

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Savvas Angelidis, Minister of Defence of  
the Republic of Cyprus at the United Nations Ministerial Meeting on Peacekeeping  
New York, 29 March 2019**

Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

Peacekeeping continues to be the most important tool we have at our disposal to disrupt the conflict cycle. As the host country of a long-running United Nations peacekeeping operation, Cyprus holds that peacekeeping mandates must be clear and simple, no matter how complex a conflict is. UNFICYP is a case in point; the Force's mandate has proven flexible enough to see it through very significant changes on the ground.

Peacekeeping operations must be tailored to the conflict they seek to address in order to be effective and if self-sustaining peace is to follow their withdrawal. They are instrumental in ensuring stability and conditions that can generate peace agreements. For this, the enduring consent of the host government and constant synergy with the latter are required.

The protection of civilians, particularly vulnerable populations like IDPs, women and girls, must be a primary objective. In addition to being trained on International Humanitarian Law and gender issues, UN operations must lead by example through eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse. The growing number of women peacekeepers and women in posts of high command is key to this end. We are proud that UNFICYP is the first UN operation led by women in all three of its components: military, police and civilian.

Conflict prevention and peacekeeping – not political considerations – must determine the deployment, mandate and duration of peacekeeping operations. The UN has the necessary expertise to examine each case on its merits, based solely on the criterion of maintaining international peace and security. It is in this context that Cyprus has supported the “Action for Peacekeeping” initiative, as well as the efforts of the Secretary General of the UN to focus operations on performance and their ability to deliver on their mandates.

Before closing, Mr. Chairman, allow me to express my country's deep appreciation to all Member States which have made contributions to UNFICYP over the years. The Force has successfully fulfilled its mandate to prevent the recurrence of fighting and its presence- in its current mandate with a strong military component- remains indispensable until Cyprus' occupation comes to an end, restoring peace and international legality. Cyprus will continue to cover a third of UNFICYP's budget through voluntary contributions, as the Force is crucial in maintaining stability and creating an enabling environment to conduct the peace process, which we hope will resume as soon as possible.

Thank you.