



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 [2506 \(2020\)](#), requested me to submit a report by 10 July 2020 on my good offices, in particular on progress towards reaching a consensus starting point for meaningful results-oriented negotiations leading to a settlement. In that resolution, the Council urged the sides and all involved participants to renew their political will and commitment to a settlement under United Nations auspices. 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 [2506 \(2020\)](#), in particular with regard to paragraphs 5 and 6, with a view to reaching a sustainable and comprehensive settlement, and requested me to include the contents of those updates in my report. The updates submitted by the two leaders are annexed to the present report.

2. The present report focuses on developments from 31 October 2019 to 18 June 2020, 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 also 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/2019/883](#)), I expressed hope that a durable settlement to the Cyprus problem could be achieved. I welcomed the constructive engagement of the sides, the guarantor powers and other interested parties with Ms. Lute and underscored that the prospects for peace ultimately lie in the hands of the two sides. I urged the parties to make productive use of the coming period and to take advantage of the consultations to lay the groundwork for fresh and unambiguous commitments to achieve a peaceful settlement. In that regard, I reiterated my call on the parties to constructively consider the framework of six points that I had offered on 30 June 2017.

4. As I mentioned in my previous report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) ([S/2020/23](#)), I held an informal joint meeting with the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, in Berlin on 25 November 2019. It was the first time that I had met with the two leaders jointly since the closure of the Conference on Cyprus in Crans-Montana in



July 2017. The meeting provided an important opportunity to take stock of the efforts towards reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem almost two and a half years later.

5. Following the meeting in Berlin, and building on the successful implementation of key confidence-building measures during 2019, the two sides shifted their efforts to the bicomunal technical committees and devoted increased attention to the ways in which these committees could assist in boosting confidence and communication between the sides and improve the daily lives of Cypriots. In the framework of the committees, and in the presence of my Deputy Special Adviser, the two leaders met three times after their joint meeting with me in Berlin. They also had a number of telephone conversations during the reporting period.

6. The joint appearances and the confidence-building measures implemented during the reporting period were generally well received by the public and contrasted with the climate surrounding the peace process, which has deteriorated since the closure of the Conference on Cyprus in 2017. On 16 December 2019, the two leaders attended the head teachers conference for the academic year 2019/20. The leaders used their joint appearance to send a message of support for the work of the Technical Committee on Education and the voluntary peace education programme “Imagine”. On 3 February 2020, the two leaders co-chaired a meeting of the Technical Committee on Health to discuss the precautions that had been taken in response to the developing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as both sides had begun taking initial steps in late January. After the Committee briefed the two leaders, it issued a joint statement, observing that all necessary precautions, including screening, had been taken by both sides in accordance with the guidelines of the World Health Organization. The members of the Committee also agreed to remain in close contact, to exchange information and to provide assistance as needed. Following the meeting of the Technical Committee on Health, the two leaders attended a launch by the Technical Committee on Culture of an art exhibition, hosted by my Deputy Special Adviser and co-organized and funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Commission.

7. As described in more detail in my report on UNFICYP ([S/2020/682](#)), which was requested in resolution [2506 \(2020\)](#), on 29 February, citing public health concerns related to COVID-19, the Republic of Cyprus closed four crossing points linking south to north, triggering demonstrations by various groups against the closing, with some groups advocating the continued closure of the crossing points. A few weeks later, the authorities in the north also closed two additional crossing points following the emergence of the first cases of COVID-19 on the island on 9 March. In late March, both sides introduced quarantine requirements at the remaining open crossing points, effectively restricting movement between the two communities. The emergence of COVID-19 in Cyprus also led to the announcement on 19 March that the Turkish Cypriot leadership elections scheduled to take place on 24 April would be postponed for six months until 11 October, with a possible second round on 18 October. The postponement extended the electoral cycle, as well as the associated pre-electoral politics. It also affected a possible resumption of dialogue and steps to be taken towards a five-plus-United Nations informal meeting since the relevant parties understand that such a meeting should not take place before the elections. On 12 April, the day after UNFICYP announced its first case of COVID-19, restrictions on movement through the crossings to the north were imposed by the Turkish Cypriot authorities on personnel from the United Nations, multilateral organizations and the wider diplomatic community.

8. Following the outbreak of COVID-19 on the island, rapid measures were taken. While the two sides’ responses to the pandemic were separate and uncoordinated, the two Cypriot leaders held several telephone calls expressing support for each other’s

efforts to address the outbreak and agreeing to engage in order to provide assistance to meet the humanitarian and medical needs of individuals island-wide. Members of the bicomunal Technical Committee on Health also remained in daily contact, exchanging information and providing assistance where necessary in an effort to maintain the ongoing dialogue and cooperation to confront the challenges of this unprecedented crisis. Economic measures were taken by the authorities on each side in an effort to address the devastating impact caused by the almost complete shutdown of the economy of both communities.

9. Despite the call by the Security Council, in its resolution [2506 \(2020\)](#), for a reduction of tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, regional tensions remained high over hydrocarbons exploration and, increasingly, maritime boundary delimitation. On the island, separate proposals were put forward by the two sides during 2019 to address the hydrocarbons issue, but they have not been taken forward and significant differences persist. Other strains due to factors on and around the island also persisted during the reporting period, for example with respect to irregular migration and Varosha, as described in more detail in my report on UNFICYP.

10. On 23 March, I called for an immediate global ceasefire in order for all efforts to be focused on addressing the pandemic and saving lives, which my Deputy Special Adviser echoed through her own letters to the two leaders on 27 March. On 28 March and 4 May, respectively, the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot leaders responded positively in writing to my call, stressing cooperation and collaboration and referring to the work of the Technical Committee on Health. In my replies to the leaders on 11 May, I noted that cooperation, dialogue and coordinated initiatives would be essential to help to tackle the island-wide consequences of the pandemic, and I urged both leaders to fully empower the technical committees to contribute to the broader COVID-19 response. Following my appeal, the two sides committed to bringing additional focus to the committees, and my mission of good offices has explored ideas and initiatives with them. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 on the island, my Deputy Special Adviser, my mission of good offices and UNFICYP have actively engaged with actors on both sides of the island, facilitating information exchange and assistance, and liaising with other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as the European Commission, to try to reduce the destructive impact of the pandemic.

11. Restrictive measures taken on both sides of the island in the face of COVID-19 resulted in relatively low numbers of cases, with both communities gradually easing restrictions as from early May. In mid-May, in the middle of an unseasonal heatwave, fires broke out on both sides of the island. In response to a request from Mr. Akıncı to Mr. Anastasiades, the two sides cooperated in fighting an especially large wildfire in the north, and the assistance provided by the Greek Cypriot community to the Turkish Cypriot community in this context was noteworthy. Following this development, both leaders spoke on 21 May and agreed to a first phase of the reopening of crossing points, by allowing the transit of specific categories of people as from 8 June. However, the authorities in the north postponed the implementation of the agreement, possibly until 22 June. As also agreed by the leaders on 21 May, the Technical Committee on Health met on 1 June to discuss the epidemiological situation in both communities and subsequently gave the leaders a briefing on their exchange, focusing on epidemiological data, treatment and testing.

12. Representatives of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot political parties continued to meet under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia. On 29 January 2020, at a bicomunal event held by the Embassy, the results of the latest opinion poll carried out on behalf of my good offices mission were presented, and they were subsequently discussed in detail during a meeting of the political parties on 26 February 2020. The poll examined political, social, economic and security expectations island-wide, both with and without a possible settlement in Cyprus. Members of the political parties in

attendance provided comments and engaged in discussions over the results. Despite in-person meetings being interrupted in March, the political parties' dialogue continued through the COVID-19 outbreak, and a statement was issued on 24 April in which the parties paid tribute to health workers for their efforts. Displaying bicomunal spirit, in the statement, the parties called for Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots "to set aside their differences of opinion regarding the solution of the Cyprus problem and concentrate on their mental and physical strength in order to eliminate the danger facing public health" and to address future social and economic consequences. They also noted the need to show solidarity among Cypriots, expressed appreciation and support for the close coordination between the leaders and acknowledged the work of the bicomunal Technical Committee on Health.

13. The religious leaders of Cyprus continued to support peacebuilding and reconciliation within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden. For the first time since they started meeting regularly in 2011, the religious leaders were physically divided owing to COVID-19-related restrictions. Nevertheless, they remained united and continued to meet online and issue joint statements. Language courses in Turkish and Greek for clerics and staff of religious institutions also continued online as a confidence-building measure. In a joint communiqué issued on 6 May, the religious leaders stated that it was a time for "real solidarity, compassion and unity", while praying "for Cypriots to heal the painful memories of the past and work united tackling our challenges as one". On 1 June, my Deputy Special Adviser met with the religious leaders of Cyprus via videoconference and discussed current developments and the importance of activities that contribute to a culture of peace in Cyprus. Later that day, the religious leaders reacted to an incident in Limassol, issuing a joint statement "condemning acts of vandalism" of a mosque and noting that such acts were not only "disrespectful to the religious community but to all those who work together to advance respect, human rights and freedom of religion".

