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Excellency,

On the occasion of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Philemon Yang for his election as the President of the General Assembly and to reiterate at the outset our ironclad support for the international order established by the United Nations Organization, as well as, *inter alia*, its crucial role in utilizing multilateralism as the main tool for the peaceful resolution of disputes, the rebuilding of trust among global actors, and the deliverance of tangible humanitarian support for those in need during these overwhelmingly difficult times.

Considering the 79th Session's theme titled "*Leaving no one behind: Acting together for the advancement of peace, sustainable development, and human dignity for present and future generations.*", I wish to express, on behalf of the Turkish Cypriot people, that we are deeply committed to the principles of peace, sustainable development and human rights that are at the heart of this year's theme. However, the notion of "*leaving no one behind*" should apply to all people, regardless of their political or ethnic background and I feel compelled to remind the international community that the voices and rights of the Turkish Cypriot people continue to be excluded from the international dialogue and decision-making processes that affect our future and well-being. Year after year, the Turkish Cypriot people have been denied a voice and platform, not just only in the General Assembly, but in every body of the UN Organization. On the other hand, one of the two sides in Cyprus, i.e. the Greek Cypriot side, continues to be represented loud and clear, as if it is the sole voice and representative of both peoples of the island.

As one of the equal co-owners of the island, the voice of the Turkish Cypriot people deserves to be heard. Unfortunately, in their absence, Greek Cypriot representatives are being afforded the right to exploit their unfair and unlawful unilateral representation at international platforms to blatantly distort the realities in Cyprus, under the disguise of the so-called sole representative of the entire island. On 25 September 2024, Mr. Christodoulides took the stage during the General Debate

H.E. Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

cc: H.E. Mr. Philemon Yang
President of the General Assembly
of the United Nations
New York

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of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and delivered yet another speech using his usurped title of “the President of the Republic of Cyprus”. The fact of the matter is, contrary to the claim made in his speech, the Greek Cypriot leader, Mr. Nikos Christodoulides, neither has the legal right or the capacity to speak on behalf of the Turkish Cypriot people, nor does he represent them in any way.

In his speech, Mr. Christodoulides underlined the importance of morality while blaming Türkiye and the TRNC with alleged propensity for historical amnesia. Nevertheless, it is indeed the Greek Cypriot Administration which replaces historical facts with manufactured forms of historical amnesia and ignorance. The truth of the matter is that the Cyprus issue commenced in 1963 when the Greek Cypriot co-founder of the 1960 Republic of Cyprus, established under International Cyprus Treaties, tried to impose its political will on the Turkish Cypriot co-founder by force of arms and illegally converted the bi-national Republic into a purely Greek Cypriot entity. Years later, it seems very little has changed in the Greek Cypriot mentality, which still claims to speak on behalf of the “whole island”, while continuing to silence the so-called “minority”. The truth of the matter is that the Turkish Cypriot people have never been a minority in Cyprus. To the contrary, they were the separate and equal sovereign signatories of the said international treaties which established the then Partnership Republic. In short, Turkish Cypriot people are the very co-owners of the island of Cyprus.

In his speech, Mr. Christodoulides refers to the bedrock principles of the UN Charter which call for the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means and refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. In fact, it was the Greek Cypriots themselves who violated this overriding principle in 1963. Even though the international treaties that established the 1960 Republic of Cyprus forbade the union, in part or in whole, of the island with any other country, the Greek Cypriot militia, aided and abetted by Greece, took part in an ethnic cleansing campaign, known as the *Akritis Plan*, against the Turkish Cypriot people during the years from 1963 to 1974, with the ultimate aim of achieving the annexation of the island to Greece (*Enosis*). It was actually this large-scale violence and ensuing gross human rights violations that necessitated the UN Security Council to deploy UNFICYP to the island in 1964 in order to stop the bloodshed and atrocities perpetrated against the Turkish Cypriot people. These facts, conveniently ignored by the Greek Cypriot representatives, are yet another example of their insincerity when they profess the need for adhering to international principles and law.

By falsely claiming that “*Cyprus is a victim of invasion and continuing occupation*”, Mr. Christodoulides flagrantly distorts the undeniable historical facts on the island. As the Greek Cypriot leader is also well aware, Türkiye had to intervene in the island in accordance with her rights and obligations under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee following the Greek/Greek Cypriot military coup in 1974 which was aimed at the realization of *Enosis*. Turkish Cypriot people are still mourning for their losses during the tragic years between 1963 – 1974 in the face of the island wide attacks against them starting on 21 December 1963, also known as the Bloody Christmas, still fresh in our memories. The coup itself was described by the then Greek Cypriot leader Archbishop Makarios in his speech before the Security Council on 19 July 1974 as “an invasion” by Greece. Although legitimate and justified Turkish intervention was carried out against the backdrop of an 11-year long systematic campaign of oppression directed against the Turkish Cypriot people. Clearly, the attempted portrayal of the Cyprus issue as one of “invasion” and “occupation” by Türkiye is not corroborated by historical facts. It is also crucial to note in this regard that none of the United Nations Security Council resolutions on Cyprus describe the legitimate and justified Turkish intervention in

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1974 as an “invasion”, nor its subsequent presence on the island as an “occupation”. In fact, the only occupation on the island is the occupation of the seat of the government by the Greek Cypriot administration since 1963. Therefore, the Greek Cypriot leader’s speech at the UN General Assembly, under the guise of his so-called authority to speak on behalf of “all Cypriots” is a new manifestation of this occupation. Moreover, there is not and has never been a national identity as “Cypriot”, even in 1960, where the two peoples created a joint State, albeit not a nation. As such, referring to Turkish Cypriot people in his speech as “compatriots” is factually incorrect and misleading, to say the least.

