

The Blue Beret

June 2007



Paying Tribute
on International
Peacekeepers Day



THE BLUE BERET

Published monthly by the:

Public Information Office
United Nations Peacekeeping Force in
Cyprus
HQ UNFICYP
PO Box 21642
1590 Nicosia
Cyprus

Tel: 2261-4550/4416/4408

Fax: 2261-4461

E-mail: unficyp-blue-beret@un.org
blueberetcyprus@hotmail.com

Website:www.unficyp.org

Editorial Team

Brian Kelly

Miriam Taylor

Netha Kreouzios

SSgt. Michal Ivan (Photographer)

Anne Bursey

Capt. Tomáš Pavlík

Unit Press Officers

Sector 1 Capt. Guillermo Larreyna

Sector 2 Capt. Gary Allen

Sector 4 Capt Miloš Segeň

MFR Lt. William Percy

UNPOL Sgt. Gail McClure

UN Fit Lt. Cristian Ramos

FMPU Capt. Miroslav Svorník

The **Blue Beret** is UNFICYP's in-house journal. Views expressed are of the authors concerned, and do not necessarily conform with official policy.

Articles of general interest (plus photos with captions) are invited from all members of the Force.

Copyright of all material is vested in UN publications, but may be reproduced with the Editor's permission.

Editorial

Now more than ever, this island needs a renewal of confidence and mutual trust in a joint commitment to resolve the Cyprus problem once and for all. Almost a year on from the 8 July agreement, it is time to fulfill the expectations raised when the leaders of the two communities signed their first agreement since the late seventies.

The Secretary-General has urged the two leaders to build on progress achieved to date and move from discussions on procedures to real engagement on substance.

The Security Council has urged all parties to move to full-fledged negotiations, saying the status quo is unacceptable and that time is not on the side of a final Cyprus settlement.

The Secretary-General has warned we should not take UNFICYP's continuing involvement on the island for granted, at least not in its present form. International patience is wearing thin, he suggests, telling us in his recent report to the Security Council that the question increasingly heard is, what more can UNFICYP offer 43 years on, given the absence of significant progress on the political process?

Of course, everyone agrees that the Cyprus problem must have a Cypriot solution. It is essential that Cypriots feel that their voices are heard in helping shape a solution. For this to happen, civil society needs to be allowed to freely engage and express itself within and between their communities.

Contents

Editorial	2
Security Council Extends UNFICYP Mandate	3
SG's Report on UNFICYP	4/9
Military Skills Competition	10/11
World Refugee Day: Launch of Reality Game / Global Survey Calls for More Power for the UN	12
Carabinieri Anniversary	13
Environment	14/15
UNDP Projects:	
Support for the "3E"s / Promoting a Voice for Cypriot Youth	16
New Faces / Farewells /	
Condolences	17
Visitors to UNFICYP	18/19
Sport	18/19

Security Council Extends UNFICYP Mandate

(Resolution 1758 (2007) adopted by the Security Council at its 5696th meeting on 15 June 2007)

The Security Council,

Welcoming the report of the Secretary-General of 4 June 2007 (S/2007/328) on the United Nations operation in Cyprus,

Noting that the Government of Cyprus is agreed that in view of the prevailing conditions in the island it is necessary to keep UNFICYP beyond 15 June 2007,

Echoing the Secretary-General's firm belief that the responsibility of finding a solution lies first and foremost with the Cypriots themselves and noting the primary role of the United Nations in assisting the parties to bring the Cyprus conflict and division of the island to a comprehensive and durable settlement,

Taking note of the assessment of the Secretary-General that the security situation on the island and along the Green Line remains generally stable, but noting with concern the increase in the overall number of violations of the buffer zone, and urging both sides to avoid any action which could lead to an increase in tension,

Underlining that activity in the buffer zone should not be at the expense of stability and security, and noting the Secretary-General's firm belief that the situation in the buffer zone would be improved if both sides accepted the 1989 aide memoire used by the United Nations,

Welcoming the principles and decisions enshrined in the 8 July 2006 Agreement, stressing that a comprehensive settlement based on a bicommunal, bizonal federation and political equality, as set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions, is both desirable and possible and should not be further delayed,

Noting, with regret, the failure to date to implement the 8 July 2006 Agreement, and urging the leaders of both communities to act to start the process without delay in order to prepare the ground for fully-fledged negotiations leading to a comprehensive and durable settlement,

Regretting that demining activity in the buffer zone has stalled, welcoming the provision by the European Union of funds to support these activities, and urging the Turkish Forces and the Turkish Cypriot side to allow the resumption of demining activities,

Reiterating its call to the parties to assess and address the humanitarian issue of all missing persons with due urgency and seriousness, and welcoming in this regard the progress and continuation of the important activities of the Committee on Missing Persons; expressing the hope that this process will promote reconciliation between the communities,

Welcoming the continuing crossings of the Green Line by Cypriots and encouraging further progress on other confidence-building measures, such as the opening of additional crossing points including, but not limited to, at Ledra Street, taking into account the arrangements already in place at existing crossing points,

Welcoming all efforts to promote bicommunal contacts and events, including, inter alia, on the part of all United Nations bodies on the island urging the two sides to promote the active engagement of civil society and the encouragement of cooperation between economic and commercial bodies and to remove all obstacles to such contacts,

Expressing concern, in this respect, that opportunities for constructive public debate about the future of the island, within and between the communities, are becoming fewer, and that this atmosphere is hampering, in particular, efforts to foster bicommunal activities intended to benefit all Cypriots, and to promote

reconciliation and build trust in order to facilitate a comprehensive settlement,

Reaffirming the importance of the Secretary-General continuing to keep the operations of UNFICYP under close review while continuing to take into account developments on the ground and the views of the parties, and reverting to the Council with recommendations as appropriate for further adjustments to UNFICYP's mandate, force levels and concept of operation as soon as warranted,

Noting the unacceptable accommodation conditions endured by many UNFICYP troops, and welcoming the recent commitment by the Republic of Cyprus to address this issue without delay,

Echoing the Secretary-General's gratitude to the Government of Cyprus and the Government of Greece for their voluntary contributions to the funding of UNFICYP, and his request for further voluntary contributions from other countries and organisations,

Welcoming and encouraging efforts by the United Nations to sensitize peacekeeping personnel in the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases in all its peacekeeping operations,

1. Welcomes the observations in the Secretary-General's report;
2. Expresses full support for the 8 July process, notes with concern the lack of progress, and calls upon all parties to immediately engage constructively with the United Nations efforts, as described in Under-Secretary-General Gambari's letter of 15 November 2006, to demonstrate measurable progress in order to allow fully-fledged negotiations to begin, and to cease mutual recriminations;
3. Reaffirms all its relevant resolutions on Cyprus, in particular resolution 1251 (1999) of 29 June 1999 and subsequent resolutions;
4. Reaffirms that the status quo is unacceptable, that time is not on the side of a settlement, and that negotiations on a final political solution to the Cyprus problem have been at an impasse for too long;
5. Expresses its full support for UNFICYP and decides to extend its mandate for a further period ending 15 December 2007;
6. Calls on both sides to engage, as a matter of urgency and while respecting UNFICYP's mandate, in consultations with UNFICYP on the demarcation of the buffer zone, in particular in relation to the Ledra Street crossing point, with a view to reaching agreement on the United Nations 1989 aide-memoire;
7. Calls on the Turkish Cypriot side and Turkish forces to restore in Strovilia the military status quo which existed there prior to 30 June 2000;
8. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report on implementation of this resolution by 1 December 2007;
9. Welcomes the efforts being undertaken by UNFICYP to implement the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and to ensure full compliance of its personnel with the United Nations code of conduct, requests the Secretary-General to continue to take all necessary action in this regard and to keep the Security Council informed, and urges troop-contributing countries to take appropriate preventive action including the conduct of pre-deployment awareness training, and to take disciplinary action and other action to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel;
10. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

Front Cover:

Rasit Pertev and Tasos Tzionis, principal aides to the two leaders, joined SRSG Møller for the International Peacekeepers' Day ceremony at St. Columba's Church. A plaque commemorating the 172 UNFICYP peacekeepers who died while serving in Cyprus was unveiled.

Back Cover:

Testing Military Skills

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus



I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus covers developments from 25 November 2006 to 25 May 2007, and brings up to date the record of activities carried out by the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, the most recent being resolution 1728 (2006).

2. As at 30 April 2007, the strength of the military component stood at 856 all ranks and the strength of the police component stood at 64.

