



**Statement by Secretary-General's
Special Adviser on Cyprus, Alvaro de Soto, on arrival at Larnaca Airport
Tuesday, 6 April 2004**

I am very glad to be back in Cyprus.

As you know, I flew straight from Bürgenstock to New York to brief the Security Council. On my way back here, I stopped off in Dublin where I met the Irish Prime Minister, Mr. Ahern, who holds the rotating Presidency of the European Union.

I know that I come back to the island at a very delicate moment. On each side, there is a great deal of internal deliberation going on in advance of the referenda on 24 April. This is as it should be. As the Secretary-General said in Bürgenstock, the decision is now up to the people – and rightly so. We have no intention of interfering in that democratic decision.

The plan provides for one referendum, on 24 April 2004. It does not provide for a second bite of the cherry some time later on. On the contrary, the plan will be null and void if it isn't approved at referenda. We've had four years of intensive negotiations. The product is on the table. The time has come for a definitive decision.

In making that decision, I would appeal for a calm assessment of the plan on each side. Above all, I appeal to people to read the plan. Despite what has been reported in some quarters, the plan was improved at Burgenstock – for both sides.

The plan was not dreamt up by the Secretary-General. It reflects a four year process of negotiations between the parties. The vast bulk of the plan has been agreed. There are some points where the Secretary-General filled in the gaps by invitation of the leaders.

Obviously, the plan is a compromise – but it is a principled compromise. We believe the final product is a fair plan, a workable plan, a plan that accommodates the concerns of each side. But the only way the Cypriots can decide this is if they read the plan themselves.

People can find the plan on many different websites, including the UN site, which is www.annanplan.org. The plan is long – 9000 pages – but most of these are technical annexes. People can get an authoritative summary of the main points of the plan from its first 14 articles – the Main Articles of the Foundation Agreement.

If my Greek Cypriot friends read the plan, they will discover that it is very different from how it is sometimes portrayed, and that it meets the most important basic concerns of the Greek Cypriot side.

- a. The plan safeguards the independence and territorial integrity of Cyprus, in accordance with international law and the resolutions of the Security Council.
- b. The federal government is designed to be able to function immediately and effectively.
- c. A majority of displaced and dispossessed persons will be able to return to their homes under Greek Cypriot administration.
- d. All other displaced and dispossessed persons will have their property rights fully honoured by reinstatement and/or compensation. They will mostly get back one-third of their property and be fully compensated for the rest.
- e. There will be no limits on people returning – or going for the first time – to establish secondary residences in the other constituent state. And over time, those who truly want to live permanently in the other constituent state will be able to do so.

I would also encourage my Turkish Cypriot friends to read the plan. If they do, they will discover that the plan meets the most basic concerns of the Turkish Cypriot side:

- a. The plan is based on the political equality of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.
- b. The plan provides for two constituent states of equal status, enshrining the distinct identities of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, with each side largely to run its own affairs under its own constitutions.
- c. The plan provides for a bizonal set-up and ensures that neither side will be overrun or dominated by the other.
- d. The system of guarantees established by international treaty in 1960 remains unchanged.
- e. Some Turkish Cypriots will have to be relocated, but the plan ensures that this will be done properly and fairly.

I would also say, to both sides, that the security arrangements in the plan are designed to allay the concerns of each side, and to ensure that the settlement can be implemented smoothly.

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