

The Blue Beret



Secretary-General visits
to boost peace efforts

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Editorial

Spring is already much in evidence in Cyprus, especially in the largely untouched area the buffer zone occupies. The still-crisp morning air is thick with the fragrance of blossoming trees and shrubs, and lush greens and yellows enliven the landscape. The sense of renewal that comes with the season also extends to other spheres.

In UNFICYP, for example, we are in the middle of rotation – new soldiers from Argentina, the United Kingdom, Slovakia, Hungary and a handful of other countries – are arriving to take over for their comrades.

Meanwhile, the re-launched peace process the UN has been facilitating for the last 18 months has just received another boost with the impending beginning of work to open another crossing point, specifically the opening of Limnitis/Yesilirmak on the northwest of the island.

The Limnitis/Yesilirmak crossing point has been a long time in coming: the leaders formally agreed to its opening in June 2009, and the project was

discussed during a fair amount of time before that.

On 24 March, a contract to build the road that will allow civilian traffic to flow again in that part of Cyprus was finally signed. Chief of Mission Tayé -Brook Zerihoun welcomed the development, calling it "further tangible evidence that when there is a will, even what seem to be the most intractable problems can be solved".

The Chief of Mission was in essence echoing what the Secretary-General said earlier this year during his visit to Cyprus, which we cover in this issue.

Ban Ki-moon put it very simply when he said he was under no illusions that the Cyprus problem was easy to solve. But he added he was confident that "a solution is possible and within reach".

That sentiment is sure to be on the minds of many of those who will witness the ceremony on 29 March marking the beginning of work at Limnitis/Yesilirmak, on what promises to be a beautiful spring day in Cyprus.



Preparatory work at Limnitis

Road safety campaign with Highgate multinational school



UNFICYP's Force Military Police Unit (FMPU) helps keep the roads safe within the UNPA, but it also shares its expertise with the wider community. A case in point is the unit's work on road safety with Highgate Primary School in Nicosia. The multi-national school is attended by Greek and Turkish Cypriot children as well as children of families from the UN.

Members of the FMPU were invited on 24 February to give the children and teachers a presentation on various road safety issues, including the dangers associated with driving whilst using a mobile phone, speeding, seat belts and being aware when driving through populated areas.

The children were then asked to participate in an art competition, based on the various themes of road safety discussed in the presentation.

The campaign was met with great enthusiasm by the school. Deputy head teacher Susan Connolly arranged for the children to produce the pictures prior to their midterm break. On 23 February 2010 a small judging panel, consisting of the FPM, Maj Russell Foulcer, the FMPU CSM, WO2 Alasdair MacDonald,

Susan Connolly, and Highgate teachers Mary Satsias and Patricia Stephanou chose the competition winners.

The pictures were excellent – even the ones with traces of chocolate on them -- and demonstrated that the essence of the message given at the earlier presentation by the FMPU had been understood.

The five winning budding artists received prizes in the form of vouchers for a local educational store and the promise that they would be invited to see their paintings on the UNPA, once they have been transferred to road signs and placed in situ. It is proposed that the signs be erected in areas that are frequented by some of the children from the school and their families through the summer, such as the football pitches, swimming pool, ERMES road and the married quarters area.

The FMPU look forward to continuing its work with Highgate and hope that cycling proficiency classes can be run on the UNPA over the summer break to further promote road awareness and safety amongst the pupils.

Runner Up
Michael Christou
(Year 1)



Runner Up
Laura Geraghty
(Year 6)



Runner Up
Tamsin Alderson
(Year 6)



1st Place



Sila Tokar
(Year 4)

2nd Place



Liza Osanai
(Year 6)

UNPOL's very own hero

The work of UNFICYP's police unit, UNPOL, consists primarily of maintaining and restoring law and order in the buffer zone and supporting the military and civil affairs branches.

It does not traditionally include life-saving rescues, a detail that happily did not prevent Italian UNPOL officer Domenico Pastore from acting heroically last summer.

On 4 July 2009 Pastore was enjoying off-duty time with his family at Pyla beach. He suddenly noticed a woman and a man struggling to swim in deep water off shore. The man seemed to be in particular difficulty.

Without hesitating Pastore swam out to rescue the couple. The woman was able to swim to shore when Officer Pastore reached them, but the man was struggling to stay above the water. Pastore grabbed the drowning man by the arm but was pulled under for a time by the man who at this time was semi-conscious.

