



# Security Council

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## Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus

### I. Introduction

1. The Security Council, in its resolution [2483 \(2019\)](#), requested me to submit a report by 15 November 2019 on my good offices, in particular on progress towards reaching a consensus starting point for meaningful results-oriented negotiations. In that resolution, the Council urged the sides to renew their efforts to achieve an enduring, comprehensive and just settlement based on a bicommunal, bizonal federation with political equality, as set out in relevant Security Council resolutions including in paragraph 4 of resolution [716 \(1991\)](#). The Council also urged the sides and all involved participants to renew their political will and commitment to a settlement under United Nations auspices and to agree on terms of reference to enable results-oriented negotiations leading to a settlement as soon as possible. The Council encouraged the leaders of the two communities to provide written updates to my mission of good offices on the actions they had taken in support of the relevant parts of resolution [2483 \(2019\)](#), with a view to reaching a sustainable and comprehensive settlement, and requested me to include the contents of those updates in my report. The contents of the updates submitted by the leaders are annexed to the present report.

2. The present report focuses on developments from 11 April to 30 October 2019, 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 includes an update on the consultations conducted by senior United Nations official Jane Holl Lute on my behalf.

### II. Background and context

3. In my previous report on my mission of good offices ([S/2019/322](#)), I noted that the means for a durable solution to the Cyprus problem remained in the hands of the parties and that a settlement would require willingness to compromise. I also noted that, while the efforts to conclude the terms of reference were ongoing, it was my hope that the parties would use the opportunity presented to them and overcome the differences that persisted. In that regard, I requested Ms. Lute to continue her discussions with the parties on my behalf.

4. During the reporting period, the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, held a joint meeting on 9 August under the auspices of my Deputy Special Adviser to discuss the way forward. In the



statement issued at the end of the meeting, the two leaders announced that they had decided to continue engaging in the efforts undertaken by Ms. Lute with the determination to finalize the terms of reference that would enable structured and results-oriented negotiations leading to a settlement with a sense of urgency. They also expressed readiness to hold a joint meeting with me following the general debate of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly in order to plan the way forward. Mr. Akıncı and Mr. Anastasiades met once more during the reporting period, following an intensive week of shuttling by Ms. Lute between the two sides in early September. Before leaving Cyprus, Ms. Lute hosted the two leaders for a brief informal gathering at the premises of my mission of good offices on 6 September, which was also attended by my Deputy Special Adviser.

5. With the agreement on the terms of reference still pending, I engaged in separate discussions with the two leaders and other interested parties during their visit to New York at the end of September. In those discussions, I reconfirmed that my good offices remained available to support the parties in their efforts. The leaders agreed to hold a joint informal meeting with me as a potentially constructive step in trying to find a mutually acceptable way forward.

6. At the same time, the situation on the ground has become increasingly complex, a circumstance that is possibly linked to the prolonged hiatus in the political process and the uncertainty surrounding its future. As reflected in my report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (S/2019/562), contestation of parts of the northern ceasefire line in particular has been occurring on an increasingly frequent basis since 2018, which together with unauthorized civilian activity and construction by both sides, can result in tensions and, over time, in a more permanent alteration of the status quo in the buffer zone.

7. Tensions have also increased over developments related to the fenced-off part of Famagusta, Varosha. The issue has recently attracted attention since the announcement on 18 June 2019 that the Turkish Cypriot authorities would conduct an inventory study as a first step towards its potential reopening, followed by visits to the closed-off area by journalists and by four ministers from Turkey which were facilitated by the Turkish Cypriot authorities. The Republic of Cyprus expressed strong concern over those developments and brought the matter to the attention of the Security Council. On 9 October, the members of the Council discussed the issue of Varosha in closed consultations and subsequently issued a press statement in which they recalled the importance of the status of Varosha as set out in previous Council resolutions, including resolutions 550 (1984) and 789 (1992), reiterated that no actions should be taken in relation to Varosha that were not in accordance with those resolutions and stressed the importance of implementing the Council's resolutions. In that statement, the members of the Council further reaffirmed resolution 2483 (2019) and the importance of achieving an enduring, comprehensive and just settlement based on a bicomunal, bizonal federation with political equality, as set out in relevant Council resolutions. They called on the parties to engage constructively and with a sense of urgency and encouraged the leaders to agree on and implement new confidence-building measures. Finally, they urged the sides and all involved participants to refrain from any actions and rhetoric that might damage the chances of success for a settlement.

8. During the reporting period, developments in the region also led to a marked increase in tensions, including surrounding hydrocarbon exploration. Despite separate proposals put forward by the two sides in recent months to address the latter, significant differences persist.

9. In its resolution 2483 (2019), the Security Council renewed its call upon the two leaders to improve the public atmosphere for the negotiations. The Council also called

upon them to ensure a meaningful role for civil society engagement in the peace process. However, the climate surrounding the peace process deteriorated further during the reporting period due to the ongoing tensions in and around Cyprus and with the agreement between the two sides on the terms of reference remaining elusive.

10. It is notable that, in a recent World Bank public perception survey financed by the European Commission, a majority of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot respondents found the status quo unacceptable, and support for a settlement reached an all-time high, with a clear majority of respondents being in favour. As to which type of settlement was preferred, the survey confirms that the only mutually acceptable solution remains the bizonal, bicomunal federation model. The survey also indicates that trust between the communities could be bolstered through increased contact.

11. During the reporting period, pro-solution members of civil society became somewhat more vocal, amid rekindled hopes following the meeting of the two leaders on 9 August that the consultations could lead to an agreement on renewed efforts to solve the Cyprus issue but also out of concern for the consequences of a further, prolonged hiatus in the process. While the number of individuals involved is modest, these initiatives could be indicative of a broader sentiment in the two communities as suggested by the results of perception surveys such as the one referred to above.

12. On 19 July, the bicomunal initiative Unite Cyprus Now issued a press release calling on the Secretary-General to personally work towards holding an unofficial five-party meeting “which would clarify the process aimed at finding a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem”. It also called on the Secretary-General to help the leaders in “easing the process at this crucial juncture for the country and the region”. The Bicomunal Peace Initiative–United Cyprus organized a march in Nicosia for “solution, reunification and peace” on 8 August. The following day, it handed over a document to the two leaders and the United Nations in which it expressed concern about the current stalemate in the process and urged the leaders to reconvene the Conference on Cyprus based on the six-point framework of the Secretary-General. On 4 September 2019, a new initiative, Decision for Peace, was launched by a group of prominent Greek Cypriots of various political affiliations, with the stated objective of supporting the prospect of a solution to the Cyprus problem and the reunification of the island on the basis of a bizonal, bicomunal federation. The initiative, which the organizers hope can be replicated on the Turkish Cypriot side, called for cooperation between all political forces that support a federal solution, as well as for “transparent and honest informing of the political leadership and society on the progress of the negotiations”. The Greek-Turkish Forum has also continued its support for the process. The Forum issued a statement on 8 October in which it urged the two leaders to come to an agreement on the terms of reference, which would facilitate the resumption of results-oriented negotiations with the aim of reaching a fair and viable settlement on the basis of a bizonal, bicomunal federation with political equality. In that statement, the Forum also stressed the need to protect the body of work and to build on the already achieved convergences. Furthermore, the Forum urged all concerned parties to consider the issue of natural resources in the Eastern Mediterranean as a source of mutual interest and cooperation.

13. On 25 September, leaders and representatives of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties continued their engagement under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia in Nicosia. In their joint communiqué, the political parties acknowledged the importance of developing further collaboration mechanisms between the two sides on the island, enhancing existing initiatives and increasing joint efforts on a number of issues, ranging from criminal matters to humanitarian issues, in order to build trust among the members of the two communities with the aim of reaching a mutually acceptable comprehensive solution.

14. The Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden, continued to support the right to worship and the right to access the respective religious monuments across the divide. To follow up on the religious leaders' 2017 joint statement condemning all forms of violence against women and girls, a seminar on human trafficking was held for eight different faith communities, in cooperation with experts from human rights and women's organizations. The Religious Track also continued providing language training in Greek and Turkish for the personnel of religious institutions.

### **III. Status of the process: consultations**

15. With respect to the consultations being conducted on my behalf, Ms. Lute has continued discussions with the parties to the Conference on Cyprus as part of the efforts to facilitate agreement on the terms of reference that would constitute a consensus starting point for a negotiated conclusion to the Cyprus issue. She extended her sixth visit to Cyprus to allow for additional discussions with Mr. Akıncı and Mr. Anastasiades, holding meetings from 1 to 6 September. She also engaged with representatives of the guarantor powers, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

16. In view of the parties' desire that I continue to seek ways to help to get the negotiation process back on track, I have asked Ms. Lute to continue discussions with the leaders of the two communities, the guarantor powers and other interested stakeholders. I have also underscored that it is imperative that any process going forward, including the informal meeting with the leaders of both communities and any subsequent discussions, must be well prepared and oriented towards the resumption of a process with urgency and focus that would lead to a durable solution on the basis of Security Council resolutions and agreed parameters.