II. Mission of good offices and other developments

3. On 15 December, the Security Council adopted resolution 1728 (2006), by which, inter alia, it expressed full support for the process agreed upon by the Greek Cypriot leader, Tassos Papadopoulos, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, on 8 July 2006, and encouraged active participation in bicom-munal discussions as described in the letter dated 15 November 2006 from the then Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari, to which both leaders had responded

positively, under the auspices of my Special Representative. The Security Council called for the early completion of the preparatory phase so that a fully fledged

... the Council regretted the continued lack of trust between the parties, which had prevented the implementation of the 8 July agreement

good offices process might resume as soon as possible. At the same time, the Council regretted the continued lack of trust between the parties, which had prevented the implementation of the 8 July agreement.

4. Over the past six months, my Special Representative has continued efforts aimed at facilitating the implementation of the 8 July agreement (see S/2006/572) through intensive discussions with the two leaders and their representatives. Thus far, 14 meetings of the Coordination Committee, comprising the advisers of the two leaders and my Special Representative, have been convened, in addition to a number of bilateral meetings between the Special Representative and each side. The main objective of the Coordination Committee has been to agree on the modalities for the launching of the bicom-munal working groups, which will deal with substantive issues, and the bicom-munal technical committees, which will discuss issues affecting the day-to-day life of the people. There is a broad consensus on the way forward, based on procedural clarifications and agreements, including preliminary agreement on the list of issues for the technical committees and the working groups. However, differences remain concerning the interpretation of the agreement, most notably on what constitutes a day-to-day matter, and the mechanism for resolving disagreements. Although an

understanding ad referendum was reached at the Co-ordination Committee meetings on 9 and 10 March, it foundered on the above points. Despite the commitment of the two leaders in July to ensuring that the "right atmosphere" prevail for the process to be successful, including by putting an end to the so-called blame game, the two sides continued to engage in mutual recriminations throughout the reporting period.

5. On 27 March, in a statement to the press, the members of the Security Council urged both communities to work with the United Nations to implement the 8 July agreement, in particular through the immediate creation of bicom-munal working groups and technical committees in order to prepare the ground for full-fledged negotiations leading to a comprehensive settlement.

6. On 9 February, I met the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Abdullah Gül, in New York and stressed the need for both sides to implement the 8 July agreement without delay. Mr. Gül promised that Turkey would be supportive in seeking a lasting solution under the auspices of my good offices mission. He expressed the hope that the 8 July agreement would lead to a meaningful dialogue.

7. In a meeting on 20 March in New York, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Dora Bakoyannis, stressed to me the need for the 8 July agreement to be implemented, and stated that discussion of all issues, including contentious ones such as property should be allowed. She also emphasized the importance of adhering to the agreed framework, stating that the leaders should meet one week after the formal launch of the process, as suggested by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs last November. I reiterated to the Minister the need for both sides to implement the 8 July agreement.

8. On 29 March, I met the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in Riyadh. Expressing his gratitude to the United Nations for its efforts in the search for a comprehensive settlement, the Prime Minister stressed the importance of planning the next phase. He recalled that my predecessor's report of 28 May 2004 to the Security Council (S/2004/437) had not been acted upon yet. In that connection, he reiterated that the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots should be lifted. I stated to the Prime Minister that all concerned needed to be encouraged to engage in the 8 July agreement process.

9. Early in April, Mr. Talat shared with me his misgivings over the direction in which the process appeared to be moving. Nonetheless, his adviser assured my Special Representative and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the continuing commitment of the Turkish Cypriot side to the 8 July agreement process. In the meantime, the Greek Cypriot side also reconfirmed its commitment to the process. In the light of these developments, my Special Representative has continued his efforts with both sides.

10. On 24 April, the results of an independent island-wide opinion poll, commissioned by UNFICYP to evaluate the effectiveness and ongoing relevance of the

United Nations work in Cyprus, indicated popular support in both communities for the 8 July agreement process and its stated objectives. It revealed that a large majority in each community would accept a solution based on a bizonal, bicom-munal federation. According to the same poll, only a small minority in each community believed that the status quo was the answer.

11. The European Union aid package for the Turkish Cypriot community has begun to be implemented. The purpose of this assistance is to help reduce the socio-economic disparities between the sides, and it should therefore be considered as a positive step towards lifting the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots, as called for by my predecessor in his report of 28 May 2004, by which I stand. On 11 December 2006, the presidency of the European Union expressed its full support for the resumption of the negotiations for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

III. Operations of the Force

A. Prevention of the recurrence of fighting and maintenance of the military status quo

12. The military and security situation along the ceasefire lines continued to be largely stable. In general, the opposing forces cooperated with UNFICYP to ensure peace and security in the buffer zone.

13. There were a total of 473 violations and other incidents during the reporting period. That represents an increase of 143 violations over the last reporting period, owed to civilian incursions into the buffer zone during the hunting season. The number of violations by the opposing forces was similar to those that characterized previous reporting periods. Typical violations included exceeding the permitted manning of positions, limited construction at and improvements to observation posts, and the photographing of opposing force positions. In addition, the forces of both sides serving in the observation post positions along the ceasefire line in the old city of Nicosia have often demonstrated lack of discipline. Incidents included the shouting of insults and the throwing of stones or bottles towards the opposing position, towards soldiers authorised to work on observation posts, or towards civilian vehicles outside the buffer zone. Such incidents persisted despite UNFICYP protests, and the opposing forces appeared unwilling to prevent these activities.

14. In late December, the Turkish Cypriots dismantled the bridge over the military patrol track, north of the Turkish Forces ceasefire line on Ledra Street. Once the work had been completed, a fibreglass wall was erected along the Turkish Forces ceasefire line. In early March, the National Guard removed the wall on Ledra Street south of their ceasefire line. The National Guard replaced the concrete structure with a fibreglass wall. Both sides continue to maintain a military presence in these locations. The National Guard has additionally installed a high-powered searchlight that has been the subject of protests from the Turkish Cypriot side. Since the destruction of the bridge and the concrete wall, UNFICYP has been engaged in discussions with representatives of both opposing forces in an attempt to

facilitate the long-delayed opening of a crossing point along Ledra Street.

15. The Turkish Forces have previously shown restraint when civilians have approached their ceasefire line. During the reporting period, the Turkish Forces demonstrated a greater willingness to engage civilians close to their ceasefire line, in full implementation of their rules of engagement. On two separate occasions, Turkish Forces fired warning shots in the direction of Greek Cypriot farmers working close to the Turkish Forces ceasefire line. In the first incident on 30 January, a United Nations patrol in the area of Athienou reported approximately 10 shots fired into the buffer zone from behind the Turkish Forces ceasefire line. In the second incident on 31 January, a Greek Cypriot working in the vicinity of Astromeritis reported approximately six shots fired by a Turkish Forces patrol. The Commander of the Turkish Forces confirmed that his troops had fired warning shots towards civilians in the buffer zone and stated that the principal concern of the Turkish Forces regarded the use of land close to their ceasefire line. UNFICYP strongly protested both incidents.

16. On a number of occasions, civilian persons from both communities contributed to raising tensions in the buffer zone, particularly in areas close to the Turkish Forces ceasefire line. In separate incidents a shotgun was discharged, from the Greek Cypriot side, in the direction of a Turkish Force observation post and a United Nations sign was erected to indicate that the perimeter of the buffer zone was damaged by gunshots. Unruly behaviour of civilians in the buffer zone disrupted UNFICYP operations at least twice and involved assaults against United Nations personnel and damage to United Nations equipment.

17. The hunting season saw continued ingress into the buffer zone by members of the Greek Cypriot community. UNFICYP responded to prevent an increase in tension and ensure that those who entered the buffer zone left without incident. Both communities have been urged to exercise restraint and to comply with UNFICYP procedures during the forthcoming harvest season.

Both communities have been urged to exercise restraint and to comply with UNFICYP procedures during the forthcoming harvest season.

18. I am encouraged that neither side conducted major military manoeuvres during the reporting period, and urge the opposing forces to exercise similar restraint in the forthcoming period. However, both opposing forces completed limited military exercises close to their ceasefire lines. The Turkish Forces conducted exercises, typically at company strength (70-80 personnel), some of which involved the deployment of heavy weapons, including mortars and anti-tank recoil-less rifles. These were held in training areas approximately 2,000m north of their ceasefire line. The

National Guard, contrary to advance information given to UNFICYP, deployed vehicle-mounted machine guns to observation posts along their ceasefire line and exercised at regimental strength with mortars within 1,000m of their ceasefire line.