Regarding the claim of “*displaced*” awaiting to return their homes, it should be remembered that this issue dates back to 1963, when the Turkish Cypriot people throughout the island had to flee their homes out of fear for their lives in the face of the Greek Cypriot onslaught which lasted for eleven years. Mr. Christodoulides conveniently omits this part of the island’s history during which the Turkish Cypriot people were forced to live in enclaves comprising mere 3% of the island. Though many Turkish Cypriot people as well as Greek Cypriot people were also displaced in 1974 as a result of the Greek/Greek Cypriot coup and its aftermath, the question of displaced persons was comprehensively settled through the Voluntary Exchange of Populations Agreement reached between the two sides at the third round of talks held in Vienna in 1975. The Agreement was implemented under the supervision of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and both the Agreement as well as its implementation are well-recorded in the relevant UN documents (S/11789 of 5 August 1975, S/11789/Add.1 of 10 September 1975). As such, the Greek Cypriot people who had decided to stay in the TRNC had done so as a result of their own free will. Needless to say, they freely enjoy all rights and freedoms in all walks of life which are on a par with those of the Turkish Cypriots’ living in the TRNC and have full liberty to move throughout the island.

In relation to Mr. Christodoulides’ comments about the fenced-off area of Maraş, one must not overlook the fact that over the course of many decades, this area has become a major symbol of the status-quo in Cyprus and it is an undeniable fact that leaving it closed in its current condition is in the interest of no one. There is no question that the fenced-off area of Maraş is part of the territory of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, where our Government has sole jurisdiction and authority. In July 2021, the TRNC Council of Ministers lifted the military zone status of a pilot area, which corresponds to 3.4% of the fenced-off area of Maraş, with a view to enabling the Immovable Property Commission (IPC) to process applications regarding the properties located in the said area. The IPC was established in 2005, in line with the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and is recognized by the Court as an effective domestic remedy for the settlement of the property claims in the form of restitution, compensation and/or exchange. As such, the work of the IPC that has been carried out to date in the fenced-off area of Maraş, as well as the steps planned for the future, are in line with international law and are without prejudice to property rights. This is a humanitarian act which will provide economic benefits to both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot peoples and create a unique area where they, as well as other foreign nationals, can work together, for mutual benefit.

In another futile attempt to conceal destabilizing, unilateral activities of the Greek Cypriot Administration in the Eastern Mediterranean, Mr. Christodoulides misleadingly portrays the island “as an anchor of stability in a turbulent sea”. Nonetheless, it should be remembered that Greek Cypriot authorities are recently engaged in rapid militarization of Cyprus and facilitate deployment of various foreign troops in the Greek Cypriot side. Such unilateral activities only increase the risk of regional escalation, put our Island in the way of becoming a target of various state or non-state actors and pose various security threats for both sides. These acts of clear aggression by the Greek Cypriot side, as well as the sad reality of recent international conflicts plaguing our world, show us

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that the Guarantee System in Cyprus is more relevant and necessary than ever. Without a doubt, it is the Turkish military presence on the island which acts as a deterrent to the recurrence of Greek Cypriot atrocities against the Turkish Cypriot people.

The ill-intentioned approach of Mr. Christodoulides to sideline its counterpart, the Turkish Cypriot side, during his speech by directly addressing Türkiye is yet another indication of the Greek Cypriot refusal of and disrespect to the distinct identity of the Turkish Cypriot people. This approach has been the main reason that rendered the Cyprus issue unresolved for decades and naturally does not bode well for future efforts towards reaching an agreement. In his speech, Christodoulides continues to pay lip service to the repeatedly tried-and-failed, exhausted, and now-defunct agreement model of “bi-zonal, bi-communal federation” based on sharing power and prosperity with the Turkish Cypriot people, a model that the Greek Cypriot side has categorically rejected on numerous occasions. This is the same hegemonic mentality that rejected the Annan Plan in 2004 and led to the collapse of the negotiations at the Cyprus Conference held in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, in July 2017. Most recently, the Greek Cypriot leader was on record speaking to the Greek Cypriot Newspaper, *Kathimerini* on 13 July 2024 stating that the Greek Cypriot leadership “approached [the 1960 Republic of Cyprus] as a transitional stage to achieve another goal”, continuing to say that they “started with Enosis, moved to independence [and] then worked for Enosis”. By repeatedly using the word “determined” alongside “resumption” in reference to a negotiated agreement in his speech, Mr. Christodoulides actually demonstrates the same determination as every other Greek Cypriot leader to cling to outdated parameters and imprison the Turkish Cypriot side to an open-ended negotiation process and thereby sustaining the inhuman and unlawful isolation of the Turkish Cypriot people, while the Greek Cypriot side continues to reap the benefits of international recognition. In an atmosphere, where the Greek Cypriot leadership makes it apparent that the Greek Cypriot side has never intended to share a common future with the other co-owner of the island, it becomes clear that the only new basis that can be discussed between the two sides is based on two equal sovereign States.