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

17. During the reporting period, my mission of good offices continued to closely follow political developments on the island and maintained regular contact with relevant stakeholders to seek their views on the current situation and the way forward. Through active engagement with political parties, civil society groups, the business community and analysts on both sides, my Deputy Special Adviser continued to raise awareness of the need to mobilize support for the peace process across a broad spectrum on both sides of the island.

18. My mission of good offices, with the support of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), has continued to facilitate the work of the 12 technical committees established by the two leaders as part of the peace process to help improve the daily lives of Cypriots. Further signs of revitalization of the committees, many of which had been dormant after the closure of the Conference on Cyprus, continued to emerge throughout the current reporting period. Most technical committees have now worked steadily in line with their overall mandate, although some of them continued to meet less frequently than others, showing that some inconsistency in the overall pace of work of the committees remains.

19. The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage continued to work on the protection and preservation of shared heritage with funding from the European Union and the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Ceremonies were held on 22 June to mark the completion of conservation work on the hamam and a minaret in Paphos and on 21 September to mark the completion of conservation work on the important mosaics of the Agia Triada basilica and the Agios Philon

church in Karpasia/Karpaz. More recently, the upgrading of the Kyrenia shipwreck gallery was also completed. Ten additional conservation projects are under way on both sides of the island. Further, the Committee received 190 applications from young Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to participate in the Heritage Youth Ambassadors initiative whereby young people will endeavour to cooperate and work together on their shared heritage. From the applications received, 16 young people from each side were selected to lead efforts to promote and preserve the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Cyprus and to become the youth voice of the Committee.

20. Following the decisions conveyed by the two leaders at their meeting on 26 February 2019, the Technical Committee on Culture announced on 3 September that an exchange of artworks and audiovisual recordings had taken place on the premises of my mission of good offices. Paintings and recordings will be prepared for an exhibition which will be open to the public in due course.

21. The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters and the Joint Communications Room have remained steadily active by holding regular meetings and exchanging information. During the reporting period, 246 requests pertaining to crime and criminal matters were exchanged between the sides through the Joint Communications Room. On 30 September and 1 October, the University of Cambridge hosted a workshop examining the bicommunal Joint Communications Room from an international perspective. The workshop provided an opportunity to exchange views and best practices on peacebuilding and on possible ways of enhancing trust in the context of protracted conflicts, with a focus in particular on crime and justice matters. Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot representatives participated in the workshop, with funding from the European Commission facility in support of the technical committees and support from UNFICYP.

22. The Technical Committee on Education continued to implement and enhance the voluntary peace education initiative Imagine, building on the success of previous years and the increasing interest from schools in participating in this important programme. New activities during the 2019/20 academic school year include the development of educational materials that promote peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue and the hosting of a website to allow easy access to the training materials and bicommunal study tours to places of interest on both sides.

23. On 12 June, the Technical Committee on Humanitarian Matters launched a programme entitled “Angels of peace: social inclusion – leaving no one behind”. Approximately 40 children and youth with autism and Down’s syndrome from both sides of the island performed modern and folk dance together and participated in other activities. Civil society representatives from both communities also participated in the event to exchange information and discuss common issues of concern as part of efforts to ensure that sustainable development is inclusive.

24. The Technical Committee on Gender Equality reconvened for the first time since 2016, meeting on 18 September to discuss various initiatives under consideration. The Committee also acknowledged the need to develop an action plan supporting the participation of women in peace talks, as encouraged by the Security Council in its resolution [2483 \(2019\)](#).

25. The Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters, which was instrumental in the implementation of important confidence-building measures agreed between the two leaders in 2015, including the interconnectivity of the electrical grids and the interoperability of mobile phones, met on 10 September to discuss further initiatives to promote and facilitate economic contacts and trade between the two sides.

26. Both the Technical Committee on Health and the Technical Committee on Telecommunications and Radio Frequency Broadcasting met regularly during the reporting period. The members of the technical committees cooperated well, tackling practical issues and challenges as they emerged. Meanwhile, the Technical Committee on the Environment is developing ideas for exchanging experiences and information to address island-wide environmental issues.

27. In line with the repeated calls by the Security Council for the two leaders to empower the technical committees, as well as the leaders' own recent reaffirmation of their commitment to intensifying the committees' work, my mission of good offices has started a stocktaking exercise on the activities and *modi operandi* of the technical committees over the past 11 years. The objectives of the stocktaking exercise are to assess if and how the technical committees have evolved, to identify their strengths and challenges and to propose recommendations to the sides to assist them in their efforts to strengthen and streamline the work of the committees. The stocktaking exercise is being conducted through a participatory approach to seek the views of the sides, including the members of the technical committees themselves. The goal is for my mission of good offices to conclude the stocktaking exercise by the end of 2019.

28. The European Commission-funded facility in support of the technical committees, launched in April 2019, emerged as a very useful tool during the reporting period, primarily by providing financial support for a number of the recent initiatives and activities undertaken by various technical committees described in the present report. The facility, which is aimed at developing the capacity of the committees and enhancing the impact and visibility of their work, is administered by UNDP with the involvement of my mission of good offices, the two sides and representatives of the European Commission. The number of project proposals submitted by the technical committees has been steady and interest from the committees that have not yet applied for funding continues to grow, indicating that there is an increased awareness of the facility's potential.

29. With respect to confidence-building measures, the interoperability of mobile phones across the island was established on 11 July, with the aim of improving communication between the communities and bringing all Cypriots closer together. The two leaders placed the first call, facilitated by the United Nations, confirming that the arrangement was live and working. Further work is pending to make interoperability more broadly available and affordable for subscribers on both sides of the island.

30. My mission of good offices, together with UNFICYP, has continued to support intercommunal engagement with women's groups across the island, with an emphasis on engagement with an ever-broader spectrum of women's interest groups. The intercommunal Cypriot branch of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, which is supported by the Government of Italy and UNFICYP, was formally launched on 17 May, with a view to strengthening women's inclusion at all stages of the peace process. The Network's first formal initiative, a workshop aimed at young women on inclusive and gendered mediation and peacebuilding, was held on 18 May.

31. As called for by the Security Council in its resolution [2453 \(2019\)](#), my mission of good offices has taken concrete steps to advance the gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment of a settlement. With the support of the World Bank, the initial output has been drafted based on data analysis and literature review, informal consultations and targeted focus groups with key stakeholders on both sides of the island. The assessment, which is aimed at increasing the understanding of the socioeconomic benefits and challenges of a comprehensive settlement, will include a focus on the gender-differentiated impact of a settlement and make specific social policy recommendations on ways to ensure that a settlement can more effectively

benefit both men and women. A dissemination strategy has also been developed, and the outcomes of the assessment will be shared with the two communities, as requested by the Council.

## V. Observations

32. I continue to hold out hope that a durable settlement to the Cyprus problem can be achieved and urge all parties to take advantage of this period of consultations to lay the groundwork for fresh and unambiguous commitments to achieve a peaceful settlement, which has eluded Cypriots for so long. I welcome the constructive engagement of the sides, the guarantor powers and other interested parties with Ms. Lute and credit this engagement with helping to maintain prospects for peace, which, ultimately, lies in the hands of the two sides. The people of Cyprus deserve to know that this time is different. I again urge the leaders, the guarantor powers and other interested parties to make productive use of the coming period. In this context, I would reiterate my call on the parties to constructively consider the framework of six points that I offered on 30 June 2017.

33. While efforts continued during the reporting period towards reaching an agreement on the terms of reference, the backdrop to these efforts has been an increasingly complex situation, with rising tensions in and along the buffer zone, in particular along the northern ceasefire line, as well as over the possible opening of Varosha and over hydrocarbon exploration around Cyprus.

34. With respect to Varosha, the United Nations continues to be guided by relevant Security Council resolutions. The Council reiterated on 9 October 2019 that no actions should be taken in relation to Varosha that were not in accordance with its resolutions, including resolutions [550 \(1984\)](#) and [789 \(1992\)](#). I will continue to monitor developments closely.

35. I have continually emphasized that natural resources in and around Cyprus constitute a strong incentive for a mutually acceptable and durable solution to the Cyprus problem and could serve to engender deeper regional cooperation. I am monitoring recent developments related to hydrocarbons in and around Cyprus closely and with growing concern. I again urge all relevant parties to exercise restraint and reiterate my call for serious efforts to be made to avoid any further escalation and to defuse tensions.