With great effort and risk to his own life Pastore succeeded in bringing the drowning man to a point where he could touch bottom; a life guard then came to assist.

The small crowd that had gathered on the beach by that time congratulated the UNPOL Officer for his bravery. The man who was rescued identified himself as Marios, a 35-year-old Cypriot. He and his family thanked Officer Pastore for saving his life.

Pastore is from Italy and is on a one year tour of duty with UNFICYP. He is presently attached to SCAT at the United Nations Police Station in Pyla.



World Water Day: Clean water for a healthy world

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon challenged world leaders to ensure that all people have access to safe drinking water, saying more people die from unsafe water than from all forms of violence, including war.

"Clean water has become scarce and will become even scarcer with the onset of climate change," the Secretary-General warned in a message on World Water Day, 22 March 2010.

The theme of this year's World Water Day, "Clean Water for a Healthy World", emphasizes that both the quality and the quantity of water resources are at risk.

"More people die from unsafe water than from all forms of violence, including war. These deaths are an affront to our common humanity, and undermine the efforts of many countries to achieve their development potential," the Secretary-General said.

Every day, millions of tons of untreated sewage and industrial and agricultural waste are poured into the world's water systems, and it is the poor who "continue to suffer first and most from pol-

lution, water shortages and the lack of adequate sanitation," he said.

A report by the U.N. Environment Programme estimates 2 billion tons of waste water discharged daily into the world's water systems spreading disease and damaging ecosystems.

At least 1.8 million children under the age of five die every year from water-related diseases, or one every 20 seconds, the report said, and over half the world's hospital beds are occupied with people suffering from illnesses linked to contaminated water.

The Secretary-General described the deaths as "an affront to our common humanity."

World leaders have the "know-how to solve these challenges and become better stewards of our water resources," Ban said, and he challenged them to act ahead of a high-level General Assembly meeting in September to assess progress toward meeting the U.N. Millennium Development Goals to reduce global poverty by the target date of 2015.

UNFICYP marks International Women's Day



UNFICYP staff marked International Women's Day 2010 with a reminder that the significant progress made cannot obscure the obstacles women still face in realizing their rights and full potential.

During the commemoration, -Chief of Mission Tayé-Brook Zerihoun read out the Secretary-General's message on the occasion, stressing that the fight for women's rights is central to the UN's global mission.

The Secretary-General pointed out that fifteen years ago, in Beijing, Governments committed themselves to equality, development and peace

for all women, in all countries. The Beijing Declaration was a landmark on the road to women's empowerment, he said but "much work remains" to be done.

"Death in childbirth is still too common. Too few women have access to family planning. Violence against women remains a cause of global shame, and sexual violence in war is endemic," the Secretary-General said.

Referring to the United Nations itself, the Secretary-General said, "We have more women in senior posts than at any time in history."

In conclusion the Secretary-General said, "Securing women's rights is central to all our hopes for peace,

security and sustainable development."

UNFICYP Focal Points for Women, Renalyn Natural and Athena Georgiou, who organized the event, recalled that on 8 March across continents and countries, men and women of different cultures, religions and histories come together to demonstrate solidarity.

Referring to her life as a peacekeeper, Renalyn, who has also served in East Timor and Sudan, said she arrived in UNFICYP as she was expecting her second child and with a toddler in hand. Many thought that as a woman, she would break but her resolve and belief in family kept her strong, and able to contribute effectively as a peacekeeper.

"Women often have to make difficult choices", she said. "Sometimes these are choices that men do not have to make. Yet we make them because we must," she said adding that women's fight for equality and respect is not only part of history. "We have to realize that history is being written every minute and every single day," she said.

As Focal Point for Women, Renalyn said she and Athena aim to support UNFICYP in reaching gender targets and ensuring a gender-sensitive environment is maintained.

As part of the day's events staff enjoyed an interactive demonstration of self-defence from the Pilavakis Taekwondo School and a brief introduction to yoga, massage and meditation led by Daniel Dimitrova.

The day's events ended with a session of "laughter yoga", a combination of laughter exercises with yoga breathing intended to bring in more oxygen to the body and brain, "making one feel more energetic and healthy", according to instructor Elina Papa. Home baked cakes and raffle tickets were also sold with the proceeds donated to Cypriot charities supporting women.