19. The Turkish Forces have completed routine maintenance on the liaison post at Strovilia and have persistently overmanned the position, in violation of the military status quo in the area. The observation posts constructed by both sides in the Dherinia area in the summer of 2006, referred to in the previous report (S/2006/931), remain in place and negotiations for their destruction have stalled. UNFICYP operations in Varosha continue to be hampered by restrictions, imposed by the Turkish Forces, on access to and movement within the fenced area. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

B. Mine action

20. Mine clearance operations continued until the end of December 2006. By this time, the 13 Turkish Forces minefields located in the vicinity of Nicosia had been cleared. Following the completion of this operation, Nicosia was declared landminefree in a ceremony held in the buffer zone. UNFICYP, on behalf of the Mine Action Centre, has continued discussions with the Turkish Forces/Turkish Cypriot Security Forces to identify additional mined areas and to agree on terms for their clearance. Due to the reservations of the Turkish Forces concerning the potential civilian use of the cleared areas and Turkish Cypriot objections regarding the source of European Union funding of the mine-clearing operation, these discussions have failed to produce positive results and no mine-clearing has taken place since the beginning of this year. In order to respond to priority tasks such as the verification of the proposed Ledra Street crossing and to ensure a rapid resumption of full activities once agreement on access to minefields is reached, the programme has retained a reduced capacity from both contractors. I encourage the earliest conclusion of negotiations so that demining activities may resume.

21. From the inception of the programme in October 2004, over 2.2 million m² of land have been released, with 25 minefields cleared and 2,816 mines destroyed (1,320 anti-personnel and 1,496 anti-tank). Since the previous report on UNFICYP (S/2006/931), 323,153 m² of land have been released through survey activities. In December 2006, the European Union confirmed that an additional €4 million would be made available for mine action, bringing the total amount of European Union funding to €9 million.

C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

22. UNFICYP continued to work with its United Nations partners and local actors to facilitate projects of common benefit for Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots in and outside the buffer zone and to promote confidence-building measures between them. In addition, UNFICYP continued to carry out its functions with regard to the maintenance of law and order.

23. Cypriots on both sides of the buffer zone contin-

ued to use the crossing points for various activities, including trade, religious and bicommunal events, without major incidents. UNFICYP has recorded approximately 13 million crossings since the opening of the crossing points in April 2003. That figure does not include crossings in Pergamos since 1 September 2006, when the Turkish Cypriot side discontinued sharing statistics on the movement of people at that crossing. Since August 2004, goods worth approximately £C2 million (more than US\$4 million) have crossed the Green Line from the north to the south of the buffer zone, reflecting a significant increase (£C1 million for the period August 2004 to December 2006 and more than £C1 million for the reporting period alone). During the period August 2004 to April 2007, goods worth approximately £C500,000 (approximately US\$1 million) crossed from south to north.

24. No agreement was reached on the opening of additional crossing points, despite some positive steps taken by both sides towards the opening of the Ledra Street crossing point in Nicosia (see para. 14). By its letter of 8 March, the Greek Cypriot side informed my Special Representative that it had decided to proceed with construction work at a prospective crossing point between Kato Pyrgos-Karavosti in the north-western part of Cyprus. Construction work is under way to the west of the National Guard ceasefire line outside the buffer zone.

25. UNFICYP facilitated 37 bicommunal events with the participation of approximately 2,000 people from both sides. These events were held in the buffer zone, at the Ledra Palace Hotel, which continues to be viewed by both sides as an essential, neutral venue for hosting bicommunal activities. There was a significant increase in the number of events at the Ledra Palace during the reporting period. In December 2006, in the bicommunal village of Pyla, UNFICYP facilitated a children's event, which included the nursery and primary schools of both Cypriot communities. That event was followed by commitments to continue to engage in joint cultural activities in 2007. UNFICYP also supported a United Nations Development Programme-led international civil society fair from 3 to 5 May at the Ledra Palace Hotel, crossing with about 1,500 participants.

26. Regular monthly meetings between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political party leaders continued to be held at the Ledra Palace Hotel under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia. My Special Representative attended these meetings on a number of occasions to brief participants on the political process. In March, for the first time, the political party leaders agreed on a range of bicommunal confidence-building initiatives, though of limited scope.

27. During the reporting period, UNFICYP conducted 60 humanitarian convoys and humanitarian visits in support of the 384 Greek Cypriots and 142 Maronites living in the north. An increasing number of Maronite

No agreement was reached on the opening of additional crossing points, despite some positive steps taken by both sides towards the opening of the Ledra Street crossing point in Nicosia

and Greek Cypriot persons are expressing an interest in returning permanently to their villages in the north, often to look after parents who stayed behind and are now growing too old to look after themselves. UNFICYP continued to assist Turkish Cypriots living in the south in obtaining identity documents, housing, welfare services, medical care, employment and education.

28. The trend towards increased construction on the Turkish Cypriot side continues to be a cause of concern, as it may complicate efforts towards a comprehensive settlement. UNFICYP received complaints from the Greek Cypriot side that uninhabited houses in Rizokarpaso belonging to Greek Cypriots were being demolished. UNFICYP confirmed that and protested to the Turkish Cypriot side the practice of demolishing houses without the owners' consent. UNFICYP personnel faced difficulties accessing the Greek Cypriot community in the Karpas area, with restrictions being placed by local police on home visits without prior clearance. UNFICYP has protested these new restrictions. UNFICYP has two police officers based in Leonarisso, to attend to the Greek Cypriot inhabitants in this region and to assist with the weekly resupply runs and home visits. On 18 and 19 April, UNFICYP personnel were prevented by the Turkish Cypriot side from accessing the Leonarisso station in the north to perform regular health, safety and maintenance-related tasks. UNFICYP protested these incidents.

29. UNFICYP continued to follow the establishment of a Turkish language primary school in Limassol, to which the Greek Cypriot side had committed in March 2005. The school is not yet operational. At its request, UNFICYP met with the Turkish Cypriot Teachers' Trade Union on this subject and other issues related to the education of Turkish Cypriot schoolchildren in the south. The formal proceedings of the lawsuit filed by the Turkish Cypriot Teachers' Trade Union with the Supreme Court to guarantee Turkish Cypriots the right to an education in their mother tongue have been adjourned several times (see S/2006/931, para. 27). The next trial date is set for 7 June 2007. UNFICYP follows developments on this issue, pending the outcome of the judicial proceedings. At the same time, efforts continue to improve conditions for Turkish Cypriot children in a Greek Cypriot school in Limassol.

30. UNFICYP assisted in arranging two pilgrimages by Greek Cypriots to churches in the buffer zone. On 9 April, approximately 100 Greek Cypriots visited the Varisha church to conduct annual religious services, and on 1 May, approximately 200 Greek Cypriots prayed at the Ayios Georgios Soleas church. In addition, on 6 May approximately 140 Armenian Cypriots visited the Saint Magar Armenian Monastery on the northern slopes of the Kyrenia mountain range for the first time since 1974.

31. UNFICYP is facilitating a request by the Maronite community to return an icon from a museum in the north to the church in the Maronite village of Kormakitis. It has also been asked to facilitate the temporary relocation of 15 icons from the church in Kormakitis for restoration works in the south. These issues have been taken up with the Turkish Cypriot authorities.

32. UNFICYP continued to receive requests from both Cypriot communities in relation to the desecration of, access to and preservation of sites and items of cultural

and religious significance. On 21 February, H.E. Chrysostomos II, Archbishop of Nova Justina and All Cyprus, and Ahmet Yönlüer, the head of religious affairs in the north, met under the auspices of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, René van der Linden. They expressed their mutual commitment to contribute to an atmosphere of trust and tolerance in Cyprus and agreed "to take practical steps to promote respect, including efforts towards restoration, for sites of religious significance of the other community". As a first step, they planned to work towards the goal of enabling worship at the Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque in Larnaca and the Apostolos Andreas Monastery on the Karpas Peninsula. My Special Representative has since written to the two religious leaders to congratulate them on their meeting and encourage them to address specific issues of concern to both communities.

33. The number of civilians seeking to construct or otherwise develop land in the buffer zone, often outside of the procedures established by UNFICYP to safeguard the stability of and security within the buffer zone, continues to grow. A significant part of the resources and energy of UNFICYP operations is increasingly geared towards addressing this development. UNFICYP continues to call on both sides to provide greater support to the Mission in exercising its mandate in the buffer zone with respect to civilian activities. To this end, UNFICYP continued discussions with the two sides on practical modalities to prevent unauthorized civilian activities in the buffer zone outside of the areas designated for civilian use.