36. Public perception surveys have again demonstrated that the desire for a solution among the two communities continues to prevail, but that trust remains low. People are sceptical about the prospects for successful talks. Despite repeated calls on the two leaders to better inform the two communities about the contours of a settlement and to improve the overall conditions and atmosphere of the process, the climate has deteriorated further owing to increased tensions in and around Cyprus and to the sides disagreeing over the terms of reference, prolonging the stalemate. Neither side has made sufficient effort to avoid unhelpful rhetoric, which has further reinforced scepticism among the public.

37. At a time when the prospects for resumed negotiations remain uncertain, the technical committees can be an important vehicle for bringing the two communities closer together, implementing practical and impactful bicomunal initiatives and mobilizing support for increased dialogue. In this regard, I have noted further signs of revitalization of the technical committees, as demonstrated by increased activities and initiatives registered during the reporting period, and hope to see more progress in the period ahead.

38. Various recent activities implemented successfully by the technical committees have benefited from the facility funded by the European Commission that was established to support the committees. This demonstrates the importance of material support for enhancing the capacity of the technical committees, as well as the impact and visibility of their work. Preliminary analysis of the information gathered in the United Nations-facilitated stocktaking exercise on technical committees indicates that, in general, the committees are responding to their overall mandates and that successful projects and initiatives have been undertaken which have brought the two sides closer together. At the same time, some challenges have also been identified, including the continuing lack of sufficient resources, secretariat support or cooperation from the relevant authorities, as well as delays in decision-making. In order to fully exploit the potential of the technical committees, I urge the sides to further strengthen the ongoing efforts to revitalize them and to intensify their work by providing them with sustained resources and strong political backing from the leaders.

39. I welcome the full implementation of several previously agreed confidence-building measures. At the same time, despite ongoing discussions facilitated by my Deputy Special Adviser and staff from both missions on the ground, consideration of further measures appears to have lost momentum. This may be partly linked to the fact that the sides have turned their focus to the ongoing consultations to reach an agreement on the terms of reference but is also likely a reflection of the prevailing atmosphere. While agreement on and implementation of confidence-building measures has often been a long and complicated process, I remain convinced that, in the continuing climate of mistrust, such measures can help build a bridge across the divide and bring Cypriots closer together. I therefore encourage the leaders to consider further measures that they could jointly pursue for the benefit of all Cypriots.

40. I welcome the efforts of civil society to strengthen its voice in support of a settlement and reiterate my call upon the two leaders to create space for broader civil society engagement in the process. I remain convinced that achieving a sustainable settlement will require concerted efforts by the two sides to inform their public about the benefits of a solution and to address the persisting trust deficit through a broad range of measures aimed at increasing understanding and cooperation between the communities.

41. While some sectors of civil society have become more vocal in their support for a settlement, I continue to note the need for greater engagement of women and youth in the peace process. In this regard, I welcome the reconvening of the Technical Committee on Gender Equality as an important first step in this direction and call on the sides to fully empower the Committee to develop an action plan supporting the participation of women in the peace talks, as encouraged by the Security Council in its resolution [2483 \(2019\)](#). I note that there could be scope to explore further with the sides and relevant civil society organizations possible modalities and partnerships to enhance the participation of youth in the peace process. This could also build on the results of several activities undertaken by my mission of good offices, including the stocktaking exercise of the technical committees, as well as opinion polls and the gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment.

42. I would like to once again thank the partners, in particular the World Bank and the European Commission, that have continued to provide support for the work of both United Nations missions in Cyprus, UNDP and the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus and have contributed to the implementation of confidence-building measures.

43. While underscoring the importance of the work of the technical committees and the positive impact of confidence-building measures for trust-building between the

two communities, I believe that only genuine progress made towards a return to the negotiation table, including through an agreement on the terms of reference, will mark a path to a comprehensive settlement and reassure Cypriots, as well as the international community, that the prospects of the process truly remain alive.

44. Finally, I would like to thank my Deputy Special Adviser and the personnel serving in my good offices mission in Cyprus for the dedication and commitment with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council. I also express my appreciation to Ms. Lute for conducting the consultations on my behalf.

**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 2483 (2019)**

This submission is made in response to the call in UN Security Council Resolution 2483, 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 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**

Reaching a settlement that entails the evolution of the Republic of Cyprus into a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, continues to be an absolute priority for the Greek Cypriot side. I am keenly aware that the prolongation of the *de facto* division and the *faits accomplis* it enables, entrench the status quo and complicate reunification.

Since the agreement of the sides in 2014 to reunify Cyprus as a contemporary and functional European country with a single sovereignty, single international legal personality and single citizenship, much has been achieved. Years of negotiations led to a significant body of convergences on internal matters, and in 2017, two international conferences were convened to discuss security and guarantees, culminating in the Crans Montana conference. The latter was inconclusive, but not a failure. For the first time in the long history of the Cyprus peace process, all the issues were on the table simultaneously, first and foremost the quest of Cypriots to live in an independent country without the threat or use of force and without foreign troops on their soil. Because of the personal engagement of the UNSG, by the end of the conference, we came closer to a settlement than ever before. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the UN Secretary-General encapsulated the essence of the Cyprus Problem and that “*Progress in this chapter (Security and Guarantees) is an essential element in reaching an overall agreement and in building trust between the two communities in relation to their future security*” (Joint Statement between the two leaders and the UN Secretary-General of June 04, 2017) and that is why for the first time this Chapter was discussed in depth.

Ever since Crans Montana we strongly supported the resumption of the talks the soonest possible from where they were left off at Crans Montana. Unfortunately, despite our immediate and positive reply to the first suggested appointment of a special envoy by the UN Secretary-General, the Turkish Cypriot leader and Turkey refused to give their approval. In conjunction with the Turkish general elections in June 2018, valuable ground and time for the resumption of the process was lost.

It is in this context that we also supported the appointment of Ms. Lute, as the SG noted in his Report [S/2018/918](#) of 15 October 2018. While this resumption has yet to be achieved, I am encouraged by and I concur with the assessment of the SG in

his Reports on Cyprus since Crans Montana, that prospects for a settlement remain alive.

The effort of Ms. Lute to assist the parties to resume the peace process is ongoing. I have engaged constructively with her since her appointment in an effort to agree terms of reference based on which to resume the process. To this end, on 14 June 2019, I addressed a letter to the UNSG, suggesting i) to hold a tripartite meeting between the leaders of the two communities and Ms. Lute, so as to discuss ways to overcome difficulties in agreeing the terms of reference, and ii) to hold a tripartite meeting between the leaders of the two communities and the UNSG, in order to assess the state of play and explore possible ways forward.

At a meeting I had with Mr. Akinci on 9 August 2019, which I initiated, an understanding was reached, in principle, that the terms of reference should consist of i) the Joint Statement of 11 Feb. 2014, ii) the six-point package framework elaborated by the UNSG at Crans Montana, and iii) the convergences achieved until the Crans Montana Conference. I also agreed with the Turkish Cypriot leader that neither of us would insist on interpreting the elements of the Secretary General's package in the terms of reference themselves. In this regard, I would stress the value of receiving written proposals by the Turkish Cypriot side on the UNSG six-point package, akin to those submitted by the Greek Cypriot side in Crans Montana.

Ms. Lute was informed of the understanding achieved on 9 August 2019 and was invited to Cyprus to assist us in formalizing it, thus paving the way for a meeting between the leaders and the UN Secretary General in late September in New York. Unfortunately, following consultations with other interested stakeholders, this understanding was not upheld and, during Ms. Lute's visit to Cyprus in early September, the Turkish Cypriot side insisted on including unilateral interpretations of one element of the UNSG package, as well as other elements preempting both the way forward and the substance of the negotiations.

I remain convinced that the minimalist document encapsulating the spirit of what was agreed on 9 August 2019, is the only way forward.

I will not get into details, since the efforts will continue. However, it should be clear that the aim of reaching an agreement on the terms is to pave the way forward for resuming the negotiating process and therefore we should avoid:

(i) Inserting provisions of not ruling out possible solutions of the Cyprus Problem that run contrary to the UN Security Council Resolutions. In this regard, it is recalled that in the Report of the Secretary-General on Progress towards a settlement in Cyprus, dated 14 June 2018 (S/2018/610), the Secretary-General stated that, *"With respect to the guarantor Powers, in its public statements since July 2017, Turkey has expressed doubts as to the possibility of reaching a settlement based on the established parameters, given the outcome of the conference in Crans-Montana and past failures. Turkey has nonetheless reiterated its support for a 'sustainable settlement' of the Cyprus issue"*.

(ii) Insisting on preconditions that we should selectively resolve one of the six-elements of the Secretary-General's framework prior to resuming negotiations.