Members of the Pilavakis Taekwondo School give an interactive demonstration of self-defence



Instructor Elina Papa leads staff in a session of laughter yoga.



Staff participate in yoga relaxation exercises with instructor Daniel Dimitrova.



Focal Point for Women Renalyn Natural pins a white ribbon on the Force Commander



The White Ribbon Campaign (WRC) is the largest global effort to end violence against women. In over fifty-five countries, campaigns are led by both men and women who wear the white ribbon as a personal pledge to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls. Wearing a white ribbon is a way of saying, "Our future has no violence against women."

Senior Police Adviser honours UNPOL women



Chief Superintendent John Farrelly hosted all his female UN Police Staff for breakfast at the UNPA International Cafeteria, on International Women's Day, 8th March. The ladies came in from HQ and the outlying UNPOL Stations across the island and enjoyed a great start to the day. As the photo shows, the Senior Police Adviser was in his element, surrounded by such a cheerful and appreciative bevy of lovely ladies!



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited Cyprus from 31 January to 2 February to show his support for the leaders' reunification efforts.

The Secretary-General met with Demetris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat individually and jointly on 1 February.

He also held discussions with his Special Adviser Alexander Downer and addressed the UN team in the country.

UNFICYP staff had the opportunity to see the Secretary-General at a Town Hall meeting where he spoke about developments within the Organization and his plans for the improvement of working conditions for all staff. During the visit, the Secretary-General and his wife were conducted on a walking tour of the Green Line section of the buffer zone.

The visit, Mr Ban's first to Cyprus, was the sixth by

Secretary-General visit' s to boost peace process

a Secretary-General, following Kurt Waldheim in 1972, 1973, 1974 and Kofi Annan in May 2002 and February 2003.

On arrival in Cyprus the Secretary-General said his visit was a reflection of the importance he attached to the current efforts of the Cyprus leaders.

He said that: "For over 45 years, the United Nations has been in Cyprus helping to keep the peace and contributing to the efforts to bring about normal conditions on the island. Therefore he said he was under no illusions that the Cyprus problem is easy to solve, or about the difficulties that had to be faced."

At the same time, however, he said he was "confident that a solution is possible and within reach."

"I am impressed by the enormous personal commitment shown by both leaders over the past 16 months. They have invested great time and energy in this peace process. I am pleased by the significant progress that has been achieved recently on governance and power-sharing. The leadership that their Excellencies Christofias and Talat have demonstrated at this key moment is to be commended."

The secretary-General said he was in Cyprus to encourage the two leaders to bring these talks to a successful conclusion. "Reaching a mutually acceptable solution will require courage, flexibility and vision, as well as a spirit of compromise," he said.

The Secretary-General stressed that the talks process belongs to Cyprus. "The United Nations is here at the invitation of both sides to assist. Your destiny is in your hands. You have taken responsibility for finding a solution. You are the ones driving the process and the ones who will benefit from the tremendous benefits and

opportunities a settlement would bring to this island."

He noted that the expectations of the international community are very high and the importance of a solution not only to Cyprus but the wider region and the world should not be underestimated. "Solving the Cyprus problem will give inspiration to all those around the world trying to solve other seemingly intractable conflicts," he said. Following a visit to the Ledra-Lokmaci Street crossing, the Secretary-General had the opportunity to meet the two leaders separately and jointly.

During a press conference with the two leaders the Secretary-General paid tribute to the two leaders for "their strong commitment and resolve." He said he had come to Cyprus to show his personal support to the Cypriot-led and -owned process to reunify the island. "I wanted to be here now because I recognize how important it is to continue to build momentum on what the leaders have achieved up to now," the Secretary-General said.

He pointed out that his visit had been "productive and constructive", adding that the world is watching.

"Today the world is seeing two leaders who are rising to the challenge."

"Cyprus needs commitment, vision, and flexibility," and that he had seen that with the two leaders striving to forge a better future for the people", he said.

"I am encouraged that the two leaders personally assured me of their shared commitment to a comprehensive solution as early as possible. We will need even more courage and determination in the period ahead to bring these talks to a successful conclusion. No one is under the illusion that any of this is easy. Peace negotiations never are. But the time is ripe to push ahead. I am convinced that these two leaders can achieve a mutually beneficial solution. For decades, the world has heard about the Cyprus problem. Now is the time for the Cyprus solution."

