

**Mayor's speech at the opening of the SAT-7 International Office
and SAT-7's 20th year celebration –
Thursday, 12 November, 2015, 6.00pm**

Distinguished guests, friends and now also neighbours.

It is my great pleasure to be present in this 20-year celebration of SAT-7, and it is my honour to welcome SAT-7's International Office to the Strovolos municipality. As Mayor of this municipality, I hope that we can work to better the community, forge lasting relationships and invoke positive change together.

Although I have only recently been introduced to SAT-7, their reputation for integrity, hard work and perseverance precedes them. What has begun as a small seed has now blossomed into a fruitful tree. The Organisation's modest weekly broadcasts have now expanded to five channels that air 24 hours daily in the Arabic, Farsi and Turkish languages.

SAT-7 was registered in Nicosia, in September 1995, and broadcasts in Arabic commenced on the 31 May, 1996. In the past 20 years SAT-7 has transformed from a dream into an effective ministry in support of the Christian communities of the Middle East. SAT-7 has grown, matured and I am sure will continue to do so.

Operating its five channels and with offices spread across four continents, SAT-7 demonstrates its core principles through its programming. SAT-7 broadcasts are politically and religiously sensitive, keeping God as the focus whilst endeavouring to be inclusive of viewers from all walks of life. Today, SAT-7 touches the lives of millions of people, from Morocco to Afghanistan. Persisting in their efforts to be relevant throughout the region, the quality of programming and their care for their viewers is undisputed.

SAT-7 serves churches of all denominations, evidence of which we can see here tonight. Through its screens, the organisation seeks to show the unity and the rich diversity of the region's Christian communities. It also seeks to build bridges of understanding between the different religious communities of the region, one where there is so much division, mistrust and senseless death and destruction.

Let us acknowledge the diligent work of SAT-7's staff and leadership, and its International Council and Executive Board - some of whom are with us tonight. Their passion and dedication have helped SAT-7 flourish. I hope and wish that these new offices will inspire creativity, strengthen, resolve and encourage you in your mission to support the Christians of the Middle East and North Africa in their lives.

May your next 20 years impact a new generation of young people across this region with God's love; foster the spirit of inclusiveness and coexistence that is so vital to the building of free societies and a prosperous Middle East; and may the Island of Cyprus continue to be both a safe haven and launching pad for your honourable endeavours.

10 November 2015