

**Friends of Karpaz Association**  
**There is no other Karpaz!**

05.11.2007

Presentation for “Environmental Symposium”

“Sustainable Karpaz”

**I. Introduction**

Dear participants, Friends of Karpaz Association (FoK) is an NGO which was established in the year 2004 with the mission of protecting and promoting the natural, historical and cultural texture of the Karpaz Peninsula. At the same time, FoK carries the consciousness on the economic conditions of the people living in Karpaz and aims to implement the model of sustainable development within the region by participating in the actions and by providing every needed support. The content of this paper presented by the KDD depends mostly on the observations rather than scientific studies and on the thoughts of the members and the public living in Karpaz.

**II. Environment and Development**

Today, most of the world's natural affluence is shared by countries within the Northern hemisphere. Besides the rapid advancement in science and technology, this wealth is the result of hundreds of years long exploitation of the lands we now call the 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries or developing countries. Especially after the industrial revolution which first began in England, the wealth and prosperity that was experienced first in the West, and then in the Far East and nowadays in Asia, have caused inequality in people's income and put our planet's environment under an alarming danger. This is why the term 'sustainability' has become the most important concept in our lives. Along with the widespread debate in the world, there is the dilemma between economic development and environmental protection in our country as well. It is now observed that global warming had reached an alarming point due to the damage done to the environment in the name of wealth, which did not benefit the lower levels of societies.

In addition to the social and economic aspects of the 'sustainable development', there is the environmental aspect of the concept as well, which means, while trying to provide prosperity for the community, we need to protect the rich natural resources of the country and ensure their conservation for the next generations as well. Now we came to realize the significance of this term which has emerged at the beginning of 1980s. You don't have to travel all around the world to see this. If you look at Northern Cyprus, you can see how the environment is damaged in expense of so called development.

**III. Construction and Environment**

The construction sector, which has boosted especially before and directly after the referendum for the Annan Plan, has unfortunately become the only mean of development for the governments which came to power since that period. While constructions increased, the number of tourists coming into our country has decreased; as a result of the noise and visual pollution caused. Many tourists coming to our island to find a peace of mind were widely disappointed. Besides the damage to the tourism sector, great damage was given to the olive trees and ravines by irresponsible construction firms. While the quarries are chewing our mountains on one hand, the big hotels constructed to serve mass tourism launched the phase of turning our coasts into concrete.

The intensive construction of concrete buildings and environmental damage, especially along the Kyrenia coasts, had not affected the Karpaz Peninsula yet. However the marina currently constructed to the east of Yenierenkoy (Yalusa), the possibility of a university campus to be built in Yenierenkoy (Yalusa) and the settlements which will follow, is an indication that the construction sector will take Karpaz under its influence very soon. We strongly believe that Karpaz National Park, which is one of the most beautiful areas of Karpaz, is under a big threat due to the project aiming to take electricity on the poles to the very edge of the peninsula, from Rizo Karpaso (Dip Karpaz) to Cape Andreas Castros. The fact that the government has not been able to make any satisfactory explanations on the subject and was far from convincing on who will benefit from it is main concern. In addition, the projects documents which have been put forward by the bureaucrats in government institutions on the Karpaz National Park are very upsetting. Furthermore, the postponement of the case law for several times, which was aimed at producing an interim order against the project, showed us that the judiciary did not perform its task on the case precisely.

The legislative process started to produce a law for the “Karpaz National Park” followed by the opening of the National Park area for hunting, shows us the level of consciousness carried by the government on National Parks and their infirmity against the hunters once again. When our government is criticized because of their wrong decisions and implementations, they try to justify them by giving the excuse that all is done for economic development. Although the destruction of the environment, extinction of living creatures and exhaustion of natural resources are bringing us economic wealth today, the possibility of our grandchildren, and the generations to follow, living in a country without treasures, without any natural resources and beauties is rising. As Friends of Karpaz, our request from the government is to develop more rational policies, improve the existing ones and designate a representative from the Sustainable Environment Platform to the Environmental Committee during the discussion processes on the insufficient Karpaz Draft Law. The Law that will be prepared should defend the full protection of the Karpaz National Park and ensure the improvement of the living conditions of the people living in Dipkarpaz (Rizo Karpaso) village. The people of Dipkarpaz should know that they have two choices that will shape their lives in the future. One of these choices is to sell their lands and get rich in a short period of time, which is what most of the people of the region are intending to do. However local people of the region should also be aware that each land sold within the Karpaz National Park will be an obstacle for them to raise their voice in subjects concerning their region. The other choice for the community is to claim rights on the Karpaz National Park and to be their own bosses. Besides the recruitment and the additional income that the National Park will provide

