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THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE  
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Athens, Greece

17 August - 7 September 1977

QUESTION OF CYPRUS

Letter dated 1 September 1977 from the Head of the  
Turkish Delegation addressed to the President of the  
Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization  
of Geographical Names

With reference to Agenda Item 7 of the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names being held in Athens, I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the statement which the Turkish delegation to the Conference was not allowed to pronounce in full before the Plenary Meeting of the Conference on 29 August 1977 - as a result of a time limitation imposed - in the exercise of its right of reply to what was said on Cyprus at the Plenary Meeting of 18 August 1977 and included in the corresponding Conference documents.

In confirmation of my Delegation's formal request already expressed during the above-mentioned plenary meeting, I hereby request you to kindly circulate this letter, together with its enclosure, as an official document of the Conference.

(Signed) Prof. Dr. Talip Yücel

Athens, 29 August 1977

APPENDIX

Full text of the Statement by the Turkish delegation on Agenda Item 7 (Reports by divisions and Governments ...) in the Plenary Meeting of the Conference held on 29 August 1977, in the exercise of its right of reply to the accusations directed against Turkey both in various documents issued, and statements made by the Greek Cypriot delegation to the Conference

(Full delivery of this statement was not made possible as a result of a time limitation imposed during the said meeting)

Mr. President,

As I had already announced in my statement of 18 August that was interrupted apparently for "procedural" reasons, my delegation's intention to take the floor was related to the so-called "Report on the Progress in Cyprus", issued in document E/CONF.69/L.82, as introduced in our 18 August plenary meeting by the Representative of the Greek Cypriot Administration. Consequently, the present statement by my Delegation, in the exercise of its right of reply, is mainly aiming at submitting to this scientific and technical conference factual and objective information regarding Cyprus, in view of various purely political, one-sided and deliberately biased documents and statements already received and heard in this very forum from the representative of the Greek Cypriot Administration.

As the distinguished representatives are aware, Cyprus is a bi-communal and bilingual State, and even the 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus - which has been deliberately and continuously violated since the end of 1963 by the Greek Cypriot Administration - contains express provisions about both the participation of the Turkish and Greek communities in the administration of the State and in all its organs, as well as the existence of two national official languages - Turkish and Greek - used by the two communities. Since the very foundations of the Republic of Cyprus are based on the existence of two distinct national communities, it is legally impossible for either one community, namely the Greek one, to assume and carry out all standardization activities for the whole territory of the State without the participation of the other community of the Island, as would it equally be illegal to use the language of only one of the Island's two communities, namely the Greek language, for the purpose of standardizing the geographical names of the whole territory of Cyprus, thus including also the territory under the jurisdiction of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, a territory which is inhabited by the Turkish community of

the Island, where solely the Turkish language is officially used and whose geographical names are Turkish. I wish also to recall, in this respect, the fact that the existence of two communal administrations is a universally established fact, since it was re-confirmed, on the one hand, by the three guarantor States - Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom - by their declaration in Geneva on 30 July 1974, and, on the other hand, by Resolution 3212 of the United Nations General Assembly adopted on 1 November 1974, which stressed, inter alia, that the constitutional system of the Republic of Cyprus was the concern of both the Turkish and the Greek communities, which system should be decided through negotiations on equal footing. It is also worthwhile to point out that such negotiations are underway and both communities' leaders have already agreed on the establishment, in Cyprus, of a bi-communal, bi-zonal and independent federal State. The Turkish "wing" of such federal State of Cyprus, is the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, which has been and is presently exercising its jurisdiction over the Northern part of the Island inhabited overwhelmingly by Turkish Cypriots.

In view of these facts and considerations, this Conference should deem it appropriate to consider and recommend that, given the existence of two distinct national communities and official languages, any geographical standardization work in Cyprus should be carried out by the respective communities, and should be based on their corresponding national languages and the geographical names given by either *community* to the places under its own jurisdiction. This would emphasize the equal footing of, and respect for the two national languages of the two distinct communities living in a bi-communal and bi-zonal State, as one expects from a United Nations Conference of such a high technical and scientific level.

At this point, the Turkish delegation would also like to bring to the distinguished representatives' attention the linguistic/geographical division related to Cyprus. Since I have just provided ample information on the nature and composition of the State and population of Cyprus, I shall refrain from entering into further details on this specific matter. I will, however, state that the consideration of the whole territory of Cyprus within the same division as Greece is both unrealistic and unjust, and therefore unacceptable. In view of the realities of Cyprus, the territory under the control and jurisdiction of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, where the Turkish language is spoken, should logically and normally be placed within the same linguistic/geographical division as Turkey, namely the division "10. Asia, south-west, other than Arabic". In case this solution would not meet with the immediate consent of the Conference, we should then take into consideration the on-going negotiations between the two communities of the Island in conformity with their agreement over the establishment of a bi-communal federal State of Cyprus, and should defer any action on the Island's linguistic/geographical division until such time as the political solution to the Cyprus issue as a whole has been reached. In any event, my delegation formally requests our distinguished Rapporteur and the Secretariat to duly reflect in both the final report and official records of this meeting Turkey's reservation in this respect, and the alternative solutions to this state of affairs proposed by my delegation with a view to establishing a just and scientific way of proceeding.

