Bicommunal Hoops in Pyla
Editorial

"... I am pleased to take this opportunity to thank you for all your hard work and continued commitment to our common cause during the last 12 months. Having recently returned from Headquarters, I am also very pleased to convey personally the deep appreciation of both our colleagues and Member States for your efforts.

The past year also witnessed trying moments for UNFICYP. Our thoughts are with the family and friends of our colleague WO Stephen Goldsmith, who passed away on 23 November. As you know, the Security Council recently decided to extend our mission for another six months. In doing so, the Council again affirmed that the status quo is unacceptable, that time is not on the side of a settlement, and that negotiations to reunify the island have been at an impasse for too long. This has become, unfortunately, a standard assessment in Council resolutions on Cyprus. I believe, however, that far from an invitation to succumb to gloom and pessimism, this situation demands a renewed effort from all to find a solution. And I’m deeply convinced the time is ripe for that effort. As the Secretary-General wrote in his latest report, the coming year may prove to be crucial in the search for a comprehensive settlement. This means for us is more hard work, a fresh approach to some aspects of our mission, and demonstrating that we are steadfast in our determination to help all Cypriots find a comprehensive and just settlement. I am certain that we can provide that help.

In the meantime, I … look forward to seeing you all in the new year, re-energized and ready to take on the many challenges that surely await us.”

Excerpted from Chief of Mission Michael Moller’s end-of-year message to UNFICYP staff

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Front Cover: Bicomunal Hoops in Pyla
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We have the science. Global warming is real, and we are a prime cause.

We have heard the warnings. Unless we act, now, we face a dangerous, perhaps terminal, future for the planet. Largely lost in the debate is the good news. We can do something about this – more easily, and at far less cost, than most of us imagine.

These are the conclusions of the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the scientific body that recently shared the Nobel peace prize. It is sobering reading, but we must not miss its optimistic bottom-line: to repeat, we can do this – in ways that are both affordable and promote prosperity.

The evidence is all about us, often in unexpected places. Visiting South America recently, I saw how Brazil has become one of the biggest players in green economics, drawing some 44% of its energy needs from renewable fuels. World average: 13%. The figure in Europe is 6.1%.

Bali and Beyond: A New Green Economics

Ban Ki-moon, 4 December

Friendly transformation of the global economy – one that spurs growth and development rather than crimes it, as many national leaders fear.

We have witnessed three economic transformations in the past century. First came the industrial revolution, then the technology revolution, followed by our modern era of globalization. We stand, now, at the threshold of another great change: the age of green economics.

The evidence is all about us, often in unexpected places. Visiting South America recently, I saw how Brazil has become one of the biggest players in green economics, drawing some 44% of its energy needs from renewable fuels. World average: 13%. The figure in Europe is 6.1%.

Much is made of the fact that China is poised to surpass the United States as the world’s biggest emitter of greenhouse gases. Less well known, however, are its more recent efforts to confront grave environmental problems. China will invest $10 billion in renewable energy this year, second only to Germany. It has become a world leader in solar and wind power. At a recent summit of East Asian leaders in Singapore, Premier Wen Jiabao pledged to reduce energy consumption (per unit of GDP) by 20% over five years – not so far removed, in spirit, from Europe’s commitment to a 20% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2020.

This is the way of the future. According to some estimates, growth in global energy demand could be cut in half over the next 15 years simply by deploying existing technologies yielding a return on investment of 10% or more. The new IPCC report lays out the very practical ways, for instance, for higher standards for air conditioners and refrigerators to improved efficiency in industry, building and transport. It estimates that overcoming climate change is as affordable as 0.1% of global GDP a year over the next three decades.

Growth need not suffer and in fact may accelerate. Research by the University of California at Berkeley indicates that the United States could create 300,000 jobs if 20% of electricity needs were met by renewables. A leading Munich consulting firm predicts that more people will be employed in Germany’s enviro-technology industry than in the auto industry by the end of the next decade. The UN Environment Programme estimates that global investment in zero-greenhouse energy will reach $1.9 trillion by 2020 – seed money for a wholesale reconfiguration of global industry.

