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**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. NICOS ANASTASIADIS**

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

**AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 69<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**New York, 26 September 2014**

**Mr. President,**

I wish to congratulate you on your election as President of the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly and convey my Government's full support in the exercise of Your high duties, with the shared goal of promoting UN principles in a period of great uncertainty and instability.

**Mr. President,**

The UN General Assembly constitutes the only international forum in which all the Heads of States or Governments gather together, in order not only to brief the international public opinion about serious issues faced by their countries, but to also deliberate on all regional and international challenges that are not country-specific and call international order into question.

We should always bear in mind that the UN was created with the aim of maintaining international peace and security, thus, fostering the effective protection of the fundamental freedoms and human rights of all people, irrespective of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief.

For these principles, at the heart of the Charter of this Organization, to be upheld, we should all realize that, in an era of globalization, all members of the UN are bound to be affected, one way or another, by events unfolding in any country or region, though in dissimilar magnitude and at different times.

As such, joint actions are needed, through a common understanding that, despite our individual differences, the path to peace, stability and democracy can only be achieved through the United Nations. Enhancing its role, adhering to the principles of its Charter and implementing its resolutions is a sine qua non for effectively tackling new and long-standing threats.

The upcoming 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations constitutes a significant milestone in the UN history. Cyprus believes that this is the right moment to intensify our efforts and commit ourselves to move ahead, through self-assessment and an all-inclusive debate, so as to reach a tangible outcome that will strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of this Organisation.

In this regard, I would like to remind of the 2005 “World Summit” during which world leaders agreed to an “early reform of the Security Council”.

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**Mr. President,**

Last year, when for the very first time I addressed this body, I conveyed my deep concern and indignation about acts that we were witnessing and which undermined the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, causing regional and global insecurity, such as:

- Terrorism;
- Annexation of territories via illegal use of force;
- Religious fundamentalism; and,
- Forcible displacement of millions of peoples.

Unfortunately, and despite our efforts, we have to admit that during this past year we have not adequately risen to meet these challenges. It is even more worrying that their extent and impact has been intensified at the expense of human lives, individual and collective social and economic prosperity, and, ultimately, regional and international peace and security.

All that we are witnessing in Libya, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, particularly following the emergence of ISIS and the perpetration of its untold atrocities, should not leave us indifferent or passive.

It is our duty towards humanity and our shared values to immediately adopt a more proactive involvement, so as to save future generations from the plague of asymmetrical threats, terrorism and bare hatred.

In this respect, we salute the Security Council Resolution, adopted last Wednesday, to decisively address the growing threat posed by the unprecedented flow of foreign terrorist fighters and the growth of facilitation networks fuelling conflicts around the World. We expect that those responsible for the shocking crimes committed in the last few weeks will be held accountable.

At the same time, we should not ignore that deep-rooted and long-standing conflicts possess the ability to ignite instantly regional instability, cause bloodshed, and endanger the lives of thousands of innocent civilians, including children.

Regrettably, such events sow the seeds of animosity and of further violence that render dialogue and negotiations more difficult to be conducted and eventually to succeed. Specifically, as regards the Middle East Peace Process, the right of Israeli people to statehood should not be called into question, nor should the same right for the people of Palestine.

We commend the very positive role of the Egyptian Government in mediating between the two sides. At the same time, we strongly urge all interested stakeholders to discourage the activities of terrorist groups that oppose the Middle East Peace Process.

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Furthermore, we cannot remain indifferent to what is taking place in Ukraine and the repercussions as regards the relations between some of the most important and influential actors in the world arena, the United States, the Russian Federation and the European Union.

We welcome the agreement reached in Minsk on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September and we call for it to be honoured and fully implemented by all sides.

Naturally, besides and beyond these regional conflicts, we should be vigilant and remind ourselves that other conventional and non-conventional challenges pose existential dangers which we have yet to tackle.

These include, amongst others, human trafficking, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, global poverty, hunger and distress that intensify migration flows and create demographic changes, and epidemic spreads, such as the recent example of Ebola. Simultaneously, the effects of climate change can eventually, in the distant future, turn out to be irreversible and catastrophic.

**Mr. President,**

Cyprus lies at the crossroads of Europe, North Africa, and the Near and Middle East, a volatile region in which most conflicts take place. However, we do pride ourselves in being an EU member-state and in enjoying excellent relations with all our neighbours. Hence, we are being considered as an honest broker with no hidden agendas.

We do realise that our geography is our destiny and we have assumed a constructive role in upholding the UN values and principles and contributing to efforts towards peace in our region, always in line with our capabilities.

We are at the forefront of efforts to fight terrorism and human trafficking, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to provide humanitarian aid and facilities when deemed necessary. Only yesterday, Cyprus was instrumental to the rescue of around 350 Syrian refugees from a fishing boat stranded in the Mediterranean, thus averting a great humanitarian catastrophe.