The Secretary-General said the United Nations will continue to provide all the support it can but noted that this is a process that is by the people of Cyprus, and for the people of Cyprus. "I carry the world's support for Cyprus in my heart. But the future of Cyprus is in your hands," he said.



The Secretary-General in a meeting with the UN Country Team in Cyprus



The Secretary-General addresses staff at a town hall meeting



The Force Commander guides the Secretary-General on a tour of the Green Line.



The Secretary-General with the Chief of Mission view a map of the Nicosia buffer zone.



The Secretary-General at a meeting with Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat.



The Secretary-General at a meeting with Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias.



Mrs Ban with the Cyprus leaders wives, Elsi Christofias (centre) and Oya Talat.



The Secretary-General flanked by members of the Committee on Missing Persons Gulden Plumer Kucuk (left) and Elias Georgiades.

UN PHOTO/Debebe

UN PHOTO/Debebe

Secretary-General's visit (continued)

The Secretary-General read out a joint statement on behalf of the two leaders which read as follows: "We, as the two leaders, express our gratitude for the visit of the United Nations Secretary General to Cyprus, which demonstrates the continued interest of the United Nations and the international community for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem under the Secretary General's Good Offices Mission."

Taking this opportunity, we express our appreciation to the Secretary General for his Good Offices Mission as approved by the Security Council and for the efforts aimed at finding a mutually agreed solution.

Working groups comprising Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriot have devoted time and effort to thoroughly discuss all aspects of the Cyprus problem. We ourselves, together with our Advisors and our teams, have been working diligently for more than a year on all Chapters of the Cyprus problem. We have worked on the basis of the integrated whole approach that is "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed".

Good convergence has already been achieved in some Chapters. For the rest, we are determined to work hard to achieve the desired progress.

Over the last three weeks we have worked hard during our intensified negotiations, mainly on the Chapter of Governance and Power Sharing and achieved important progress.

We express our strong commitment to continue to work on this and the rest of the Chapters. We express our confidence that with good will and determination, we can achieve a solution in the shortest possible time. It is our common conviction that the Cyprus problem has remained unresolved for too

long. We are also aware that time is not on the side of settlement. There is an important opportunity now to find a solution to the Cyprus problem which would take into full consideration the legitimate rights and concerns of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. We are aware that such a settlement is in the interest of all and that it will finally bring peace, stability and prosperity to our common home Cyprus."



During his visit the Secretary-General attended the inauguration ceremony for the Ledra-Lokmaci Street stabilization work. The Secretary-General said he was pleased that after a long interval following the opening of the crossing, work on the façade of the buildings could now continue.

"I look forward to the day when the whole area will be opened and restored so that inhabitants of Nicosia can again enjoy this area as a busy centre

of daily life", he said. "This crossing has become the symbol of the two leaders to heal divisions and to work together towards a common future".

"My personal reflection as a citizen of Korea, I am coming from a country where it is still divided between the south and north, I have seen for myself the very sad reality, the emptiness and destructions and such very painful feelings I share with the people of Cyprus".



The Secretary-General and the representatives of the Cyprus leaders at the launch of the Ledra Street stabilization works.

UN family honours Haiti victims

The UN family in Cyprus held a memorial service on 11 February 2010 in honour of colleagues who died in the devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on 12 January. Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Chief of Mission Tayé-Brook Zerihoun told the service: "It is hard to describe the suffering inflicted by the earthquake in less than 60 seconds. Numbers lose meaning: some 230,000 lives lost, over 300,000 injured and an estimated 1.5 million others internally displaced, with more than half of them in need of emergency assistance. The real damage – physical and psychological – and its after effects are yet to be understood and assessed. "We, the United Nations are joined in grief with the people of Haiti. We too mourn a great and unprecedented loss, the greatest single tragedy in the history of our Organization." A total of 101 UN person-

Zerihoun noted that it is often easier to accept and live with the consequences of such disasters than to understand and rationalize why they happened to such devastating end. He said he too had friends and colleagues among the UN staff that perished in the earthquake. "A few were close colleagues, incredibly dedicated and talented individuals with whom I had worked closely for two or three decades. I may be resigned to their loss, but I remain troubled by the terrible coincidence of the tragedy and, despite my best efforts, will feel the void for some time to come." "As colleagues, the best tribute we can pay to them

and their memory is to rededicate ourselves to the very best ideals and principles of the United Nations and to the many noble causes it has embarked upon in Haiti and elsewhere in the world."