III. Status of the process: consultations

14. With respect to the consultations being conducted on my behalf, Ms. Lute has continued her engagement 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 paid her seventh visit to Cyprus from 15 to 17 November 2019, holding separate meetings with the two leaders on 16 November. She subsequently facilitated preparations for the informal meeting that I held with the two leaders in Berlin on 25 November. Ms. Lute also regularly engaged with representatives of the guarantor powers, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as with the European Union in its capacity as an observer to the Conference on Cyprus.

15. In the Berlin discussions, both leaders welcomed my engagement and reaffirmed their commitment and determination to achieve a settlement based on a bizonal, bicomunal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions, including paragraph 4 of resolution [716 \(1991\)](#). They also agreed that achieving a comprehensive and durable settlement to the Cyprus problem within a foreseeable horizon was of the utmost importance to the future well-being of both communities and that the status quo was unsustainable. In addition, the Greek Cypriot leader and the Turkish Cypriot leader reaffirmed their commitment to the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014, the prior convergences and the six point framework that I had presented on 30 June 2017 with a view to achieving a strategic agreement paving the way for a comprehensive settlement.

16. The two leaders affirmed, in my presence, some of their prior agreements and understandings on a number of crucial aspects of the negotiations. In view of those discussions, I agreed to extend my efforts to achieve terms of reference to serve as a consensus starting point for phased, meaningful and results-oriented negotiations at the earliest feasible opportunity. In this regard, I committed to exploring, with the Turkish Cypriot leader and the Greek Cypriot leader and with the guarantor powers, the possibility of convening an informal five-plus-United Nations meeting at an appropriate stage.

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

17. My Deputy Special Adviser and mission of good offices engaged regularly with the two leaders and their representatives, as well as other relevant stakeholders, on the current situation and the way forward. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, the mission put in place contingency plans and thereafter enacted measures to protect the health and safety of its staff and its counterparts, restricting face-to-face contact with stakeholders and interlocutors, while continuing to work on mandate delivery. Although in-person outreach activities were not possible owing to COVID-19 movement restrictions, the mission's engagement with civil society actors, women, youth and the business community, as well as the ongoing monitoring of political developments on the island and in the region, continued via online platforms. Reporting and analysis by my good offices mission on possible avenues towards and challenges to the resumption of peace talks continued, despite the pandemic.

18. The 12 bicomunal technical committees formed by the leaders to build confidence and improve the daily lives of Cypriots continued to function under the auspices of my good offices mission, which has, with the support of UNFICYP, continued to coordinate and facilitate their work towards ensuring dialogue and cooperation between the two sides. Through regular meetings with the coordinators of the technical committees from both sides, the mission noted increased attention being paid by both sides to the revitalization of these bodies. The COVID-19 outbreak on the island, however, coupled with corresponding restrictive measures to prevent further spread of the virus, negatively affected the work of the committees. The implementation of several ongoing projects, as well as face-to-face meetings and activities, have been either indefinitely suspended or postponed. Nevertheless, more than half of the technical committees, including those addressing health, cultural heritage, education, the environment, culture and gender equality, remained engaged through online meetings, issuing statements and drafting proposals for intended projects. While other technical committees met only once or twice during the reporting period, one of the committees, the Technical Committee on Crossings, did not meet at all.

19. Following repeated calls by the Security Council for the two leaders to empower the technical committees, including most recently in its resolution [2506 \(2020\)](#), as well as the leaders' own reaffirmation of their commitment to intensifying the committees' work, in December 2019 my mission of good offices finalized a stocktaking exercise on the activities and working methods of the technical committees over the past 12 years. The stocktaking exercise assessed the effectiveness of the committees in achieving the purposes for which they were established; identified their strengths and weaknesses; and proposed recommendations for improving, strengthening and streamlining their work. Overall, the exercise concluded that despite challenges and impediments, the committees have been effective and remain the best vehicles for delivering confidence-building measures aimed at improving the everyday life of Cypriots while encouraging and facilitating greater interaction between the two communities.

20. The stocktaking exercise recommended steps that could be taken by the sides and by the United Nations to assist the committees in more effectively delivering real and sustainable benefits to all Cypriots. A summary of the main conclusions and recommendations was, for the most part, positively received by the two Cypriot coordinators, and they expressed readiness to consider ways to implement the recommendations. Initial discussions were held by my mission of good offices and the sides on ways to proceed; these slowed, however, owing to the outbreak of COVID-19. Welcoming the readiness of the sides to continue these discussions and identify mutually agreeable next steps to bolster the work of the technical committees, my mission of good offices intends to follow up in the coming months. The implementation of some recommendations from the stocktaking exercise, including training for all United Nations facilitators of the technical committees in partnership with the Mediation Support Unit of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, has already begun.

21. The Technical Committee on Health met in person or online seven times and maintained routine communication,. Beginning in February, the Committee, focused its discussions on COVID-19 and exchanged information on the precautions taken by both sides in response to the pandemic. On 3 February, the Committee gave a briefing to the Turkish Cypriot leader and the Greek Cypriot leader, who both expressed satisfaction with what they had heard. Following the adoption of restrictions on movement and group gatherings, the Committee subsequently began to meet online, while individual members have remained in daily communication to exchange information and arrange assistance for individuals on a humanitarian basis as needed. On 1 and 17 June, the Committee met and exchanged information on the epidemiological situation in their respective communities, as well as on different scientific methods employed in the fight against the pandemic. Both sides also discussed next steps in the lifting of restrictions and confirmed that they would give briefings to their leaders and provide scientific advice.

22. Following communication between the two leaders and through dialogue between members of the Technical Committee on Health, important support was provided in connection with the COVID-19 outbreak, including the provision of drugs and personal protective equipment from the Greek Cypriot side to the Turkish Cypriot side. As described further in my report on UNFICYP, the Force also continued important work in assisting the sides in this respect, by facilitating vital humanitarian deliveries, including of medical supplies following the closure of crossings between the two communities and other restrictions on movement.

23. On 3 February 2020, the Technical Committee on Culture organized an exhibition of artworks and audiovisual recordings that had been exchanged between the two sides in September 2019. The exhibition followed the agreement on 26 February 2019 between the two leaders on the exchange of artworks. Pursuant to the agreement, the Turkish Cypriot side had returned paintings by Greek Cypriot artists that had been under its protection since 1974, while the Greek Cypriot side had shared archive material of the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation on cultural activities of the Turkish Cypriot community related to the pre-1963 period. Selected paintings and audiovisual materials were unveiled at the exhibition. Subsequently, a detailed catalogue, translated into the Greek, Turkish and English languages, of all paintings and audiovisual recordings was distributed, with electronic versions also being made publicly available. Following the restrictions on movement instituted on the island, the Technical Committee on Culture met online to continue its discussions. The Committee has obtained funding from the European Union-funded support facility to the technical committees to sponsor a poetry contest in which five poets from each community would be selected to be filmed reciting their own poems written during the COVID-19 crisis.

24. The Technical Committee on Economic and Commercial Matters continued discussions on its priorities outlined in early 2020, including several confidence-building measures to improve trade and commercial links between the two communities. Despite the positive working relationship among the members, the political dynamics on the island continue to pose a challenge to the initiatives aimed at promoting greater economic ties and increased intra-island trade that I have repeatedly called for in my reports to the Security Council. The restrictions on island-wide movement following the COVID-19 outbreak compounded the situation, posing a significant obstacle to further cooperation at a time when both communities face urgent and severe economic fallout from the pandemic.

25. The Technical Committee on Education continued to implement and enhance the voluntary peace education programme “Imagine”, building on the success of previous years and the increasing interest from schools in participating in the programme. The activities include voluntary monocommunal and bicommunal peace education in schools, training for teachers engaged in peace education and the development of educational materials that promote peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue. Because of the COVID-19-related restrictions, in-person “Imagine” events have been suspended until the next academic year. However, the Technical Committee on Education continued to develop peace education training materials and other projects, including a webinar for teachers, which was successfully piloted on 28 May with the participation of 34 Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot teachers from all levels of education. In a press release issued on 3 June, the Committee announced the successful completion of the “Imagine” programme for the 2019/20 academic year, noting that 1,285 students and 162 teachers had been brought together from Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot schools across the island during the year.

