



**Statement by Cyprus on the Report of the Security Council
United Nations General Assembly, 12 September 2019**

Madam President,

I wish to thank the President of the Security Council (SC) for the month of September for his presentation of the Council's annual report for 2018. We consider essential the meaningful discussion of this report by the General Assembly (GA), given that the Council discharges its responsibilities on behalf of all of us and that the success of the international political and legal order established by the UN depends on the principal organs fulfilling their distinct but complementary roles.

The objective of such a discussion is not to stoke antagonism between the GA and the SC, or to suggest a hierarchy among them. A substantive exchange serves as a mechanism for self-preservation through introspection and self-assessment. It is simply not in our collective best interest if any part of our system is not subjected to rigorous scrutiny. Every mandated structure must be accountable, particularly if its mission is one that the entire international community has a stake in. We need to be able to assess whether the SC is fulfilling its responsibilities and we need to do likewise for all other principal organs, including this Assembly.

It is clear to us that if there is malaise in one part of the system, this could not but imply a broader condition that reflects poorly on the entire system. The high number of conflicts in the world today shows that the performance of the Council is suboptimal, notwithstanding the certain fact that the situation would have been much worse if it were not for the Council.

At the same time, the Charter does not prevent the GA from discussing matters of international peace and security, while organizational practice has even included the adoption of recommendations by the Assembly on such matters. Where the Council is too divided to take action, the GA has more powers to act than it is currently using and we need to consider our own role and responsibility in enabling the UN as a whole to deliver in its core, overarching mandate, and in compelling the Council to act based on principles instead of power.

The key to delivering as an organization may lie in achieving the right synergies between the GA and the SC. Without affecting the clear delimitation between their respective competences, their complementarity – coupled with the effectiveness of each one – can keep the UN credible and relevant. But their interaction is insufficient. An annual report cannot serve as a platform for proper institutional dialogue.

The Charter for example provides for special reports to be submitted, something which has never happened. Beyond the Charter, there are a number of informal ways to relate the wider membership to the work of the Council on a regular basis. The Presidency of the Council could provide a briefing for delegates on a weekly basis regarding its work. End of presidency meetings could also be conducted in more depth. While we appreciate that a significant part of Council negotiations must take place in a closed setting, this need not be at the expense of transparency.

Like others, we find that a more meaningful exchange on the report before us would be possible if it were to be submitted and discussed earlier in the year. Moreover, while the overview of the Council's work provided by the report is useful, we believe that the membership would benefit from a more substantive and analytical report.

We would like to see, among other elements, an overview of the actual work done by the Council, an overview of the situation on the ground in respect of each item on the agenda, an assessment of the level of threat in each case, an assessment of the implementation of Council mandates and of general compliance with Council resolutions, as well as what the wider membership can do in respect of each unresolved conflict.

Madam President,

Small states, non-members of the Council, with a longstanding, ongoing conflict on its agenda, like Cyprus, absolutely rely on its effectiveness. We cannot overstate the importance of having a SC that is not distracted from focusing purely on threats to peace, the use of force, and conflict resolution. The Council should be resolute in recognizing, condemning, and addressing unauthorized use of force. While the comprehensive notion of security entails a multitude of root causes and complicating factors, we have other bodies within the UN system to mitigate these factors and we need to ensure that these bodies can effectively carry out their own responsibilities.

We also cannot overstate the importance of the SC upholding the primacy of international law when making decisions. It must consistently apply the same set of rules that we have collectively elaborated and mainstreamed in international relations.

When resolving conflict, justice cannot be sacrificed for the sake of peace, or peace will not be sustainable. On an individual level, the only form of redemption for victims of conflict, is the prospect of justice. We must use the judicial institutions we have created to fight impunity, including through referrals by the SC.

In light of the ever-increasing violence against civilians in armed conflict and the changing nature of conflict with the significant rise in non-state actors as belligerents, more targeted action is required by the Council to ensure compliance with IHL and accountability for perpetrators.

Here, I would like to make special mention to the adoption of Resolution 2474 on missing persons, initiated by Kuwait, which we wholeheartedly welcome and support.

If you will allow me a couple of last remarks, I wish to devote one to peacekeeping, which has proven to be the most potent tool at the disposal of the Council: in deploying, managing, and withdrawing peacekeeping operations, the SC must decide solely based on criteria pertaining to peace and security, expertise, and true knowledge of the situation on the ground. While the 6,7 billion-dollar annual budget for UN PKOs is admittedly high, it is much less costly than the alternative.

My penultimate remark concerns synergies in the maintenance of peace and security between the UN and regional organizations with corresponding capabilities and local knowledge of a situation on the ground. While there can be no doubt that such cooperation helps the Council deal with conflicts more effectively, this must be done within the rules-based framework of the UN and on condition that the SC does not relinquish its primary competence in such case.

Lastly Madam President, I would be remiss if I did not stress the need for more access to the Council's work by member states on, or directly affected by, its agenda.

Thank you.