Already, businesses in many parts of the world are demanding clear public policies on climate change, regardless of what form they might take – regulation, emissions caps, efficiency guidelines. The reason is obvious. Business needs ground rules. Helping to create them is very much the role of the United Nations.

Our job, in Bali and beyond, is to shape this nascent global transformation – to open the door to the age of green economics and green development. What’s missing is a global framework within which we, the world’s peoples, can coordinate our efforts to fight climate change.

The scientists have done their job. Now it’s up to the politicians. Bali is a test of their leadership. What are we waiting for?
Resolution 1789 (2007)
Adopted by the Security Council at its 5803rd meeting, on 14 December 2007
Welcoming the analysis on developments on the ground over the last six months in the report of the Secretary-General of 3 December 2007 (S/2007/699) on implementation of this resolution, in accordance with his mandate,
Noting that the Government of Cyprus is agreed that in view of the prevailing conditions on the island it is necessary to keep UNFICYP beyond 15 December 2007,
- Echoing the Secretary-General’s firm belief that the responsibility of finding a solution lies first and foremost with the Cypriots themselves, that the upcoming year offers an important window of opportunity to make decisive progress, which must be grasped by all parties without delay, and to the end of which the Secretary-General has clearly outlined the need to maintain a comprehensive pressure approach, including 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, welcoming the decrease in the number of incidents involving the two sides, and urging both sides to avoid any action which could lead to an increase in tension,
- Underlining that activity in the buffer zone, in particular for the completion of commercial projects, which are not compatible with returning to normal conditions as expressed in the UNFICYP mandate, should be halted and that 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 bicomunal, bizonal federal and political equality, as set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions, is both desirable and possible among the parties,
- Deploring the continued 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,
- Welcoming the agreement to allow European Union funds to support demining activities; urging the rapid finalisation of the protocol between the relevant parties governing the remaining demining activities in order to complete demining of the buffer zone,
- Welcoming the progress and continuation of the important activities of the Committee on Missing Persons; expressing the hope that this process will provide a basis for reconciliation between the communities,
- Welcoming the proposed confidence building measures advanced by both sides, as a means of creating greater trust between the two communities and encouraging their early implementation; encouraging also progress on 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, and reaffirming the importance of continued crossing of the Green Line by Cypriots,
Welcoming all efforts to promote bicultural contacts as a means of creating greater trust between the two communities and for the purpose of all United Nations bodies on the island, urging the two sides to promote the active engagement of civil society and the encouragement of economic and commercial bodies and to remove all obstacles to such contacts,
Agreeing that an active and flourishing civil society is essential for a comprehensive solution, and, in this respect, that opportunities for constructive public debate about the future of the island, within and outside the island, are essential, and that this atmosphere is hampering, in particular, efforts to foster bicultural 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 SecretaryGeneral 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, for the purpose and concept of operation as soon as warranted,
Welcoming the steps taken by the Republic of Cyprus to address the living conditions of many UNFICYP troops,
Echoing the Secretary-General’s gratitude to the Government of Cyprus and the Government of Greece for their voluntary contributions to the treasury of UNFICYP, and his request for further voluntary contributions from other countries and organisations,
Welcoming and encouraging efforts by the United Nations and the international community, including the World Bank, in the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases in all its peacekeeping operations,
1. Welcomes the analysis on developments on the ground over the last six months in the Secretary-General’s report, in accordance with his mandate;
2. Reaffirms that the status quo is unacceptable, that time is not on the side of a settlement, and that negotiations to unify the island have been at an impasse for too long;
3. Expresses full support for the 8 July process, notes with deep concern the lack of any progress, and calls upon the leaders to accelerate and fully implement the 8 July Agreement, and to continue the process, including the key issues of the 8 July Agreement;
5. Expresses its full support for UNFICYP and decides to extend its mandate for a further period ending 15 June 2008;
6. Calls on both sides to continue 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, and on the United Nations 1989 aide-memoire, with a view to reaching early agreement on outstanding issues;
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. Request the Secretary-General to submit a report on implementation of this resolution by 1 June 2008;
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 Council informed of the situation and to provide information on the position of contributing countries to take appropriate preventive action including the conduct of predeployment awareness training and to keep the Council informed of any action to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel;
10. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