26. The Technical Committee on Gender Equality met twice during the reporting period using an online platform and discussed issues related to the gender impact of COVID-19 in both communities, as well as ways in which the Committee could pursue the request of the Security Council in multiple resolutions, including its resolution [2506 \(2020\)](#), to develop an action plan supporting the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace talks. While the outbreak of COVID-19 on the island slowed down the initial discussions regarding the action plan, the Committee raised awareness on domestic violence following the introduction of the restrictive measures put in place in both communities to prevent the spread of the virus. The Committee also highlighted the need to ensure the effective participation of women and girls in response efforts to the outbreak and to adopt gender-sensitive socioeconomic measures.

27. On 6 May 2020, the Technical Committee on Gender Equality released a statement in which it noted the upsurge in violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 outbreak. It quoted civil society sources that had noted a 58 per cent increase in incidents of domestic violence in the Greek Cypriot community and a 10 per cent increase in calls to helplines in the Turkish Cypriot community between mid-March and 22 April. The Committee concluded that it was of the “utmost importance that the gendered impact of the pandemic as well as of the measures taken to combat it, are recognized and addressed”. Several members of the Committee participated in informal consultations organized as part of a gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment of a settlement carried out by my mission of good offices in cooperation with the World Bank, as described in further detail below. Members also attended the launch of the outcome of the assessment hosted at my mission of good offices.

28. The Technical Committee on Broadcasting continued to work in a constructive and solution-oriented manner to address issues related to radio frequencies and possible interference problems. Although the Committee has not met in person thus far in 2020, the members’ ongoing communication and cooperation have enabled them to tackle a number of practical issues of concern as they have occurred.

29. The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage has over 30 ongoing projects aimed at stabilizing or preserving cultural monuments across the island such as churches, mosques, fountains and cemeteries. The Committee is working to repair the Nicosia walls and stabilize two churches within the buffer zone. Owing to the lack of access to these monuments and worksites as a result of the restrictive measures introduced by the authorities to curb the spread of COVID-19, the Committee conducted weekly online meetings and worked on documents and tender competitions for several projects. The Committee recently launched the Heritage Youth Ambassadors initiative to engage young people in its activities and has ensured their involvement in online programmes. In a joint statement on 11 May, the Co-Chairs of the Committee announced that, in the coming period, they would be overseeing the safe resumption of works at 10 cultural heritage sites across the island, by implementing required safety measures as restrictions were lifted. In accordance with that joint statement, work on the Agios Georgios and Agios Iacovos churches resumed thereafter, following enhanced health and safety measures instituted and approved by UNDP.

30. In November 2019, the Technical Committee on Crisis Management, in collaboration with the Technical Committee on Education and the “Imagine” programme, organized the “Disaster Ready School” project for students in Pyla in order to raise awareness on crisis preparedness, with a particular focus on earthquakes and fire incidents in commemoration of the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Committee continued to discuss issues such as the prevention of and response to floods, fires and other human-caused or natural disasters.

31. The Technical Committee on Humanitarian Affairs met twice during the reporting period, including most recently on 18 May, when the Committee met virtually and discussed its potential role in facilitating humanitarian-related requests made by the communities, to be addressed on a case-by-case basis, including with respect to access to medical care.

32. The Technical Committee on the Environment met consistently throughout the reporting period, holding virtual meetings after restrictions were placed on movement owing to COVID-19. Two technical experts, one Greek Cypriot and one Turkish Cypriot, were hired in December 2019 with resources from the European Union-funded support facility. The Committee plans to undertake 12 joint field visits to sites of environmental significance on both sides of the island, focusing on six thematic environmental issues and producing subsequent policy reports. The Committee is working to create a website to raise public awareness of its work and bring together key environmental experts from both sides. Finally, the Committee participated in a virtual event organized by UNFICYP for United Nations staff to celebrate World Environment Day on 5 June, giving a presentation on its work and on biodiversity on the island.

33. The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters met in early February 2020 to discuss organizing a joint seminar with the Technical Committee on Gender Equality on preventing child abuse and gender-based violence in both communities. Owing to rising concerns over COVID-19, the organization of the seminar was postponed. The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters has also worked on a project proposal in collaboration with the Technical Committee on Education on the prevalence, correlates and prevention of bullying in schools and cyberbullying, to be supported and implemented through the European Union-funded support facility. Both Co-Chairs recommitted to the work of the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters and agreed to consider possible virtual meetings until the COVID-19 crisis has been overcome. The Joint Communications Room, a coordination mechanism formed by the Committee, continued its liaison work and exchanges of information. Following the closures of and restrictions at the crossings, however, only informal contact to facilitate humanitarian activities took place.

34. Project proposals continued to be submitted to the European Union-funded facility in support of the technical committees. The facility was created in cooperation with UNDP just over one year ago to assist the bicomunal bodies in building capacity and enhancing the impact and visibility of their work. My mission of good offices, along with UNDP, the European Commission and the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot coordinators for the committees, reviewed three proposals during the reporting period and approved two of them, while requesting further details on the third one. In the first year of its operation, the facility disbursed funds to seven projects and it continues to be a useful tool in support of the bicomunal committees.

35. Given their relevance for the achievement and sustainability of an eventual settlement, my mission of good offices continued to maintain extensive contacts and actively network with a diverse range of civil society actors, supporting and encouraging their mobilization, advocacy and participation in wider peacebuilding activities on the island. In close cooperation with UNFICYP, my mission of good offices strove to create a multiplier effect by facilitating and nurturing connections between interested, like-minded groups and organizations from both sides of the island. As an extension of these activities, following the outbreak of COVID-19 in Cyprus, the mission coordinated and engaged in communication between and among international community actors and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, including UNDP, the World Bank and the World Health Organization, as well as the European Commission, with respect to the situation on the island and its own work and outreach. My mission of good offices also continued to give regular briefings to academics and students on its work in Cyprus.

36. Since the closure of the Conference on Cyprus in 2017, the mission has engaged with over 50 civil society organizations or social movements, spanning a wide range of thematic areas (gender equality, civic space, academia, think tanks, business and entrepreneurship). While efforts were made to maintain regular contacts with as many individuals and groups as possible, pandemic-related restrictions, including at the crossings, limited outreach and engagement on the youth and peace and security agenda during the reporting period.

37. A gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment of a settlement in Cyprus, requested in Security Council resolution [2453 \(2019\)](#), was completed during the reporting period and launched on 17 February 2020. The assessment substantiated that delaying a settlement in Cyprus increases both economic and non-economic costs and outlined appropriate supportive policies to address existing gender barriers that limit women's economic engagement. It noted that reunification would result in higher incomes and increased gross domestic product growth for both communities, as well as an expanded set of opportunities that, if coupled with such policies, could be shared more equally by men and women island-wide.

38. My mission of good offices and the World Bank designed a strategy to widely disseminate the gender-differentiated policy recommendations contained in the assessment. Additional steps will include continuing to monitor the economic and social impact of COVID-19 to determine if those recommendations would need to be aligned with a post-COVID-19 reality in which pre-existing inequalities between women and men may be further entrenched and the most disproportionate impact may be seen with respect to political representation, economic participation and the gender wage gap, for example.

39. In the weeks prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Cyprus, two notable reports were issued: the *Delivering the Cyprus Peace Dividend* report published by the Cyprus Centre of the Peace Research Institute Oslo on 5 February; and the gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment mentioned above. Several discussions were held on the economic limitations of the status quo and the concrete financial and

other gains that both communities could reap following a settlement in Cyprus. While economists in Cyprus have indicated that studies on the impact of a settlement may need to be requantified owing to the inevitable impact of the pandemic on the economy island-wide, it is nonetheless clear from the substantial work conducted on this issue that a resolution to the Cyprus problem would continue to present significant economic opportunities, which might now be needed more than ever.

40. On 8 June, the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce issued a joint statement. Noting that they had met through teleconferencing on 2 June, the two Chambers recalled the need to “enhance the economic cooperation on the island and increase the volume of intercommunal trade in order to maximize the full economic potential of both communities”. They expressed their support for the reopening of crossing points which could “help improve the economic situation in both communities” and facilitate at the same time “much needed contact between the Cypriot people”, while noting that “necessary precautions will need to be in place and strictly adhered to”.

V. Observations

41. Three years have now passed since the intensive talks at Crans-Montana, making it more challenging to resume negotiations. As I stated following our Berlin meeting, I will continue to extend my efforts to achieve terms of reference to serve as a consensus starting point for phased, meaningful and results-oriented negotiations at the earliest feasible opportunity. In this regard, I committed to explore with the Turkish Cypriot leader and the Greek Cypriot leader and with the guarantor powers the possibility of convening an informal five-plus-United Nations meeting at an appropriate stage. I underscore the point that this time must be different.