That is why our side never raised worries and concerns that would have liked to include in the text of the terms – in particular concerning security and guarantees, the maps of territorial adjustments which the Turkish Cypriot withdrew, the property issue, violations in our exclusive zone and the issue of Famagusta.

The above-mentioned is in line with the principle and the philosophy of the UN Secretary-General that, irrespective of the sides' different understanding, his framework could form the basis for discussions to be held in a comprehensive manner

and as a package, and not in a selective, “cherry-picking” manner by either party, leading to a strategic agreement.

This is also evident by his reply letter to the President of the Republic of Cyprus on August 18, 2017, through which he stated the following: *“With regard to the negotiation process, it is my view that the six elements identified during our various meetings in Crans Montana would only serve as part of a comprehensive package. It is therefore unlikely that any specific element would be resolvable outside of the package”*.

In the Report of the UN Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus, dated 28 September 2017 (S/2017/814), the Secretary-General reported that, *“In an effort to resolve that dilemma, on 30 June I presented the parties with a framework for simultaneously resolving six major outstanding issues at both tables as elements of a final package that, in my view, would lead to a comprehensive settlement. The elements were related to territory, political equality, property, property, equivalent treatment, and security and guarantees”*.

This approach was also recalled, amongst others, in his Report on Progress towards a settlement in Cyprus, dated 14 June 2018 (S/2018/610), through which he conveyed, *“...it is necessary to follow a balanced and comprehensive package approach comprising specific key issues.....The framework contained elements relating to territory, political equality, property, property, equivalent treatment, and security and guarantees. I proposed it in an attempt to help the parties to resolve the remaining core outstanding issues interdependently and overcome the challenges of negotiating across chapters”*.

In anticipation of Ms. Lute’s visit to Cyprus in November 2019 and of a meeting between the leaders and the UNSG, I reiterate my strong commitment to reach agreement on the terms of reference as quickly as possible, as well as my readiness to hold an informal conference in Crans Montana format in order to agree the modalities of a possible substantive meeting for fully fledged negotiations. Such a phased approach would allow for a well-prepared negotiation, the importance of which was highlighted also by the UNSG in his Report S/2019/322 of 16 April 2019.

As regards the substance of the settlement, in response to the encouragement of the Secretary General in his Report S/2018/918 of 15 October 2018 for any new input that could prove useful in bringing the sides closer, I suggested to discuss the decentralization of the exercise of powers by the central government, always in full respect to the bizonal, bicomunal form of settlement. Such a proposal entails that, on the one hand, the federal government, as the one representing the country as a subject of international law, will maintain those powers that are absolutely necessary to safeguard the union and cohesion of the State, while on the other hand, each constituent state, within its administrative area and in line with the principles of subsidiarity and non-encroachment, will enjoy extended administrative autonomy. This proposal was positively received by the Turkish Cypriot leader and paved the way forward for the understanding reached on August 09, 2019 between the two leaders. We are ready to further elaborate on the said proposal in the context of a fully-fledged negotiating process.

I also put on the table the possibility of changing the form of government, from a presidential to a parliamentary system, in order to facilitate agreement on the federal executive. This would entail having a non-executive Greek Cypriot President and Turkish Cypriot Vice President, in combination with a Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister who would be elected by the House of Representatives and rotate on a 4:2 ratio. Such a system would help create a national political system, bringing parties from both communities in the same political arena and compelling them to forge alliances irrespective of ethnicity.

To help maintain the prospects of a settlement in the absence of a fully-fledged peace process and in response to the call of the UNSG for additional confidence-building measures, I proposed a package of 21 CBMs on 26 February 2019. This package includes, but is not limited to, 1) establishing new technical committees, such as on climate change and on labour issues with trade unions from both sides, as well as on reconstruction and resettlement, with priority to be given to the fenced area of Varosha; 2) opening new crossing points with priority given to Athienou–Piroy–Aglantzia and Pomos–Pachyammos–Kato Pyrgos–Kokkina for humanitarian reasons and the effect they would have on immediately improving the daily lives of the densely populated, yet isolated, villages; 3) extending the Pedhieos River Linear Park to the northern part of Nicosia; 4) creating a free access zone in the buffer zone in Nicosia, extending from Victoria Street to Ermou Street and connecting the renovated Arab Ahmed Quarter with the Armenian church and bishopric compound, the Pallas Theatre and Kastelliotissa Hall in the Paphos Gate area and Ermou Street; 5) enhancing intra-island trade by abolishing obstacles imposed by the Turkish Cypriot community, such as “taxation”, other levies and “import licenses” on products originating in the government-controlled areas; 6) facilitating the movement of commercial vehicles transporting goods covered by the Green Line Regulation; 7) reinforcing the work and financing of the Technical Committee of Cultural Heritage with increased allocations from both sides; 8) conserving religious sites and facilitation of all religious services, including in Hala Sultan mosque every Friday and St. Barnabas Monastery every Sunday, the reconversion of the church of Panagia in Lysi village from a mosque, the protection of the monastery and church of Agios Panteleimonas in Myrtou village, the preservation of the area of Apostolos Andreas and the return of the icons removed from the Apostolos Andreas church to their initial place; 9) the restoration of the Churches of St. James and St. George in the Nicosia buffer zone; 10) restoring the use of original names in road signs for main villages, towns, cities and archeological sites; 11) reducing military forces and disengagement of forces along the cease-fire line and unmanning of positions, cessation of violations by Turkish forces along the ceasefire line and restoration of status quo ante in Strovilia, clearance of anti-personnel mines as well as other mines, on each side, to be agreed, setting-up demilitarized zones in sensitive areas along the cease fire-line, withdrawal of 5.000–10,000 Turkish troops from Cyprus; and 12) identifying additional burial sites of missing persons through information from countries and organizations with a military or police presence in Cyprus in 1963, 1964 and 1974.

The above CBMs are over and above other ongoing or completed CBMs, such as the clearance of 18 suspected hazardous areas and the clearance of nine suspected hazardous areas on both sides of the buffer zone, the interconnectivity of the electrical system, the interoperability of mobile phone networks, the handing over by the Turkish Cypriot side of paintings by Greek Cypriot artists and the handing over by the Greek Cypriot side visual and audio recordings of Turkish Cypriot artists from the archives of the CyBC.

At the same time, it must be recalled that despite the agreement between the two leaders to attend a bicomunal friendly match between Greek Cypriot club Nea Salamina Ammochostou and Turkish Cypriot club Magusa Türk Gücü in the mixed village of Pyla in March 2019, the Turkish Cypriot leader at the last instance refused to attend the football match, citing as a reason the fact that it was to be held in the areas controlled by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Last but not least, the technical committees continue to work towards alleviating the daily problems generated by the status quo. Following the call of the UNSG, in his Report [S/2019/322](#) of 16 April 2019, to revitalize and intensify the work of the technical committees, I strongly encouraged the Greek Cypriot members of the bi-communal technical committees to build on synergies and cooperation between

them and the Turkish Cypriot members within their relevant technical committees, sharing best practices and contributing in a more structured way, not only to facilitating the daily lives of Cypriots, but also to the creation of a conducive environment for the resumption of talks. In this context of empowering the work of the Technical Committees, the Republic of Cyprus has also decided to donate 750,000 euros to the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage in order to support more renovation and restoration works of heritage sites across the island.

Furthermore, we have encouraged and actively supported the Technical Committees to develop and present proposals in the framework of the Support Facility (with EU funds), which was established to strengthen the capacity of the Technical Committees as effective inter-communal mechanisms through projects that foster mutual understanding and cooperation. Proposals already agreed include the creation of a platform of cooperation for exchange of experience and information between environmental experts, the pilot production of educational material on peace education to be made available to educators, the holding of a workshop on the Joint Contact Room, the organization of a seminar on social inclusion, and an exhibition of a selection of the paintings by Greek Cypriot artists handed over by the Turkish Cypriot side, along with a selection of audiovisual material from CyBC archives related to the Turkish Cypriot community, handed over by the Greek Cypriot side.

## **II. Factors impeding the resumption of the peace process**

As I have alluded to above, we have faced a specific obstacle in agreeing the terms of reference in the form of an insistence to interpret political equality as a veto of the Turkish Cypriot community in all decisions of all federal institutions. Beyond the fact that such interpretation is not and could not be extracted from the agreed definition of political equality, I must recall that it is the existence of a much more restricted such right of veto that created the constitutional crisis in Cyprus in the first place. I must also stress that such a provision in the settlement would not only render the state dysfunctional, but it would defeat the purpose of reunification altogether. I am absolutely convinced that the suggestion by the UNSG in his six-point package, i.e. to grant a positive vote in specific bodies where the vital interests of each community or constituent state might be affected provided that there exists an effective deadlock-resolving mechanism, is the only formula that can lead us to a breakthrough on this issue. I am also convinced that embedding separatist and deadlock-inducing decision-making mechanisms in the settlement will make it non-viable. The convergences already achieved on effective participation amount to the most far-reaching power sharing arrangements in existence, anywhere.

