REPLY BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
H.E. MR. NICOS ANASTASIADES
AT THE CEREMONY FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE LETTERS OF CREDENCE
BY THE NEW HIGH COMMISSIONER OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA
H.E. MRS MADHUMITA HAZARIKA BHAGAT

NICOSIA, 05 DECEMBER 2019

Excellency,

It is with great pleasure that I receive today your Letters of Credence, appointing you as the new High Commissioner of the Republic of India to the Republic of Cyprus. I would like to extend my warmest congratulations for your appointment and my sincere wishes for every success during your tenure.

The bonds between our two countries stretch back to the birth of the Republic of Cyprus, after India and Cyprus completed their struggle against colonialism and gained their independence. Cypriots are inspired and feel close to the people of India. This mutual affinity is seen in the monuments and streets named after inspiring leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, as well as brave UNFICYP Force Commanders who have served during very challenging times in Cyprus' modern history.

Historically, our shared vision of peace and democracy has helped us forge a natural friendship, not out of necessity, but out of free will and choice. I am very pleased to witness this friendship blossoming into a solid partnership, based on the common values of international peace, security, rule of law and respect to human rights. This common set of values is also reflected in our excellent cooperation in international fora such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth. I recall with great satisfaction my fruitful meeting with Prime Minister Modi in September, in the margins of the UN General Assembly, and the constructive exchange of views we had on issues of mutual interest and concern.

Our relations expand into the bilateral sphere, allowing us to forge stronger ties and further enhance our cooperation. We look forward to continue working closely together towards deepening relations in fields such as finance, trade, maritime, education, climate change, technology and tourism. Furthermore, Cyprus, being a long-standing friend of India, stands ready to engage in further advancing the relations between the European Union and India. We firmly believe that your country’s relationship with the Union is of paramount strategic importance for world peace and economic progress.
Excellency,

As regards the economy, following the severe economic crisis of 2013, Cyprus has achieved a return to positive growth rates since 2015. What has been achieved in a period of just a few years, is nothing short of a remarkable recovery, confirming the resilience and strong foundations of Cyprus’ economy and the excellent prospects of its key productive sectors. For 2019, the growth rate is estimated at 3.2%, while medium-term macroeconomic forecasts project a robust growth of around 3% in the years to come.

Public finances have been set - and they continue to be - on a sustainable management path. In particular, for 2019 the budget surplus is expected to be at 3.8% as a percentage of GDP. The labour market is continuing to record steady progress, with an estimation of 7% unemployment for 2019, compared to 8.4% the previous year. The percentage decline in unemployment is among the largest in the EU and it is projected that by 2020 we will return to full employment conditions.

We are pursuing significant reforms, amongst others, in the public administration, the welfare and health care system, and in tax administration. At the same time, we are enhancing our position as a competitive and stable business and investment destination, through the enhancement of our tax and legal frameworks, as well as providing incentives for new entrepreneurial activities.

The positive course of the Cypriot economy, as well as effective actions in the banking sector, have strengthened the confidence of investors and of International Credit Rating Agencies, which is reflected by a number of successive upgrades, classifying Cyprus at the investment grade. We look forward to fully utilizing the amended bilateral Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation which provides a solid basis for expanding our relations in the field of investments.

Our commitment as a Government is to remain focused on maintaining and broadening the conditions under which surpluses and high growth rates can be generated, to continue promoting structural reforms and improving the country’s business environment.

Excellency,

The reunification of Cyprus and its people after 45 years of Turkish occupation is long overdue. In the face of this perpetuated injustice, the aim of reaching a lasting solution which would safeguard the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus, without any third country dependencies, military troops and guarantees, cannot wane.
Cyprus highly values India’s principled stance and continued support towards our untiring efforts to reach a comprehensive and viable settlement of the Cyprus issue, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions on Cyprus, international law and the EU acquis.

On my own behalf, I would like to reiterate my sincere willingness and determination to continue working tirelessly to achieve a settlement reuniting Cyprus. The tripartite meeting with the United Nations Secretary-General and the Turkish Cypriot leader in Berlin on November 25, 2019, was a positive step towards resuming negotiations.

What is of course required is to create those necessary conditions that will allow the dialogue to resume on the basis of good will and constructive stance from all stakeholders in order to safeguard the positive outcome of the negotiations.

Regrettably, Turkey’s continued illegal drilling operations within Cyprus’ Exclusive Economic Zone, as well as actions and statements alluding to plans of the Turkish side for a potential opening of Varosha, do not only contradict the UN Charter and international law, but they also pose a threat to peace and stability in Cyprus and our immediate region and run contrary to the necessity of having a positive climate in place, conducive to resuming negotiations.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express my deep appreciation for India’s full support and solidarity, strongly condemning Turkey’s continued provocations and illegal actions. We will continue to rely on your invaluable support and firm commitment to promoting international peace, security and rule of law.

Your Excellency,

In concluding, High Commissioner Bhagat, I warmly welcome you to Cyprus and I would like to assure you of the support of myself and the Government of the Republic of Cyprus during the execution of your high duties. Moreover, I would kindly ask you to convey a message of genuine friendship and good will to the President of the Republic of India, H.E. Mr. Ram Nath Kovind and to the Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi, as well as a message of solidarity and support to the friendly people of India.