

OPENING STATEMENT

I warmly greet everybody to this official launch of the full fledged negotiations. I welcome you Mr. Downer as Special Adviser and you Mr. Zerihoun as Special Representative of the Secretary General and I assure you of our full cooperation. Please convey to the Secretary General our appreciation for his continuing interest and support and that of the United Nations.

The time has come to put an end to the longstanding Cyprus problem and to give the Cyprus people the better future that they deserve.

The foundations of an agreement are described in the High Level Agreements of '77 and '79 which provide for the transformation of the unitary state into a federal one.

In our efforts we must be guided by the Relevant United Nations Resolutions which endorse the solution of a bi-zonal bi-communal federation with political equality as described in the relevant Security Council Resolutions with a single sovereignty, citizenship and international personality.

In these full-fledged negotiations, which we officially commence today, it is of utmost importance to safeguard the basic principles which have accompanied us so far in this process: to reach an agreed solution under the good offices mission of the Secretary-General of the United Nations which will be approved by the people in separate simultaneous referenda with no arbitration or artificial timetables, to safeguard the Cypriot ownership of the process and that the outcome will be a Cypriot solution by the Cypriots and for the Cypriots. Another basic principle which must

be observed in this process as in all the previous processes is that nothing will be considered as agreed until everything is agreed.

We must also consistently adhere to the agreed common basis that we reaffirmed during our meetings: a bizonal, bicommunal federation with political equality, as defined by the relevant Security Council Resolutions with a single sovereignty, citizenship and international personality.

Moreover, it should always be kept in mind that Cyprus is a full Member State of the European Union and that the solution must respect and implement the principles upon which the European Union is founded.

We also anticipate a new conciliatory spirit from all interested parties and that everybody will respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the United Cyprus.

I wholeheartedly hope that the two Cypriot communities will put aside the conflicts of the past, will endorse a cooperative spirit and will take joint action to decide their future for a reunified homeland.

I will do my utmost for the realization of this vision.