However, the challenges posed by the complex substance of the Cyprus problem are not the only impediments to getting the peace process back on track. I am obliged to list a number of other factors that induce tensions and stand in the way of fruitful negotiations:

1. Since May 2019, Turkey has taken its violations of the sovereignty and sovereign rights of Cyprus to a new level, by engaging in hydrocarbon exploration activities in Cyprus' territorial sea and exclusive economic zone/continental shelf. This is a significant build-up on previous violations by Turkey in Cyprus' maritime zones, which, combined with the violations entailed in the status quo, raise the level of threat and the risk of escalation. Turkey has, in effect, surrounded the island of Cyprus, with drilling and seismic vessels, conducting illegal hydrocarbon exploration, escorted by numerous warships, daily patrols of armed, unmanned aerial vehicles, which together with the increased number of repeated military exercises, have led to an intense militarization of the sea around Cyprus. Despite the repeated calls by the UN Security Council "for a reduction of tensions in the Eastern

Mediterranean” and many like statements by other actors, in early October 2019, Turkey redeployed its drilling ship ‘Yavuz’ to conduct an illegal hydrocarbon exploratory drilling in offshore exploration Block 7 of Cyprus’ EEZ/continental shelf, where the Cyprus Government had already issued exploration licenses.

Cyprus will continue to exercise its sovereign rights in accordance with international law, having no doubts about the legal solidity of its positions, which are fully upheld by international law. As this is a case of aggressive behaviour by a powerful state against a small state, which also threatens the stability, peace and security of the entire Eastern Mediterranean region, Cyprus anticipates that the international community in general and the United Nations in particular will take necessary action to defend international law and the principles of the UN Charter, for example through targeted measures like those adopted by the EU in June and October 2019, to prevent further escalation. I have said on many occasions that it lacks sense to have a peace process in such conditions and that I cannot be expected to negotiate under duress.

As regards the exploitation of its natural resources by reunited Cyprus, I should recall that there are existing convergences covering all the aspects of this issue, including the continued adherence of Cyprus to the UNCLOS and the allocation of revenues. Cyprus, however, will not be held hostage to its occupation and be prevented from exercising its rights in the absence of a settlement. At the same time, Cyprus cannot be asked to co-decide and co-manage these issues as if its government lacked legitimacy to do so. In order to alleviate any concerns of the Turkish Cypriots with regard to hydrocarbons, a National Sovereign Fund, based on the Norwegian model, has been established, in order to manage any future revenues accruing from hydrocarbon exploration. This ensures that any use of the revenues either repaying public debt or their utilization by the Government as a guarantee for securing loans is strictly prohibited.

I have also expressed my readiness to brief regularly the Turkish Cypriot leader on hydrocarbons related matters, including revenues, provided of course, that any unlawful actions by *Turkey within the EEZ of Cyprus are definitively terminated*. I have also conveyed the readiness of the Cyprus Government to examine establishing an escrow account for hydrocarbons revenues to benefit Turkish Cypriots, based on population ratios, provided there is a meaningful peace process underway and provided a delimitation agreement is concluded between Cyprus and Turkey as suggested by the Republic of Cyprus and welcomed by the EU. The conclusion of such an agreement pursuant to the UNCLOS is absolutely vital and the only way forward which is consistent with international law.

2. In the past few months, Turkey has been threatening to open the fenced area of Varosha, in violation of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. As this would constitute a new and particularly grave *fait accompli* on the ground and deal a deadly blow to the peace process, the Cyprus Government resorted to the Security Council, which “recalled the importance of the status of Varosha as set out in previous Security Council resolutions, including resolution 550 (1984) and resolution 789 (1992), and reiterated that no actions should be carried out in relation to Varosha that are not in accordance with those resolutions”. It would be difficult to visualize having meaningful negotiations in the midst of violations and inflammatory rhetoric as regards Varosha. I expect everyone to respect the special status of Varosha as defined by the 1979 High-Level Agreement and relevant Security Council Resolutions, avoiding actions that might adversely affect the right of return and the property rights of the city’s lawful inhabitants. I also recall that Varosha has been included in many CBM proposals of the Greek Cypriot side over the years and I wish to restate my conviction that the return of Varosha as a matter of priority and without awaiting the

resolution of other aspects of the Cyprus problem would be a gamechanger for our efforts to settle it.

3. Serious violations of the military *status quo* on the ground by the Turkish forces continue to intensify. We are confronted with an increasingly aggressive positioning of the Turkish Forces, with threats and violations on the whole stretch of the buffer zone. A series of military status quo violations have taken place and are still ongoing, in the Strovilia area, the village of Pyla, Ledra Palace and Home for Cooperation area, Ledra street, Wayne's Keep cemetery, Avlona and Dhenia villages. These violations on the part of the Turkish occupation army clearly illustrate an effort to advance the Turkish Forces ceasefire line southwards by taking control of further territory and establish new *faits accomplis*, bringing agitation and hampering security in the buffer zone, while creating further obstacles to UNFICYP in exercising its mandate in line with Security Council Resolution 186 (1964). Of those, the violations in the Strovilia enclave constitute the most flagrant ones. Despite the constant calls of the UNSC to lift these violations, not only has the continuous military *status quo* violation, in place since 2000, not been lifted, it has been exacerbated with additional violations in February, July, and September 2019. I should reaffirm the vital role of UNFICYP, not only in maintaining stability, but in creating the necessary conditions to enable the existence of a peace process.

4. Proposing elements that run contrary to Security Council Resolutions on Cyprus, the High-Level Agreements, and the agreed basis and form of settlement, are not conducive to resuming meaningful negotiations. Recalling that "Turkey has expressed doubts as to the possibility of reaching a settlement based on the established parameters", as reported by the UNSG in S/2018/610 on 14 June 2018, I feel compelled to remind that a federation, as opposed to a unitary state, was a historical compromise by the Greek Cypriot side and to underscore that the settlement will be a compromise for everyone.

### III. The way forward

In March 2016, aiming to establish a more creative and results-oriented dialogue so as to move the process forward in a speedier manner, I proposed to the Turkish Cypriot leader to produce a joint document with three columns, enlisting i) the convergences we have achieved, ii) minor divergences which are bridgeable, and iii) major divergences on core issues. Such a manual would help us organize our work more efficiently and focus our attention on the outstanding issues that require progress before reconvening a new Conference on Cyprus. The Greek Cypriot side produced the above document, but the Turkish Cypriot side did not engage. I then suggested to Mr. Akinci to hold a joint press conference, in order to inform Cypriots on the substance of the progress achieved and the outstanding issues. This would better inform the direct constituents of the peace process and provide a good opportunity for coordinated public messaging, as per the repeated encouragement of the UNSG. My proposal was not positively received by the Turkish Cypriot side. I continue to see merit in both of these proposals, which are still on the table.

More recently, and despite the numerous challenges and escalating tensions, the Greek Cypriot side has i) suggested 21 new Confidence Building Measures with the aim of reversing the prevailing negative climate and creating a win-win situation for both sides; ii) reinforced the work of the bi-communal technical committees as a means of enhancing inter-communal contact and trust-building, including through the engagement of civil society in peace efforts; and iii) submitted constructive proposals, both on substance and on the way forward, with the aim of breaking the impasse and resuming the negotiating process.

Despite numerous challenges and escalating tension due to actions by the illegal regime in the north and by Turkey during these past months, the two sides reached an agreement in principle and without preconditions, on 9 August 2019, on the three basic elements of the terms of reference that would create a solid basis for the resumption of talks. This understanding never materialized.

As I have stated repeatedly, the United Nations and the Secretary General's Good Offices Mission is the only way forward. We are determined to continue doing our utmost to support both the efforts of the Secretary General and his special envoy to reach an agreement on the terms of reference and we are committed to working tirelessly, in good faith and determination for the resumption of the negotiating process.

In my meeting with the UN Secretary General on 27 September 2019, I reiterated my determination to continue engaging in efforts to reach an agreement on the terms of reference, as well as my readiness to hold a tripartite meeting with the Turkish Cypriot leader and the UNSG in order to finalize the terms of reference and plan the way forward.

To this end, I have already positively responded to an invitation by the UN Secretary General to hold a joint meeting with the Turkish Cypriot leader in his presence, so that the terms of reference are finalized on the basis of the understanding reached on 9 August 2019. I anticipate that this will pave the way for an informal preparatory meeting of all involved parties to discuss the procedural aspects for a possible new Conference on Cyprus that would allow the resumption of the negotiations from where they were left off in Crans Montana. It is of paramount importance in this difficult and critical juncture not to allow the hopes and expectation for the continuation of the negotiations to drift away.