both to move the process forward. Mr. Papadopoulos presented to me a number of proposals concerning the 8 July process and confidence-building measures. He also proposed the establishment of a civil society consultancy body in support of the negotiations process. Mr. Talat presented a set of proposals (see S/2007/572) through discussions with the two leaders and their representatives. Towards that end, the Coordination Committee, comprising the advisers of the two leaders and my Special Representative, convened six more times over the summer, and my Special Representative held numerous bilateral meetings with each side. These meetings were aimed at agreeing on the modalities for the implementation of the agreement between the leaders, including some procedural clarifications outlined in November 2006 also agreed to by the leaders.
5. On 7 July, the Greek Cypriot leader, Tassos Papadopoulos, visited the United Nations, the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, echoed the latter’s longstanding position that the leaders should meet directly.
6. On the occasion of the anniversary of the 8 July agreement, the leaders took the opportunity to highlight the necessary creativity and political courage to move from talks about procedures to real engagement on substantive issues. I urged all parties to show flexibility and political will over the coming months to make measurable progress which will allow fully fledged negotiations to begin;
7. On 5 September, I met with the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in New York. I expressed my disappointment at the fact that the meeting on 5 September of the leaders in New York did not yield any agreement, and expressed my hope that the dialogue between the sides would continue. She reiterated her belief that Mr. Papadopoulos was ready to implement the 8 July agreement.
8. In the light of various proposals made by the two sides, my Special Representative held a number of meetings with both leaders and their advisors to address the concerns of both sides, and encouraged them to flexibly engage, particularly with regard to confidence-building measures. Both sides proposed further openings across the buffer zone, including Ledra Street; a pull-back of military personnel from sensitive areas; a lifting of the ban on all military exercises near the buffer zone. In contrast to these positive signals, however, mutual recriminations continued to be exchanged throughout the reporting
period, undermining trust between the communities.

9. On 18 September, the European Commission published its annual report for 2006-2007 on the implementation of a €259 million aid package for the Turkish Cypriot community. The aim was to reduce the socio-economic disparities between the two communities and is thus an important component of European Union efforts to promote the process of the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. The Commission’s report concluded that the implementation process faced challenges; most notably for the upgrading of Turkish Cypriot property, a low absorption capacity by the Turkish Cypriot administration and the propensity of both communities to block projects for political reasons.

III. Operations of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

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

10. The security situation in the buffer zone remained stable. A total of 365 violations and other incidents were recorded during this period. This represents a decrease of 108 violations compared with the last reporting period. The pattern of violations broadly reflects those reported in the previous period, with no increase in unauthorised repairs or minor enhancements to, and overmanning of, military positions along both ceasefire lines. Minor repairs to posts, including the photography of the opposing side’s positions; the completion of ground orientations by incoming troops at observation posts; the removal of ground forces of each side into the buffer zone; and, most significantly, restrictions on United Nations Movement, at access points to the buffer zone.

11. Incidents reflecting a lack of discipline on the part of junior soldiers posted in observation posts along both ceasefire lines were reported throughout the reporting period and noted in my previous report (S/2007/328), remain of concern. These have included incidents in which troops were found at the opposing side of the buffer zone. The majority of incidents have continued to occur where the opposing forces are in close proximity to one another. In this context, I welcome the proposals made by both sides for the pull-out of military exercises near the buffer zone.

16. Turkish Forces continue to violate the status quo in the area of Karpas, where they are building a wall on their liaison post and have imposed constraints on UNFICYP movement in the area. Those restrictions have extended to nearby villages in the area of Varosha. UNFICYP access to and operations within the uncontrolled area of Varosha remain severely limited by Turkish Forces. The situation in Varosha holds the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo. Restrictions imposed by the Turkish Cypriot side on United Nations movement in certain parts of the Karpas peninsula continue to hamper human rights monitoring operations in this area. Both sides retain observation posts, referred to in my previous reports (S/2006/931, paras. 14 and 15, and S/2007/328, paras. 13 and 14). The Palace Hotel in the buffer zone, which continues to be seen by both sides as an essential, neutral venue for hosting a variety of community meetings and events, continues to lie on an irregular basis by the Turkish Forces in violation of the standing local agreement. UNFICYP continues to call on both sides to come to an agreement on this and to demand the removal of the position.