Mr. President,

I now wish to turn to the co-called Report on the Progress in Cyprus submitted by the Greek Cypriot Administration in document E/CONF.69/L.82, and to formally put on the records that the Turkish Delegation strongly objects to both the contents and the style of the whole report, and, especially, of its paragraphs 1.2, and 3.4. Similarly, we firmly reject all untrue accusations and provocations of purely political nature, which are directed against Turkey in document E/CONF.69/L.80, mainly in its paragraphs 3.1, 3.4 and 3.5. I hasten to emphasize, for inclusion in our records, the political, deliberately biased and one-sided style used in such reports which distort the truth and, therefore, are entirely unacceptable. Moreover, the Turkish Delegation believes that the statement made in our 18 August plenary meeting by the Representative of the Greek Cypriot Administration under the pretext of introducing a national report, is also far from both reflecting the realities and being scientific, and, especially owing to the nature of the unfounded provocations and malicious accusations directed against Turkey, is of a highly political character. Nevertheless, my delegation will show utmost restraint by avoiding specific replies to the Representative of the Greek Cypriot Administration, which replies would, otherwise, entail a lengthy and unnecessary debate on the political aspects of the Cyprus issue. We shall do so, since, on the one hand, we deem that this Conference is absolutely not the appropriate body of the United Nations to tackle any such political matters, and, on the other hand, the Cyprus question's political side has been, and still is being amply debated in the competent instances of the United Nations.

I feel, however, compelled to make some indispensable clarifications with a view to shedding light on the real aspect of the accusations directed against my country. First of all, I wish to affirm that there has never been, nor is there at the present time, any such thing as a so-called Turkish invasion or a so-called Turkish occupation in Cyprus. A Turkish peace operation has taken place in 1974, as launched by Turkey in exercise of her rights and obligations under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee. This operation aimed at both saving the bi-national State of Cyprus from ceasing existing as an independent, sovereign and non-aligned State, after the well-known coup of July 1974 directed against the very entity of the Island as a distinct and independent member of the international community, and also saving the physical existence of the Turkish community in the Island from total destruction.

On the other hand, I also wish to point out that, what is referred to as "changing" or "renaming" of geographical names in the north of Cyprus in the so-called national reports on the island and in the statements by the Greek Cypriot Administration's representative, is also an untrue and biased statement. It is so, because, following an agreement reached between the representatives of the two communities of the island at the Third Vienna Meeting, over the movement of the Turkish Cypriots from Greek areas to the north, there has been an important exchange of population, followed by rehabilitation work which necessarily involved a consideration, in December 1975, of Turkish names for the newly populated areas, first by the Council of Ministers, and later by the Constituent Assembly of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus. This work was entirely carried out by the competent authorities of the Turkish Federated State, in conformity with its legal and legitimate rights, and in accordance with the already existing dual and original Turkish names, a great majority of which date back to 1571 when Turkish rule had started in Cyprus, to last more than three centuries. This process is very clearly expounded by the President of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, His Excellency Rauf Denktas, in his reply letter which has just been submitted by my delegation to our distinguished President for official circulation to the participating delegations. In view of such realities, Turkey had, therefore, nothing to do and no involvement whatsoever with the so-called alleged "renaming of geographical names in Cyprus".

Before concluding, Mr. President, I would like to draw the kind attention of the distinguished representatives to a peculiar proceeding and practice which we have unfortunately witnessed in connexion with the so-called reply by the Representative of the Greek Cypriot Administration. This letter, which was circulated as an official document of the Conference under the symbol E/CONF.69/L.122, pretends to refer to the matter of "representative capacity of the Greek Cypriot delegation", in reply to the letter of His Excellency President Denktas. However, in reality, it seems to aim at directing unfounded and malicious accusations of sheer political nature against the Turkish Government. This letter seems to seize the opportunity of a so-called reply to President Denktas' letter - which concerns solely the subject of representation of Cyprus - to attack the Turkish delegation by referring, in its second paragraph, to our statement that was partly allowed to be made during the Plenary Meeting of 18 August which, I wish to recall, was related to Agenda item 7 and had nothing to do with the representation of Cyprus. On the other hand, the same letter seems merely to seek to create confusion in the minds of the distinguished delegations, especially in its penultimate paragraph, by including a completely false and imaginary assertion. In addition to what I have already said about the very bi-communal constitutional nature of the Republic of Cyprus, I wish to recall that, on the one hand, there exists, at the present time, no central government in Cyprus, and the Turkish community is being ruled by its own Administration, namely the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus.

On the other hand, still referring to the contents of the same penultimate paragraph of the letter, I wish to point out the fact that all minorities living in Turkey have been exhaustively spelled out in the 1924 Treaty of Lausanne, which contains

provisions as to the rights to be enjoyed by such minorities. These minorities, as clearly defined by this Treaty, are all non-Moslem ones. Since Turkey is a secular State, as stipulated in Article 2 of her 1961 Constitution, there exists an absolute equality of rights and opportunities for every Turkish citizen, regardless of his language, race, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, as clearly indicated in Article 12 of the Constitution. Likewise, the press and information media also enjoy complete freedom, being totally exempt from censoring in all its forms. It goes without saying that the non-Moslem Turkish citizens who are forming the minorities existing in Turkey all enjoy these rights in full, including participation in the public administration of the Republic of Turkey which is, unlike the Republic of Cyprus, a unitarian State.

Thank you, Mr. President.