Mr Chairman,

The Republic of Cyprus aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to make some additional remarks in its national capacity. Before proceeding to doing so, my delegation extends its gratitude to Trinidad and Tobacco and New Zealand for the successful conclusion of negotiations of the two draft resolutions, which as every year, it proudly co-sponsors.

Mr Chairman,

The draft resolution on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, notes with satisfaction that the 16th of November 2014, marks the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and recognizes the pre-eminent contribution provided by the
Convention to the strengthening of peace, security, cooperation and friendly relations among all nations in conformity with the principles of justice and equal rights and to the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples of the world, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Resolution also emphasizes the universal and unified character of the Convention, and reaffirms that the Convention sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.

Significantly, this year's Resolution, repeats its call upon all states that have not done so, to become parties to the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

It is generally acknowledged that most of the provisions of the Convention have acquired the status of customary rules of international law and are, thus, binding on all States. Indeed, all those who value international legal order can attest to the fact that few conventions have contributed so much as UNCLOS to international peace and security. The substantive provisions of the Convention, as well as its terms on the peaceful settlement of disputes are to this end, indispensable, as they set out a comprehensive legal framework establishing a regime of law and order, and rules governing all uses of the seas oceans and their resources.

In compliance with the Convention, Cyprus proclaimed its EEZ in 2004, and, pursuant to Article 74, signed delimitation agreements of its EEZ with three of its neighboring countries on the basis of the principle of the median line. Based on the proclamation of the EEZ and the relevant Delimitation Agreements, Cyprus has exclusive sovereign rights and jurisdiction over its EEZ, for the purposes set out in Article 56 of the Convention. In addition, Cyprus has, as a matter of international law, inherent exclusive sovereign rights over the continental shelf covering the same area, which it exercises in conformity with Article 77 of the Convention. In particular, in relation to hydrocarbon resources, the Republic of Cyprus has exclusive sovereign rights, inter alia, for the purpose of exploration and exploitation in its EEZ and over its continental shelf.
Such sovereign rights in the EEZ belong to internationally recognized States, not to communities or any other group within a state.

It is our firm belief and a basic tenet of international legality, that all states should mutually respect the lawful exercise of their neighbors’ rights in the sea areas where each state has sovereignty or sovereign rights and/or exercises jurisdiction in accordance with the Convention.

Mr, Chairman,

It is my country’s firm belief that cooperation between all the states in the eastern Mediterranean, for the purposes achieving sustainable development and prosperity for the entire region, can be a vehicle for regional co-operation and peace. This very ideal has been the driving force of my country’s active pursuit of the conclusion of relevant bilateral agreements and partnerships with its neighboring states. Cyprus is also active in proposing and participating in initiatives which promote regional cooperation particularly in the hydrocarbons sector, always in line with the Convention, and in full respect of each participating coastal state’s sovereignty, or sovereign rights and jurisdiction in their respective maritime zones.

Mr. Chairman,

In reiterating the significance of the Convention through this year’s resolution on the Oceans and the Law of the Sea, we strongly urge all states to act in accordance with international law and abstain from illegal acts in the EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus, which constitute a violation of the sovereign rights of the Republic of Cyprus and of international law, and strongly call on all states to abstain from acting or threatening to act in contravention of Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations.

In congratulating once more all delegations on their contributions to this year’s resolutions under agenda item 74, I thank you for your attention.