B. Mine clearance

17. Between January and July 2007, the Mine Action Centre retained a single team in the country and operated at a reduced capacity owing to Mr. Talat’s reservations concerning the European Union funding source for the project. On 13 August 2007, following the pull-back of Turkish Forces from their surveillance camera on their ceasefire line overlooking Ledra Street, UNFICYP, which is still negotiating on this issue with the Turkish Cypriot side, is continuing discussions about this action. UNFICYP continues to vigorously engage with both opposing forces to facilitate the opening of a mine clearance area in the buffer zone in the vicinity of the “safety zone” area of mines and on the clearer marking of the perimeters of minefields.

C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

12. UNFICYP maintained a close working relationship with international partners and local stakeholders, continued to support confidence-building activities aimed at fostering interaction between the two communities across the buffer zone.

19. UNFICYP, in cooperation with international partners and local stakeholders, continued to support confidence-building activities aimed at fostering interaction between the two communities across the buffer zone.

20. During the reporting period, UNFICYP recorded 700,000 persons from both sides crossing through the buffer zone, while goods worth approximately €832,000 (approximately $1,772,000) crossed in the opposite direction. Goods worth approximately €178,000 (approximately $356,000) crossed through the buffer zone, while goods worth approximately €178,000 (approximately $356,000) crossed through the buffer zone.

21. As part of its overall efforts to establish trust among Cypriots, UNFICYP continued discussions aimed at facilitating agreement on the opening of the Ledra Street crossing. In their respective proposals for confidence-building measures addressed to me, Mr. Papadopoulos and Mr. Talat, attached priority to the opening of that crossing point. The proposals also presented the respective approaches of the two leaders to the opening of the Ledra Street crossing.

22. During the reporting period, UNFICYP facilitated 55 bicommunal events in which 2,680 people from both sides participated. These events included sports and cultural activities, as well as visits to the Karpas Peninsula, Larnaca, Limassol and Strovilia, where they have consistently overmanned their liaison post and have imposed constraints on UNFICYP movement in the area. Those restrictions have extended to nearby villages in the area of Varosha. UNFICYP access to and operations within the uncontrolled area of Varosha remain severely limited by Turkish Forces. The situation in Varosha holds the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo. Restrictions imposed by the Turkish Cypriot side on United Nations movement in certain parts of the Karpas peninsula continue to hamper human rights monitoring operations in this area. Both sides retain observation posts, referred to in my previous reports (S/2006/931, paras. 14 and 15, and S/2007/328, paras. 13 and 14). The Palace Hotel in the buffer zone, which continues to be seen by both sides as an essential, neutral venue for hosting a variety of community meetings and events, continues to lie on an irregular basis by the Turkish Forces in violation of the standing local agreement. UNFICYP continues to call on both sides to come to an agreement on this and to demand the removal of the position.

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18. Negotiations between UNFICYP and the Turkish Forces to renew protocol terms for the clearance of the remaining minefield attributed to the Turkish Forces resumed on 22 August 2007. So far, the parties have agreed on a limited area of unknown origin, bringing the area of land released to a total of 415,566 square metres for the period under review. Discount at least the clearance of the remaining minefields of unknown origin.

19. UNFICYP continues to actively engage the Turkish Forces to finalize the protocol agreement. Once that agreement has been reached, the Centre will mobilize three more mine-action teams.

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The Blue Beret

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V. Financial and administrative aspects

37. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/280 of 29 June 2007, appropriated for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 June 2007 to 30 June 2008 the amount of $46.6 million gross ($44.6 million net). In this regard, I would like to report that the financial contribution of one third of the cost of the Force, equivalent to $15.5 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.

38. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNFICYP for a further period of six months, the cost of maintaining the Force would be limited to the amount approved by the General Assembly.

39. As at 31 August 2007, the total outstanding assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP amounted to $22.2 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to $2,479.9 million.

VI. Observations

40. Reimbursement of troop- and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made only for the periods up to 30 September 2006 and 31 July 2006, respectively, owing to the delay in the receipt of assessed contributions.