34. A number of projects were authorized by UNFICYP during the reporting period, in accordance with its mandate to restore normal conditions in the buffer zone. These included the sinking of a well to supply water to both communities in the villages of Petra/Taskoy and Peristerona/Cengizkoy, the replacement of an asbestos water pipeline from the water pump into the village of Kato Kopia/Zumrutkoy, construction works for an access road and the construction of a fenced road to the Pascal School in Nicosia, the construction of a pumping station to help implement the sewerage system in wider Nicosia and the construction of a road to the Palouriotissa Lyceum in Nicosia.

35. UNFICYP facilitated anti-malaria spraying activities in the buffer zone, carried out by the health services of both sides, until the last week of December 2006. The anti-malaria spraying activities resumed on 5 April and will continue until December 2007. UNFICYP continued to engage the local authorities on both sides in an anti-dumping campaign, in response to an increase in the number of illegal waste dumping sites in the buffer zone. In this connection, UNFICYP also supported a campaign led by the United Nations Development Programme to promote environmental awareness in the buffer zone.

36. During the reporting period, UNFICYP was faced with increasing incidences of unauthorised, at times challenging, behaviour of members of the Greek

The number of civilians seeking to construct or otherwise develop land in the buffer zone continues to grow

Cypriot community living in the buffer zone. On 4 January, an incident took place in the area of Troulli village on an unauthorised road construction site in the buffer zone. It resulted in criminal charges being laid against three members of the Greek Cypriot community. This and other similar cases are beginning to show an emerging pattern of increased questioning of UNFICYP authority in the buffer zone.

37. UNFICYP continued liaising with the two sides on law enforcement and issues related to crossings. Twenty medical evacuations were facilitated from the north, and the remains of three Greek Cypriots were returned for burial in their villages in the northern part of the island. Prison visits and interviews with inmates and relevant officials of detention facilities continued. There are currently 20 Turkish Cypriots detained in the south and one Greek Cypriot in custody in the north.

38. While exchange of information on criminal matters between the two communities through UNFICYP continues to some degree, during the reporting period

no further progress was made in bringing the two sides closer on law enforcement matters. This lack of cooperation undermines UNFICYP efforts to facilitate the resolution of law enforcement-related issues involving the

lack of cooperation undermines UNFICYP efforts to facilitate the resolution of law enforcement-related issues involving the two sides

two sides, in particular in the buffer zone. This was evident during an incident near Pyla village in the buffer zone, on 26 January, where the Turkish Cypriot side confronted UNFICYP police who had attempted to facilitate the Greek Cypriot side’s access to a tragic accident scene. Incidents of illegal crossings of the buffer zone continue unabated. Reports concerning the arrests of persons involved in human trafficking are encouraging. There is still a need for greater cooperation between the two sides on these and other criminal matters. Following the opening of the crossing points, UNFICYP has been receiving increased requests to assist in locating third party nationals suspected of having been victims of trafficking on the island.

39. UNFICYP continued to coordinate and facilitate activities on gender-related issues on the island, such as the Cypriot Women’s Policy Group. Made up of women from both sides of the island, it provides a platform for addressing gender issues throughout Cyprus. On International Women’s Day, UNFICYP hosted an event consisting of a play on domestic violence, which was written, directed and acted in by UNFICYP staff, followed by a bicomunal panel discussion on ending impunity for violence against women. Municipal representatives of both north and south Nicosia attended, and discussions have since ensued on funding for a bicomunal shelter for battered and trafficked women.

IV. Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

40. During the reporting period, the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus pursued its project on the exhumation, identification and return of remains in

Cyprus, launched in August 2006. To date, the remains of over 250 individuals have been exhumed from sites on both sides of the buffer zone. Approximately 150 have undergone examination at the Committee’s anthropological laboratory in the United Nations Protected Area in Nicosia. At the beginning of April, the first bone

samples were sent to the DNA laboratory for formal identification. It is expected that the process of returning remains of missing individuals to their families will begin in June.

41. The project on the exhumation, identification and return of remains in Cyprus, which is entirely bicomunal in character, continues to benefit from broad political and public support. The above-mentioned opinion poll shows that almost all Greek Cypriots and a strong majority of Turkish Cypriots believe that the process of exhumation and identification of remains is essential to resolving the issue of missing persons.

V. Financial and administrative aspects

42. As indicated in my previous report (S/2006/931), the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/270 of 30 June 2006, appropriated for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 the amount of \$44.8 million gross (\$43 million net). In this regard, I am grateful for the voluntary contribution of one third of the cost of the Mission, equivalent to \$14.9 million, by the Government of Cyprus, and the voluntary contribution of \$6.5 million by the Government of Greece. I invite other countries and organisations to do likewise, with a view to reducing the portion of the cost of UNFICYP covered by assessed contributions.

43. The proposed budget for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, which amounts to some \$46.8 million, is currently under consideration by the General Assembly.

44. As at 31 March 2007, the total outstanding assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP for the period from 16 June 1993 to 15 June 2007 amounted to \$17.9 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to \$1,801.5 million.

45. As at 31 December 2006, amounts owed to troop contributors totaled \$8.8 million. As a result of the delay in the receipt of assessed contributions, reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made only for the period up to 30 April 2006 and 31 March 2006, respectively.

46. In the previous report on Cyprus, reference was made to the conditions endured by UNFICYP soldiers at Ledra Palace Hotel and Camp San Martin. The report stressed the urgency and importance of swift completion of the repair work needed to ensure the minimum level of health and safety requirements for the Force troops. Since then, despite prolonged dialogue between the United Nations and the Republic of Cyprus,

It is expected that the process of returning remains of missing individuals to their families will begin in June

and discussions between the Government of the troop contributing country concerned and the host Government, very limited progress has been achieved towards resolving this issue. On 24 May, following a meeting

UNFICYP will continue to support civilian activities in the buffer zone such activities will not be allowed at the expense of stability and security

with UNFICYP, the Cypriot authorities undertook to provide a detailed work-plan for the refurbishment shortly. In the meantime, the continued exposure of UNFICYP personnel to these hazards presents an unacceptable risk to their health and safety. I therefore call on the host Government to comply with its legal obligation to provide appropriate accommodation facilities under the status of forces agreement.

VI. Observations

47. During the last six months, the situation along the ceasefire lines has remained generally calm and stable. The opposing forces extended cooperation to UNFICYP and generally refrained from actions that could disrupt efforts to resume political negotiations. However, safety and stability in the buffer zone continued to be negatively affected by members of the civilian population seeking to exercise their property rights in the buffer zone in disregard of security considerations. In this connection, UNFICYP will continue to support civilian activities in the buffer zone in full respect of ownership rights. However, such activities will not be allowed at the expense of stability and security for which the United Nations bears direct responsibility. Moreover, I firmly believe that the situation would improve further if both sides accepted the 1989 aide-memoire used by the United Nations to regulate activities in the buffer zone for the past 18 years. I call on both sides to accept it without delay.

48. In the absence of a comprehensive settlement, UNFICYP has played an important role in maintaining peace and security in Cyprus. Nonetheless, the continued involvement of the international community in Cyprus, through UNFICYP, at least in its current form, should not be taken for granted. After 43 years of presence in Cyprus, the value added of UNFICYP, particularly in the absence of significant progress on the political process, is increasingly being questioned by various actors in the international community.

49. Despite the absence of significant progress, the parties have taken small but incremental steps in the right direction. There has been a sustained dialogue between the representatives of the two leaders on the modalities for the launching of the bicomunal working groups and the bicomunal technical committees. While the 8 July agreement is yet to be implemented, it should be noted that the two sides have come close, on several occasions, to reaching agreement on the start of the process.

50. A sustained dialogue between the two sides is itself no small achievement, in the light of the continuing mistrust between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, especially since the 2004 referendums. The time has come, however, to move from talks

about procedure to substance. The work of the last 16 months should be brought to fruition, with the implementation of the 8 July agreement. In this regard, the parties are once again reminded of the repeated calls by the Security Council for its implementation. It is high time that the considerable convergence of positions be translated into action. In this regard, and in order to build trust between the sides, I urge both leaders to honour their written commitment and bring to an end the ongoing mutual recriminations, which only serve to undermine the process.

51. I regret to be unable to report any meaningful improvement in the atmosphere in which Cypriots of both sides are allowed to engage in bicomunal contacts. Unhindered interaction aimed at building trust between the communities is in line with the spirit and letter of the July agreement. In addition, I believe that an active and flourishing civil society could provide critical support to the political process. In this regard, I encourage all Cypriots to become more involved in the debate on the future of their country.

