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Question of Cyprus

Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 18 March 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to the letter from the Greek Cypriot representative dated 13 November 2019 ([A/74/549-S/2019/881](#)), and upon instructions from my Government, I would like to bring to your attention the following:

On numerous occasions, through the Turkish Permanent Mission's notes, in particular notes Nos. 2004/Turkuno DT/4739 dated 2 March 2004, 2005/Turkuno DT/16390 dated 4 October 2005 and 2013/14136816/22273 dated 12 March 2013; and letters dated 25 April 2014 ([A/68/857](#)), 18 March 2019 ([A/73/804](#)) and 27 February 2020 ([A/74/727](#)), as well as the Permanent Mission's numerous other letters, Turkey has submitted to the United Nations her ipso facto and ab initio legal and sovereign rights in the maritime areas of the Eastern Mediterranean. With my letter dated 13 November 2019 ([A/74/550](#)), it was registered that the outer limits of Turkish continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean follow the median line between the Turkish and Egyptian coastlines to a point to be determined in the west of 28° 00' 00"E, in accordance with the outcome of future delimitation agreements among all relevant States, and with equitable principles, considering all the special and relevant circumstances based on international law.

In line with Turkey's above-mentioned position, the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of National Accord-State of Libya on Delimitation of Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean was signed on 27 November 2019, which was ratified by both countries and subsequently entered into force as of 8 December 2019.

I have the honour to convey the geographical coordinates of the outer limits of the Turkish continental shelf between Point F (34° 16' 13.72"N – 026° 19' 11.64"E) and Point E (34° 09' 07.90"N – 026° 39' 06.30"E) as agreed by the delimitation agreement between Turkey and Libya (see annex). The Memorandum of Understanding, following the precedent of various judgments by international bodies of adjudication, is based on the principles that: (a) islands cannot have a cut-off effect on the coastal projection of Turkey, the country with the longest continental coastline in Eastern Mediterranean; (b) the islands which lie on the wrong side of the median



line between two mainlands cannot create maritime jurisdiction areas beyond their territorial waters; and (c) the length and direction of the coasts should be taken into account in delineating maritime jurisdiction areas.

In addition to the fact that the Greek Cypriot Administration is not competent to represent the whole island of Cyprus and as such cannot claim de jure and/or de facto jurisdiction or sovereignty over these areas, it is against the legal background explained above that the hydrocarbon activities carried out by Turkey lie entirely within the Turkish continental shelf. Any claim concerning the hydrocarbon activities of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus should be addressed to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Turkey, once again, emphasizes that it stands ready today, as it did in the past, to give its full support to ensure a just, equitable and peaceful solution to all pending issues, including the equitable delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas with all relevant coastal States that it recognizes and with which it has diplomatic relations, in accordance with international law, in order to further contribute to the stability and prosperity of the whole Mediterranean basin. Turkey believes that building peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean will only be possible through dialogue and cooperation.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 41 and 74, and published on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as well as in the next edition of the *Law of the Sea Bulletin*.

(Signed) Feridun Hadi **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 18 March 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

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