



TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

3 April 2007

Excellency,

I am writing to convey to you the views and concerns of the Turkish Cypriot side regarding the 8 July process.

Since the simultaneous referenda on the UN Plan for the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem in April 2004, the Greek Cypriot side has been pursuing a policy of no dialogue with the Turkish Cypriot side and unfortunately there is no sign that it is ready to consider giving up this meaningless and counter-productive policy in the near future. It was under such circumstances that the UN had proposed on 17 February 2006 that the two sides start to cooperate at least on day-to-day issues of very practical nature. As expected, the Turkish Cypriot side immediately responded positively to this proposal. It is unfortunate that after more than a year it has not been possible to establish the technical committees despite the pressing need for such a mechanism between the two sides in Cyprus. Subsequently, during the visit to the island of the former Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, the two sides agreed on 8 July 2006 on the establishment, in tandem with the technical committees, of working groups to deal with issues of substance regarding the Cyprus problem.

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the
United Nations Organization
New York

The representatives of the two leaders have been meeting, ever since, to carry into effect the 8 July agreement and realize the establishment of technical committees and working groups, however with no tangible results. We are deeply concerned that this process is being used as an excellent opportunity by the Greek Cypriot leadership to achieve all their aims, except for the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. This has, most recently, illustrated itself in the lead-up to the 2008 Greek Cypriot elections, as well as in the strategic delays through which the Greek Cypriot leadership hopes to extract, in the meantime, unilateral concession both from Turkey and Turkish Cypriots by exploiting the EU membership process of Turkey. You would appreciate that this policy would only lead to the postponement of the settlement of the Cyprus problem to a distant future. By then, I am afraid, it might be too late for a comprehensive settlement.

The major tool that has been used by the Greek Cypriot leadership for blocking the start of the process has been its insistence on the inclusion of the issue of property, one of the four core issues of the Cyprus problem, on the agenda of the technical committees that were to deal with day-to-day issues. The aim of this tactic is three-fold. Firstly, to block the start of the process by insisting on something that is neither rational nor acceptable to Turkish Cypriots whilst at the same time, putting the blame on the Turkish Cypriots for the inevitable deadlock that would follow. Secondly, in the event that the process starts, to cite the refusal of the Turkish Cypriot side to take up this matter in the technical committees as a pretext to stymie movement on other day-to-day issues. Thirdly, if the Turkish Cypriot side somehow accepts to discuss, in principle, the issue of property in the technical committees, to exploit and spin it in a manner that would bring our construction sector and subsequently our economy to a standstill. This, I believe, is their main focus, which is something we would not allow. It is also true that by insisting on the inclusion of the issue of property in the technical committees, the Greek Cypriot side also aims at rendering ineffective the Immovable Property Commission established by the Turkish Cypriot side to address any property claims that the Greek Cypriot individuals might have in the North. As you are aware, this Commission has also been welcomed by the European Court of Human Rights as a local remedy for such applications. It is a well known fact that the Greek Cypriot side has been trying to prevent Greek Cypriot individuals from applying to the Commission fearing that the Commission's work would deny the Greek Cypriot side the opportunity to continue to exploit such cases in the international fora for political gain. At this point, I would like to underline that the Turkish Cypriot side is ready for, and indeed had proposed, the establishment of a working group that would exclusively deal with the issue of property cognizant of the fact that it is a major substantive issue to be

dealt with in the full-fledged negotiations for the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. It should be also underlined at this point that the main aim of the process of technical committees is to find practical and immediately applicable solutions to day-to-day problems and establish trust between the two sides which would also be conducive to full-fledged negotiations. The original list of technical committees was prepared and submitted to the both sides by the UN with this understanding. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that both sides respect this understanding and do not propose taking up issues in technical committees that would inevitably create deadlock and tension and thus lead to the worsening of the climate between the two sides rather than improving it. In view of the above, we believe that without a clear and common understanding as to which issues are the day-to-day matters and which issues are the substantive ones before the start of the process, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for the 8 July process to lead to its ultimate and declared aim, which is the immediate commencement of the process of full-fledged negotiations for a comprehensive settlement.

As for the working groups, we are of the view that the parameters for the settlement of Cyprus problem have already emerged through four-decades of negotiations carried out under the auspices of the successive UN Secretaries-General and these are known to everyone interested in the settlement of the problem. It would, therefore, be wrong and futile to allow the working groups to be turned into talking shops that would be exploited for doing away with the established UN parameters for the settlement and drag us into uncharted territories in line with the Greek Cypriot side's declared policy of "*osmosis*". Working groups can be utilized to prepare the ground by identifying the positions of the two sides on issues pertaining to the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem and preparing the annotated agendas within a reasonable period of time for full-fledged negotiations on the basis of the established UN parameters for a settlement, including the Comprehensive Settlement Plan dated 31 March 2004.

It is also unfortunate that the Greek Cypriot side has been engaging in activities that are counter-productive to the efforts aimed at building trust between the two sides in the island. The actions of the Greek Cypriot side aimed at consolidating the isolations imposed upon the Turkish Cypriot people by issuing political as well as legal threats, rather than acting in line with the will of the international community for the removal of the restrictions, do not naturally instill confidence in the Turkish Cypriot people regarding the true intentions of the Greek Cypriot leadership. In this context, its resistance to the adoption of the EU's direct trade regulation and its other actions in the direction of blocking each and every effort aimed at easing, let

alone lifting, the isolations, are detrimental to the efforts to build confidence between the two peoples in the island.

I also would like to remind your Excellency of the mission of good offices report submitted to the Security Council on 28 May 2004 by your predecessor following the separate and simultaneous referenda held on the island on the UN Comprehensive Settlement Plan. Unfortunately, this historic report, which explained in detail the process that led to the Plan and contained *inter alia* very important evaluations and suggestions regarding the future of the UN settlement efforts as well as the isolations imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people is yet to be taken up by the Council despite the well-established practice. We are of the view that its endorsement by the Council will send a clear message to the parties interested in the settlement of the Cyprus problem that the UN continues to be fully committed in assisting the two sides in their efforts aimed at the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to reiterate our firm commitment for the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem without further delay, under the auspices of your Excellency's good offices mission and on the basis of the UN Comprehensive Settlement Plan of 31 March 2004. Unlike my counterpart, I am also ready to accept a time-table and UN arbitration, when needed, in the process of full-fledged negotiations which, to our considered opinion, can commence as early as tomorrow.

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



Mehmet Ali Talat
President

cc: H.E. Sir Emyr Jones Parry
Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the UN
Presidency of the Security Council
New York