52. It is my firm belief that the responsibility of finding a solution lies first and foremost with the Cypriots themselves. The United Nations remains committed to supporting a political process and facilitating reconciliation. It is essential that the parties demonstrate their readiness to match words with deeds through sincere efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement. It should also be clear to all that there is a considerable body of work and basic agreements relating to the established parameters for a solution, which may be drawn on in the search for a future settlement.

53. I note with regret that no further progress has been achieved during the reporting period on demining. I urge the Turkish Forces and the Turkish Cypriot side to re-engage with UNFICYP to renew the agreement in order to allow for the completion of mine clearing in the buffer zone.

54. I am gratified that the Committee on Missing Persons has maintained the momentum and advanced towards resolving one of the most painful aspects of the Cyprus problem. I sincerely hope that this bicomunal endeavour will not only address a burning humanitarian question, but will also reflect positively on both communities’ broader efforts towards reconciliation.

55. I am grateful for the strong support received both in New York and on the island from the members of the Security Council, as well as other Member States, for United Nations efforts.

56. In the absence of a comprehensive settlement, the presence of UNFICYP on the island remains important. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force by a further period of six months, until 15 December 2007. At the same time, there may be a need for a further review of the operation at an appropriate juncture.

57. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative and Chief of Mission, Michael Møller, to the Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni, and to the men and women serving in UNFICYP for the efficiency and dedication with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.

UNFICYP Military Skills Competition

The bi-annual Military Skills Competition took place on 30 May in the UNPA. Ten teams took part from all Sectors/Units including UNPOL. Sector 1 once again managed to triumph while the UNPOL made a commendable effort. Lt. Percy from the MFR, the unit which organised the competition, gives a personal account of his team's efforts during the day's events.

	DRIVER	THEORY	SHOOTING	SAVING	DRIVING	REACTING	REACTING	REACTING	REACTING	REACTING	REACTING	REACTING
1	80	100	80	80	10	80	100	100	100	100	100	100
2	80	70	90	30	70	80	20	90	100	100	100	100
3	100	30	20	100	50	100	40	80	100	100	100	100
4	70	80	30	90	60	80	70	40	100	100	100	100
5	60	60	10	40	90	10	30	70	100	100	100	100
6	30	80	60	60	20	30	80	30	100	100	100	100
7	80	50	100	20	100	70	80	60	100	100	100	100
8	20	10	70	10	80	20	10	20	100	100	100	100
9	10	40	40	50	30	80	60	10	100	100	100	100
10	40	20	80	70	60	40	80	50	100	100	100	100

My alarm went off at an unhealthy 4.00 a.m. on 30 May, as it would have too for all the competitors, umpires and officials and everyone else involved in the much-anticipated Military Skills Competition. Despite going to bed at 7.00 p.m., I felt exhausted after a particularly restless and nervous night's sleep. The same applied to the remainder of the MFR team, two of whom had managed the grand total of zero hours' sleep between them.

As the sun rose above the Kyrenia mountain range in the distance, the teams wearily made their way down to the assault course for an initial brief, registration, kit check and weigh in. Ten teams from across UNFICYP would soon embark on a challenging and arduous competition. After some last-minute kit repacking, the teams formed up outside the NAAFI, 10-abreast, facing the daunting initial 500m climb for the start of the endurance march. Each member of the six "man" teams, each including one officer and one female, would be carrying 15 kg in their military rucksacks and their respective rifles.

Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni started the event with a gun blast and the teams were off. As expected with the adrenaline pumping and the crowd cheering, the pace was intense. The teams all galloped off at mach one before settling down to a more humane speed. The event lasted for five exhausting kilometres, the last stretch being particularly gruelling as it required the teams to

collect rucksacks including tyres and a water jerry can. Sector 2A Team won this event with a super-human effort that saw the team run the entire route, a truly determined and courageous performance.

All teams then faced a round robin of a further seven events throughout the day. 100 points were awarded to the team finishing first, 90 to second, 80 to third and so on. The MFR team was fortunate as they were gifted a one-hour break before the Driver's Stand. Confidence was high as the team was fortunate enough to be based at the UNPA where the competition took place. The team had spent hours perfecting the off-road driving circuit and had wheel changing down to Formula One standards. Confidence was short-lived as the team flew round the course, creating a tidal wave at the water obstacle, crashing on the reversing down hill phase and breaking every safety rule in the book on the tyre change. After a quick debrief on what had been an awful start, it was rucksacks on, a quick map check and off to the next stand. Two events down – and I had team MFR firmly rooted to the bottom of the table!

The mood was sombre and the dejected silence was finally broken by Cpl. Mitchell who jokingly remarked, "Well, that went really well... I think we've won that easy!" This was followed by various comments including Sgt. Ughy, the driver guilty of the vehicle crash, stating, "I'm a very good driver... in a few months, I'll be

master driver!!" Morale now raised, the team headed to the Command Task Stand determined to start performing.

There were two command tasks to tackle, the first involved taking a combination of animals and vegetables around a circular course without the said items eating each other. The second involved stacking blocks in various formations, an event which the team completed in good time. After numerous attempts and a fair amount of head-scratching, the team completed all tasks, annoyed at not finishing sooner. It had shown a clear need for clear and concise briefings, a task that LCpl. Asher fulfilled admirably.

Next was the Reaction to Incident Stand. It comprised of a RTA and a shooting incident, which the team had to assess and deal with. A clearance patrol was sent in to secure the area and gain information from the casualties. A quick plan was formulated, with a clear intent not to rush and become casualties ourselves. A set of Quick Battle Orders were given and then casualties received first aid, casevac was called for, the area was searched and the casualties' weapons made safe. Sgt. Adair's performance was particularly commendable, treating the wounded and sending simultaneous SitReps. Personally I enjoyed the stand. It was well organised and had clear training benefit for all the teams, demonstrating the need to remain calm when dealing with tense situations, an ethos that had been



instilled in UN troops when patrolling the buffer zone.

The temperature was now getting up into the high 20s and would later hit 35 degrees Celsius, making the march between events seem that little bit further and kit that bit heavier. After one of the longer marches between stands, the team faced the map reading test. Having spent numerous late nights honing map reading skills, 2/Lt. Canizares hard work to translate Cpl. Mitchell's navigation lessons into Spanish was greatly appreciated, especially by Ptes. Gallardo and Britez, who had not got to grips with his unique form of Spanglish. The map reading test was handed in with an air of confidence, and after a quick session of "what did you get for question...", the team had time for a spot of well-earned lunch before the ranges.

The range event, organised by Sgt. Brown, was split into two parts, the shoot and the weapon assembling. The team divided into two sets of three and would alternate between the two. The shoot involved a 500m sprint, followed by each member firing 20 rounds from the prone, kneeling and standing positions. After the sprint it was a predictably wayward piece of firing, only LCpl. Asher doing any real damage to the figure 11 target. The weapon assembling, which was done blindfolded, went well and the hours of practice seemed to pay dividends.

The penultimate event was the Observation and Recognition Stand



and involved patrolling down a patrol lane, spotting and remembering various pieces military equipment, which were placed around a bunker position some 50 m off to our left flank. As Cbo. Gallardo took his turn to peer down the binoculars, a loud explosion rocked the ground to our fronts. The team immediately withdrew to cover and formulated a plan to "pepper pot" out of the danger area along the remainder of the patrol lane. It had been a simulated mortar attack and the team had responded well.

Next was the recognition phase and the team correctly identified seven pieces of military equipment. The plan for each member to concentrate on a particular section – tanks, vehicles, helicopters, weapons and so on – rather than try to remember all, was once again successful.

The team, now tired, headed for the final event, believing that despite clear improvement throughout the day, it might have left it a little too late for a top three position. Despite practising the assault course for weeks on end, the teams now faced it after a hot and tiring day's competition. I felt heavy-legged and just wanted to get it over with. We finished in a time of 8'56", slower than previously practised, but not surprising, all things considered. A huge "well done" must go to both teams from Sector 1, completing the course in times of 6'51" and 7'25" respectively. I would not have believed it possible if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes.

The assault course really summed up the competition. Every team gave it 110% and it was extremely well supported by all nations involved. Personally, I was delighted when it was all over. Early on, with only a short time to prepare physically, the team had decided to focus most of their time on the theory events, spending many late nights in the classroom teaching and learning from one another. This was undoubtedly a main factor in the team's success, combined with great morale induced by the poor start and the subsequent "mickey-taking" that followed. Overall, only 90 points separated the top six teams, showing that it was an extremely close-run competition.

Huge thanks must go to SSgt. Barton and his works party for turning the assault course into a stage fit for television. Also to Lt. Col. Villagran and his training cell for their months of hard work to ensure the event ran well with a huge training value for all involved, and team MFR consisting of Lt. Percy, Sgt. Adair, Sgt. Ughy, Cpl. Mitchell, LCpl. Asher, Pte. Gallardo and the reserves Pte. Britez and Pte. Ellis, who completed the weeks of training.