42. Although I continue to hold out hope that a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus is possible, the global advance of COVID-19 has, unfortunately, added to an already complex situation on and around the island. Rising tensions in and along the buffer zone, concerns over irregular migration and the flow of refugees both on the island and in the region and friction in relation to the possible opening of Varosha, hydrocarbons exploration and, increasingly, maritime boundary delimitation have strained relations among the parties to the Cyprus issue. I will continue to monitor developments closely and urge all relevant parties to exercise restraint and avoid escalation. With regard to the question of Varosha, I reiterate that the position of the United Nations remains unchanged. The United Nations continues to be guided by the relevant Security Council resolutions and is available to assist in the implementation of any measures that are consistent with those resolutions. I also continue to stress that natural resources located in and around Cyprus should constitute a strong incentive to reach a mutually acceptable settlement to the Cyprus problem without any further delay. I urge all relevant parties to renew dialogue and explore possibilities for regional cooperation, and I call for serious efforts to be taken to defuse tensions.

43. Beyond the important regional dimension of the Cyprus issue, much remains in the hands of Cypriots themselves. Redoubled efforts are required to re-engage Cypriots, bridge the divide between them and address societal scepticism and disengagement. Despite the general mood of disengagement and scepticism on both sides, when the issues of reconciliation and renewed dialogue on the Cyprus problem are specifically raised in public polls, the results indicate that the two communities continue to feel that increased cooperation between them on a series of issues could bring them closer. In a recent poll carried out on behalf of my mission of good offices, the majority of respondents from both communities stated that the resolution of the Cyprus issue was of the highest importance or of high importance to them. While both

communities considered that the other community placed somewhat lower significance on reaching a solution, both had more positive expectations of a settlement scenario than of the status quo. As the poll was carried out pre-pandemic, however, it remains to be seen whether continued separation and restrictions on movement through the crossings, as well as the broader fallout of the COVID-19 crisis, affect these views. In the light of the continuing challenges, I call upon influential actors in the political, economic, religious, artistic and other spheres to contribute to bringing the communities together. At the same time, acts that are aimed at provoking the other community or inciting hatred must be addressed and denounced by political and other leaders on both sides of the island.

44. I welcome the signs of revitalization and increased engagement of the technical committees that were evident during the reporting period, continuing a trend from 2019 that I previously reported on (see [S/2019/37](#), para. 23; and [S/2019/883](#), paras. 18, 37 and 38). For example, 11 of the 12 technical committees met at least once during the reporting period, many members were also directly in communication with each other between committee meetings, and concrete initiatives and events were carried out. Joint statements that were issued by several technical committees on a range of issues during the reporting period, including by the technical committees on culture, gender equality, cultural heritage, health and education, were significant in their number and scope. The direct engagement by the two leaders with the bicommunal technical committees and their presence at their events served as a welcome reaffirmation of political support for the committees' important work, as called for by the Security Council, most recently in its resolution [2506 \(2020\)](#). As joint appearances of the two leaders have taken place only sporadically over the past three years, they carry particular significance, especially considering the overall decline in the political climate on and around the island. Although these developments are positive, it should be noted that a number of the technical committees have not yet reached their full potential. In this respect, I urge the two leaders to take forward the recommendations of the stocktaking exercise shared with both sides.

45. Furthermore, I have to reiterate that, despite the critical importance of confidence-building measures and other forms of cooperation between the communities, which I continue to strongly encourage in order to improve the daily lives of Cypriots and create conditions conducive to a comprehensive settlement, such initiatives, including the work of the technical committees, cannot replace a viable and comprehensive negotiation process to reach a peaceful settlement in Cyprus. I echo the call by the Security Council to the sides and all involved participants to renew their political will and commitment to a settlement under United Nations auspices. I look forward to renewed dialogue on the Cyprus issue and urge the parties to find a path towards a comprehensive settlement as soon as possible.

46. I welcome the fact that restrictive measures are being lifted on the island in the light of the encouraging epidemiological situation, with the number of overall COVID-19 cases so far remaining among the lowest in Europe, and a public health situation that continues to improve. Decision-making with respect to addressing the pandemic and the overall public health response have generally been viewed positively in both communities, and I commend both sides for their efforts and their diligence.

47. Notwithstanding these efforts, however, opportunities for more tangible bicommunal appeals and initiatives were missed. Mindful of my global ceasefire appeal and call for unity and solidarity in these difficult times, I urge the two communities to engage in additional and mutually beneficial coordination and cooperation, including through strong political and technical support for the bicommunal technical committees, such as those working on health-related, economic, crisis-related and humanitarian issues.

48. As restrictive measures are being lifted, including at the ports of entry to the island, it is essential that movement within the island be allowed along with incoming travel. I encourage the leaders, with the support of the Technical Committee on Health and cooperation from relevant authorities on both sides, to work together and develop a comprehensive plan for the full reopening of all crossing points.

49. The COVID-19 outbreak has had a significant economic impact on the island and, while addressing the effects will be challenging, the crisis recovery period will also offer opportunities to close certain long-standing gaps and bring positive changes. I encourage both leaders, as part of their ongoing dialogue, to jointly explore restructuring and innovating, diversifying and greening the economy, promoting better and more inclusive social and public services and introducing new forms of economic consumption, production and cooperation models, including through the technical committees and as confidence-building measures.

50. The findings of the gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment of a settlement illustrate that advancing gender equality should not, and in fact cannot, wait. Acting now can strengthen the impact and inclusivity of a future settlement agreement in Cyprus to the benefit of all. I am encouraged by this work and call upon the leaders to consider the outcome of the assessment and its recommendations for supportive policies that could be introduced to address existing gender barriers and ensure that a future peace agreement can more equally benefit men and women across the island. I reiterate the readiness of my mission of good offices to continue working with the sides on this important initiative, to further harness the participation of women in the peace process and to work towards a gender-transformative outcome that can achieve greater opportunities for women and men alike.

51. Around the globe, women's participation in peace and security efforts has consistently been found to strengthen the sustainability and durability of peace agreements, and to better reflect the needs and considerations of men, women and children. As we mark the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) in 2020, I urge the leaders to heed the call of the Security Council and empower the Technical Committee on Gender Equality to urgently develop an action plan supporting the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace talks. This will contribute to ensuring that any future united Cyprus is more sustainable, safer and more equal, with greater opportunities for all.

52. I would like to once again thank the partners that have continued to provide support to the work of both United Nations missions, UNDP and the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus. I also note the long-standing cooperation with the European Union, including through its Commission, in the framework of the Cyprus settlement talks. This cooperation has been very much appreciated in the past phases of the peace process, both in terms of the high-level engagement of the European Union and its support for various confidence-building measures, and I count on its continuation. I also acknowledge the contribution of the World Bank, both previously to support the negotiations of the sides under the auspices of my good offices and recently to conduct and launch the gender-sensitive socioeconomic impact assessment of a settlement. The latter exercise, conducted jointly with my mission of good offices during the reporting period, was significant, and it is my hope that it will pave the way for further constructive efforts to support the Cyprus peace process in the future.

53. 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. I also express my appreciation to Ms. Lute for conducting 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 2506 (2020)

This submission is made in response to the encouragement in UN Security Council Resolution 2506, 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 since its adoption, in particular with regard to paragraphs 5 and 6, 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 entails entrench the status quo and undermine prospect of reunification. For us there is no alternative but peace.

Despite the systematic effort by Turkey to escalate tensions in and around Cyprus, in defiance inter alia, of the recent call by the SG for a global ceasefire to diminish conflicts in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain committed to do our utmost in order to build upon the joint meeting of the leaders of the two communities with the UN Secretary-General last November in Berlin, which confirmed our determination to resume the negotiations process as soon as possible, based on an understanding on the three basic elements of the Terms of Reference that should guide the talks.

We therefore, have confirmed in several occasions and in our communication with the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy our readiness to support the Secretary-General in his efforts to this end. We are particularly encouraged by his expressed commitment to explore the possibility of convening an informal five-plus-United Nations meeting at an appropriate stage.

In our view, such a meeting could pave the way for a new Conference on Cyprus resuming the negotiations process from where they were left off in Crans Montana, with all elements negotiated interdependently, as a package.

Currently, every effort is being made by the government of the Republic of Cyprus to maintain the prospects of resuming negotiations. Despite the continuous and escalating provocations on behalf of Turkey we maintained communication with the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community and we have undertaken initiatives aiming at contributing to a positive atmosphere, including via the work of Technical Committees, despite the difficulties created by the current covid-19 crisis.

Throughout the period of the covid-19 pandemic, the government of the Republic of Cyprus has been facilitating in a number of ways the Turkish Cypriot community, including via allowing on humanitarian grounds crossings of Turkish Cypriot patients

to the government-controlled areas and facilitating requests for repatriation of Turkish Cypriots and for their immediate crossing to their residence in the occupied part.

The government of the Republic of Cyprus has also provided the Turkish Cypriot community with medications and medical supplies, whilst facilitating the crossing of Turkish Cypriot patients to the government controlled areas for medical treatment and will continue responding positively to the needs and requests of the Turkish Cypriot community. Additionally, the government has immediately responded to requests to provide aerial means to tackle fires that had erupted in the occupied areas.