41. During the previous reporting period, the situation along the ceasefire lines has remained calm and stable. The opposing forces extended their cooperation to UNFICYP and generally refrained from actions that may exacerbate the tensions existing in the buffer zone.

42. Over the last six months, there has been no progress on the implementation of the agreement of 8 July 2006, although both parties continue to publicly support the principles contained therein, namely, that a comprehensive settlement will be based on a bizonal, bicommunal federation and political equality.

43. The broad outline of a solution is well known and has been achieved in the context of the conclusion of the agreement of 8 July 2006, although both parties continue to publicly support the principles contained therein, namely, that a comprehensive settlement will be based on a bizonal, bicommunal federation and political equality.

44. I welcome, however, the various proposals made by both leaders containing confidence-building measures. Their early implementation would greatly contribute to an environment conducive to efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement. In this regard, I am encouraged by the high level of contact between the two sides. The proposals made by the two leaders on the roles that could be played by civil society, including the establishment of a network in the buffer zone, will provide an opportunity for progress and possible new initiatives.

45. It is regrettable that the ongoing debate on the lifting of the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community has not yet led to a debate on recognition. Recognition, or assisting secession, would be contrary to the resolutions of the Security Council. The Security Council should not be allowed to engender greater economic and social parity between the two communities of Cyprus. The current efforts of the Turkish Cypriot community, so that the reunification of the island may occur in an seamless manner as possible, of all organisations to do likewise, with a view to achieving this crucial objective in conformity with Security Council resolutions.

46. I welcome, however, the various proposals made by both leaders containing confidence-building measures. Their early implementation would greatly contribute to an environment conducive to efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement. In this regard, I am encouraged by the high level of contact between the two sides. The proposals made by the two leaders on the roles that could be played by civil society, including the establishment of a network in the buffer zone, will provide an opportunity for progress and possible new initiatives.
UNFICYP Raises Money for AIDS!

In commemoration of World AIDS Day, UNFICYP held an auction and raffle on 14 December to raise funds for local NGO’s supporting HIV/AIDS patients on the island. The two charities chosen – KYFA and Pink House – support patients in the south and north respectively. The auction raised C£1,500 for the support groups.

Military, police and civilian personnel were asked to contribute to the auction and raffle with prizes and services they could offer. This resulted in some interesting ideas and some novel items being offered. Raffle tickets were also sold and with each ticket, a condom was given as part of the awareness campaign for safe sex.

Public Information Officer Anne Bursey served as auctioneer and kept the bidders focused and happy to part with their cash.

One of the more unusual items offered was a toilet roll FM radio and LCD Clock donated by Finance Assistant Anastasia Neocleous. Information Assistant Emma Dottycan was determined to buy it and, after some determined bidding, walked away with it chuckling, obviously thinking of the person she intended to give it to.

One of the services offered by MFR’s Mick Ryan was a session of military physical training for a group. According to Mick, this is apparently all the rage in London at the moment. Bidding on this started at a mere £5 but quickly rose as several female participants started to bid on it. It was finally sold to Christine Iacovou from transport for £23. Now whom she plans to torture with this training session is anyone’s guess.

PA to the Senior Adviser Hala Barber offered her baking skills for four Mondays of home-baked treats with the winner able to choose from a delicious selection of goodies. Finance Assistant Michele Kourea lost no opportunity to secure these treats, but whether she will be willing to share them with her colleagues remains to be seen.

One of the services offered by Dima Abdoul Samad was an original painting by Public Information Officer Anne Bursey for a steal.

Numerous local businesses also supported the event offering vouchers for dinners, car washes and car rental, overnight stays at luxury hotels, treatment sessions from a health centre, a cruise to Egypt and an original Manchester United football shirt.

Tözün Catering sponsored the event with refreshments for all participants.

HIV/AIDS Peer Education Training

UNFICYP HIV/AIDS Focal Point Netha Kreouzos participated in a peer education-training workshop in Ekmler-Lehman from 3-6 December, organised by the UNIFIL HIV Unit. The trip was sponsored by the HIV/AIDS Trust Fund and facilitated by UNIFIL within the framework of the regional cooperation agreement among the missions in the area.