Finally, congratulations to all personnel who took part, especially Sector 1 for retaining their trophy, and the UNPOL team whose efforts and determination were an example to all.

Lt. W.M. Percy



World Refugee Day Launch of Reality Game

On the occasion of World Refugee Day, 20 June, UNHCR Representation in Cyprus launched the UNHCR reality game, Taxidi Fygis (www.taxidifygis.org.cy).

As the High Commissioner stated in his message, "World Refugee Day is the occasion to remember those tens of millions of refugees and others who have been forcibly displaced, and to recall what makes them different. In an age of increasing globalization, when more and more people are on the move, refugees are not unique because they are away from home. What sets them apart is that they cannot return there."

Taxidi Fygis is about the fear that every refugee experiences and the unavailability of any other option than fleeing; it is about this difference, but it is also about the challenges that any refugee faces in the new country.

This is an online UNHCR education game that has been successfully running in other countries, in Sweden and Norway, as well as in the German-speaking countries. UNHCR Cyprus will be presenting the Cyprus (Greek) version of the game.

The game targets primarily young 13 to 18-year-old students, but experience in other countries shows that it has been well received by teachers, parents and the media. The objective is to promote understanding for the refugee plight and empathy towards refugees through playing the role of the refugee.

Cyprus hosts around 900 refugees and more than 12,000 asylum seekers. What they need most in order to be able to rebuild their lives is the support of the hosting society which can only be achieved through understanding and empathy. As the UN Refugee Agency in Cyprus, with a supervisory role in protecting this group of people, UNHCR are mandated to promote this understanding.

Therefore, the launching of the game is part of the effort to enhance the understanding on refugee issues as well as on issues of human rights, multiculturalism and tolerance.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in his message for World Refugee Day, said refugees do not leave their homes and villages willingly. They are forced to do so by conflict or persecution. In many cases, they are fleeing for their very lives, trying to find safety,



Cristina Planas (centre), Head of UNHCR, Dr. Demetriou, Director of the Media and International Relations of the Archbishopric of Cyprus and Ms. Olympia Stylianou, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Culture help launch the game

protection and a way to meet their most basic needs. For tens of millions of people, exile has brought untold hardship. Rather than an opportunity to pursue education or employment, leaving home has meant traumatic experiences of uncertainty, deprivation and intolerance.

Compared to the past few decades, official global refugee figures are at low levels. But they do not take account of other groups displaced by insecurity or political strife. Entire communities may also seek refuge within their own countries. Living in refugee-like conditions within their borders, internally displaced people have the same need for protection and assistance, education and a safe environment. And this population is growing. In the past year, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other UN agencies have expanded their assistance to 23 countries with a total population of nearly 20 million internally displaced people.

And then there are the stateless, those who because of their ethnicity or history are simply denied the right to a nationality. For them, "going home" may not depend on a peace accord and repatriation, but rather, on overcoming bureaucratic obstacles and securing an official identity. Though the estimate of stateless people worldwide has risen to nearly six million in some 60 countries, the figure signals growing international willingness to recognise and address the problem.

For more information about the game, please contact Emilia Strovolidou, Public Information Officer, UNHCR, e-mail: strovoli@unhcr.org; website: www.unhcr.org (English); www.unhcr.gr (Greek).

Global Survey Calls for More Power for the UN

Large majorities across the globe favour giving the UN more powers to stop genocide, nuclear proliferation and terrorism.

The findings of the survey were made public by two US research organisations, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and WorldPublicOpinion.org, based on polling conducted from July 2006 to March this year representing roughly 56% of the world's population.

Large majorities in 12 of 14 countries polled agreed that the UN Security Council should have the right to use of force to "prevent severe human rights violations such as genocide," with the highest levels of support in France (85%), Israel (83%) and the United States (83%).

A majority in eight countries led by China (76%), the U.S. (74%) and the Palestinians (69%) felt the Council has not just the right but also the "responsibility" to intervene militarily to protect people from severe human rights abuses.

Large majorities averaging 71% and led by Israel (85%) and France (84%) also backed the use of force to "stop a country from supporting terrorist groups".

Fifty-two percent on average agreed that military force should be allowed to prevent a country that does not have nuclear weapons from acquiring them, with highest support in Mexico (70%), Israel (62%) and the US (62%).

Asked whether their own country should be "more willing to make decisions within the UN" when dealing with international issues, even if this meant their country having to "go along with a policy that is not its first choice," 78% in China, 68% in France, 60% in the U.S. and 54% in Israel agreed.

"Having a standing UN peacekeeping force selected, trained and commanded by the United Nations" was backed by majorities in 12 of the 14 countries polled, 64% on average.



In true Italian style, the four UNPOL carabinieri invited military, civilian and police colleagues, together with their families, to celebrate the 193rd anniversary of its foundation on 13 July 1814. 130 guests arrived for the occasion including the Italian Ambassador, Luigi Napolitano, the Irish Ambassador, Tom Brady, the CAO, Mr. Frank Clancy, the SPA, Ch. Supt. Carla Van Maris and the CCAO, Ms. Kyoko Shiotani.

The evening started at 7.00 p.m. with Contingent Commander Ch. Insp. Riccardo Terra addressing all present. He stated that apart from Cyprus, the carabinieri also serve in Afghanistan, the Balkans, Congo, Iraq and Lebanon. Back in Italy, the carabinieri are mainly involved in law enforcement (anti-riot, anti-terrorism, intelligence, etc.). However as peacekeepers in Cyprus, duties lean more towards humanitarian issues, and the Contingent strives to interact and build up confidence with the local communities. It was gratifying to note that the Contingent found it can communicate easily with the local population on both sides of the divide. "As Mediterraneans, we understand the general frame of mind of the people on this island. As we say in Italian, *'una faccia, una razza!'*"

The national anthem was then played, with the carabinieri saluting the Italian flag.

Ambassador Napolitano spoke about how the UNFICYP carabinieri strive hard to maintain a safe environment in the buffer zone. He was proud of the work they were doing and the excellent reputation they have built up for themselves.

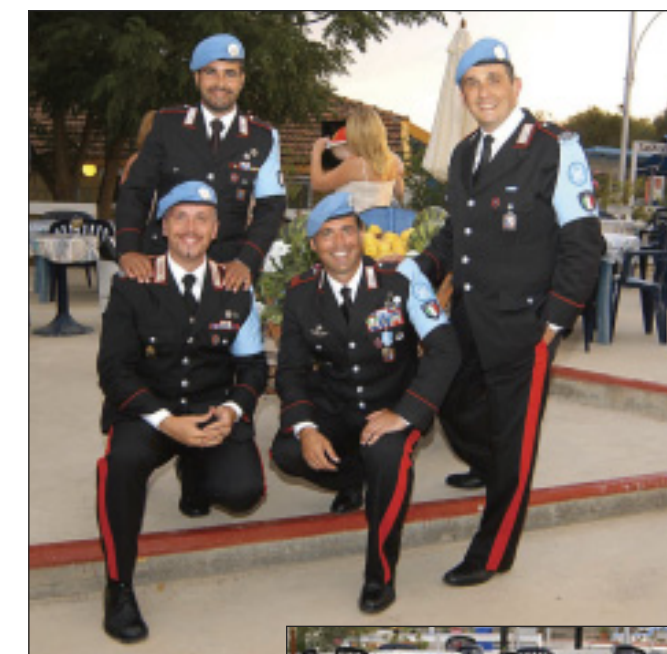
SPA Carla Van Maris recalled excellent memories of working with the Italian police officers in Somalia where the going was really tough. She was very pleased that they were also a part of UNPOL. UNFICYP, she said, was honoured to have four and a half carabinieri – Adriano Potenzieri's son Francesco (seen left with his mother Gianna), now five months old, travelled to Cyprus to join his father when he was only three months!

Marco Ciampini then read the carabinieri's prayer, "Virgo

Fidelis", praying for the protection and blessing of all law enforcement officers.

Following the speeches, a delicious barbecue was offered to all guests, accompanied, of course, by music.

One notable attraction of the event was the cart, discovered in Nicosia's old town by the carabinieri. This type of barrow, once used regularly by farmers but now mainly retained as a decoration, is often seen in the



south of Italy. They were so inspired by this cart that they brought it back to the UNPA specifically for this occasion and decorated it in true southern Italian style – with fruit and flowers, demonstrating the carabinieri's deep attachment to their rural heritage.

