



Departure Statement by the Secretary-General

28 February 2003

I am very satisfied with the outcome of my mission which I have conducted over the past few days in Ankara, Athens and Nicosia in relation to a Cyprus settlement. In particular, I am glad that the two leaders, Mr. Denktash and Mr. Papadopoulos, have agreed to meet me again in The Hague on 10 March.

I have asked the two leaders to arrive at The Hague prepared to tell me, there and then, whether or not they would sign a commitment to submit the Foundation Agreement to approval at separate, simultaneous referenda on 30 March in order to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. I have also asked the two leaders to arrive in The Hague having completed all necessary internal consultations and processes so that the response on 10 March is definitive.

At the end of my visit, I am convinced that all concerned – Greece, Turkey and the two parties in the island – understand that the holding of referenda on 30 March is the key to a reunited Cyprus signing the Treaty of Accession on 16 April. I myself am absolutely certain that a Cyprus Settlement which brings about a new state of affairs, would be a great benefit to all the people of Cyprus, as well as to the motherlands, the region and to the world.

There is a unique opportunity that must not be missed. I said on arrival, Cyprus has a rendezvous with destiny. I believe very strongly that the Plan for Settlement that is on offer is fair and balanced. Of course it is a compromise. But all negotiated settlements require compromise. I urge all concerned to catch the tide before it turns, perhaps irreversibly.

As I leave this beautiful island, I pray and hope that you will soon have the settlement so long hoped for and so long denied.