At the same time, we are fully aware that in our pursuit to create the right conditions for the resumption of the negotiations, we should be guided by a combined sense of urgency and pragmatism. To this direction we are mindful of the fact that developments are being delayed in view of the internal procedure for the selection of the leader of the Turkish Cypriot Community due in October 2020. It should also be noted, however, that the aforementioned procedure in the T/c community has been used on behalf of Turkey and of those forces in the Turkish Cypriot community who aspire to undermine the prospect of reunification, as a convenient excuse, for some time now, to justify their reluctance to engage actively in the peace process and to continue to pursue a policy of provocations.

It is in this context that the T/c leader stated in early June that it would be unrealistic to expect any developments before October (“no move shall be made in peace talks before Turkish Cypriots renew the mandate”); which would bring us already one year after the Berlin meeting. What is most concerning though, is the tendency during this period to escalate tension through provocative acts that only poisons the political environment, creates new unacceptable *faits accomplis* and undermines the prospects of the peace process.

In this vein, Turkey continues to act in an aggressive manner by, *inter alia*, turning to military threats, illegal drilling activities within the exclusive economic zone of the Republic, threatening to infringe in the fenced-city of Famagusta in contravention to Security Council Resolutions and proceeding with the signing of an illegal Memorandum of Understanding on the delimitation of maritime jurisdictions in the Mediterranean Sea with Libya.

These actions have been condemned in the strongest manner by the international community and the EU, since they do not comply with the notion of good neighbourly relations, international law and particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and infringe upon the sovereign rights of third States.

We have to be clear on this issue: For a peace process to resume with realistic prospects for success, it is imperative to create an environment that will be conducive for constructive and good faith negotiations, in the same spirit and conditions that characterized all previous negotiating rounds, including the two Conferences on Cyprus.

We therefore call on the UN Secretary-General, in the context of his Good Offices mission on Cyprus and the Secretary Council, as the international body entrusted with the primary responsibility for international peace and security and as the guardian, of international law and of the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, 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 unconstructive policy to interfere in the bicomunal aspects of the negotiating process and concentrate its efforts towards reaching a comprehensive settlement on the Cyprus Problem.

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

II. Factors impeding the resumption of the peace process.

With the sole purpose of a factual presentation of the current situation and of the latest developments, I am obliged to list a number of factors and activities that undermine efforts to improve the political climate in Cyprus and the ongoing efforts to resume negotiations with the aim of reaching a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus Problem.

(a) Irrespective of the pandemic, during the whole reporting period, we continued to witness in a very revealing manner an enhanced effort by the Turkish occupation army to alter the military status quo and to gradually extend its military control further south into the buffer zone between the cease fire of the Turkish occupation forces and the cease fire line of the National Guard of the government of the Republic of Cyprus, and beyond. These violations of the Turkish occupation forces coincide with an increased provocative and aggressive behavior by Turkey in and around Cyprus, including via the upgrading of its military capabilities in the occupied part of Cyprus in, but not limited to, the illegal military bases in the occupied villages of Bogazi and Lefkoniko.

It is an undisputed fact that violations observed since April 2018 across the whole stretch of the buffer zone are still ongoing during the current reporting period and have been further solidified, while new serious violations have been confirmed.

Particular reference should be made to the violations in the Strovilia enclave which characteristically manifest the Turkish policy to flagrantly disregard repeated calls of the UN Security Council to lift the continuous military status quo violation, in place since 2000. These violations not only persist but they have been exacerbated with additional ones, including through actions aimed at undermining the ability of UNFICYP to exercise its tasks.

(b) Regarding Varosha, in addition to statements by the occupation regime and Turkey on their intention to infringe and create new faits accomplis in the fenced city of Varosha, which have persisted during the reporting period and the continuation of the restrictions on the freedom of movement imposed on UNFICYP in the area, the occupation regime has organized a conference on February 15, 2020, with the participation of the Vice President of Turkey, during which it was announced that a road map will be put forward for the opening of the fenced city. It is also recalled that yet again, this month, the Turkish Vice President publicly stated that they will proceed with the opening of the fenced area of Varosha in the absence of any developments in the peace process.

Let me underline that a possible realization of the aforementioned threats will cause irreparable damage to the prospects for the resumption of meaningful negotiations. 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 game changer in boosting the prospects of a successful peace process.

(c) During the current reporting period, Turkey has announced, in April 2020, that it will deploy its drilling ship "Yavuz" in the EEZ/continental shelf of Cyprus, in order to conduct illegal hydrocarbon exploratory drilling. This will be the sixth illegal drilling of Turkey in the EEZ/continental shelf of Cyprus in a period of less than 12 months. This activity will be conducted in parallel to consecutive seismic surveys of Turkey in the maritime areas of Cyprus, taking place since January 2019.

Furthermore, the sea around Cyprus is being increasingly militarized by Turkey, as the drilling and seismic survey vessels are accompanied by numerous warships and daily patrols of armed, unmanned aerial vehicles, while military naval exercises of Turkey are increasing.

Cyprus will continue to exercise its sovereign rights in accordance with international law. The consequences of this aggressive and reckless behavior on behalf of Turkey are not only detrimental to the sovereign rights of the Republic of Cyprus, but also constitute a threat to stability, peace and security in the highly volatile region of the entire Eastern Mediterranean. It is therefore expected that the international community and the United Nations in particular will take necessary action to defend international law and the principles of the UN Charter. Let me reiterate at this point, that for a peace process to have realistic prospects of success it should take place in the good faith environment and that no genuine negotiations can be conducted under conditions of threats, violations and intimidation.

As regards the exploitation of the natural resources of Cyprus, I should recall that there are existing convergences covering all relevant aspects, including the continued adherence of Cyprus to the UNCLOS and the allocation of revenues. In order to alleviate any concerns of the Turkish Cypriots, a National Sovereign Fund, based on the Norwegian model, has been established, in order to manage any future revenues accruing from hydrocarbon exploration. This, inter alia, ensures that any use of the revenues either for the repaying of 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 on 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 government of the Republic of Cyprus to examine establishing an escrow account for hydrocarbons revenues to benefit Turkish Cypriots based on their population ratio, provided a meaningful peace process is resumed and that a delimitation agreement is concluded between Cyprus and Turkey as already proposed 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.

III. Crossing – Points.

Part of the current reporting period falls within the current global pandemic of covid-19 outbreak, which has compelled governments, across the globe, to adopt extraordinary measures in order to protect the life and health of their citizens.

In this vein, the government of the Republic of Cyprus on 28 February 2020 adopted precautionary and temporary measures for the protection of public health, taking into account the relevant information and guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO) and reports by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

These precautionary measures, amongst others, included the temporary suspension of the functioning of four crossing points along the ceasefire line (Ledra Street, Derynia, Astromeritis and Lefka), which operate under EU Regulation 866/2004, in order to exercise more thorough and effective health related procedures at the five crossing points that remained in operation (Kato Pyrgos, Ayios Dhometios, Ledra Palace, Pergamos, Strovilia).

The above decision was taken purely on grounds of protection of public health and safety in the context of the government's duties and responsibilities.

Furthermore, it should also be noted that the government of the Republic of Cyprus cannot exercise effective control over the "points of entry" in its occupied territory,

thus rendering it practically impossible to implement measures to contain the penetration of the pandemic from countries of high risk whose citizens could enter in the occupied part via Turkey.

Crossings were allowed for Cypriots (Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriots), persons legally residing in the government controlled areas and citizens of foreign countries that are in Cyprus for assigned diplomatic service, including UNFICYP personnel, under bilateral or international agreements, with the latter category being exempted from the requirement of having a Covid-19 certificate valid for at least 4 days and to remain in a 14-day quarantine.

It should be underlined that throughout the period during which these temporary measures were in force, all humanitarian cases were facilitated, via UNFICYP, by special permissions granted by the Minister of Interior.

Unfortunately, the occupation regime took the decision to close all the crossing points and thus fully restrict all crossings. In addition, the movement of UNFICYP's personnel and of foreign diplomats was prohibited, severely hindering UNFICYP's ability to implement its mandate. At the same time, the decision of the occupation regime to impose restrictions on the crossings of ambulances through the Limnitis and Astromeritis crossing points had endangered human lives.

Despite the aforementioned bad faith disruptive behavior of the occupation regime and given the positive outcome and encouraging results of the Government's management of the pandemic and in line with our policy to swiftly re-operate the four crossing – points whose operation had been suspended, the President of the government of the Republic of Cyprus, within the context of his regular contacts with the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community on the fight against Covid19, communicated to Mr. Akinci on May 21, the government's decision, after consultation with the epidemiological team of experts, for the gradual lifting of Covid19 related controls on the functioning of the crossing points, as of 8 June 2020 for certain categories.

