

24 March 2009

**CHANGE is in the BAG – DEĞİŞİM alışveriş ÇANTANIZDA
Cleaning up Cyprus – 1 bag at a time!**

Plastic bags have become an ever-present blot on our landscape—stuck on fences, strewn across beaches, blowing across fields and clogging storm drains. Now Supporting Activities that Value the Environment (SAVE) has teamed up with local business and community leaders to address the problem. The CHANGE is in the BAG campaign is being launched today to raise public awareness about the dangers posed to our environment and health by the continued overuse of plastic bags. If a picture is worth a thousand words then the campaign's feature photo of Alagadi Beach speaks volumes about the visible damage being caused by our use of plastic bags. SAVE, along with local retailers Deniz Plaza, Lemar, Reis, and Metropol and the supporting organizations of Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Environmental Engineers, Cyprus Action for Recycling and Environment (CARE) and Famagusta Walled City Steering Committee want to make sure that this is not the landscape we continue to live in or pass on to our children.

The campaign challenges all of us to simply stop and think before taking a plastic bag. If you are only buying a bottle of water, do you really need a bag? When you go to the grocery store, why not bring reusable bags? They are more durable, hold more groceries, last for years and do not pollute. At the pharmacy or the kiosk, can you simply tuck your purchases into your purse, briefcase or backpack?

This is the message being delivered by all Deniz Plaza stores and copy centers, the supermarket outlets of Lemar, Reis and Metropol, shops throughout Famagusta's walled city, as well as participating pharmacies. Signs will be posted at check out counters that ask the very simple question—**Do you really need a bag?** If everyone makes a conscious effort to only use bags when necessary or, better yet, bring reusable bags for purchases, then we can all make a big difference in the amount of garbage sent to overburdened dump sites and the amount of litter spoiling our beautiful island.

The campaign provides all of us with some interesting food for thought. Plastic bags can take up to 1000 years to break down. Plastic bags suffocate, disable and kill thousands of marine animals and sea birds each year and are particularly dangerous for our sea turtles and migratory birds. 1 reusable bag lasts 4 years on average and replaces 1200 – 1600 plastic bags. Plastic bags are made from non-renewable, unsustainable and highly polluting materials, so the harm is being done from the time a bag is produced through to when it is used and disposed of. The bottom line is that we can take responsibility for our own environment and also be a part of something bigger – the global efforts to reduce the damage from plastic bags worldwide.

If anyone would like to help support this campaign and display a CHANGE is in the BAG– DEĞİŞİM alışveriş ÇANTANIZDA sign at their store or workplace, please contact SAVE at SAVE-info@irgltd.com, or online at www.save-irg.com.

SAVE works to build local capacity to better protect and manage Cyprus' valuable natural and cultural resources. This campaign is part of SAVE's ongoing efforts to address important environmental issues on the island. SAVE is a key component of the overall U.S. assistance program in Cyprus funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

For more information please contact:

Hüral Avcioğulları

Supporting Activities that Value the Environment (SAVE)

Tel: 0090 392 228 1925 / Fax: 0090 392 228 1756

SAVE-info@irgltd.com / www.save-irg.com