Lack of agreement in the previous months should not discourage us but strengthen our resolve and efforts to achieve reunification for the benefit of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots alike. For negotiations to be meaningful, we need an environment constructive to the holding of negotiations, and we certainly cannot negotiate under duress. The role of the United Nations, both of the Security Council and of the Secretary General, is critical in order to achieve that. For us, there is no alternative to the peaceful settlement of disputes and to reunification of our country.

Yet, and we have to be clear on this issue, for substantial negotiations to resume we need an environment that will allow constructive discussions to be held, in the same spirit and conditions that characterized all previous negotiating rounds, including the two Conferences on Cyprus.

We therefore call the UN Secretary-General, his Good Offices mission on Cyprus and the Permanent Members of the Security Council, as the guardian, of international law and of the values and principles of our UN family, to adopt an assertive stance so as for Turkey on the one hand to terminate its unlawful activities and refrain from any provocative acts and on the other hand to terminate its negative interventions as regards the bicomunal aspects of the negotiating process and concentrate its efforts and work constructively towards reaching a comprehensive settlement on the Cyprus Problem.

As we have repeatedly stated, we are ready to move in this direction with commitment and undeterred resolve. We do hope that our genuine determination and tangible commitment for returning to the negotiating table will be finally matched in practice by the Turkish Cypriot side and Turkey.

## Annex II

### **Actions of the Turkish Cypriot side taken in support of the relevant parts of Security Council resolution 2483 (2019) with a view to reaching a sustainable and comprehensive settlement**

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

The comprehensive settlement negotiations on the Cyprus problem have been ongoing under the auspices of the United Nations for over five decades with some intervals. Throughout these negotiations, the main principles and parameters of a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus have been well established, as set out in the relevant UN Secretary-General reports and the Security Council resolutions. Moreover, during the course of these negotiations within the established UN parameters, a body of work has also been accumulated in the form of framework agreements, joint declarations and convergences, which have essentially guided the efforts to date in reaching a solution based on a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with political equality.

Especially when the negotiations resumed in May 2015 following the election of President Mustafa Akıncı, the process gained an unprecedented momentum through intensive negotiations conducted with an accelerated pace across main chapters and built upon the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014 as well as the convergences reached between the two sides to that date. For the following two years, the two sides further widened and deepened their discussions over the core issues that had not been tackled previously. Accordingly, the two sides produced new convergences and achieved significant progress, thereby reaching maturity in the process that eventually necessitated the participation of all involved parties to resolve the main outstanding issues interdependently. In that respect, the Turkish Cypriot side always adopted a constructive stance and took bold steps to push the process forward both during the negotiations held on the island and in the successive rounds held in Mont Pèlerin as well as in Geneva. The Turkish Cypriot side furthermore continued its positive and leading role so as not to let the derailing of the process even when the Greek Cypriot side asked for recess during the first round of negotiations in Mont Pèlerin and when Greece asked to end the already convened Conference on Cyprus held for the first time in Geneva for preparation.

As a consequence, when the Conference on Cyprus in Crans-Montana convened, the Secretary-General presented a framework of six points on 30 June 2017, which brought together under a final package those key outstanding issues that remained to be resolved simultaneously in order to pay the way for reaching a comprehensive settlement and bring the Cyprus problem to an end. However, due to reasons well known to all participants and interested parties, in particular the rejection of the Greek Cypriot side to fully accommodate the elements of the Secretary-General's framework in relation to political equality, a historic opportunity was missed in Crans-Montana and the Conference on Cyprus was concluded without a result.

The Secretary-General, in his report on good offices mission dated 28 September 2017, which was submitted after Crans-Montana, while referring to the historic opportunity missed due to the fact that the parties had come close to reaching a strategic understanding on all outstanding core elements of a comprehensive settlement, pointed out also that "the essence of a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem is practically there" and called upon the sides to reflect "to determine if and when conditions will mature again for a meaningful process in the near future".

During the period ensuing Crans-Montana, despite all the setbacks and confusion created in relation to the established basis of a solution in Cyprus as well as regression from the jointly achieved convergence on the principle of effective participation, the Turkish Cypriot side has nevertheless continued its consistent stance unwaveringly in favor of a solution based on the established UN parameters and called for the preservation of the UN body of work that has come into existence after decades-long negotiations on the Cyprus problem as a compromise between the two sides. In that regard, drawing the necessary lessons from the unsuccessful conclusion of the Conference on Cyprus in July 2017, the Turkish Cypriot side has remained committed to the resumption of a meaningful new process to walk the final mile and achieve a solution based on federation in line with the following assessment of the Secretary-General:

*I reaffirm the readiness of the United Nations to assist the sides, should they jointly decide to engage in such a process with the necessary political will, in order to conclude the strategic agreement that was emerging in Crans-Montana. Furthermore, I encourage them to seek ways to preserve the body of work that had been built throughout the process in the form of convergences and understandings accumulated in the course of the past two years. (UNSG report S/2017/814, para. 47)*

*It is my firm belief that, for a process of such complexity and political sensitivity to be successful, a package approach on specific key issues, such as the one that guided the discussions during the meetings in Crans-Montana, would need to be followed. In the future, agreement should be pursued at the strategic level on key outstanding issues, which would form the basis for the comprehensive settlement and, following the conclusion of a strategic agreement, the details of which would need to be worked out at the technical level... (para. 48)*

Given the fact that the two sides achieved considerable progress and the remaining issues were framed by the Secretary-General under a package to be resolved interdependently and simultaneously, the only feasible way forward to pave the way with “a sense of urgency” for a comprehensive settlement within “a foreseeable horizon”, as also called for by the Secretary-General, would be reaching a strategic agreement on the basis of the framework of the Secretary-General dated 30 June 2017 as outlined above.

Therefore, with a view to breaking the stalemate emerged after Crans-Montana, President Akıncı took a step in that respect and called upon his Greek Cypriot counterpart publicly on 30 April 2018 to accept the Secretary-General’s framework of 30 June 2017 with no dilution and distortion, and to jointly announce it as a strategic package agreement. Unfortunately, this call of the Turkish Cypriot side had not been reciprocated. Moreover, further confusion was created this time in relation to the framework of 30 June 2017 despite the fact that it was confirmed by the Secretary-General himself in his various reports as the only existing framework and most recently in the latest Security Council resolution [S/RES/2483 \(2019\)](#).

Against this background, the timely decision of the Secretary-General in June 2018 to appoint a senior UN official with the intention of conducting in-depth consultations with the sides undoubtedly provided an impetus to the efforts in assessing whether conditions matured for a meaningful process. In that regard, the Turkish Cypriot side engaged with Jane Holl Lute in a constructive manner and renewed its commitment and political will once again for a solution based on a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with political equality, as set out in relevant Security Council resolutions, including OP4 of its resolution [716 \(1991\)](#). Maintaining its firm position on the Secretary-General’s framework of 30 June 2017 as the sole instrument in establishing a common ground for a meaningful new process, the

Turkish Cypriot side continued to reiterate its calls for reaching a strategic agreement on its basis. In his report on his mission of good offices dated 14 June 2018, the Secretary-General also emphasized the necessity “to follow a balanced and comprehensive package approach” and stressed that “should the sides jointly decide to resume talks, the six-point framework that I introduced in Crans-Montana could form the basis for negotiations aimed at reaching a strategic agreement and paving the way for a comprehensive settlement”. (UNSG report [S/2018/610](#), para. 25)

As the Secretary-General mandated the ongoing consultations with the task of agreeing on terms of reference that would constitute the consensus starting point for meaningful negotiations leading to a settlement within a foreseeable horizon, the Turkish Cypriot side clearly put forward that if the Greek Cypriot side is sincere in its articulation of a solution based on a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with political equality, then the way forward should be designed in a way securing:

(i) a renewed commitment to what has already been achieved and agreed to date between the two sides over the course of the negotiations held under the UN auspices;

(ii) a firm commitment to a meaningful, results-oriented process that would assist the sides in walking the final mile and reaching a solution “with a sense of urgency” and “within a foreseeable horizon”, as also called for by the Secretary-General in his various reports ([S/2018/919](#) and [S/2019/322](#)) and most recently by the Security Council in its latest resolution on Cyprus ([S/RES/2483](#)).