These included Turkish Cypriots who work in the government controlled areas of the Republic of Cyprus, Turkish Cypriot students attending educational institutions in the government controlled areas, Turkish Cypriot patients receiving medical care at medical institutions in the government controlled areas, Turkish Cypriots residents of the mixed village of Pyla who work in the occupied areas, Greek Cypriots residents of the village of Pyrgos who work in Nicosia and Greek Cypriots and Maronites permanently residing in the occupied part of Cyprus, as well as any other individuals whose crossing is deemed necessary on humanitarian grounds.

On the basis of the above a joint understanding had been reached with the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community and, thus, the government of the Republic of Cyprus proceeded with the relevant preparations, whilst the Technical committee on health convened in order to consult on the practical arrangements. During this meeting the Greek Cypriot members of the Technical Committee presented a thorough report with the relevant epidemiological data. Unfortunately, the Turkish Cypriot members did not respond in the same way.

Even more disappointing is the fact that certain political figures in the Turkish Cypriot community, in pursuit of their own political expediencies, deliberately undermined the understanding reached between the President of the Republic and the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community Mr. Akinci, and, hence, the opening of the crossing-points for the aforesaid categories was not materialized as envisaged on 8 June, except for a small number of Turkish Cypriot workers who crossed over and decided to remain in the government controlled areas in order to avoid the 14-day quarantine to be imposed by the illegal regime if they had returned back to the occupied areas on the same day following the end of their work.

It is regrettable that at a time when the epidemiological conditions are such as to permit the aforementioned steps and the necessary understanding was attained between the leaders of the two communities, the prospect has been impeded by decisions guided by ulterior political motives in an effort to undermine the Turkish Cypriot leader.

Motives that obviously undermine any action that could potentially contribute in creating a more favorable climate, for both communities. We need not reiterate the continuous deliberate provocations followed by the same political figures in the Turkish Cypriot community, in full alignment with the well-known divisive policy of Turkey, towards Cyprus.

IV. Support provided by the Republic of Cyprus to the Turkish Cypriot community during the pandemic.

Health related matters.

The Institute of Neurology and Genetics of the Republic of Cyprus offered to conduct tests for the detection of SARS – CoV -2 to Turkish Cypriots and we also offered to conduct, free of charge, tests for the detection of SARS – CoV -2 to 80 Turkish Cypriots persons residing in the mixed village of Pyla. Both offers were met with a negative response, purely on grounds of political expediency.

At the same time, following a relevant request by the Turkish Cypriot leader, the government of the Republic of Cyprus provided, free of charge, medical protection equipment and medical drugs to the Turkish Cypriot side. This acceptance by the Turkish Cypriot leader was met with criticism by the same political figures who orchestrated the closure and non-opening of the crossing – points. We also conveyed our readiness, at a later stage, to provide even more medical protection equipment and medications.

Moreover, during the pandemic, we continued:

- * Providing medical supplies to the Turkish Cypriots who were undergoing treatment at the Institute of Neurology and Genetics and medical drugs both to those Turkish Cypriots who are registered at our Health System and to those who are not.
- * Facilitating the crossing to the government controlled areas of those Turkish Cypriots patients who had appointments for medical treatment at the Bank of Cyprus Oncology Centre.
- * Accommodating the request of Turkish Cypriots who arrived through chartered flights to Larnaca and wished to be immediately transferred to the occupied area.

Support provided in tackling wildfires.

Following relevant requests by the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, Mr. Mustafa Akinci, to the President of the government of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, the Republic on two occasions immediately provided assistance to tackle wildfires which had erupted in the occupied areas. On the one occasion a fire plane and one helicopter were sent and on the other one three planes and one helicopter.

The support by the Republic had a catalytic role in successfully containing and eventually eliminating the fires which at the time-being were out of control.

At the same time, on another occasion, assistance was again requested with the Republic being ready to send the necessary fire means but at the end this support was not needed.

The Republic of Cyprus stands ready at any time to provide any assistance deemed necessary, with any available means and always in line with its capabilities, when relevant requests are to be yet again conveyed.

Turkish Cypriots working in the government controlled areas of the Republic of Cyprus.

More than 1.500 Turkish Cypriot workers who due to the extraordinary situation of the pandemic were unable to work in the government controlled areas of the Republic of Cyprus, were included among the beneficiaries of the Work Suspension Plan of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, through which they were allocated a special benefit scheme covering up to 60% of their monthly wages, with their employers covering the remaining 40%.

V. Technical Committees.

In our effort to create a political environment that would be conducive towards a settlement, we have also encouraged the Technical Committees to maintain their increased pace in their work and among other things engage with a constructive approach in further discussion of the 21 CBMs that the President of the Republic of Cyprus had proposed to the Turkish Cypriot leader on February 2019. At the same time, we have engaged at the level of Negotiators in a reflection on how to adjust to the current needs and identify potential areas where further initiatives can be undertaken.

While we have constantly embraced the Technical Committees' work, I would like to particularly recall the three instances during which the President of the Republic with the Turkish Cypriot leader participated in major activities, namely the conference of teachers organized by the TC on Education, the exhibition of invaluable artworks and archival material organized by the TC on Culture and a meeting of the TC on Health on the eve of the COVID-19 pandemic; and grabbed the opportunity to reaffirm our active support and engagement in what they have been doing.

I should also note that following these successful openings to the broader public, where the work of the Technical Committees was in prominent display to be acknowledged and embraced by more people, I have appointed 12 new members deemed necessary to further reinforce the work of the Committees. It was only unfortunate that due to the COVID-19 pandemic they were not able to immediately contribute to the extent we all had expected.

It is natural that the activity of the Technical Committees after March has been affected by the measures taken for the protection of the population due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, during the first weeks, the members limited their activity to the absolutely necessary. When circumstances allowed us all to engage again, they were encouraged to reactivate their communication and cooperation channels. Thanks also to the facilitation by the Good Offices mission, the Technical Committees gathered some pace again, as they started exploring new ways to continue their work.

A particular reference should be made to the keen engagement of young people through the use of technology. A teleconference of the "Heritage Youth Ambassadors" under the umbrella of the Technical Committee of Cultural Heritage in April and a webinar for teachers on challenges in a post-COVID-19 world in the framework of the "Imagine" programme under the auspices of the Technical Committee on Education in May were initiatives that should be praised and be used as examples.

Other Technical Committees have also been active, like the Technical Committee on Gender Equality which called attention to the increasing numbers of domestic violence amidst COVID-19 pandemic through a joint statement; the Technical Committee on Economy and Entrepreneurship facilitating "contactless transactions"

(trade of products under a scheme that allowed no physical contact) with the cooperation of the G/c and T/c Chambers of Commerce.

Special references deserve to be made to the Technical Committee on Health which was literally on constant call even before the peak of the epidemic and had maintained daily communication in order to have a real-time exchange of information and respond, in an efficient way, to continuous requests for the provision of medicines and medical supplies for the Turkish Cypriot community and the facilitation of uninterrupted treatment of patients. As soon as the situation allowed, virtual meetings were also scheduled to provide a platform for experts to exchange vital information and views on the handling of the epidemic and the lessons learned.

It is also recalled that in the context of empowering the work of the Technical Committees, the Republic of Cyprus has donated 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. In fact, from October 2019 till May 2020 across the island 8 restoration works were completed and 13 restoration works began.

It is true that at present the priority remains to establish conditions that would allow gradual return to a COVID-19 status quo ante. And to this direction, we will continue to encourage and support the Technical Committees to enable them for a significant and substantial contribution.

VI. Effective mechanism for direct military contacts.

The idea for the establishment of such a mechanism originated from the need to explore measures that could contribute towards addressing the increasing and extremely worrisome violations of the military status quo by the Turkish occupation forces, in various sensitive locations along their ceasefire line and beyond, particularly since the beginning of 2019, continuous provocative illegal activities of Turkey in the sea of Cyprus, threats as regards the opening of the fenced-off area of Varosha under Turkish military occupation, as well as through the additional impediments and the restrictions introduced by the Turkish occupation regime against UNFICYP.

It is also imperative not to lose sight of the overall unpredictable and destabilizing role of Turkey in the wider region and the negative repercussions of this behavior at the current juncture. It is therefore essential to approach the issue with a sense of pragmatism and to be aware that the aforementioned aggressive behavior on behalf of Turkey will not be reversed unless firmly and decisively refuted by the international community and the United Nations.

In this regard, let me underscore that a more decisive and effective stance on behalf of UNFICYP that would effectively deter the provocations of the Turkish occupation army across the buffer zone is imperative.

Against this backdrop, and following the call of the UN Security Council in its Resolution 2483 (July 2019), the government of the Republic of Cyprus has submitted its proposal to the United Nations Secretary General, through a letter of the Minister of Foreign Affairs dated 20 December 2019, expressing readiness to discuss the establishment of a mechanism for direct contacts at military level between the National Guard and the Turkish occupation forces, i.e. the opposing forces, comprising their Commanders, as well as the Force Commander of UNFICYP as facilitator, in accordance with the mandate of UNFICYP as prescribed by the UN Security Council resolution 186, of 4 March 1964.

