



**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY
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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
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Mr. President,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to once again address this august body. I would like to start by joining the previous speakers in conveying my Government's congratulations to Ambassador Peter Thomson on his election as President of the 71st Session.

Mr. President,

Last year, we, the leaders of the international community, came together in the realisation that in an increasingly interdependent world, more than ever before, all our actions are closely connected and impact on each other.

We, therefore collectively pledged to the implementation of the sustainable development goals, so as to transform our world for the benefit of humankind.

The universal, comprehensive and indivisible 2030 agenda for sustainable development represents a common reference point for all of us and our guiding tool to tackle effectively the universal challenges that transcend boundaries and threaten regional and international cohesion.

Challenges such as poverty, hunger, child mortality, social and economic inequality, lack of adequate health standards and educational opportunities, have, in turn, aggravated worrying phenomena such as religious fundamentalism, sectarianism, terrorism, civil war and ethnic conflicts.

The combination of all these factors has resulted to the extraordinary humanitarian crisis of forcible displacement of millions of people with the consequent unprecedented wave of refugee and migratory flows that we are all witnessing; some of us at our doorstep.

In this respect, it goes without saying that in order to reverse these disturbing developments and establish more prosperous, just and peaceful societies, we should address collectively and in an effective manner the root causes that have led to their uncontrolled exacerbation, through a two-fold interrelated approach:

First, by directing and concentrating our efforts to make sustainable development finally a reality to all those countries and regions in need.

This can only be achieved if we adopt a targeted and results-oriented approach of development co-operation, which will create those political and socio-economic conditions leading to institution building, stability and economic growth, through, among others:

- Eliminating inequality and social exclusion;
- Addressing gender inequality and combating gender-based violence;
- Facilitating investment in human capital via capacity development and education, especially by promoting girls' education;
- Strengthening the role of key productive sectors, such as agriculture, energy and health;
- Building resilience and fostering the full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Enhancing good governance and promoting the rule of law, as well as combating corruption.

Secondly, we need to resourcefully confront the threats posed by ongoing conflicts and also prevent future ones, in order to achieve lasting and viable political solutions that will promote regional peace, security and predictability.

To this end, I wish to remind that the current session of the General Assembly was preceded by the Summit on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, during which we confirmed our shared responsibility to address collectively enforced human displacement.

In parallel, all of us should direct our efforts in an inclusive way, against human traffickers and the enablers of terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Taking into account that in today's globalised world, all of us, even though in a different context and in varying degrees, inevitably face some of all these challenges, meaningful and effective multilateralism should be reinforced.

To this end, we should reconsider the prevention and conflict resolution mechanisms at our disposal, with a view to making them more efficient, effective and immediate.

This can only be achieved through strengthening our support and commitment to the UN, as it constitutes the only international forum which was established by all of us with the aim of resolving co-operatively regional and international threats to peace and security.

Otherwise, we run the risk of an indefinite perpetuation of the current humanitarian crisis and of on-going conflicts that will serve the best interests of their perpetrators at the expense of our Universal principles.

Mr. President,

As his 10-year tenure is coming to an end, I wish to convey both my Government's and personal high appreciation to the UN Secretary-General for his service in the promotion of our common values, his hard work and accomplishments.

In particular, I wish to commend him for his instrumental role in having the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted, for the recent agreement on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and, of course, to bringing the UN Climate Change Conference to a successful conclusion through the Paris Agreement. An Agreement, which Cyprus is committed to ratify by the end of the year.

Moreover, I wish to thank His Excellency for his active role in achieving a peaceful and comprehensive settlement on long-standing international issues, including the Cyprus Problem.

A problem which sadly is the second longest-standing unresolved international issue in the UN agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Following the tragic events of 1974 and Turkey's invasion, the continuing military occupation of more than a third of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus and the forcible displacement of approximately 40 per cent of the population, the Greek Cypriot side, in a spirit of compromise, accepted the evolution of the unitary state to a federal one.

Since then, a plethora of UN Security Council Resolutions reaffirmed the basis of the settlement as a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with political equality, as set out therein and the High Level Agreements, with a single international legal personality, a single sovereignty and a single citizenship.

At the same time, successive leaders of the two communities have engaged unsuccessfully so far, in numerous rounds of talks.

Following my election in 2013, a renewed effort led on February 11, 2014 to the adoption of the Joint Declaration by the leaders of the two communities and the resumption of the negotiating process.

