cypriot compatriots are equal citizens of the Republic of Cyprus, and that I personally will strive consistently for their rights and for finding their rightful place in all organs of the state.

My political roots are in the Progressive Peoples' Movement of my country which always stood by the side of our Turkish Cypriot compatriots for peace and harmonious co-existence. Nevertheless, the rights of our Turkish Cypriot compatriots cannot be implemented at the expense of the rights of the bigger community, which is the Greek-Cypriot community. There must be mutual respect. I want to assure you that I will spare no effort in order to achieve a

balanced and just solution which would restore the rights of the people as a whole.

We have all paid a heavy price - human, political and economic - and continue to pay a heavy price. The profits of lasting peace will be beneficial for the people of Cyprus, of Turkey and for the peoples of our region as a whole.

Real political leaders are not the ones who think of the next election but of the next generation. We have the responsibility to work together to achieve a lasting peace in our region.

I wish to the family of Nations a successful conclusion of the deliberations of the 64th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

I thank you,