

ARMENIA FUND USA In ACTION

East Coast Affiliate of Hayastan Himmadram

Armenia Fund USA In Action 2006 Issue 6.2

May 27, 2006

“We understand ‘development’ mobilizing communities to invest their potential, and ‘sustainability’-empowering them to become self-reliant by helping them excel at what they do best”

Armenia Fund USA

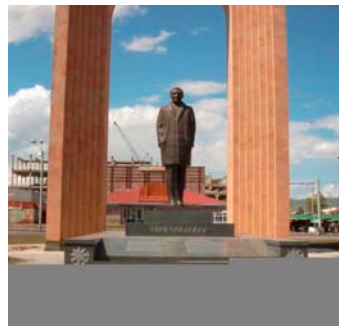
Inside this issue:

Charles Aznavour and Baroness Caroline Cox support the Agricultural Initiative	1
Executive Director’s Message	2
About the Agricultural Initiative	2
Project Highlights	3
Donor Spotlight	3
Donor Acknowledgement	4

Charles Aznavour and Baroness Caroline Cox Support Armenia Fund USA’s Development Project in Nagorno-Karabakh

France’s most famed singer and Britain’s “voice for the voiceless” appeal to the Armenian-American community to support the Fund’s Agricultural Initiative in Nagorno-Karabakh

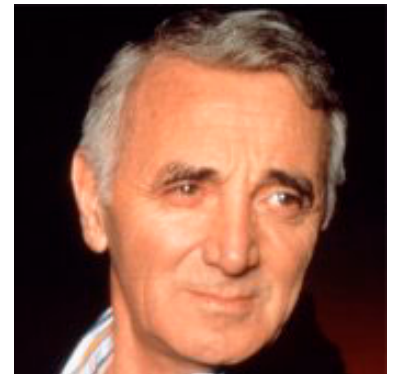
“Bonjour, this is Charles Aznavour. I am calling you today because we are in need, in urgent need of a large number of things. Our important Diaspora in the world should be generous and help fundraising actions for our sisters and brothers who do not have the same luck we have ... thank you, good-bye.” With



Aznavour’s statue in Gyumri, Armenia

Baroness Caroline Cox, Deputy speaker of the British House of Lords, is also a supporter of the Agricultural Initiative. In a letter addressed to donors and supporters of the Fund, the Baroness stressed the importance of the Agricultural Initiative and the ways in which it can revitalize the agricultural economy of Nagorno-Karabakh, largely contributing to poverty reduction in the region. Baroness Cox, a staunch supporter of Armenia and

these words, France’s most famed singer, actor and songwriter appealed to the Armenian-American community in the Eastern United States to ask for their support of a poverty-reduction project Armenia Fund USA is implementing in Nagorno-Karabakh. Every Armenian, in any part of the world, would be unable to express by words the high esteem and gratitude Armenian people hold towards Charles Aznavour. The images of a man standing in the ruins of the earthquake - devastated town of Gyumri, a man who stood next to his people in the darkest years, and a man whose spiritual support and humanitarianism recognizes no boundaries will never



Charles Aznavour

be erased from the memory of Armenians all over the world. Today Charles Aznavour’s support of the Agricultural Initiative, a program that will combat poverty in Nagorno-Karabakh and raise the standard of living for its people, is a token of the great philanthropist’s continued support and wish to see a prosperous Armenia.

Karabakh, is a renowned philanthropist and human rights advocate. Her humanitarian work has taken her on many missions to “no-go” conflict zones in Sudan, Nigeria, North Korea, Indonesia, Burma and Nagorno-Karabakh. Visiting Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh more than sixty times, the Baroness witnessed the people’s suffering during and after the crisis of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This and her other involvements with issues and concerns of the needy around the world have made Baroness Cox a “voice of the voiceless” (continued page 2)



Baroness Caroline Cox of Queensbury, British House of Lords

(continued from page 1)

Dear Friends,



My warmest welcome to all of you — the supporters of Armenia Fund USA who are joining us this year in making our programs a reality. Your support and generosity have been the driving force behind our ability to implement the much needed development projects in Armenia and Karabakh. On behalf of those in whose lives we have been able to make a difference, thank you.

This year is of great significance for the Fund. Having always funded specific infrastructure development projects, we are now sponsoring a regional development program for Nagorno-Karabakh. Specifically, we have targeted rural poverty reduction by boosting the agricultural sector of regional economy and helping Karabakh farmers to not only provide for their families but also get their produce to the market.

You are the reason why we are able to build on our success and broaden our mission. You make an incredible difference in helping so many in need in Armenia and Karabakh.

Baroness Cox was created a Life Peer in 1982 by former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and has been Deputy speaker of the House of Lords in the United Kingdom since 1985.

For her humanitarian work, the Baroness has been honored with the Commander Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, the Wilberforce Award, Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, and Honorary Doctorates by universities in the UK, USA, Russia and Armenia.