As is well known, our new vision which was put forth in April 2021, during the informal 5+UN meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland envisages the acknowledgement of the inherent sovereign equality and equal international status of the two sides to enable the start of formal negotiations on a new and realistic basis with a view to achieving a freely-negotiated and mutually-acceptable cooperative relationship on our island. Our proposal is to level the playing field and establishing the equilibrium between the two existing States in Cyprus both on and off the negotiation table, which is the only way to create a realistic perspective for an agreement that would justify entering into a new process of formal negotiations. Most recently, with the culmination of the six-month mandate of your Personal Envoy, Ms. Maria Holguin Cuellar, it became clear once again that there is no common ground between the two sides, which was also acknowledged by Your Excellency following the informal dinner in New York on 15 October 2024. We strongly believe Your Excellency has a crucial role to play in encouraging the members of the international community to accept the realities on the ground and not to look at the Cyprus issue only through the lens of the Cypriot side.

The President of the Republic of Türkiye, H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, highlighted once again, at his speech he delivered this year at the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly, on 24 September 2024 that “*the sovereign equality and equal international status of the Turkish Cypriots, which are their inherent rights, should be reaffirmed, and the isolation should now come to an end*”, which was followed by his reiteration to the international community to “*recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and establish with it diplomatic, political and economic relations*”. As rightly underlined by President Erdoğan, the outdated “federation model” is no longer an option and

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it is high time that the international community acknowledge the reality that there are at present two separate peoples and two separate States in Cyprus. Excellency, the decades-long injustice, discrimination and denial of Turkish Cypriot inherent and inalienable rights, which are in clear contradiction with United Nations principles must come to an end.

The Greek Cypriot leader also made frequent references during his speech to the EU membership of the so-called "Republic of Cyprus" – which is yet another platform where Turkish Cypriot people have no representation. Calling on an international body which has lost its ability to remain impartial on the Cyprus issue to facilitate any process between the two sides in Cyprus is both counterproductive and unacceptable. In fact, the European Union relinquished any opportunity it may have had to be a catalyst for an agreement on the island when it reneged on its promises as well as decisions to lift the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot people following their "yes" vote to the UN Settlement Plan (aka the Annan Plan) in 2004 and instead rewarded the Greek Cypriot side with unilateral membership despite its "resounding no" to the said Plan. Ever since, with political considerations such as the so-called EU solidarity as well as the well-known practices of the EU such as "horse-trading/political vote trading", the Union has become an ardent supporter of the Greek Cypriot views in relation to Cyprus while continuing to treat the Turkish Cypriot people as non-existent.

While throughout his speech the Greek Cypriot leader professes that the Greek Cypriot administration has a "...*deep dedication to promoting, protecting, and fulfilling basic human rights for all*" and is "...*determined to provide for all Cypriots all rights and fundamental freedoms that other Europeans enjoy*", he conveniently omits to mention his administration's longstanding policy of violating the basic human rights of the Turkish Cypriot people in the form of the inhuman and unlawful isolation imposed on them in all walks of life. These all-encompassing restrictions range from denying the Turkish Cypriot people the right to participation and representation in the international arena, including in cultural, academic and sports events; to preventing and restricting their movement abroad and their communication with the outside world as well as curtailing their trade relations with other countries. I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that the unjust isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people is the most important element poisoning the relations between the two States and their peoples. We expect that Your Excellency, like your predecessors, will take a stronger position against this basic human rights violation of the Turkish Cypriot people, which also clearly runs counter to the Charter of the UN and make an unequivocal call to the international community to lift the isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people and not to refrain from engaging in cooperation with the Turkish Cypriot side towards this end.

It is contradictory that the Greek Cypriot leader refers to the importance of cooperation and multilateralism when speaking about the establishment of a humanitarian corridor to Gaza, which they pursued without any regard for the Turkish Cypriot side. By excluding us from this important initiative, they not only ignore our existence but also refuse to work together on addressing pressing humanitarian needs in the region. This lack of cooperation is an illustration of the Greek Cypriot side's disregard for the principles of inclusivity and collaboration, even in the face of urgent humanitarian crises.

I would like to conclude by reiterating our long-overdue expectation from the United Nations organization to finally acknowledge the above-mentioned factual and legal realities of the island, the fact that there exists two distinct peoples, cultures and administrations in Cyprus. As for our Greek Cypriot neighbors, we remind them that mutual respect is the cornerstone of any relationship, and that we, as the Turkish Cypriot side, their true counterpart, stand ready to cooperate today as well as tomorrow as equal partners in the island.

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I would be grateful if the present letter is circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 40 of the agenda of its 79th Session.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Mehmet Dâna
Representative

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

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