

Upcoming Cyprus Conference ‘a unique opportunity,’ says UN negotiator

27 June 2017 – A fresh round of talks on Cyprus will last “as long as it takes,” but there are no guarantees of success, the United Nations negotiator facilitating the process said today.

Speaking to journalists in Geneva, Espen Barth Eide, the UN Special Adviser on Cyprus, said that the reconvening of the Conference is “not the last chance” but the “the best chance” of reaching an agreement between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots.

“It is a unique opportunity, and it would be extremely sad if it was wasted [...] and I think frankly that’s recognized by all participants.”

He highlighted however that sticking points remain between the delegations as they prepared to meet tomorrow in Mont Pèlerin, Switzerland.

“Make no mistake; it’s not going to be easy,” he said, explaining that he and Secretary-General and will “do our utmost” to help. So would the Security Council which has remained “very united” throughout the process, so would the [European Union], which is lending extremely important and productive support, and so would the international financial institutions which are directly involved.

“But none of us can do it for the participants, they have to take the responsibility and try to make the best out of what I see is a unique opportunity,” Mr. Eide underscored.

After decades of division in Cyprus [dating back to 1974](#), the UN envoy said that this was the “best chance” for successful talks and not the last chance, despite the “risks” and the “tense situation” on the Mediterranean island.

There are six main topics up for discussion; they include new territorial boundaries, power-sharing and the economy. Agreement has been found on most of these so-called ‘chapters,’ broadly, and concrete progress achieved, Mr Eide said.

The Turkish-Cypriot delegation had assented to what he called a “significant return of territory” to the Greek-Cypriots, and both sides had also exchanged maps in Geneva in January “an historic first,” the UN negotiator told journalists.

Nonetheless, Mr. Eide said that the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot positions still diverge on the issue of security and guarantees.

“What I’m saying is that on these five chapters, we have made substantive process, on the issue which is most complicated right now and very much in focus now and by the guarantors “Greece, Turkey and the

United Kingdom and others who will be present, is the security and guarantees chapter; that's where the sides are so far opposed," he said.

"But they have also told each other and the world many times that are trying to seek a common vision also on that chapter, and that is what we are trying to do," said Mr. Eide, insisting that this shared viewpoint is something only the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots could do by talking together.

The UN would be there to help both sides find common ground, he said, so that an agreement owned by the people of Cyprus could prevail.

In a statement issued in New York, the Secretary-General picked up that thread saying that [welcomed](#) the reconvening of the Cyprus Conference and that the "the opportunity for the reunification of Cyprus is now finally before us."

Calling on all concerned players to seize this opportunity, "for Cyprus first and foremost, but also for the wider Eastern Mediterranean region," Mr. Guterres reiterated his steadfast commitment to supporting this effort.

"I urge all participants to demonstrate the will and leadership required to conclude a comprehensive settlement," he concluded.

[UN recognizes young entrepreneurs on Day for micro-, small, medium-sized enterprises](#)

27 June 2017 – United Nations agencies today launched a new campaign to make it easier for the 70 million unemployed youth to get financing and learn new skills to start a business.

The global campaign "launched by the the International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)), the International Trade Centre (ITC) , the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the UN Conference on Trade and Development ([UNCTAD](#)) and the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) " will run through August of this year.

It will aim to "effectively enable young entrepreneurs [to success and improve the sustainability and quality](#) of self-employment opportunities for youth," according to ILO.

The UN agency added that the main challenges to be addressed include "the lack of enabling policy and ecosystems, the limited access to

capital, the insufficient tools to enhance skills development and knowledge transfer.”

The campaign will focus on strategies to promote “an enabling regulatory environment” for young people, make use of technology and networks, aim to allow greater access to finance, and provide greater support for young people.

The UN estimates that while 70 million youth are unemployed, an additional 150 million work yet live in moderate to extreme poverty.

Today's launch comes on the first observance of the International Day for Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, which seeks to raise public awareness of these business which generally employ fewer than 250 people. This year's theme is “youth entrepreneurship and self-employment.”

[The Day](#) was created in April to observe the Day and raise public awareness of their contribution to the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, which aims to alleviate poverty and preserve the people and the planet.

According to the data provided by the International Council for Small Business (ICSB), formal and informal Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) make up over 90 per cent of all firms and account on average for up to 70 per cent of total employment and 50 per cent of GDP.

[UN agency saves 600 stranded migrants in Sahara Desert, but 52 dead in Niger](#)

27 June 2017 – The United Nations migration agency in Niger has saved more than 600 lives since April 2017 through a new search and rescue operation that targets migrants stranded in Sahara Desert, but 52 did not survive.

“We are enhancing our capacity to assist vulnerable migrants stranded in Northern Agadez, towards the Niger-Libya border,” said Giuseppe Loprete, Niger Chief of Mission for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in [press release](#).

“Saving lives in the desert is becoming more urgent than ever. Since the beginning of the year we have been receiving frequent calls to rescue victims who embark on this route,” Loprete added.

A 22-year-old woman was the only female among the survivors of a rescue mission on 28 May. She left Nigeria in early April hoping for a better future in Europe. There were 50 migrants on the pick-up truck when it left Agadez for Libya, but only six are still alive today.

“We were in the desert for ten days. After five days, the driver abandoned us. He left with all of our belongings, saying he was going to pick us up in a couple of hours, but he never did,” she recalled.