Special Adviser of the Secretary-General Alexander Downer also addressed the ceremony, pointing out that the United Nations is built on great ideals. "[A]nd while sometimes it may not succeed in living up to those ideals, so many people who come to work for the United Nations do so because they believe in those ideals", he said.

"The ideals of humanity, of caring for humanity, of assisting humanity of reaching out to people in need and that's what those people working for the United Nations in Haiti were doing," Downer continued.

Downer said that what is important to remember is, "that for those who died and those who were injured, they were there for the greatest of ideals and to care for the people of Haiti and to assist those people to build a better life. Let us remember that those people, who did die, suffered in the cause of helping others. They did not suffer; they did not die in vain.

The names of the UN personnel who died in the earthquake were read out by Zerihoun, the Chairperson of National Staff Union Ersin Öztoycan, the Chairperson of the Field Staff Union Thomas Grasberger, and military and UNPOL representatives.

The Special Representative, the Special Adviser the Force Commander, the Senior Police Adviser and the officer in charge of Mission Support also laid a wreath in memory of the victims.



Funds raised for Haiti effort

As we watched the terrible scenes unfold following the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti, we wanted to do something significant to help but felt powerless. But one day, over a cup of coffee, a number of us came up with an idea that would enable UNFICYP to make its own contribution: a 24 hour rowing, cycling and running charity event for Haiti.

The target was to cover 649 kms – the length of the Cyprus coastline -- in 24 hours from noon on 11 February to noon on 12 February 2010 at St. Michaels Gym, UNPA.

With posters put up calling for participants, sponsorship money and volunteers the preparations were underway. The response was immediate: there was no shortage of help from all sections of UNFICYP.

Colleagues were willing to help provide everything needed to run a successful event, not least the two rowing machines, two treadmills and two cycles central to the whole occasion. Volunteers came forward to keep the event going for 24 hours and the time slots started to fill up. Everything was ready to go when the first eager athletes arrived. Cue the music and let the race begin!

The main organiser, WO2 Dusty Coleman, and Garda Gary Martin monitored the smooth running of the event throughout the 24 hours; they also found time to run and cycle. Enthusiastic participants worked the machines continuously, with most people covering longer distances than they had originally set out to achieve.

Mel Anderson and Christine Iacovou ran the refreshment table throughout the event, offering hot and cold drinks, chocolate, crisps, energy drinks and freshly baked cakes and sandwiches that people had contributed in exchange for donations, raising €558.27 over the two days.

By 8 the first evening, it was with disbelief that we realised we had already reached our original goal; the target was therefore doubled to 1,298 kms. During the long night people arrived to add their distances while watching films on the big screen.

The highlights only served to increase the fantastic atmosphere with extraordinary performances from people like Max Dyck who arrived at the gym at 11pm and left at 4am having covered 83 kms on all three machines; Phil Spense brought his own bike, set it up on a stand and covered 62 kms in total. Donna Bramham ran on the



treadmill and raised €620. Children came to the gym after school and eagerly took turns on the treadmill; 'Team Supply' ran for Haiti in their team shirts and multicoloured wigs.

Soldiers from Sector 1 and Sector 4 arrived in minibuses from their camps to take part and add their sponsorship money. Unexpected donations continued to pour in over the 24 hours; €100 from one source, €300 from another and €500 collected during the recent UNPOL mugout.

People arrived to support the last hour after a message was sent out to 'Dance for Half an Hour for Haiti' and taken up by belly dancers and closet disco dancers raising over €130. Members of the senior management took their turn on the machines with the Chief of Mission and the Force Commander the last two over the finish line.

The final distance covered was an incredible 1,369 kms, more than double the original target.