The objective of the training was to equip the focal point with the necessary skills to be able to build capacity and skills for awareness training at UNFICYP. The Ghanaian Battalion hosted the workshop and were joined by their Tanzanian colleagues and the UNFICYP and UNAMA representatives.

The intensive four-day workshop covered the HIV/AIDS epidemic globally and regionally as well as risky behaviour and condom use, HIV/AIDS related stigma and needs of people living with HIV, vulnerable groups and soldiers’ vulnerability and needs related to HIV/AIDS prevention, guidelines, principles, components and ethics in voluntary counselling and testing.

One of the key messages highlighted during the training was that UN policy stipulates that mandatory testing is not UN policy, and that fitness to serve is what defines whether a person can carry out their duties. It also stressed the importance of living positively with HIV and not discriminating against colleagues who may have the virus.

The UNFICYP’s target for the New Year is to establish voluntary confidential counselling and testing (VCCCT) in each mission. This requires training counsellors drawn from the ranks of civilian, military and police pillars.

SG’s Message on World AIDS Day – 1 December 2007

The theme of this World AIDS Day is leadership. Without it, we will never get ahead of the epidemic.

AIDS is a disease unlike any other. It is a social issue, a human rights issue, an economic issue. It targets young adults just as they should be contributing to economic development, intellectual growth, and bringing up young children. It is taking a disproportionate toll on women. It has made millions of children orphans. It does to society what HIV does to the human body – reduces resilience and weakens capacity, hampers development and threatens stability.

This does not need to happen. We have the means to prevent young adults from becoming infected. We have the means to treat those who are infected. We have the means to care and support.

We have made tangible and remarkable progress on all these fronts. But we must do more. Although new data shows that global HIV prevalence has levelled off, the numbers are still staggering. It is our crucial mission to ensure that everyone can access HIV prevention, treatment, care and support – wherever they live, whatever they do. That includes those who live on the margins of society – migrants, sex workers, injecting drug users, and men who have sex with men. And it includes those who function in the mainstream – in Government, banks, legal offices, schools, and general organisations.

In reaching all those groups, overcoming stigma remains one of our biggest challenges. It is still the single biggest barrier to public action on AIDS. It is one of the reasons why the epidemic continues to wreak its devastation around the world.

Today, I call for renewed leadership in eradicating stigma associated with HIV, which advocates tirelessly for the rights of the HIV-positive, who educate others about AIDS. I call for leadership among Governments in fully understanding the epidemic, so that resources go where they are most needed. And I call for leadership at all levels to step up the work to scale up towards universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010 – as pledged by all Governments last year. We have only two years left until that date. We need to show leadership now.

As Secretary General, I am determined to lead the United Nations family in this endeavour – to ensure that we prioritize action on AIDS, to encourage Member States to keep the issue high on national and international agendas, and to work to make the UN a model of how the workplace should respond to AIDS.

Whatever our role in life, wherever we may live, in some way or another, we all live with HIV. We are all affected by it. We all need to take responsibility for the response. On this World AIDS Day, let us show the leadership required to live up to that responsibility.
First ever intercommunal children’s sports event

On 13 December, the Chief of Mission hosted a reception for UNFICYP Staff Christmas. UNFICYP is facilitating the submission of a number of these projects to the EU’s Task Force for the Turkish Cypriot community for consideration for funding. Sally Anne Corcoran, Political Officer

Intercommunal Basketball in Pyla

At the request of both the Primary School Principals and the Heads of the Parent/Teacher Associations in Pyla, UNFICYP facilitated the first ever intercommunal basketball match on 6 December. This mixed sporting event, prior to the school’s closure for the winter break, was intended as the kick-off for closer bi-communal cooperation in that village.

The activities began last year, with Santa and helper’s arrival via UN helicopter. All the children were thrilled to receive bags of holiday sweets from the “man in red”. Then, as the games were about to begin, mother nature had other ideas and all present were pelted with rain! However, no one’s enthusiasm was dampened as all beat a hasty retreat for cover and typical holiday delicacies which had been supplied by all the parents of Pyla.

