

## Women begin to make their mark in political life

The increasing participation of Cypriot women in political life was highlighted in a report on the Government's efforts to advance the status of women presented by Cyprus Representative Demetris Hadjiargyrou to a UN General Assembly committee in New York on 19 October.

Mr Hadjiargyrou noted that Cyprus has been a party to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) since 1985 and has also signed other relevant UN and European conventions intended to promote gender equality.

He said that an area which the Cyprus Government considers particularly important for the empowerment of women in society is their participation in politics. He noted that Cyprus had set a goal of a minimum of 30 per cent representation by women by 2005, as laid down in the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action, and stressed that the Government, the political parties and women's organizations are committed to meeting that goal. Measures taken to date include:

- special training programmes aiming at encouraging women to enter politics and at creating a more friendly environment for women within political parties;
- creation of a cross-party citizens' group to lobby and campaign for equal representation of the genders in politics;
- sensitization of the mass media;
- appointment of women to high-ranking political posts;
- launching of a public campaign to support



•Negotiating terms... The women of Cyprus are at last beginning to make their mark in politics.

women candidates.

Mr Hadjiargyrou said that the women of Cyprus have been particularly active in the field of conflict resolution and promotion of human rights, "having suffered the tragic consequences of military conflict, displacement and foreign occupation for 27 years". Examples of such activity include:

- the International Eco-peace Village, which promotes conflict resolution and global environmental sensitivity;
- the Federation of Women's Refugee

Associations (KEGYK), which has been in the forefront of raising awareness of the Cyprus problem with particular reference to women refugees;

●bicommunal initiatives between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women.

Mr Hadjiargyrou concluded that Cyprus remains strongly committed to pursuing policies and programmes which "ensure that women fully enjoy their human rights and are equal partners in shaping its economic, political and social development" □

## Notes & News

●Agricultural, Natural Resources and Environment Minister Costas Themistocleous warned on 3 October that **natural water supply** would take time to recover from long-term drought. Rainfall in the year to end-September had been 97 per cent of the expected amount, but input into reservoirs had been 45 per cent below original projections. He confirmed that, while domestic water supply was assured, a new desalination plant purely for agricultural purposes was not among government plans.

●The final section of the **Limassol-Paphos highway**, including the biggest and most expensive bridge ever constructed in Cyprus, was opened on 19 October by Communications and Works Minister Averof Neophytou and Bishop Chrysostomos of Paphos. The 420-metre-long, 70-metre-high bridge accounted for nearly half of the C£12 million cost of the final stretch of the highway, which bypasses the old coastal road and will therefore liberate beauty spots such as Aphrodite's Rock from through traffic.

●Two Cypriot surgeons belonging to **Médecins Sans Frontières** left for Afghanistan on 21 October to provide medical treatment for victims of the present conflict and related disruption. Dr Eleni Theocharous and Dr Demetris Demetriou, who are giving their services free and whose transportation costs are being met by the Cyprus Government, flew to Dushambe in Tajikistan, from where they were due to travel on to Feizabad in northern Afghanistan to set up an operating theatre and other medical facilities.

●Catholicos Aram I of the **Armenian Apostolic Church** visited Cyprus on 20-24 October to participate in celebrations by the

2,500-strong Armenian community marking the 1,700th anniversary of Armenia's adoption of Christianity as its official religion in 301.

●Some 7,000 Greek and Turkish Cypriots got together on 21 October in a **bicommunal gathering** hosted by the United Nations to mark the 56th anniversary of the UN's creation. Held at the Ledra Palace Hotel in the UN buffer zone in Nicosia, the event was welcomed by the Cyprus Government as enabling the country's citizens to meet one another and to exchange views.

●A rapid increase in production from **fish farms** in Cyprus, from 2,000 to 10,000 tonnes a year, was identified as a Government aim in early October. Sea farms account for 50% of



•Growth industry... Fish farming in Cyprus.

fish production at present, and 60% by value, excluding prawn and fresh water trout output of 65 and 78 tonnes a year respectively. The objective is a five-fold increase in fish farm production, in order to build on an export trade already surpassing 500 tonnes of fish a year.

●The remains of another **1974 National Guard hero** identified by DNA testing were buried in his native village of Troulli on 27 October. Cadet Officer Michael Zenios, then 27, was killed on 14 August 1974 while fighting against Turkish forces attacking Nicosia. He had studied physics at Athens University and had been a schoolteacher before the Turkish invasion cut his life short.

●Cyprus **telephone numbers** change from 1 December due the introduction of 8-digit numbers in all Government-controlled areas under the National Numbering Plan (NNP). The existing area codes will be abolished and incorporated into the new numbers minus the zero and starting with 2. Thus the new 8-digit numbers for Nicosia will all start with 22, those for Famagusta 23, those for Lamaca 24, those for Limassol 25 and those for Paphos 26. □

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