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Agenda items 45 and 78  
Question of Cyprus  
Oceans and the law of the sea  
Security Council  
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Letter dated 25 April 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to the letter from the Permanent Representative of Turkey dated 18 March 2019 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/73/804), I have the honour to state the following:

The Turkish allegations contained in the above-mentioned letter regarding the limits of Turkey's continental shelf in the maritime area of the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as the coordinates 32°16'18"E and 28°00'00"E mentioned therein, are legally unfounded, incorrect and arbitrary to the extent that they disregard Greece's sovereign rights in the area, and in particular the legitimate maritime zones of the Dodecanese islands.

Greece wishes to reiterate once again that, according to a well-established principle of the law of the sea, islands, regardless of their size, have full entitlement to maritime zones (continental shelf/exclusive economic zone), as other land territory. In line with our long-standing position, it should be stressed that the delimitation of the continental shelf or exclusive economic zone between States with opposite coasts (both continental and insular) should take place in accordance with the pertinent rules of international law on the basis of the equidistance/median line principle.

Furthermore, the reference in the above letter to "the outcome of future delimitation agreements in the Aegean Sea, as well as in the Mediterranean, among all relevant States" constitutes, in our view, open interference with the right of Greece to effect delimitation agreements with third States on the basis of international law and without prejudice to the sovereign rights of such States. Greece's firm policy is to settle any outstanding issue with its neighbours in good faith and in accordance with international law.

Greece also rejects the reference, in the abstract, to notions such as "prevailing parameters" and "special circumstances", which are legally irrelevant and misleading, and are made for the sole purpose of prejudging future delimitation outcomes in the said area.

Greece once again underlines that it has ipso facto and ab initio sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the above area of the Eastern Mediterranean on the basis of the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, which codifies customary international law, as well as of its national legislation. This position has been registered on numerous occasions with the United Nations (note verbale dated 24 February 2005, see Law of the Sea Bulletin, vol. 57, p. 129; note verbale No. 974 dated 8 May 2012, see Law of the Sea Bulletin, vol. 79, p. 14; note verbale No. 389 dated 20 February 2013, see Law of the Sea Bulletin, vol. 81, p. 23; and letter dated 23 May 2016 (A/70/900-S/2016/474)) and has also been communicated bilaterally to Turkey (notes verbales No. 187/AS 2207/24.7.2009, No. 187/AS 2648/15.11.2011, No. 187/1066/30.4.2012, No. 156.3/1675/12.7.2012 and No. 2019/503.14/267/15.1.2019).

Greece, therefore, refutes in their entirety the above-mentioned Turkish allegations, considers them void of any legal consequences as to Greece's sovereign rights and calls upon Turkey to respect the sovereign rights of all States in the said maritime area in accordance with international law.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 45 and 78, and of the Security Council, and have it published in the next Law of the Sea Bulletin.

(Signed) Dionyssios Kalamvrezos

Ambassador

Chargé d'affaires a.i.