As part of the Fund's awareness and fundraising campaign, Charles Aznavour and Baroness Caroline Cox have given their encouraging support and endorsement to Armenia Fund USA's recently launched *Agricultural Initiative*.

The initiative is a three-year, three region development plan designed to help farmers in Nagorno-Karabakh move from subsistence farming to export production in order to strengthen and stabilize the region economically. With these changes, they will move beyond producing only enough to feed their families - thereby improving their health; providing for their families' educational and day-to-day needs; and increasing their production of quality agricultural goods.

“The Agricultural Initiative will transform subsistence farmers in Nagorno-Karabakh into surplus food producers.”

About the Agricultural Initiative

It is surprising how the phrase “sustainable development” has found a place in extensive literature, policy papers and mission statements of non-governmental and international organizations for the last several years. Surprising also is the fact that the phrase often gets caught in voluble writings leaving the reader confused and unsure about what is actually meant.

With Armenia Fund USA, things are simpler. The organization's recently launched Agro-Initiative in Nagorno-Karabakh is a classic example of a program that mobilizes the farming communities in Nagorno-Karabakh to invest in their agricultural potential, through establishing Agricultural Development Associations, to increase surplus food production, and move away from the traditional but unprofitable subsistence farming.

The Agro Initiative is a three-year, three-region plan to develop the agricultural infrastructure by focusing on region's potential—fertile land, favorable climate and hardworking people. The goal is to upgrade rural standards of living and capacity of the region's people to build their future by increasing rural household income. The latter will allow improvements in the overall health and nutrition of Karabakh people by targeting poverty reduction in the region. This, in turn, will give people a reason to stay and prosper in their homeland instead of emigrating to foreign countries to earn their daily living. Now, this is “sustainable development”.



Hope from the “field of dreams”

Project Highlights

Armenia Fund USA Aids “Children’s Home” Orphanage in Yerevan, Armenia: Providing the much needed heating system restoration and infrastructure support

Constructed in 1937 and currently located in the district of Nork, “Children’s Home” orphanage in Yerevan has been intended for children aged 6 years and under. Today, it gives shelter to about 80 children, with an average of 150 children annually passing through its portals. Once children reach the age of 6, they are relocated to other orphanages throughout Yerevan, Gavar, and other towns. When necessary, the orphanage in Gyumri, which specializes in the care of children with various neurological illnesses and disabilities, is accessed by children with special needs.



Performance at Nork Orphanage

Yerevan winters can be brutally cold with the winds of the surrounding Ararat and Aragats mountains piercing Soviet-era stone structures which house most of the city’s institutionalized children. But with their hands tied by the socio-economic realities of a recovering Armenia, many orphanages struggle daily with critical needs such as overcrowding, poor plumbing/sanitation, and lack of heat. That is why Liana Karapetian, director of the “Children’s Home”, was so grateful when Armenia Fund USA – through the generosity of Agop Giritliyan– was able to come

alongside the “Children’s Home” in order to address the serious need of a reliable heating system.

The outdated system from Soviet times had not been working since 1989, and repairing it would have cost more than developing a new system for the orphanage. Challenged to sufficiently heat the home for the children, Director Liana Karapetian had previously been forced to rely on electricity—which then presented severe budgetary challenges. But now, through Agop Giritliyan’s gift and Armenia Fund USA’s efforts, a brand-new system utilizes natural gas— a more economical and reliable resource for heat.



A little girl performing a traditional Armenian dance at Nork Orphanage

Donor Spotlight: “Why I give to Armenia Fund USA”

“Dear Armenia Fund USA,

I have two reasons for giving to Armenia Fund USA. The first one is the more emotional: my family had always dreamed of eventually settling in Armenia. We were spared the agony of the 1946-1948 emigrations, but there was always this nagging feeling of a duty not fulfilled.

On a different track, I have vividly etched in my memory the reaction of my late wife, Anoush, at your first telethon when, eyes blazing, she turned to me and in the most emphatic manner declared ‘we have to give also!’ Thus, the limited amounts I send come with a feeling of giving on behalf of people dear to me but no longer with me.

The second reason has a much more rational explanation. It is extremely difficult to choose between the fairly large number of requests from Armenian charities. My decision has been to use some logic and discipline and

give to the one that will do the maximum good for the maximum number of people with minimum overhead. I do have a few pang of conscience when I ignore requests from very worthy causes, but the logic I follow is that Armenia Fund, by concentrating on major infrastructure projects and keeping strict controls, is fulfilling an immensely useful task in preparing Armenia for the future. If that small and besieged country has to survive at all, it will do so only through projects that will enable it to become self-sustaining.

No matter how many soup kitchens we provide and how many trees we plant, it will be the roads, sewage plants and other very basic services that will give our Armenians a fair shot at maintaining our only remaining gene pool. I must also add that seeing your modest offices (dare I say Spartan?) in a not very posh neighborhood, where just a handful of people take care of the work has reinforced my feeling that my money is being well spent indeed!”

-by Harry Djamdjian, New York

