

**Statement by the Minister Education and Culture  
of the Republic of Cyprus**

**H.E. Mr. Akis Cleanthous**

**On the occasion of the signing of the Agreement between the Ministry of  
Education and Culture and the Armenian General Benevolent Union  
on 20 June 2007**

The Melkonian Educational Institute, the most renowned co-educational institution of Cypriot Armenians has been one of the primary Diaspora institutions of education during the post-Armenian Genocide 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was a boarding school of high academic standard located in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Established in 1926, the Melkonian Institute was opened to students of all nationalities and offered a comprehensive secondary school curriculum. Two thirds of the Armenians, belonging in a specific age group (12-18 years) received their education at the Institute.

The Armenian General Benevolent Union, the world's largest non-profit Armenian organization, responsible for the preservation and promotion of the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, and the owner of the Melkonian Educational Institute premises has agreed to allow the Ministry of Education and Culture to use the grounds of the school in order to house the 430 students attending the Anglandjia Gymnasium.

The management of the AGBU offered to permit the use of the premises of the Melkonian Educational Institute lifting any financial obligations on the account of the Republic of Cyprus, and the Ministry of Education and Culture in particular. The Ministry of Education and Culture is very grateful to the AGBU for its offer.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the president of the AGBU Mr. Berge Setrakian, for his personal attention to the matter, all the members of the AGBU Central Board for their cooperation, and last but not least Mr. Loukis Papafilippou, the legal representative of AGBU. I look forward to a close collaboration and I underline once more the close ties that our two communities share.