Following the event, Chief of Mission Taye Brooke Zerihoun signed the cheque for €5,606.05 to be paid into the UN's Central Emergency Relief Response Fund Haiti

By Christine Iacovou



WO2 Dusty Coleman and Garda Gary Martin



UNFICYP Medal Parades

Three medal parades were held in the last two months to pay tribute to the peacekeepers from all sectors and contingents who had served in Cyprus over the previous six months. The 2010 Winter Medal Parade, the largest of the three, was held on 28 January in the area of old Nicosia airport. The Mobile Force Reserve peacekeepers were decorated at a second parade, held on 25 February, in the UN Flight hangar. It was the first time in the history of the MFR where all 96 peacekeepers from Argentina, Hungary, Slovakia and the United Kingdom were decorated with UN medals collectively. The Force Commander in-

spected the parade and presented the peacekeepers their medals together with Chief of Staff Col. Gerard Hughes and Chief Operations Officer Lt. Col. Ricardo Daniel Beldi.

Sector 1 (west of Nicosia) held its medal parade on 23 February in San Martin camp. On that occasion soldiers from the Argentinean contingent – and associated peacekeepers from Brazil, Chile and Paraguay – received their medals.

Post-medal celebrations followed with the three sectors putting on traditional food and drinks from their home countries.



Zerihoun: Despite calm, troubling facts of island's history cannot be ignored

Special Representative of the Secretary General and Chief of Mission Tayé-Brook Zerihoun addressed the UNFICYP Winter medal parade on 28 January 2010, saying that although there is relative calm and stability in Cyprus, the troubling facts of the island's history cannot be ignored "The island is prosperous, with scenic landscapes and friendly people. It is easy enough to feel a sense of security here, to avert one's eyes from the obvious and enduring division. The reality, however, will not allow us to look away from the troubling facts of the island's history, or from the still open wounds inherited from the not so distant and tragic past."

Zerihoun stressed that Cyprus is at a historic crossroads where the leaders of Cyprus have an unprecedented opportunity today to embark on a path of reunification and healing that should unlock the tremendous energy, ingenuity and potential of Greek and Turkish Cypriots towards a more stable, prosperous and bright future together.

"The weight of history is great", he said. "We must not underestimate how the suffering and animosities that marked previous generations have shaped attitudes and behavior today. But that record ought not to be allowed to continue to compromise the future."

The Chief of Mission stressed that the United Nations will be steadfast in its support and assistance to the leaders and their communities as they work to bridge the distance between them. "Ours is a supporting role, not a starring one, and we shall play

it as long as there is an evident will to close the division between the two communities that would otherwise threaten to grow wider over time," he said.

Referring to the peacekeepers receiving medals, Zerihoun said they play a "pivotal role in the overall United Nations support and facilitation of the talks between Greek and Turkish Cypriots".

"The work of our peacekeepers improves the environment in which negotiations can take place: broadly by contributing to stability; and specifically by ensuring that all practical arrangements – from security to logistics to facilitating media coverage – are made with the utmost of professionalism."

Awarding them the United Nations Peacekeeping Medal in the name of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Zerihoun said: "They have worked hard to earn it and I commend them for a job well done."



Rotations

Hand-over ceremonies were held in Sector 1 and Sector 4 as the troops who had completed their six-month tours of duty rotated out and were replaced by newly-arrived troops.

In Sector 4 the last line-up of the Slovak, Hungarian and Croatian troops rotating out was held on 15 March under current Commanding Officer Lt Col Ľubomír Kochanský. The Commanding Officer presented the outgoing peacekeepers with a commemorative plaque of their tour of duty in Cyprus, while individual contingent commanders gave them personal gifts. In Sector 1 the exchange of duties between the Argentinean Task Force (ATF) 34 and ATF 35 took place

on 12 March. Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Maria Michel appointed the new officer-in-charge of the national flag and his escort.

The present Task Force is drawn from the Argentinean Army, Navy and Air Force and includes personnel from Chile, Paraguay and Brazil.

The incoming personnel were divided between San Martin and Roca Camps. This was followed by a military parade after which the outgoing and incoming peacekeepers had the opportunity to enjoy a traditional Argentinean meal of "empanadas", "cazuela de pollo" and Argentinean wine.



"Good neighbourly relations and understanding" award for Sector 4

The Slovak and Hungarian contingents of UNFICYP were presented with the award for "Good neighbourly relations and understanding," by the Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Balázs and his Slovak counterpart Miroslav Lajčák on 2 March 2010.

The award, established and presented jointly by the two Foreign Ministers, is to acknowledge the merits of a Hungarian and Slovak individual or organisation that has made a considerable contribution towards the development of Hungarian-Slovak relations, as well as to strengthen mutual understanding and respect between the two nations.