During the next two days, 44 of the migrants died which persuaded the six left to start walking to look for help. “We had to drink our own pee to survive,” she said.

We had to drink our own pee to survive. Survivor

On 9 June, another 92 migrants were also rescued through an IOM search and rescue operation; among them were 30 women and children.

More recently, 24 migrants were taken to Seguedine, where one died on arrival. Among the 23 survivors are migrants from Gambia, Nigeria, Senegal and Cote d’Ivoire. It was not clear for how long they had been walking in the deserts of central Niger. They had been in a group of 75 migrants in three different cars, eventually abandoned by smugglers during the journey north.

IOM has recorded 52 deaths since it launched a new project “Migrants Rescue and Assistance in Agadez Region” (MIRAA) in April. The project will last for 12 months, and aims to ensure the protection of migrants in hard-to-reach areas while also strengthening the management of migration by the Government of Niger.

MIRAA is complementary to the larger initiative “Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism” (MRRM), which aims to bring together in one mechanism a wide range of services and assistance for migrants, including assisted voluntary return to their countries of origin and reintegration once they return.

On International Day Against Drug Abuse, UN urges collective action to realize global commitments

26 June 2017 – To mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the United Nations is calling on all countries to honour their commitments to address the scourge and to ensure that steps to do so are consistent with human rights and promote equality, peace, security and sustainable development.

“Despite the risks and challenges inherent in tackling this global problem, I hope and believe we are on the right path, and that together we

can implement a coordinated, balanced and comprehensive approach that leads to sustainable solutions,” said UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres .

In his [message](#) on the [International Day](#), the UN chief also recalled the [special session](#) on the World Drug Problem, convened by the UN General Assembly, where Governments agreed upon a series of steps which are more effective and humane, and leaves no one behind.

“I know from personal experience how an approach based on prevention and treatment can yield positive results,” noted Mr. Guterres, referring to steps he took as the Prime Minister of Portugal, including introduction of non-criminal responses to the possession of drugs for personal use – a flexibility afforded by the three international drug control conventions – and greater resources for prevention, treatment, and social reintegration programmes.

The steps helped the country achieve one of the lowest death rates for drug use in Europe, as well reduce the prevalence of HIV amongst injecting drug users.

“I am proud of these results and hope this experience will contribute to the discussion and encourage [UN] Member States to continue exploring comprehensive and evidence-based solutions,” added the Secretary General, noting that the follow-up process to the 2016 special session includes an institutional framework to share best practices.

“This would be the best possible way to implement the UNGASS recommendations and to have a positive impact on the lives of millions of people around the world,” he said.

Similarly, in his own [message](#) on the Day, Yury Fedotov, the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)), also recalled the commitments expressed at last year's General Assembly special session and underscored the challenges that drug abuse and illicit trafficking pose to sustainable development.

“Once viewed as a marginal actor on the development stage, drugs and crime are now viewed as a disturbing obstruction to the achievement of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, particularly [Sustainable Development] [Goal 3](#) on health and [Goal 16](#) on peaceful societies,” he said, underscoring the importance of implementing the commitments made by UN Member States last year.

The theme for the 2017 edition of the Day, *Listen First – Listening to children and youth is the first step to help them grow healthy and safe*, builds on the theme for the commemoration last year, as an initiative to increase support for prevention of drug use that is based on science and is thus an effective investment in the well-being of children and youth, their families and their communities.

[With hidden lives vital to our own, 'seafarers matter,' says UN on International Day](#)

25 June 2017 – Highlighting the challenges faced by seafarers – women and men sailing and working aboard ships – the United Nations International Maritime Organization has called on everyone around the world to show appreciation for their vital contributions.

“Even though seafaring can provide the basis for a fulfilling and life-long career, it is still a very difficult and demanding job,” Kitack Lim, the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), said [in his message](#) on [Day of the Seafarer](#).

In addition to personal issues, conditions onboard ships and in ports, unpaid wages, and even abandonment, mariners have to contend with long periods away from family and friends and the pressure to perform in a challenging economic environment, which multiply the anguish.

“It is easy for seafarers to feel lonely and isolated. To imagine that they do not matter. This year, we want to show [everyone] that seafarers do matter,” stressed Mr. Lim, which is also the theme for this year’s commemoration.

In particular, he praised the role of seafarer’s centres at port cities, where sailors and crew of ships visit for a “small taste of home” – a sanctuary where they can rest, recuperate, connect with loved ones back home, especially through social media, and if necessary avail of support to help them adjust and cope.

“We want to create a platform to give ports and seafarer centres the opportunity to demonstrate how much seafarer matter,” noted the IMO chief, at the Duckdalben Seafarer’s Centre in Hamburg, Germany, one of Europe’s biggest ports.

He also spoke of [events organized at ports and seafarer’s centres around the world](#) to connect the general public to seafarers and celebrate their contributions.

“As in previous years, the campaign will be centred on social media [to] spread the word as far as possible,” he added, calling on everyone to contribute and tag their messages, photos and videos to IMO’s social media channels ([on Twitter](#) and [on Facebook](#)).

“We ask all of you to join us and say *Seafarers matter!*”

The Day of the Seafarer, marked annually on 25 June, was established in a resolution adopted by the 2010 Diplomatic Conference in Manila, the capital of Philippines, to recognize the unique contribution made by seafarers from all over the world to international seaborne trade, the world economy and civil society as a whole.