to the community, establishment of guesthouses in the village will bring high the revenues from the tourism sector; which would guarantee the future for both the people of Rizo Karpaso (Dip Karpaz) and their grandchildren. Unfortunately, North Cyprus is a small scaled country. We don't have limitless lands to construct buildings on a country which is planned to be eternal. If we destroy the beauties of our country today, if we spoil the "sanctuary of unspoiled beauty"; when the prosperity provided by the construction sector exhausts, unfortunately we will have to face the question of "what is your difference?" from the tourists that we will invite to come to our country. From now on, we have to think about what kind of an answer we will give to this question.

#### **IV. Tourism and Environment**

Implementation of special interest tourism or eco-tourism in Karpaz Peninsula, rather than mass tourism, is preferred by the Friends of Karpaz especially because of the quality of tourists and for the foreign exchange left in the country. This kind of tourism introduces the culture and the nature of the region to the tourists and prevents damage to the environment and natural resources. If villages within the Karpaz Peninsula are encouraged to adopt eco-tourism as an alternative to the problematic agriculture and livestock raising, we believe that the old houses which are primarily important as a cultural heritage will be protected, the number and quality of tourist will rise and reflect as a developed input to the economic situation of the local community.

The previous governments initiated implementation of this project and Büyükkonuk (Komi) was chosen as the pilot eco-tourism village in the Karpaz Peninsula. However as a consequence of some wrong implementations made by the government the project has been damaged. The stone quarry near to Buyukkonuk (Komi), is damaging the roads of the village and causing noise and environmental pollution as well. The whole situation is further exacerbated by the fact that the hiking paths which have been established for tourists with great effort, are within the hunting area. So, the labels that have been put to divert the tourists in these ways are used as target boards by the irresponsible hunters. In addition to all, giving permissions to the projects that are not related with eco-agro tourism remotely shows us the contradiction of the decision makers within themselves.

#### **V. Importance of the Karpaz "National Park" Area**

Apart from the multi-cultural life and the incomparable beauty of the Karpaz region, it is a unique region in terms of biological diversity within the island. It's well known that the endangered Monk Seals come to the Rizo Karpazo (Dip Karapz) coasts, whereas the area contains the most important nesting sites of Chelonia Mydas and Caretta Carettas in the Mediterranean.

The region is hosting 300 types of flora, 200 types of birds, the wild "Cyprus" donkeys, 100 types of fish and marine life, 8 types of marine mammals, 13 types of territorial flying mammals, 21 types of reptiles, marine flora that is food and nest for fishes and invertebrates, natural territories, dunes and dunes coasts, sand stones and rocks.

The Karpaz National Park area is one of the most important amongst four ecological areas on the northern part of the island. 24 of the 47 endemic plant types of Cyprus, 1410 flora and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the sub-types of flora, 100% of the rare types, 162 of the 238 living organisms which are under the protection in the directive, 2 of the 5 types of mammals under protection, 12 of the 16 reptiles under protection, 147 of the 215 bird types, 17 of the 85 breeding coasts for Caretta Carettas and Chelonia Mydas and the Rhonnas coastal area which is the place that Chelonia Mydias lay their eggs the most. In addition to all, the Rizo Karpaso (Dip Karpaz) region is on the way that the immigrant birds use, which is called the "Wets Palearctic-African Flyways". The Klidhes Islands are the place where the endangered species of sea gull and cormorant are breeding as well.

In addition to the importance of the region in terms of biological diversity, the historical monuments and archeological areas belonging to different periods are have great richness which should be protected and made widely known as our cultural heritages. There are 20 registered works and 5 archeological areas in the region. Some of them are; Apostolos Andreas Monastery with very high importance, Kastros place of settlement where the first human settlements started in 6000 B.C. in the island, Antique Karpasia city port, Classical Period Uranian City, Archaic period Agridia City, Neolithic period Khelonos city, Tsambres mass grave area, Anavrysia location grave belonging to the iron age, location grave of Latsia dated to Early Geometric period, Temple of Afrodit and 3 Antique stone quarries.

### **Result:**

Karpasia Peninsula is one of the most protected regions in our country. It's a place that the people living in other countries can get jealous and it's like an ore which is unique for us and it's a heritage for the whole world as well. However if we disregard the beauties that Karpaz Peninsula is presenting to us and if we continue to insist on a model that is not sustainable, we will be able to find the untouched nature and the beautiful state of the Karpaz Peninsula only in the photographs.