The sun reappeared shortly and the children returned to the playing field for mixed football and basketball matches. Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots were well represented, not only by the children but by prominent figures in both communities, who congratulated UNFICYP on facilitating the organisation of the day. Future plans include the establishment of a mixed basketball team in Pyla to participate in an island-wide league of mixed teams. This activity is being organised by the Peaceplayers International NGO with the support of UNFICYP.

In addition, the two sides have submitted their agendas for both short- and long-term bi-communal cooperation. UNFICYP is facilitating the submission of a number of these projects to the EU’s Task Force for the Turkish Cypriot community for consideration for funding.

UNFICYP during the Festive Season

During December, colleagues in UNFICYP participated in a number of festive events.

On 12 December, the annual UNFICYP Christmas Carol Service took place in St. Columba’s Church. As customary, all contingents – Argentinian, British, Hungarian and Slovakian – participated in the event, and offered traditional national delicacies afterwards.

On 13 December, the Chief of Mission hosted a reception in the newly renovated HQ lobby for all staff. SRSG Møller toasted all present and thanked them for their hard work throughout the year.

Administration organised a lunch in the International Cafeteria on 19 December. Yet again, Manager Michael Charalambus took charge of the festive delicacies and produced an impressive spread. The CAO thanked all staff for their contributions during 2008, and wished all a happy New Year.

Fire Protection – You Can Prevent It

Fire protection is the prevention and reduction of hazards associated with fires. No one wants to think about having a fire at home or in the office. But thinking about it and being ready for it can, and does, save lives.

When a fire starts, it can grow and spread very fast. The best way to be safe from fire is to stop it from happening. Nearly all fires can be prevented.

1. Gas heaters are NOT to be used within sleeping accommodation.
2. When using a gas heater, make sure that it is checked/serviced by Engineering workshops, and that the area is well ventilated.
3. Empty or full gas cylinders must not be stored within a building – only in designated areas/stores. The only gas cylinder that can be inside a building is the one in use in your gas heater.
4. Never dry clothes near or over a heater.
5. Never move a heater when it is switched on.
6. Keep heaters at least 1.5 metres away from any combustible materials.
7. Never use electric heaters with bars or rods/elements on a carpeted floor.
8. All electric heaters are to be installed only by the Engineering Section workshop electricians.
9. Don’t overload your electrical sockets. Extension leads should not be on the floor: secure them along the wall.
11. Never use a two-pin unearthed plug in a three-pin socket – always use an adapter.
12. All electric appliances and fixtures should be checked monthly.
13. Seek advice from the Engineering Section of Sector engineers on the capacity of your electrical network (how many electrical items can be used in the area).

Drinking and Driving is a Criminal Offence

Members of UNFICYP are to be seen as an example to the population on the island. Drinking and driving is a criminal offence which will not be tolerated within the mission.

Remember that those convicted of drink driving:
• Will have a criminal record;
• Will have administrative action taken against them resulting in career implications and the potential of being employed again or not;
• Could experience a lifestyle change;
• Will have a huge increase in insurance;
• Will have difficulty hiring a car for the next 10 years;
• Will be judged by their peers.

Those planning to drink should not risk driving or be tempted to get into a car with anyone else who has been drinking. They should either:
• Book a taxi;
• Use public transport;
• Stay overnight;
• Arrange for someone who is not drinking to drive.

Commanders at all levels have a responsibility and a duty of care to ensure that those under their command do not drink and drive. The anti-drink driving campaign is to feature in training programmes. Organisers of events where alcohol will be available are to ensure that those attending are aware of the dangers of drink driving and are to ensure that either strict government of the provision of alcohol to drivers will be applied or that alternate transport arrangements are to be made available.

Personnel who drink and drive in Cyprus will be caught.

Call confidentially on 2261 4666 to stop a crime.

NOTE: In case of a fire, never move equipment involved unless it is vital for safety reasons. Always wait for the investigation to be completed.
New Faces

This is the first time that a woman holds a MLO post in Sector 1. Back in Argentina, Capt. Franco works as a nurse in a Military Unit.

All took part in a 10-day induction course, which consisted of several presentations on different topics and ended with a final field exercise. Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni presented diplomas to all MLOs.