Due to the setbacks encountered during the past two years, bringing clarity to the process, both in terms of substance and methodology, has gained utmost importance for the Turkish Cypriot side. Therefore, the terms of reference should be tackled in a way leaving no ambiguity for the sides and no room for different interpretations and backtracking. To that end, the Turkish Cypriot side proposed the following main elements to be included in terms of reference in consistence with the views of the Secretary-General and the recent Security Council resolutions:

(i) On substance: commitment to the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014; the past convergences including the footnotes; and the six-point framework submitted by the Secretary-General on 30 June 2017. A renewed commitment to the established parameter of political equality in its entirety is also of utmost importance in showing the sincerity of the sides to their commitment to past convergences, in particular the principle of effective participation, which is enshrined in the UN definition of political equality endorsed by the Security Council. Hence, in its latest resolution, the Security Council has urged the sides “to renew their efforts to achieve an enduring, comprehensive and just settlement based on a bicomunal, bizonal federation with political equality, as set out in relevant Security Council resolutions, including OP4 of its resolution [716 \(1991\)](#)”.

As a constructive way forward, the Turkish Cypriot side also expressed its willingness to take up the issue of decentralization to better understand the practical implementation of the Greek Cypriot proposal if the two sides are able to agree on a commitment to the three main elements regarding the substance in terms of reference. So far, the Greek Cypriot Leader only referred to the decentralization in principle, but refrained from naming which specific competences proposed to rest with the federal government, leaving the essence of the issue unclear, despite the repeated calls of the Turkish Cypriot Leader in that respect.

(ii) On methodology: commitment to a well-structured and clearly phased process to ensure it is programmed with a sense of urgency to achieve a comprehensive and durable settlement within a foreseeable horizon. As called for by the Secretary-General, which is noted above, reaching a strategic agreement based on

the Secretary-General's framework of 30 June 2017 would form the basis for the comprehensive settlement.

In his latest report on his mission of good offices in Cyprus dated 16 April 2019, the Secretary-General stated that:

*I recognize that widespread support for a horizon of an endless process without results lies behind us, not before us. There is consensus that an unchanging status quo, that is, the lack of a resolution to the Cyprus issue, is not sustainable... The way ahead must be well prepared, with a sense of urgency and focus... This engagement will need to be infused with a sense of purpose and determination to reach a successful end within a foreseeable horizon.* (UNSG report [S/2019/322](#))

Hence, the Security Council, in its latest resolution, also recalled the Secretary-General's framework of 30 June 2017 "as a way to move forward to close the remaining gaps".

In line with this assessment, and also drawing from the lessons learnt during the last process that ended with no result, the Turkish Cypriot side has consistently emphasized the need for designing a proper results-oriented process. Undoubtedly, this necessity derives from the fact that the continuation of the negotiations for the sake of negotiations has only been serving to the continuation of the unsustainable status quo, which hurts most the Turkish Cypriot people and leaves them in limbo.

Since Crans-Montana, the Turkish Cypriot side is unquestionably the only side on the island which has consistently pursued a solution based on federation and still remains committed to the efforts for enabling meaningful negotiations leading to a settlement as quickly as possible, and to continue engaging actively and with a sense of urgency with the senior UN official, Jane Holl Lute, as called for by the Security Council. In this respect, the Turkish Cypriot side also stands ready, as continuously expressed, for the realization of informal tripartite and five-party meetings to be called by the Secretary-General in the near future.

## **II. Actions Taken in Support of Building Confidence as well as Promoting Intercommunal Contacts and Reconciliation:**

In the lack of a comprehensive settlement, dialogue and cooperation between the two sides as well as the two communities play an essential role in enhancing mutual understanding, addressing and tackling problems as well as developing a culture of partnership. Nevertheless, these will also constitute the cornerstones of a federation to be established in Cyprus. Therefore, the Turkish Cypriot side is of the view that confidence and trust building measures are key in promoting peace and reconciliation which in effect pave the way for a durable and sustainable settlement on the island.

### **Confidence-Building Measures:**

In that respect, the Turkish Cypriot side has actively pursued a policy of building confidence and trust between the two sides as well as the two communities.

In order to promote intercommunal contact in the first place, on 14 May 2015, upon the initiative of the newly elected President Akıncı, unilateral measures were taken at the crossing points to help ease the crossing of the Greek Cypriots to and from the Turkish Cypriot side, such as lifting the requirement for filling visa forms for the Greek Cypriots.

As a sign of the importance President Akıncı attaches to bringing the two communities closer and enhancing relations also at the social and cultural levels, immediately following his election, he came together with his Greek Cypriot counterpart at a social event where the two Leaders met at the Lokmacı/Ledra crossing point and visited both the north and south parts of Nicosia together. In this respect, the two Leaders also attended a play together at the Rialto Theatre in Limassol on 8 July 2015 and then a bi-communal concert at the Othello Castle in Famagusta on 28 July 2015.

During their initial meetings in May 2015, the two Leaders agreed and announced successive packages of confidence-building measures, such as the opening of Lefke/Aplıç and Derinya crossing points to promote further intercommunal contact; interconnectivity of electricity grids; interoperability of mobile phones; prevention of radio frequency interferences; and establishing two more technical committees on Culture as well as Gender Equality. In November 2015, the two Leaders further agreed to establish another technical committee, the Technical Committee on Education, which is mandated with promoting peace education across the island, as also emphasized by the latest Security Council resolution.

Under the facilitation of the UN, the Turkish Cypriot side actively engaged with its counterpart and insistently pushed for the realization of the effective implementation of these confidence building measures. Although the implementation of some measures has taken more time and energy than expected due to the reluctance of the Greek Cypriot side, all of the above-mentioned measures have eventually been materialized and are in effect today, the interoperability of mobile phones across the island being the most recent one as it took effect on 11 July 2019.

Moreover, during the initial period of negotiations, the Turkish Cypriot Leader proposed to make the reciprocal suspension of the Toros and Nikiforos military exercises permanent. However, the Greek Cypriot Leader preferred to take a decision on this matter on an annual basis.

Elimination of Cyprus from mines as remnants of war is a priority area for the Turkish Cypriot side, which has been pursuing a policy of mine-free Cyprus. Towards that goal, the Turkish Cypriot side continues supporting activities on demining, working in particular on the clearance of nine suspected hazardous areas on its side, as agreed and announced by the two Leaders on 26 February 2019.

As per its commitment to the preservation of common cultural heritage on the island, the Turkish Cypriot side also agreed to the implementation of emergency support measures for the stabilization/conservation of two churches, St. George Church and St. Jacob Church, which are under critical conditions. In that respect, the Turkish Cypriot side authorized and conducted the necessary mine survey, as a result of which mine-free certificate was issued for the required work to be done in those areas.

On 26 February 2019, as a gesture of good will, the Turkish Cypriot Leader conveyed the decision of the Turkish Cypriot side to return paintings by Greek Cypriot artists that remained under protection on the Turkish Cypriot side since 1974. The Greek Cypriot Leader reciprocated similarly and conveyed the Greek Cypriot side's decision to hand over visual and audio recordings of Turkish Cypriot artists that exist in the archives of the CyBC, belonging to the pre-1963 period. This move of reciprocal gestures was realized on 3 September 2019 with the efforts of the Technical Committee on Culture.

With a view to taking further steps towards confidence building, the Turkish Cypriot side, on 9 August 2019, submitted to the Greek Cypriot side a new proposal on confidence building measures, which comprised (1) A package CBM:

Simultaneously removing the barriers before third country nationals arriving from Larnaca Airport and crossing to the north, and removing taxation on the Greek Cypriot commodities crossing the green line by the Turkish Cypriot side; (2) Facilitating the crossing of Turkish Cypriot commercial vehicles to the south; (3) Achieving an island-wide insurance scheme for the vehicles crossing the green line; (4) Establishing a technical committee on Sports (Sports Committee) to bring especially young people together and promote interaction between the two communities via sports activities; (5) Reactivating the Ad-Hoc Committee on EU Preparation in order to prepare the future Turkish Cypriot Constituent State for the smooth implementation of the EU *acquis* upon entry into force of the comprehensive settlement.

#### **Technical Committees:**

The Turkish Cypriot side also gives utmost importance to the effective functioning of the Technical Committees as they were established to enable cooperation between the two sides with the aim of enhancing intercommunal contacts and improving the daily lives of people.

In that respect, the Turkish Cypriot side has continuously undertaken initiatives and submitted proposals in good faith to eliminate the impediments before their effective functioning as well as to empower them to further contribute to the dialogue and cooperation between the two communities. Moreover, the Turkish Cypriot side pioneered the establishment of more technical committees with a view to enhancing collaboration between the two communities on various important subject matters. Accordingly, three more technical committees on Culture, Gender Equality and Education were established upon the proposal of the Turkish Cypriot side.