This year the Foreign Ministers presented the award to the Slovak Mountain Rescue Service and the UNFICYP Hungarian-Slovak joint military contingent, with the conviction that the award

will be in good hands and will properly represent mutual understanding between the two nations. In 2001 Slovakia took over the lead nation role and command in the joint UNFICYP sector. A Memorandum of Understanding and a technical supplement regulate the implementation of tasks in the joint unit. Cooperation between the two contingents is exemplary and contributes to peacekeeping and the hoped-for reunification of the island.

"One point of connection between the awardees is a deep, sincere and committed respect of human values – not without sacrifice – in order to protect peace and preserve human life" the two Foreign Ministers stressed. "All these merits are worthy not only of acknowledgement but of recognition for providing a bond between our countries and citizens".

New Faces

Force Signal Officer



Capitan de Fragata (Lt. Col) Marcelo Paredes joined UNFICYP in February taking up the post of Force Signal Officer. He was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on March 1965 and studied in Euskal - Echea Institute for 13 years. He joined the Navy in 1984 and graduated on board tall ship "Libertad" in 1989. He completed the Signal Officer Course in 1991 and became a Navy Diver in 1992. In 2006 he was in the Naval War College and one year later he was designated Commanding Officer of an Auxiliary Ship ARA "TENIENTE OLIVIERI". In 2008 he completed his course in the Armed Forces Joint War College. In 2009 he was the executive Officer of ARA "PARKER" a Meko 140 Class Frigate. During his career, he was served in different ships of the Argentinean Fleet and was observer in foreigner navy ships. He served in Antarctica and in different parts of the country as Environmental Protection Officer of the Navy. Lt Col Marcelo Paredes is married to Susana and they have three children: Matias (14), Facundo (11) and Julieta (8) who are here in Cyprus with him. He likes Cyprus, its nature, history and people of the Island. He also likes sailing and diving.

Sector 1 Deputy Commanding Officer



Lt Col Daniel Fernando Caceres arrived in UNFICYP on 6 March 2010 to take up the post of sector 1 deputy Commanding Officer. He was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 26 September 1966 and graduated from the Argentinean Military Academy in 1987 with a degree in Strategy and Organization, and also holds the Special Aptitude "Airborne Troops". During his career he has served in a number of different appointments: Airborne Platoon Leader, Military Academy instructor, Airborne Company Commander, Infantry Mechanized Regiment Deputy Commanding Officer. His last appointment was in the Operations Branch of the 4th Airborne Brigade Headquarters. This is third tour of duty with UNFICYP having served in 1998 as SECTOR 1 ALFA Company Commander (Roca Camp) and in 2007 as Sector 1 Operations Officer. He is married to Monica Teresita Comba and they have four children: Maria Florencia (14), Maria Carolina (11), Matias Daniel and Jose Ignacio (4 year old twins). His interests include diving, parachuting, skiing and mountain biking.

Force Hygiene Officer



Maj. Dr. Géza Dancsó took over the post of Force Hygiene Officer on 17 March 2010. Born on 17 November 1969 in Szentes, southeast Hungary, he graduated from the University of Szeged in 1997 as a general practitioner. Maj. Dancsó worked for a period of 8 years as an ENT (ear, nose and throat) specialist in the Szentes Hospital before joining the Hungarian Defence Forces in 2004 as a Captain and served in Szentes as a physician. He currently holds the post of occupational physician of the HDF 37th "Ferenc Rákóczi II." Engineering Battalion. This is his second tour of duty as a peacekeeper having previously served in 2008-2009 as a physician in KFOR (Kosovo-Pech). He is married to Dóra and they have a son, Péter (2) and a daughter, Eszter (4). His interests include swimming, skiing and football.

Force Photographer



M Sgt Gabriel Zelei arrived in Cyprus on 17 March 2010, taking up the position of UNFICYP Force Photographer. This is his first UN mission, but second overseas mission having served in 2006 -2007 in the NATO mission – Iraqi Freedom as a Signal officer in the Slovak Engineer Unit at camp ECHO near Ad Dyvanyiah, Iraq. MSgt Zelei was born in 1979 in the town of Cadca in Slovakia. After graduating from military college Liptovsky Mikulas he joined the Slovak Army in Presov as an electronic warfare NCO. In 2000 he attended the Military Academy for studies in electronic warfare, and graduated in 2005. After his studies he changed profession and went to work for the Nuclear Biological Chemical Centre of the Land Forces HQ and deployed to Iraq where he was promoted to Chief of the Tactical Psychological Operations team of the Land Forces of the Slovak Army. He enjoys playing tennis and watching movies.