José Luis Diaz, a native of the Dominican Republic, became UNFICYP spokesperson on 6 December. José comes to Cyprus from Geneva, Switzerland, where he served as spokesperson for United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour and her Office. He has also worked in Cambodia and South Africa. Part of United Nations peacekeeping and electoral operations. Among other public information activities in the United Nations, he worked as spokesperson of an investigative team established by the Secretary-General in 1997 to look into allegations of massive human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He joined the media operation of the UN human rights office in 1998, working since then with former High Commissioners Mary Robinson and the late Sergio Vieira de Mello, as well as with the present United Nations human rights chief.

Before joining the United Nations as information officer in Geneva in 1990, José was a journalist in the United States. José has two daughters, Mathilda, eight, and Vassia, four months. He enjoys jogging, and has given assurances to his partner Katia that he will try to resume playing squash soon.

Sports

Four-Day Challenge

The annual Cyprus Four-Day Challenge took place this year between 29 November and 2 December.

It is a four-day race run over various distances on varying terrains, mostly rocky trails and steep hills in the Akamas peninsular near Paphos.

The MFR entered a team with four of their finest runners, Lt. Barney Meehan, WO2 (SSM) Mick Ryan, Sgt. Steve Lloyd and Cpl. “Rixy” Rix, equipped with enough flapjacks to last for the rest of the tour! We arrived in Paphos around lunchtime, and, as the first race was not due to start until 3.00 p.m. from the Coral Beach Hotel, we had time to sort out all our pre-event admin.

We all made our way over to the start line (with some of us feeling better than others) and found approximately 230 participants from all over Europe. There were many lycra-clad athletes conducting some unnatural stretching routines, however some were very pleasing to the eye…

The first race was a 6 km time trial which started from the Coral Beach Hotel and ended at the Sea Caves. The runners started at 10-second intervals and the first race was relatively easy, as long as you didn’t start too fast. I was very surprised at the number of people walking around the 4 km mark; they probably ate pizza for lunch!

All team members finished the 6 km time trial with respectable times and, after a short bus ride back to the hotel, it was down to the steam room and jacuzzi for a body management session. After a brandy sour and the most expensive meze ever, it was time for an early night, ready for the next day’s activities.

Next day, we faced the 11 km hill race. I think that everybody was worrying about this in their own way, since if we’re all honest, nobody wants to run uphill for 11 km!

The race started at 9.30 a.m., and ran along a length of 11 km, starting at sea level and rising to 800 m. The first 3 km was on a relatively flat track going along the coast with some wonderful views – it would have been nice to go back and enjoy them. Then, after a sharp turn right, the fun really started – hill followed by hill for the rest of the race. The worst hill for me was between 5km and 6km, as it was 1000m of hill with no let up, tabbing was the only option.

Day three arrived and a half marathon was awaiting us. During all the pre-race banter, we had been warned about the long, flat, 3 km finish. What we were not told about was that the first 3 km was uphill, so it was punishing on the legs after the previous day. There were 11 km of hills up to a height of 600 m, then 7 km downhill, so the finish line was a welcome sight.

The fastest time for our team was 1 hr 46 mins, which was quite respectable considering the 21 km run was over undulating terrain on dirt tracks. This was very hard on the legs and feet, but it was all over and just a story by 11.30 a.m.

Sunday, the last day of the Challenge, was a 10 km run in the city of Paphos and was open to all runners. At 8.00 a.m., 500 tired legs crossed the start line, wondering if four days out of work was worth all this effort! Once over the finish line, we collected our medals, then made our way back to the hotel to feast on a fine, full, English breakfast and talk about a job well done.

Visitors

UNFICYP extended the usual courtesies when the Chief of Mission, Force Commander and Senior Adviser received the following visitors during this month:

10 December: Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Sergey Lavrov (above centre, with SA Wiolek Cibor [left] and FC Maj. Gen. José Bari) [right]

12 December: Hungarian State Secretary of MoD, Dr. Ágnes Vadas (above seen [centre] together with her delegation)

13 December: Ambassador of Spain, Mr. Juan José Urtasun Erro (above left, with SRSG Moller)

15 December: General Officer Commanding 2nd Division, Maj. Gen. D. McDowell (above right)
UNFICYP Raises Money for AIDS