In view of the above, I wish to inform and assure that we stand ready to engage with UNFICYP to this end, at the earliest opportunity.

Pertinent to the above-mentioned, I wish to reiterate that ideas advocating the establishment of mechanisms on a wide array of issues coupled with extensive

references calling for cooperation between the two "sides" are counterproductive and only serve towards deviating efforts away from the fundamental goal of reunification. Such ideas, in conjunction with the revival of the totally unacceptable notion of contacts with the secessionist entity "without prejudice to recognition", only serve to promote the normalization of the status quo and thus the permanent division of Cyprus.

They also reflect a tendency of shifting away from the commitment to the solution of the Cyprus problem on the basis of relevant UN SC resolutions and circumventing fundamental UN SC Resolutions [541 \(1984\)](#) and [550 \(1984\)](#) and portraying the Cyprus problem as an intercommunal issue, instead of its core nature as an international problem of foreign invasion and military occupation by Turkey.

This approach is also contrary to the mission of UNFICYP in Cyprus, as it contradicts the essence of UNFICYP's mandate, as prescribed in UN SC resolution [186 \(1964\)](#) and subsequent UN SC resolutions, while it is not in the least supportive of the effort to resume negotiations.

Annex II

Update by the Turkish Cypriot side provided pursuant to Security Council resolution 2506 (2020) of 30 January 2020

In its resolution 2506 dated 30 January 2020, the UN Security Council called upon the two leaders in Cyprus to provide written updates to the Good Offices Mission of the Secretary-General on the actions taken in support of the relevant parts of that resolution since its adoption, in particular with regard to paragraphs 5 and 6, with a view to reaching a sustainable and comprehensive settlement.

This particular period, for which we were called upon to provide written updates as the two leaders, has been an extraordinary and extremely challenging period for humanity at large due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. As COVID-19 has been encountered by the humankind for the first time in history, exponentially affecting the public health worldwide and resulting in massive losses of human life, it has proven to be a difficult test for the people of a globalized world who are now more interconnected than ever on local, regional and global scales. It has been, therefore, peculiar to witness at such an age of globalization and interconnectedness that countries have had to close down their borders internally and enter into country-wide lockdowns in an attempt to contain the pandemic and protect the lives of their citizens. Because human lives have been at stake, public health has naturally dominated the agendas and functioning of people's everyday organizations in every aspect of life.

As the Turkish Cypriot side, since the initial days of the COVID-19 outbreak, we have acted with utmost diligence and responsibility in order to engage our efforts towards a targeted action and improve our joint ability to address this common threat together with our Greek Cypriot counterparts. Cognizant of the fact that the novel coronavirus does not recognize any border as well as the need for more dialogue and cooperation between our respective communities in these difficult times, I took an initiative at the early stages of the outbreak and called upon my counterpart, Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, to convene the bi-communal Technical Committee on Health and jointly respond to the emerging crisis. Hence, on 3 February 2020, in its first meeting under our leadership and the auspices of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in Cyprus, the Committee "took note that all necessary precautions have been taken by both sides in accordance with the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO) including screening" and "agreed to remain in close contact, exchanging information between the two communities and providing assistance, as deemed necessary".

In the ensuing period, I continued to reiterate my call for more dialogue and cooperation, especially at the wake of the abrupt unilateral decision of the Greek Cypriot side on 28 February 2020 to close four of the crossing points, despite the fact that there was no single case of COVID-19 reported on both sides of the island. In my letter addressed to the UN Secretary-General on 5 March 2020, I highlighted the necessity for an island-wide collaboration leading to the adoption of common measures between the two sides and expressed my readiness to collaborate towards reducing existing barriers to intercommunal contact as well as emphasizing the importance of effective communication for risk-mitigation and trust-building between the two communities, as called for by the Security Council in its latest resolution dated 30 January 2020. Moreover, in another letter to the Secretary-General dated 28 March 2020, I again stressed my commitment and readiness for collaboration to focus together with our Greek Cypriot counterparts on "the true fight of our lives", as the UN Secretary-General rightly stated in his appeal for a global ceasefire, and to jointly counter the risks and threats emanating from the outbreak.

In an attempt to overcome the burden created due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in our health sector and the economically and socially affected sectors in the Turkish

Cypriot side, I wrote letters to and sought for technical and financial assistance from the Presidents of the European Commission, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development on 27 March 2020 as well as the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Conference on 28 March 2020. I also wrote a letter to the Director-General of the World Health Organization on 23 April 2020 and expressed the fact that despite the isolation imposed upon them, the Turkish Cypriot people is not immune from COVID-19 just like the rest of the world that can only be tackled by joint efforts and that we are ready to collaborate with the organization. Needless to say, I deemed it necessary to make these contacts with a view to contributing to the overall objective of promoting social and economic development in the Turkish Cypriot community, thereby preventing further socio-economic disparity between the two sides and supporting the efforts of the United Nations for the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

During this period, we, as the two leaders, have also exchanged phone calls with my counterpart as needed, and the Technical Committee on Health has held video-conference meetings as necessary, to share information and tackle urgent individual matters on a case-by-case basis. Hence, our dialogue during the pandemic has enabled the two sides to respond together to an environmental catastrophe that occurred when a large-scale forest fire erupted at multiple points in the north on 17 May 2020. Upon my request, in addition to Turkey, the Greek Cypriot side under the leadership of Mr. Anastasiades extended its help immediately by sending a fire plane and a helicopter, which happened to be a first in our long history. Same collaboration and solidarity were extended again on 5 June 2020 upon our call and three fire planes and a helicopter were sent by the Greek Cypriot side.

On 21 May 2020, we held another phone call with my counterpart and reached an understanding in principle for the gradual lifting of restrictions at the crossing points. In this respect, we discussed as a first step the crossing of the Turkish Cypriots who work, study and receive medical treatment in the Greek Cypriot side, the Turkish Cypriot workers who reside in Pyla as well as the Greek Cypriots and Maronites who permanently reside in the Turkish Cypriot side, provided certain necessary conditions and requirements are met. As the leader of the Turkish Cypriot side, I strongly support a phased and coordinated approach to be put in place to lift the restrictions at the crossing points in general as long as the epidemiological situation allows. The members of the Technical Committee on Health also agreed to remain in close contact, continue exchanging information between the two communities in response to COVID-19 and explore ideas to gradually lift restrictions at the crossings.

In general, it was my genuine wish that we were able to do more as the two sides during this testing period by establishing a sustainable dialogue for cooperation to jointly battle the pandemic as well as to plan and prepare for the next steps ahead of us in easing the restrictions imposed due to the pandemic. Rather than only responding to requests under critical circumstances and at critical times, I deem it essential for trust-building between the two communities and enhancing the prospects for a comprehensive settlement that the two sides are able to break long-standing taboos and open up channels for effective cooperation on various matters of island-wide significance, such as environment protection and crime prevention, as also called for by the Security Council in its latest resolution dated 30 January 2020.

Mechanisms of Direct Contact for Effective Cooperation:

Having said that, I wish to reemphasize the readiness of the Turkish Cypriot side in developing and enhancing effective and direct cooperation between the two sides as well as the two communities on all aspects to help ease the practical problems arising from the status quo and to address island-wide matters. In this respect, 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.

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. In this context, we welcome the initiative taken by the UNFICYP and its submission of a proposal for the consideration of both sides on the establishment in Cyprus of a mechanism for direct military-level contact.

Moreover, I believe it is high time for the two sides to enter into effective contact and dialogue on the issue of hydrocarbons with the aim of creating an area of cooperation and interdependency which will also provide a strong incentive for reaching a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus and bringing stability and peace in the Eastern Mediterranean. In this context, I hereby wish to call upon my counterpart to revisit the proposal of the Turkish Cypriot side dated 13 July 2019 on this issue in yet another attempt to avoid any further escalation and diffuse tensions as also called for by the Security Council. As may be recalled, the Turkish Cypriot side offered in its proposal 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. To this date, I remain convinced that this proposal, which continues to be on the table, carries the potential of triggering effective cooperation not only between the two sides but on a wider scale, and also creating interdependence among the contending parties in the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond.

Contact and Cooperation through Technical Committees:

As the Turkish Cypriot side, we give utmost importance for the effective functioning of the bi-communal 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. It is my long-standing firm belief that the Technical Committees have to be empowered even more to further contribute to the dialogue and cooperation between the two communities as well as the two sides.

Although the works of the Technical Committees have also been hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic, I constantly urged the Turkish Cypriot members of the Technical Committees to reach out to their counterparts to deliver as best as they could for the two communities to be able to respond to each other's needs and challenges. In this respect, the members of the Technical Committees from both sides remained in contact and adjusted their works according to the existing conditions generated by the pandemic.

