

Annex I

Secretary-General's statement to the press

13 February 2004

Negotiations resumed on 10 February at United Nations Headquarters in New York between the two parties in Cyprus, in my presence.

Following three days of meetings and consultations, I am pleased to announce that the parties have committed to negotiating in good faith on the basis of my plan to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem through separate and simultaneous referenda before 1 May 2004.

To this end, the parties will seek to agree on changes and to complete the plan in all respects by 22 March 2004, within the framework of my mission of good offices, so as to produce a finalized text.

In the absence of such agreement, I would convene a meeting of the two sides — with the participation of Greece and Turkey in order to lend their collaboration — in a concentrated effort to agree on a finalized text by 29 March.

As a final resort, in the event of a continuing and persistent deadlock, the parties have invited me to use my discretion to finalize the text to be submitted to referenda on the basis of my plan.

In addition, the parties have agreed on the other suggestions contained in my invitation of 4 February 2004. They have also decided to form a technical committee on economic and financial aspects of implementation, to be chaired by the United Nations.

The guarantor Powers have signified their commitment to this process and to meeting their obligations under it.

I welcome these commitments as well as the assurances of the European Union to accommodate a settlement and the offer of technical assistance by the European Commission. I look forward to drawing on this assistance as well as that of others in the course of the negotiations.

The talks will re-convene in Cyprus on Thursday, 19 February, with direct meetings between the two parties in the presence of my Special Adviser, Alvaro de Soto. The technical committees on laws and treaties will re-convene on the same day.

I commend the constructive spirit and political will displayed by both parties, as well as by Greece and Turkey, to reach this agreement.

All concerned now face historic responsibilities to bring about a just and lasting peace in Cyprus. I wish them well, and look forward to working closely with them.