A Joint Declaration which on the one hand encapsulates the following fundamental principles:

- Reaffirmation of the basis of the settlement;
- Cyprus' continued membership of the United Nations and of the European Union.
- The values upon which the EU is founded shall be safeguarded throughout the island, with full respect to democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Union in whole or in part with any other country or any form of partition or secession or any other unilateral change to the state of affairs shall be prohibited.

On the other hand, it established the methodology of the talks:

- All Chapters would be discussed interdependently.
- Would be a leaders-led process and only an agreement freely reached by them might be put to simultaneous referenda, thus, any kind of arbitration would be excluded.
- Nothing would be considered as agreed until everything is agreed.
- The leaders would aim to reach a settlement as soon as possible, without any enforced or artificial timelines.

Thus, both communities have agreed on the overarching rules and modalities that direct the negotiating process. This enabled the two leaders to have a clear and shared understanding on the framework of the envisaged settlement and the ways and means of achieving it.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last year, following the change in the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot Community, I spoke of my revived hope that the new round of negotiations would end the unacceptable status quo.

This year, following a series of frequent meetings between the two leaders, I have pleasure in informing you that progress has been achieved on important aspects of the Cyprus Problem, such as:

- Confirming that United Cyprus shall have a single international legal personality, a single sovereignty and a single citizenship.
- Guaranteeing, for all Cypriots, the freedom of movement, the right to acquire property, reside, practice a trade or profession and establish and operate a business or engage in any economic activity throughout Cyprus.
- Full respect for the individual's right to property.

- Safeguarding that the demographic character of the island on the 1st Day of the Settlement will reflect, with a slight deviation, the traditional demographic composition of the Republic of Cyprus as established in 1960.
- Ensuring that the said demographic composition will not be altered by outside influences.
- Implementation of the EU acquis throughout the territory of Cyprus without deviations and permanent derogations.
- Protecting the bi-zonal and bi-communal character of the settlement through specific clauses.
- As agreed by the two leaders: The Federal constitution shall prescribe that the united Cyprus federation shall be composed of two constituent states of equal status.
- Establishing the mode in which political equality will be exercised, including the effective participation to decision-making at the federal level.

Further, convergences have been reached on most aspects of the Chapters of Governance, Economy and European Union to the benefit of all Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

At the same time, what is also encouraging is that, in contrast to previous negotiations, for the first time discussions in the form of brainstorming have commenced in relation to the Chapters of Territorial Readjustments and Security.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Not overlooking the significant progress achieved, however, I feel obliged to stress that:

- Differences remain on a number of issues in the Chapters of Governance, European Union and Economy.
- The most significant differences lie in the core and fundamental chapters of Property, Territory and Security and Guarantees which will weigh significantly as to whether a solution would be feasible.

My aim is to avoid failures of the past and to present to the people a clear and well-prepared settlement agreement, with no constructive or other ambiguities and deficiencies; ensuring that the solution will be politically and economically viable, functional and lasting.

In this respect, the following issues, among others, need to be addressed:

- The financial dimension of the settlement, including costs related to the Property issue and to the institutional functioning of the Federal State.
- Safeguarding the smooth implementation of the agreement.
- The First Day of the solution and what it would entail.
- Introducing the Euro as legal tender on Day One of the Settlement.
- Speedy implementation of the various aspects of the agreement.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to, yet again, reiterate my resolve to continue working with the same determination and intensive pace in order to reach a solution the soonest and, if possible, by the end of the year.

I do believe that this ambitious goal is achievable, provided that all interested parties and stakeholders, and in particular Turkey, show a similar degree of commitment, engage constructively and proceed with concrete and tangible steps which will positively reinforce the negotiating process.

A solution, that will:

- Reunite our country, its people, the economy and institutions;
- Create a win-win situation for all Cypriots.
- Address the expectations, sensitivities and concerns of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots;
- Ensure a modern EU and UN member-state, enjoying full sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity;
- Restore and fully respect the fundamental freedoms and human rights of all its lawful citizens;
- Establish Cyprus as an international paradigm of the peaceful co-existence and prosperous collaboration between all of its citizens, irrespective of their different ethnic, cultural and religious diversity;
- Rid Cyprus of third country military troops or guarantees, an anachronism in today's World.
- Amplify Cyprus' role as a security provider in one of the most turbulent areas of the world which faces the totality of challenges that currently scourge the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my firm belief that the solution of the Cyprus Problem, would be first and foremost to the benefit of all Cypriots, creating conditions of peace, prosperity and a flourishing society, unlocking its full potential for future generations.

Whilst the solution of an international problem which has been on the agenda of the United Nations in the last few decades, will offer a beacon of hope for the international community that even the most intractable problems can be solved peacefully through the United Nations.

I thank you for your attention.