Further empowerment of the Technical Committee on Education has a special significance for the Turkish Cypriot side as it is aimed at promoting peace education across the island as a cornerstone of trust-building and reconciliation between the two communities. Hence, the education of children and youth towards peace culture, starting from now, is imperative both for the prospects of a solution and in a future federation. It is in this respect that the Turkish Cypriot side strongly reacted to the decision of the Greek Cypriot side in February 2017 to include in the dates commemorated by the schools in the south the so-called plebiscite conducted by the Greek Cypriots in 1950 for union with Greece (*Enosis*). At a time when the two sides came to a critical point in the negotiations, it dealt a serious blow to the process and undermined the efforts for confidence building between the two sides. This incident was therefore a stark reminder of the necessity for prioritizing joint efforts towards peace education, especially through the Technical Committee on Education.

On 2 June 2016, the two Leaders attended the first bi-communal gathering of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot students at the buffer zone that took place under the auspices of the Technical Committee on Education, which provided a successful model for experiential workshops. In the following period, based on this experience, the committee initiated a peace culture programme, “Imagine”, to which a total of 3665 Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot students and a total of 653 teachers had participated in the period between 2017–2019. Moreover, “Bicommunal Walks: Learning from Nicosia” project is also ongoing, which brings together students from both sides to explore the multicultural environment of Nicosia as part of intercultural education.

The Turkish Cypriot side has also proposed other effective measures in relation to education, such as the joint production of textbooks, student exchange programmes, including reciprocal visits to schools in both sides, and the teaching of the language of the other community in schools. Unfortunately, these proposals of the

Turkish Cypriot side have not been reciprocated. Among those proposed, the technical committee has only taken up to date a step towards the preparation of joint education materials, i.e. lesson plans, to be used at schools in both sides.

The Turkish Cypriot side remains committed to further deepening the efforts of the Technical Committee on Education, and has continuously expressed its readiness in implementing the recommendations contained in its joint report of 2017 as well as addressing the impediments to peace in school materials, including text books, as called for by the Security Council in its latest resolution.

Furthermore, under the Technical Committee on Crisis Management, the Turkish Cypriot side proposed the conduct of a joint disaster management exercise with the Greek Cypriot side. The Turkish Cypriot side also proposed a joint project to deal with a potential epidemic crisis to be held in the coordination of the technical committees on Crisis Management and Health. However, these proposals were rejected by the Greek Cypriot side. In the Technical Committee on Health, due to the risk of epidemic diseases, the Turkish Cypriot side proposed the conduct of a mosquito typification project, which is accepted to be implemented in the upcoming period.

#### **Establishment of Mechanisms for Direct Contacts:**

The Turkish Cypriot side has always been insistent on developing and further enhancing cooperation between the two sides as well as the two communities on all aspects. In this respect, it has always been in favour of establishing mechanisms aimed at cooperation, as done with the establishment of technical committees, to help ease the practical problems arising from the status quo and to address island-wide matters.

It has been a priority for the Turkish Cypriot side to utilize the existing initiatives and if need be to enhance them through new initiatives and mechanisms integrated therein. To that end, the Turkish Cypriot side has worked in close collaboration with UNFICYP to formalize an ad hoc arrangement to facilitate the handover of third country nationals sought for criminal proceedings from either side through the already existing Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters. The Turkish Cypriot side has reached a certain level of understanding on the modalities, with the facilitation of UNFICYP, for the handover in the buffer zone. Once the Greek Cypriot side gives its consent, the formalized modalities will be another example for the joint efforts on criminal matters that produce concrete results, in this case, smooth, safe and confidential handover of the concerned individuals. Nevertheless, in the meanwhile, the Turkish Cypriot side took a unilateral initiative on 28 July 2019 and immediately handed over a suspect sought for a criminal proceeding in the Greek Cypriot side, although the usual practice has been to exchange suspects simultaneously. The Greek Cypriot side handed over one of the two suspects expected in return after 6 weeks, while the second suspect has not been handed over.

The Turkish Cypriot side has also been working with UNFICYP on the establishment of other mechanisms, including at military level, and has been conveying its views on what could be feasible to help address island-wide matters that affect all on the island.

#### **Work of the Committee on Missing Persons:**

Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) is an effective bi-communal committee that the Turkish Cypriot side considers to be indispensable to help put to rest the years-long anguish of the families of missing persons in Cyprus. To that end, the

Turkish Cypriot side has been assisting in the work of the CMP to ensure CMP fulfills its mandate effectively.

The Turkish Cypriot side has been providing information on possible burial sites to the CMP. As it is also recorded in the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council dated 1 December 2000 (S/2000/1138, para. 14), all the information at the disposal of the Turkish side has been shared with the CMP back in 1998. Thereafter, any new information that comes to light is also conveyed to the CMP. In this respect, in cases when any remains are found through road works or otherwise, the authorities first check whether they belong to missing persons on the CMP's list. An Archive Committee has also been set up in 2016 to respond to the specific requests of the CMP for aid in locating burial sites from the relevant archives. Within this context, the Turkish side has given access to the Turkish Cypriot Member's Office to check the aerial photos dating 1974. A new investigation unit was also set up by President Akıncı to support the Turkish Cypriot Member's Office investigation team. The Turkish Cypriot Member's Office has its own team who is doing research in various state archives.

Turkish Cypriot side also continues to accommodate the access of the CMP to any area throughout the north, be it by interrupting the construction of a major road or giving access to those military areas. In June 2019, access to 30 additional suspected burial sites in military areas in the north had been granted. Excavations will be done according to the excavation planning of the CMP. In the North, a total of 1050 exhumations were conducted by the CMP, 992 in the civilian areas and 58 in the military areas.

Also, in addition to annual financial contributions to the budget of the Turkish Cypriot Member, President Akıncı made additional donations for four times since 2015, totalling EUR 250,000. The EUR 25,500,000 contributions from the EU to the CMP from 2007 onwards are from the funds that have been allocated for the economic development of Turkish Cypriots. The UN Secretary-General also considered provision of financial assistance will enable CMP to accelerate its work.

According to the most recent statistics CMP published, up to 30 September 2019, CMP exhumed 1224 missing persons and identified a total of 960 missing persons, 265 of whom are Turkish Cypriots and 695 of whom are Greek Cypriots.

### **III. Actions Taken in Support of Defusing Tensions over Hydrocarbons:**

The Turkish Cypriot side has always approached the issue of hydrocarbons off the coast of Cyprus with the aim of creating an area for cooperation and interdependency which will provide a strong incentive for reaching a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus and bringing stability and peace in the Eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, the issue of hydrocarbons, which as a natural resource belongs to both communities, could be well utilized between the two sides, with the participation of regional actors, to overcome differences and build bridges to the benefit of both communities. In fact, in his latest report on his good offices mission in Cyprus dated 16 April 2019, the Secretary-General also reiterated that "the natural resources found in and around Cyprus should benefit both communities and can constitute a strong incentive to finding a durable solution to the Cyprus problem".

With these considerations, following his election, President Akıncı called upon his Greek Cypriot counterpart in May 2015 to take up this issue of common wealth in a manner opening up new prospects for the efforts towards a sustainable settlement and peace in Cyprus. In this respect, President Akıncı affirmed his commitment to

establish a joint committee to manage the natural resources jointly with the Greek Cypriot side in line with the proposals previously made by the Turkish Cypriot side in 2011 and 2012. Moreover, given the fact that the negotiations were suspended in 2014 due to the tension between the sides over the unilateral hydrocarbon activities of the Greek Cypriot side, it was evident that the issue had always carried the risk of poisoning the atmosphere of negotiations and efforts of good will. Nevertheless, it was possible for both sides to re-engage into negotiations in May 2015 as a result of the understanding reached between the two Leaders that the unilateral activities of the Greek Cypriot side would be halted.

However, over time, the Greek Cypriot side continued with its unilateral activities necessitating the taking of action by the Turkish Cypriot side in response so as to protect the Turkish Cypriots' own vested interests as co-owners of the natural resources surrounding the island. The resulting developments have shown one more time that unilateralism only serves to the escalation of tension and conflict in the region, while cooperation could sow the seeds for peace and stability.

In a further attempt to diffuse the increasing tension over the issue, President Akıncı made yet another proposal on the hydrocarbons issue on 13 July 2019. In its proposal, the Turkish Cypriot side offered to establish 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 the revenue-sharing percentage for the exploration and production of off-shore oil and gas resources of the island. Without challenging the licences that have already been issued, either side would refrain from issuing licenses and authorizing exploration and exploitation activities in overlapping maritime jurisdiction areas with a view to de-escalating the tension in the region, as also called for by the Secretary-General as well as the Security Council.

Even though the Greek Cypriot side rejected the proposal outright without entering into any dialogue, the Turkish Cypriot side remains convinced that this proposal, which continues to be on the table, carries the potential of triggering wider cooperation and interdependence among the contending parties in the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond.

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