

Agenda Item 5.(a): Governments on the situation in their countries on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names.

Response by Mr Andreas Hadjiraftis, President of the Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names of Cyprus, Head of Delegation of the Republic of Cyprus to the First Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), 29th of April to 3rd of May 2019, New York

Mr./Madam Chair,

I regret that I have to take the floor in response to the statement made by the distinguished delegate of Turkey. I wish to put the following on record:

The international community has no doubts about the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus, and the fact that this sovereignty extends over the whole of Cyprus. This is why the international community recognises only the Republic of Cyprus as a subject of international law and why Cyprus' sole legitimate government is representing the country internationally.

The Turkish claim that the Republic of Cyprus does not represent Cyprus as a whole has been unequivocally, authoritatively and definitively rejected by the pre-eminent organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security in several of its mandatory resolutions. The United Nations Security Council deplored the purported secession of part of the Republic of Cyprus, rendered legally invalid the declaration which purports to create an independent state in the northern part Cyprus, called upon all States to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus, and called upon all States not to recognize any Cypriot State other than the Republic of Cyprus.

Any attempts to establish a secessionist entity in Cyprus' territory do not affect the status of the Republic of Cyprus in the international legal order pursuant to established rules and norms of international law. Equally, no effect can be created by any statements in support of such attempts.

Lastly, I urge the Turkish delegation to respect the technical character of the UN Session of UNGEGN for the Standardization of Geographical Names and refrain from attempts to politicize it. The reference given by the Turkish delegation regarding document GEGN.2/2019/6 is not relevant to Agenda Item 5(a). The sole aspect of the Cyprus problem which is relevant in the context of our work here is the fact that Turkey has illegally and arbitrarily changed over 35,000 geographical names in the area of Cyprus that it occupies, in an attempt to erase its historical identity and millennia-old character and heritage.

Thank you.

Andreas Hadjiraftis