Aviation Emergency Response Exercise



An accident involving a UNFICYP aircraft might occur any time when air operations are underway. In order to minimize the adverse effects of such an occurrence, a coordinated response based upon a well prepared, tested and updated Mission Aviation Emergency Response Plan (AERP), is necessary. To accomplish the above a full Aviation Emergency Response Exercise was held on 17 February 2010.

The exercise scenario involved a Hughes 500-D helicopter that was making a routine observation flight. A few minutes after take-off, the Flight Following was informed of 'some trouble' with the helicopter and thereafter all radio contact was lost. One crew member was suspected dead and another passenger was also believed to have been killed. The helicopter was on fire in the buffer zone close to old Nicosia airport. The Response Team Leader went into action in order to gain control over the situation. The Medical Centre's ambulance was sent to the scene of the crash

while personnel from the MFR had been deployed to establish a perimeter of security, cordoning off the area. The accident site was close to electric lines, the supply had to be turned off. Also, a mine field was simulated in the vicinity. The Medical Unit, Fire Services, Mobile Force Reserve, Military Police, Operation Branch, UNFlight and Air Safety Office were working together to bring the situation under control. The fire was extinguished with the use of foam and powder. Then the rescue of the injured was undertaken by the mission medical component which provided immediate relief to the injured; one casualty was transferred on a Bell 212 helicopter to Nicosia General Hospital. The exercise was a good opportunity for all personnel to familiarize themselves with their responsibilities in an emergency situation and ensure they are well-trained to cope with such an eventuality.

Visits

UNFICYP extended the usual courtesies when the Chief of Mission, Force commander and Chief of Staff received the following visitors during March 2010.



Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi met Rear Admiral Philippe Coindreau of France on 15 March.



Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi met with Mr. Pieter De Crem, Belgium Minister of Defence on 3 March.



Chief of Staff Colonel Gerard Hughes met Slovak Deputy Commander of Land Forces Brig. General Pavel Macko on 19 March.

Sports

This February saw Sector 2's turn to host the UNFICYP Inter-Unit Sporting Contest, with an extremely original Mini Olympics event held at the Dhekelia Garrison Sports Area.

Led by personnel from the sector's 27 Regiment The Royal Logistic Corps, SSgt Ritson and Senior Instructor of the regiments' Adventure Training Team Sgt Babbington, the three sectors of UNFICYP, and the Mobile Force Reserve raced, threw and jumped their way through the day.

Glorious sunshine prevailed, although high winds did threaten the VIP tent at first! The British teams dominated the events, but Sector 4 gave strong competition in the Shot Put and Javelin, with Sector 1 entering a speedy team of sprinters to the 100m, 400, and 1500m races. The most nail biting event of the day was the 400 metre Chain of Command relay. Cheered on by fellow Sector Commanders and the Force Commander, Sector 2 Commanding Officer, Lt Col David Albion, raced for his team. With the MFR comfortably in first place, Sector 2

athlete Sgt Castle put rival teams under immense pressure as he flew around the track putting his sector into second place and catching up fast. Fellow athletes went berserk as Pte Jackson then raced up behind MFR Sergeant Major, WO2 Pierce. But the MFR had it in the bag, crossing the finish line just metres ahead, crowning them Olympic champions.

National Anthems and a welcome speech by Capt Reynolds, in the four languages represented, preceded the prize giving ceremony, before a well deserved barbecue concluded a thoroughly successful and sporting day.

L J REYNOLDS
Capt
S2 Visits Officer



Sector 4 tennis competition took place between 2 -9 March at Camp General Stefanik in Famagusta with participation from HQ UNFICYP Force engineers and Sector4. The event included 14 members in singles and 16 in doubles tournaments. The winner was Jozef Matis who showed best skills and effort for winning and defeated Jozef Husvar 6:1, 6:1 in final. On the third place were current CO of Sector4 Lt Col Lubomír Kochansky. In double was winning couple consisting from Jozef Matis/Jozef Husvar who defeated Martin Pavlik/Michal Fratala 7:6, 6:1.



International Women's Day
celebrated in UNFICYP