In parallel, the discovery of hydrocarbons in our neighbourhood has undoubtedly upgraded its strategic importance. Energy can serve as a catalyst for broader cooperation, thus, contributing to peace and stability, and as a means of strengthening regional and EU energy security and diversification which will boost the economies of the countries in the area.

We stand ready to contribute towards this cause and even mediate in bringing neighbouring hydrocarbon-producing and hydrocarbon-consuming countries together.

**Mr. President,**

2014 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the violent division of my country: a consequence of the 1974 invasion and its continuing occupation by Turkey.

It is not my intention to engage in a blame game, since a plethora of UN resolutions and UN Security Council decisions, not only truly reflect the historic and continuing responsibilities of those who are at fault, but also condemn the unacceptable status quo and call for the re-unification of Cyprus and the withdrawal of occupation forces.

What I would like to stress, once more, is my sincere commitment to work vigorously and with resolve, in order, through a constructive, in-depth and substantive dialogue, reach a settlement that will:

- Reunite Cyprus and its people;
- Restore the fundamental freedoms and human rights of all its lawful citizens;
- Relieve the island from the presence of occupying troops;
- Ensure the peaceful co-existence and socio-economic collaboration between all of its citizens;

- Guarantee the effectiveness and efficient functioning of Cyprus as an EU member-state.

For me, there is only one Plan. That is, to reach a settlement of the Cyprus problem, on the basis of what has been agreed as a compromise: The evolution of the Republic of Cyprus into a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant Security Council Resolutions and the High Level Agreements, with a single sovereignty, a single international legal personality and a single citizenship.

**Mr. President,**

After months of difficult negotiations, on 11 February 2014, a Joint Declaration was agreed between the two communities, setting out the basic guidelines and principles for the framework of the agreed solution to be reached, as well as the methodology of the negotiating process.

At the same time, it is extremely important that the Joint Declaration clearly articulates that the shared sole purpose of the negotiating process is to end the unacceptable status quo and reach a settlement that will safeguard and respect the principles upon which the EU is founded.



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Following the Joint Declaration and intensive negotiations between the two sides, comprehensive proposals on all Chapters on the Cyprus problem have been submitted. We have now reached the phase of concentrating our efforts to bridge the differences, so as to pave the way forward towards a viable and lasting settlement.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to warmly welcome the recent appointment by the UN Secretary-General of his new Special Adviser, Mr. Espen Barth Eide. We believe that his appointment, at a critical juncture in the negotiating process, demonstrates the UN determination to ensure that the process moves decisively forward.

However, it goes without saying that what is also needed is the demonstration of genuine will by our compatriots to negotiate in good faith and by Turkey to contribute constructively to the efforts to reach a settlement, not only in theory and rhetoric, but through practical and substantial actions.

A first step towards the long-awaited demonstration of genuine political will would be the adoption of my package-proposal for bold Confidence Building Measures that would create a win-win situation for all parties concerned, helping build mutual understanding, confidence and good will, thereby serving as a catalyst to the ongoing negotiating process.

Moreover, we do expect to receive the sincere co-operation by Turkey on the humanitarian issue of the missing persons, including through granting access to all areas as required and providing the necessary information that will help shed light on their fate and alleviate the pain of their relatives.

**Mr. President,**

Cyprus and its citizens deserve much more than a divided country. Forty years is more than enough for all of us, and it is high-time for all those involved to realise that the artificial complacency related with the current status quo is to the benefit of no one. A solution would be to the benefit of all Cypriots, Turkey, our immediate region, and, evidently, the international community.

My ultimate vision is to relieve all Cypriots, especially the younger generations, the future of the country, from the anachronistic burden of having to live in a divided country in which they are forcibly prevented from enjoying the freedoms that is the birthright of every citizen in the world. A burden that they are not to blame for and are entitled to see it redressed.

I will not deviate from pursuing this vision, as this is the duty I have undertaken towards all Cypriots. I will not shy away from the historic responsibility to provide a stable, peaceful, prosperous and conciliatory future in my country.

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**Mr. President,**

It would be a serious omission if, before concluding, I did not extend the sincere gratitude of our people and of my Government to the UN Secretary-General and the Security Council for the work of UNFICYP in the last 50 years, which constitutes a prime example of the successful role that the UN can undertake in peace-keeping.

And while we greatly value the benefits of peace-keeping and the role of the UN towards this end, we consider that it is even more important to support and empower this Organisation to continue its work towards peace-making, peace-building and conflict prevention, particularly as regards new and emerging threats.

On our behalf, I want to assure you that we will continue offering any help deemed necessary in achieving these noble objectives.

Thank you for your attention.