Apart from the pressing matters over the COVID-19 pandemic, the Technical Committee on Health has continued to work on a project, which was initiated upon the proposal of the Turkish Cypriot side, against the threat posed by mosquitos. It is imperative for the Technical Committee to cooperate effectively on this matter as joint collaboration is the only way to combat the risks posed by mosquitos island-wide.

On the day when we convened the bi-communal Technical Committee on Health together with my counterpart, Mr. Anastasiades, on 3 February 2020, we also conducted

the official opening of an exhibition composed of the paintings by the Greek Cypriot artists as well as the visual and audio recordings of the Turkish Cypriot artists that were exchanged between the two sides on 3 September 2019 at Ledra Palace under the guidance of the Technical Committee on Culture. As may be recalled, as a gesture of good will, I 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 and the Greek Cypriot leader reciprocated similarly in relation to the visual and audio recordings of Turkish Cypriot artists that existed in the archives of the CyBC, belonging to the pre-1963 period. Moreover, the Technical Committee on Culture prepared a catalog of the paintings and recordings which was also presented to the leaders. Keeping in mind the fact that culture unites people, I am pleased to observe that the letter and the spirit of the works of the Committee serve this purpose well.

The Technical Committee on Environment has been active during the pandemic and continued to meet online regularly to advance their efforts in creating a network of communication and collaboration among all environmental stakeholders in Cyprus. To that end, the Committee is working on establishing an online platform to bring all stakeholders together where environmental experts from both communities will exchange experiences and information with the aim of identifying key environmental needs and acting together. The Committee has also planned to organize 12 field visits on 6 thematic areas, in collaboration with key technical consultants and environmental experts from the two communities, in order to assess certain environmental issues and produce field reports with action plans and policy recommendations addressing environmental needs in priority areas. These thematic areas are: biodiversity and nature protection, water resources management, wastewater treatment, solid waste management, mining and quarrying, and air quality.

The Technical Committee on Education has been another actively working committee during the reporting period despite the COVID-19 pandemic. I sincerely value the further empowerment of this committee, which 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. The Technical Committee on Education was one of the three technical committees along with the Technical Committee on Culture and the Technical Committee on Gender Equality which were established upon my proposal to enhance collaboration between the two communities on various important subject matters. Hence, during the event on “Transformational Leadership for Peace” at the Buffer Zone on 16 December 2019, attended by both leaders, I had the opportunity to highlight the value of education in cultivating a culture of peace in Cyprus.

The Technical Committee on Education successfully completed the “Imagine” program for the school year 2019-2020 on 28 May 2020, which took place under the auspices of the Technical Committee on Education and implemented by the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR) and the Home for Cooperation (H4C) with the support of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany and UNFICYP. It addressed primary, lower and upper secondary and vocational schools and managed to bring together 1285 students and 162 teachers from Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot schools from all areas of Cyprus during the school year 2019-2020, promoting the culture of peace and non-violence.

Due to the hardships created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the envisioned part of teacher training sessions of the ‘Imagine’ program had to be postponed to the beginning of the next school year. However, the Committee was able to hold an online webinar called “COVID-19 Changes Our World – What’s Our Response as Educators?” with 34 teachers from both sides on 28 May 2020, in collaboration with the German NGO Gesicht Zeigen!

I wish to reiterate the commitment of The Turkish Cypriot side to further deepening the efforts of the Technical Committee on Education, and our 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 successive Security Council resolutions.

It is also envisaged that through a new project called 'Edu-bites', online lesson plans will be published in a trilingual website promoting democracy, human rights, anti-racist education, peace education as well as education for sustainable development which targets the students aged between 6 and 18 years old. As the Turkish Cypriot side, we are enthusiastic to see how this project will develop with its first package of educational resources that planned to be available online in August 2020, given the importance of the education of children and youth towards peace culture, starting from now, both for the prospects of a comprehensive settlement and in a future federation.

During the reporting period, the activities of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage have also been affected from the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, as all of the construction work had been closed on both sides of the island. Therefore, the Committee had to stop all its work on the cultural heritage sites. However, I am pleased to stress that the Committee has adapted quickly to the new normal enforced by the pandemic and continued their regular weekly meetings via video-conferencing. In March and April 2020, the Committee continued to prepare new designs and tenders, and also launched new tenders for two cemeteries and for the Phase 2 of the Apostolos Andreas Monastery Conservation works. Lastly, the Committee organized an online presentation for 40 Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Heritage Youth Ambassadors who will be acting as the youth voice of the Committee.

Furthermore, I deem it necessary to specifically mention the activities of the Technical Committee on Gender Equality as the pre-existing inequalities and in particular domestic violence have further deepened throughout the world since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this respect, the Technical Committee on Gender Equality, upon the call of the Turkish Cypriot members, prepared and published a statement in a timely manner on the gendered effects of the prevailing health crisis on 6 May 2020 and had an online meeting on 13 May 2020 to address this structural matter.

Although not visible to the public, other Technical Committees have continued to function during this period to tackle some arising problems on a daily basis. For example, a radio interference problem was dealt with by the Technical Committee on Telecommunications and Radio Frequency-Broadcasting.

The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters has also remained in contact and elaborated on some issues related to the missing persons. Furthermore, a very important joint educational project on "Cyber-Bullying" was developed by the Committee in collaboration with the Technical Committee on Education.

At the wake of the recent extremist and irredentist attacks at the mosques in the Greek Cypriot side, Köprülü Hacı İbrahim Ağa Mosque in Limassol and Tuzla Mosque in Larnaca, I deem it necessary for all Technical Committees to further reinforce their activities and continue more powerfully to respond to such attacks against our cultural heritage, common history and shared values in the strongest means with the aim of fostering tolerance, diversity and reconciliation and enhancing the prospects of a united island fully integrated through stability and peace for all its inhabitants.

The Activities of the Committee on Missing Persons:

The operations of the Committee on Missing Persons were also interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After 27 March 2020, CMP members resumed their weekly meetings online and the investigation teams continued their archival work to locate possible burial places for excavation to be ready when the bi-communal teams resume

their activities. CMP's remaining work continues to be on hold due to the outbreak as bi-communal teams cannot work on the ground.

Settlement Efforts and the Way Forward:

As recalled, the efforts towards finding a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem had been deadlocked by the conclusion of the Conference on Cyprus without a result in Crans-Montana in July 2017. Nevertheless, during the two and a half year period ensuing Crans-Montana, the Turkish Cypriot side unwaveringly continued its consistent stance in favour of a solution based on the established UN parameters and insistently 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.

Despite all the setbacks in relation to the established basis of a solution in Cyprus and regressions from the jointly achieved convergences during that period, the continued involvement of the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, his appointment of the senior UN official, Ms. Jane Holl Lute, our subsequent consultations on terms of reference that would constitute a consensus starting point for meaningful negotiations leading to a settlement within a foreseeable future, and finally the invitation of the Secretary-General for an informal trilateral meeting with the two leaders, led the process to Berlin, Germany on 25 November 2019.

In Berlin, we, as the two leaders under the auspices of the Secretary-General, took stock of efforts reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem and reaffirmed our commitment and determination to achieve a settlement based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality as set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions, including OP4 of UN Security Council Resolution [716 \(1991\)](#). Acknowledged that this time must be different and motivated by a sense of urgency, we also agreed that achieving a comprehensive and durable settlement to the Cyprus problem within a foreseeable horizon is of utmost importance to the future well-being of both communities and that the status quo is unsustainable. We affirmed our commitment once again to the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014, the prior convergences, and the six point framework of 30 June 2017 with a view to achieving a strategic agreement paving the way forward for a comprehensive settlement. As a result, the Secretary-General agreed to extend his efforts to achieve terms of reference to serve as a consensus starting point for phased, meaningful, and results-oriented negotiations at the earliest feasible opportunity, and committed himself to explore with the two leaders and with the Guarantor powers the possibility to convene an informal five-plus-UN meeting at an appropriate stage.

The outcome in Berlin cleared the confusion that dominated our efforts in bringing a solution to the Cyprus problem and opened up the prospects for the way ahead in designing a properly structured and results-oriented process. Hence, our engagement in Berlin was also welcomed by the UN Security Council in its latest resolution dated 30 January 2020. In line with the call of Security Council in the same resolution, I wish to reiterate that the Turkish Cypriot side is committed to the outcome of the Berlin meeting and to reaching a sustainable and comprehensive settlement under UN auspices, including by engaging actively and with a sense of urgency with the Secretary-General and senior UN official, Ms. Jane Holl Lute. In this respect, the Turkish Cypriot side also stands ready, as continuously expressed, for the realization of an informal five-plus-UN meeting to be called by the Secretary-General when the time is ripe.