The evening ended in the early hours, a clear sign of a successful celebration.

World Environment Day

Cyprus Environmentalists Attend Commission for Sustainable Development

In Cyprus the environmental community is large but fragmented, and is in search of a stronger common voice, in order to reinforce its influence on sustainable development issues at the local and global levels. Launched in January 2007 under the auspices of UNDP Action for Cooperation and Trust, the Cyprus Environmental Stakeholder Forum (CESF) is a bicommunal, multidisciplinary network/platform of environmental stakeholders willing to agree on a list of common environmental priorities which they will advocate together locally and at international environmental events.

The forum is highly innovative since it is the first platform including Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot environmental experts, and because its members bring to the table a wide range of social backgrounds and professional expertise. Key partners in this project are the Cyprus Technical Chamber (ETEK) and Union of Chambers of Turkish Cypriot Engineers and Architects (KTMMOB), with the support of Action for Cooperation and Trust.

In terms of membership, the stakeholder group is open to a wide range of members, including environmental NGO representatives, environmental educators, journalists who tend to cover environmental issues, environmental engineers, leading environmental academics and key business leaders interested in the UN Global Compact (a set of voluntary principles for corporate social and environmental responsibility).

In an unprecedented initiative, the CESF sent a multi-disciplinary, bicommunal team of environmental experts to a crucial international event, the 15th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 15), which took place at UN headquarters in New York. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council in 1993. The role of the Commission as a high level forum on sustainable



CESF Conference Room at NY HQ

development, includes: to review progress at the international, regional and national levels in the implementation of recommendations and commitments contained in the final documents of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), namely: Agenda 21; and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, as well as to elaborate policy guidance and options for future activities to follow up the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and achieve sustainable development. Moreover, the CSD aims to promote dialogue and build partnerships for sustainable development with governments, the international community and the major groups identified in Agenda 21 as key actors outside the central government who have a major role to play in the transition towards sustainable development.

Broad public participation in implementation is a fundamental prerequisite of sustainable development. Agenda 21 recognizes nine major civil society groups: women, children and youth, indigenous people, NGOs, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, scientific and technological communities and farmers. Substantive exchange between major group representatives and officials is now integrated through the various official sessions of the CSD. The major groups have prepared "priority for action" papers addressing thematic areas that are on the CSD agenda in the given two-year implementation cycle, and are invited to contribute to many of the side events taking place during the CSD Sessions.

CSD delegates were impressed not only by the size of the Cypriot group (23 in all, making it one of the largest civil society groups attending), but by its wide range of expertise. CESF established a dialogue with worldwide sustainable development civil society networks, interacted with key global environmental stakeholders assembled at the CSD 15, and even had an influence on the final global NGO position adopted at the event.



Cypriot representatives at their first briefing

UNFICYP Joins Community in Buffer Zone Clean Up

As part of activities on the island to mark World Environment Day, UNFICYP peacekeepers from Sector 1 joined workers from Peristerona Municipality in a buffer zone clean-up exercise along the Peristerona riverbed on 5 June. UNFICYP soldiers, UN civilian police and local municipal workers removed garbage and other debris from the illegal dumping site near the riverbed between 9.00 am and 11:30.

In his message for World Environment Day, the SG highlighted the result of global warming, not only on polar regions but across the world. He pointed out that greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are causing our world to get warmer. Concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are higher than at any time for the past 600,000 years, and the rate of increase is accelerating.

Fortunately, there are many policy and technological options available to avert the impending crisis, but we need increased political will to use them. Developed countries in particular can do more to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage energy efficiency.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the 7 June agreement by the "Group of Eight" leading industrialized nations to effectively tackle climate change, and to pursue related negotiations under United Nations auspices.

The **Blue Beret** spoke to two members of the Cyprus Environmental Stakeholder Forum (CESF) Ibrahim Alkan and Michalis Loizides who attended the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 15) in New York.

Both Alkan and Loizides who are on the CESF steering committee said the experience was positive and helped strengthen relations between the committee members and injected fresh momentum for their planned projects.

Loizides said, "It was a big challenge for us to participate in an international forum representing positions by Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots jointly. But we managed to intervene on important environmental issues without political implications hindering us. We were united, fully understanding of each other, able to express scientific opinion and comprehend how such international forums operate."

Once the group members understood the workings of the forum they were able to effectively participate in a substantive manner putting forward two proposals that were incorporated in the final NGO positions, he said.

"For a team that has just recently been established with members from a broad spectrum of disciplines – from journalists, to environmentalists, industrialists and scientists this is an achievement."

Both Alkan and Loizides stress the decisive role UNDP's Nick Jarraud played in keeping the bicommunal group united and focused.

Alkan points out that since the CESF is only newly established and the members had only met in March, the trip to New York not only enriched them as environmentalists and scientists but created friendships. "We all left New York as very good friends," he said



UNFICYP peacekeeper helping in the buffer zone clean up

"The acceptance by the leaders of their responsibility to act on emission reductions and eventual cuts is to be commended," he said.

The SG also welcomed the G8's stated intention to conclude by 2009 negotiations on a replacement for the Convention's Kyoto Protocol, which contains legally binding targets for reducing emissions through 2012.

The CESF will now continue its efforts with the creation of a number of working groups made up of experts and other interested persons to discuss issues and help formulate policies for joint island wide programmes.

"It is exciting as this is the first serious initiative that will not be limited to a single project that has a beginning, middle and end but aims to continue beyond the projects on a lifetime basis," Loizides said noting that Cypriots will cooperate not only with each other but with other international experts and universities to network internationally.

Alkan concurs that their aim is the long-term sustainability of their work which he believes has every prospect of succeeding.

Currently the steering committee holds monthly meetings but the working groups may meet more frequently where necessary. Each working group includes a member of the steering committee to keep them informed of developments and to put the issues to the committee for policy decisions.

It was a big challenge to go to NY before the working groups were fully established said Loizides. "That we were successful is testament to the fact that we can succeed and participate substantively while avoiding political implications," he said.

Loizides explains that currently there are around six working groups that could soon expand to 10. The hard-core of the groups is made up of scientifically orientated personnel and also includes civil society and other groups within the communities. Their interventions are scientifically orientated with their views backed up by strong scientific data which can assist communities in making an impact on policy decisions on both sides of the island.

The '3E's

Awareness and education are essential elements of any healthy society that is taking the right steps toward protecting the environment for the sake of present and future generations. For those who care about the environment in Cyprus, the Green Line does not exist, as this island is a series of integrated ecosystems and, as such, the environmental issues in Cyprus can only be addressed on an island wide basis. Environment awareness and peace education are two excellent ways to bring young people from all the communities of the island together. This is exactly what the summer camp "Environmental Education for Educators (3E)" accomplished in the first week of June.

The "3E" programme coordinated by the Nature Conservation Unit of Frederick Institute of Technology promoted environmental education issues to students and young educators, aged 18 to 35. The first "3E" camp took place at the Environmental Study Centre in the picturesque village of Kritou Terra in Paphos from 1 to 3 June 2007. The participants had the opportunity to learn methods for teaching environmental studies and engage in educational games.

"3E" is a year-long programme that includes a series of visits and camps in various Environmental Education Centres throughout the island, including Protaras, Limassol, Lapithos and Kyrenia, as well as other educational field trips to sites of particular ecological and cultural significance. The programme also includes educational lessons concerning various outdoor sports, such as diving and canoe-kayak, which are expected to provide the participants with unique experiences and fun memories to last a lifetime.

Multi-cultural Youth Camps 2007 begin with Environmental Education



This year's Multicultural Youth Camps Programme, supported by UNDP Action for Cooperation and Trust, will give the opportunity to more than 500 young Cypriots, aged nine to 35, to participate in nine different camps. The themes of these nine camps vary from environmental education to special workshops on racism, volunteerism, sports education and science. A "Science Camp for Girls" programme organised by the University of Cyprus will give the opportunity to 50 girls aged 11-14, from both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, to come together

and work on educational activities focused on chemistry in everyday life, environmental science, biology and astrology!

To get the contact details of the organisers of each camp and reserve a place on one of these unique youth camps, please visit the website of Action for Cooperation and Trust: www.undp-act.org

A Voice for Young People in Cyprus

On 18 June, UNDP Action for Cooperation and Trust announced an exciting new initiative that will involve young people in an island-wide research and dialogue process.

The Cyprus Youth Dialogue Project will encourage inter-communal dialogue amongst Cypriot youth aged 15-24 from the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, using a variety of methods.

