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**General Assembly
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Agenda items 45 and 78**Question of Cyprus****Oceans and the law of the sea****Security Council
Seventy-fourth year****Letter dated 8 April 2019 from the Permanent Representative of
Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 28 March 2019, addressed to you by İsmet Korukoğlu, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex). I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 45 and 78, and of the Security Council and published on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and in the Law of the Sea Bulletin.

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

(Signed) Feridun H. **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 8 April 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

28 March 2019

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing in response to the letter dated 19 February 2019 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative in New York and circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council ([A/73/753-S/2019/160](#)). In the face of misrepresentations and distortions contained in the said letter regarding both the political situation, as well as the hydrocarbon resources around the island, I am compelled to bring the following facts and considerations of the Turkish Cypriot side to your kind attention.

First and foremost, I would like to refer to your determination in your most recent report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), dated 11 January 2019 ([S/2019/37](#)), also echoed in Security Council resolution [2453 \(2019\)](#), dated 30 January 2019, to the effect that “I encourage the sides to consider developing, with support from UNFICYP, their own mechanisms for alleviating tensions, be they of a military, police or civilian nature”. In fact, the issue of hydrocarbon resources around the island presents an ideal opportunity to put your suggestion of establishing a cooperation mechanism into effect, where decisions as regards the said resources will be taken by the two sides. As pointed out by you regarding the hydrocarbon resources around the island, such a mechanism would allow us to “engender deeper cooperation for the benefit of all Cypriots and stakeholders in the region” and “to pursue dialogue” on this issue, which poses “a risk of further tensions” (see reports [S/2018/25](#), [S/2018/919](#) and [S/2019/37](#), respectively), in effect contributing to the building of trust and the creation of interdependency between the two sides on the island, as well as to peace, stability and energy security in the region.

In this connection, I also wish to recall the reference in your report [S/2012/507](#), dated 29 June 2012, to “the natural resources, which belong to all Cypriots”, a fact also acknowledged by the international community, as well as the Greek Cypriot administration of Southern Cyprus. This being the case, the unilateral activities of the Greek Cypriot side as regards the hydrocarbon resources around the island, which exclude the Turkish Cypriot side’s consent and its participation in the decision-making, are outright unlawful and create a *fait accompli* in the Eastern Mediterranean at the expense of the Turkish Cypriots. What is more concerning and hypocritical is the international community’s stance, which, on the one hand, acknowledges the Turkish Cypriots as the co-owners of the hydrocarbon resources around the island, and, on the other, condones the illegitimate steps taken by the Greek Cypriot administration, reinforcing their reluctance to cooperate with the Turkish Cypriot side or to give up on the unacceptable status quo, which is benefiting them, the main stumbling block in the way of a negotiated settlement on the island. Hence, the rejection on the part of the Greek Cypriot side of the two proposals made by the Turkish Cypriot side on the hydrocarbon resources around the island through you, on 24 September 2011 and 29 September 2012, respectively. If these proposals, which were guided by the goal of establishing cooperation and of creating interdependence between the two sides in this field, had been realized at the time, then the Greek Cypriot side would probably have been ready to share power and prosperity with the Turkish Cypriot side, thus leading to a settlement at the Cyprus Conference in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, in July 2017, rather than a collapse.

In view of the above, I hope and trust that you will guide the two sides towards establishing a cooperation mechanism on the hydrocarbon resources around the island. A positive impetus in this regard would be for the energy companies,

unilaterally licensed by the Greek Cypriot administration, to acknowledge that, as co-owners, the consent of Turkish Cypriots and their effective participation in the decision-making as regards the exploration, exploitation and exportation of the said resources are essential prerequisites and that they reserve all the rights available with respect to hydrocarbon resources around the island.

I feel obliged also to point out that the arguments put forward in the above-mentioned letter of the Greek Cypriot representative reflect neither the legal nor the political realities on the island, as they are based on the false pretence that the Greek Cypriot administration of Southern Cyprus has the legal, political or moral right or authority to represent or act on behalf of the Turkish Cypriot people or the island as a whole. As is well known to you, the Turkish Cypriot side has made multiple written representations to the United Nations and put on record that these unilateral actions of the Greek Cypriot side, undertaken without the consent and joint participation in decision-making of the Turkish Cypriot side, are illegal and not binding in any way on the Turkish Cypriot people. It should be borne in mind that, at the core of the Cyprus problem and the matters pertaining to it, including oil/natural gas exploration and exploitation activities, stands the unlawful claim of the Greek Cypriot side to be the “sole government of Cyprus”, the legitimacy of which ceased to exist when the Turkish Cypriots were forcibly ejected from all its organs in 1963. Needless to say, there has not been a joint central administration capable of representing the entire island since 1963, but there exist two independent self-governing administrations on the island of Cyprus. I also wish to bring to your attention that the Greek Cypriot side, by claiming that its “sovereign rights are exclusive”, is disregarding the fundamental principle that sovereignty in Cyprus emanates equally from the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots.

In the light of provocative unilateral acts of the Greek Cypriot side, it should be noted that the Turkish Cypriot side had no choice but to take equivalent and reciprocal, albeit peaceful, measures to protect the inherent and inalienable rights of the Turkish Cypriot people over the hydrocarbon resources around the island. To this end, in addition to the signing of the Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement with Turkey in full conformity with international law, in 2011, the Council of Ministers of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus adopted a decision designating offshore exploration blocks and licensing the Turkish Petroleum Corporation to carry out exploration activities for oil and natural gas resources on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots. Since then, the Turkish Petroleum Corporation, with the express authorization of the Government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, has concluded seismic surveys in the designated blocks via navigational telex. Recently, the Turkish Petroleum Corporation, together with our authorities, has determined the most appropriate points for drilling, and drilling will commence in concession blocks F and G in the days ahead.

In this connection, the Greek Cypriot administration, which in the said letter refers to Turkey as if Turkey is its counterpart on the island, should, once again, be reminded that its counterpart in Cyprus is, and has always been, the Turkish Cypriot side and that the activities of the Turkish Petroleum Corporation as regards hydrocarbons are conducted on behalf of the Turkish Cypriot side. The Greek Cypriot side’s insistent denial of this fact in all fields, including hydrocarbons, also does not bode well for the prospects of finding a sustainable negotiated settlement which will be reached between the two sides on the island.

In view of the above, we hope and trust that the upcoming reports on your mission of good offices, as well as on UNFICYP, will openly urge the sides to cooperate in the field of hydrocarbon resources and also call upon the international community, in particular the relevant States and companies, to take the necessary steps to create the environment for the two sides to cooperate on this important matter.

There is no doubt that such cooperation would be the most comprehensive and concrete confidence-building measure realized to date, leading to interdependency between the two sides, not only paving the way for a negotiated settlement on the island but ensuring peace, stability and energy security for the region.

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 published on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and in the Law of the Sea Bulletin.

(*Signed*) İsmet **Korukoğlu**
Representative