To begin the process, a Youth Advisory Board (YAB) will be assembled made up of 20 young individuals, ranging from 15 to 24 years old. Their task will be to assist in the development of a Youth Aspiration Survey, which will explore various features of the lives, values and belief systems of Cypriot youth.

The project, implemented by Intercollege and KADEM (Cyprus Social and Economic Research Centre), will allow young Cypriots from both communities to come together in an informal, supportive environment to identify their aspirations, hopes and fears for the future.

"This project will give an opportunity for a cross-section of Cypriot youth to be part of a comprehensive research study aimed at exploring and understanding the values and belief systems of young Cypriots from all communities," said Jaco Cilliers, Programme Manager, UNDP-ACT.

According to recent research, Cypriots feel that youth dialogue as a "confidence building mechanism" could play an active part in facilitating the process of reconciliation on the island.

"I consider the Cyprus Youth Dialogue project to be a very important one, as it is the first time in which we will have the opportunity to compare the attitudes and views of youth from the various communities of Cyprus. Hopefully, this will allow us to begin building a base of comparative knowledge for the future," said Nicos Peristianis, Executive Dean, Intercollege.

Led by a team of experienced researchers, members of the Youth Advisory Board will work together firstly to design a survey questionnaire and later to interpret its results. Their interpretations, insights and ideas will be incorporated into an official report, which will then be used to create a Cyprus Youth Charter. This Charter will represent the "voice" of Cypriot youth and will serve as a tool for their thoughts and views to be heard across the island.

The project will run from June 2007 until September 2008. Participants chosen as members of the Youth Advisory Board will be expected to meet in July 2007 (to design the questionnaire) and again in January 2008 (to interpret the results of the survey). Additionally, members will have the opportunity to take part in public forums, in June and July 2008, where the final report and Youth Charter will be presented and discussed.

For details about the Youth Advisory Board and how to apply, please visit: www.undp-act.org. For more information, please contact Pembe Mentesh, UNDP-ACT Programme Analyst, at +357 22 874777 or 0392 601 4778.

New Faces



Dalibor Marinc from Croatia studied electronics at Zagreb University. He joined the UN in 2000 to serve with the mission in East Timor (UNTAET) as the IT Networks Administrator.

In 2003, he moved to UNMEE, Eritrea, where he spent just over two years, and had been serving in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for one year when he was posted to UNFICYP.

Dali has been involved in everything and anything concerning IT, from cabling and networks administration to systems development. However, his area of expertise is computer programming, and he joined UNFICYP on 16 April as the IT Systems Developer.

Dali and his wife Sanja have a new addition to their family – daughter Matija, born on 17 May (seen left with their son, four-year-old Valentin). Sanja is also a UN staff member, currently with UNMEE as the Finance Systems Administrator.

Dali's hobbies include playing and watching basketball, football, tennis, reading, playing the guitar, listening to music and watching movies.

Farewell



On 31 May, after a career of some 32 years, Bob Walker, Chief Communications and Information Technology Section, retired.

Bob's distinguished career in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations began as a Radio Technician in UNTSO, Jerusalem, in May 1975, and brought him to such exotic missions as UNEP, UNEP II, UNIFIL, UNTSO Beirut, UNFTCA, UNDOF, UNIMOG, UNVCA, UNNY, UNUCA, UNTAC, UNAVEM, UNOMIG and finally UNFICYP, where he served several tours-of-duty and has been stationed since November 2004.

Seldom will you find a man of better temperament or a more gentlemanly, more considerate character than Bob. He has shown himself to be a man of principle, humility and integrity, as well as great personal charm.

His lovely wife, Lola, has been strongly supportive. Bob and Lola, it has been an honour and privilege to know and work with you. We wish you good health and happiness for many years to come. Good luck and God bless. **TG**



Ambassador Varso with the Chief of Mission at one of the island's political party meetings

Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties paid tribute to departing Slovak Ambassador Jan Varso on 20 June with a reception at the Ledra Palace, the venue of the monthly meetings between the island's political parties that he so successfully helped organise and sustain during his time in Cyprus.

Condolences

UNIFIL Peacekeepers: On behalf of UNFICYP, SRSG/Chief of Mission Michael Möller sent a letter of condolence to UNIFIL's Force Commander Maj. Gen. Claudio Graziano on the tragic and untimely death of six of his soldiers who were killed in an attack on UNIFIL on 24 June.

The death was announced on 13 June of former SG and Austrian President **Kurt Waldheim**. He was 88 and had served as SG from 1972 to 1981. Mr. Waldheim visited Cyprus in 1979 when he convened high-level talks for a settlement.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon extended his condolences to Mr. Waldheim's family, as well as to the Austrian Government and people. Mr. Waldheim's post-UN career was enveloped in controversy stemming from revelations about his military service during the second world war.

Visitors to UNFICYP

UNFICYP extended the usual courtesies when the Chief of Mission and Force Commander received the following visitors during the month of June:



H.E. Mr. Jan Bondy, Ambassador of the Czech Republic – 4 June



H.E. Mr. Nicolas Galey, Ambassador of the French Republic – 4 June



Ms. Anne Craig from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra – 13 June



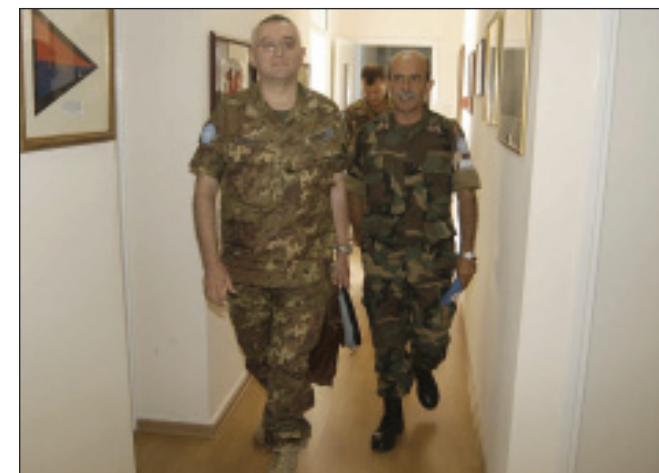
Brig. Gen. Maggi, Deputy Chief General Staff of the Argentinian Air Force – 13 June



7 June – H.E. Mr. Ján Kubiš (left), Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, with Senior Adviser Wlodek Cibor. The two served together in Tajikistan.



Commander Col Speedie greeting the Australian Federal Police Commissioner M.J. Keelty (centre) with the Australian High Commissioner Garth Hunt – 12 June



Lt. Gen. Claudio Graziano, Force Commander UNIFIL – 15 June



H.E. Mrs. Sofia Prats, Ambassador of the Chilean Republic – 22 June

Sport

Three years ago, on 8 June, a tragic accident occurred when SSgt. Miroslav Hruska lost his life in a helicopter accident. Every year, Sector 4's peacekeepers hold a short memorial service in his honour. This year was no different, and following the ceremony, soldiers lit candles in remembrance of their fallen comrade.

Some of the soldiers in Sector 4 knew Miroslav and know that they have lost a good friend, colleague and sportsman. Miroslav was known for his love of sport, so this year, a beach volleyball competition was held on 9 June in Famagusta's Camp General Štefánik in his honour.

Seven teams from Sector 4 competed in the tournament. Despite the heat and the large number of sets played, competitors gave their best in all matches. It was clearly visible that everyone wanted to win, but fair play was the name of the game.

The individual matches were very dramatic and clearly appreciated by the spectators who loudly cheered the effort put in by the players. The tournament



Winning team from SLOVCON

ment was considered a great success, so much so that Sector 4 is in the process of organising a beach volleyball competition in Camp General Štefánik, where all UNFICYP sectors and units will be challenged!

Watch this space.

On 21 June, the annual UNFICYP swimming competition took place at the Dolphin swimming pool in the UNPA.

Organised by the MFR (Sgt. Jim Kirk), seven teams representing all three sectors, the MFR, UNPOL, HQ UNFICYP and FMPU took part. The challenging event included all individual strokes, two relays and the chain-of-command race involving a private, junior NCO, senior NCO and officer.

The overall winner of the competition was Sector 2. However, the swimmer of the day was Cpl. Rachel Hunt who not only participated in three winning relay events, but also four individual stroke events.



The COS getting dressed for the last leg of the chain-of-command race



Sector 2's winning chain-of-command relay team: From the left: Lt. Ollie Nyman, WO2 Nathan Jones, LCpl. Jobbo Jobbourn, Cpl. Rachel Hunt and Force Commander Maj.Gen. Rafael Barni

Rachel's success is likely due to the fact that during her military career, she has swum for the Adjutant General's Corps, Army and Combined Services teams.

Testing
Military
Skills

