THEME: Urbanization & healthy cities – Urbanisation & villes saines

ENTRETIEN/INTERVIEW
Mr. Sergey Sobyanin, the Mayor of Moscow City

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Copenhagen – European Green Capital 2014

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Urbanization
Des racines, des ailes

On l’aime, on la quitte, elle nous manque, on y retourne.

La majorité des citadins tisse des liens particuliers avec leur ville, parfois émotionnels les ramenant vers le passé et des lieux précis, parfois les projetant vers le futur, en nourrissant des projets d’avenir pour leur proches ou le développement de leur ville.

Préserver l’àme des villes et leur identité culturelle est la tâche à laquelle s’attelle l’UNESCO depuis 70 ans en sauveguardant le patrimoine matériel et immatériel de l’humanité, car c’est au cœur de notre héritage culturel que nous puissions nos racines identitaires.

Développer leur ville pour améliorer le bien-être des citadins, tout en évitant de compromettre son développement économique, est la mission que se sont donnés certains maires de grandes villes, comme ceux de Moscow ou de Curitiba au Brésil qui n’hésitent pas à se lancer dans des projets novateurs, revisiter la distribution d’espaces verts ou faire appel à des architectes avant-gardistes.

Rassembler les citadins autour d’un projet unificateur permet d’atténuer les clivages pour que la ville de demain réponde aux besoins de ses habitants.

On l’aime, elle nous ressemble, on ne la quitte plus, on y reste.
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Cities have been centres of creation, innovation and change since the dawn of history. The different morphologies of urban settlements testify to the lives, social practices, spiritual and aesthetic aspirations of their inhabitants and their interaction with the environment, notably the landscape of the site in which towns developed and available building materials.

RONI AMELAN
Over centuries – millennia in some cases – these interactions led to the crystallization of heritage gems such as Rome, Kyoto, Timbuktu, Mexico or Cairo, to name but a few of the hundreds of urban heritage sites featured on the World Heritage List.

It is not surprising then that urban monuments, built ensembles and historic city centres together account for more than half the 759 cultural sites inscribed on the World Heritage List to date, i.e. properties which countries have committed to preserve for future generations.

These inscriptions are carried out by an independent body, the World Heritage Committee, which is in charge of implementing the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the international agreement that underpins UNESCO’s World Heritage Programme.

The Convention and its Operational Guidelines qualify what criteria must be met to merit inclusion on UNESCO’s World Heritage List and, over the past four decades, the Committee’s 21 elected members have become increasingly precise in their demands regarding how World Heritage should be preserved, notably heritage situated in urban environments.

The dynamic forces of the economy, culture and arts which led to the creation of the heritage of
the past must not be prevented from constructing new bold edifices that may well become the heritage of tomorrow.

UNESCO runs a specific programme on cities and World Heritage\(^1\) intended to find the most harmonious possible way to allow World Heritage cities to pursue their development while preserving their heritage. Indeed, nobody thinks that the hustle and bustle of living cities should be replaced by the sound of tour guides lecturing tourists around the streets of historic theme parks.

It is worth recalling that when the Eiffel Tower was built more than a hundred years ago, outraged Parisians protested that no artists worth their salt would ever again paint the city of lights. Now the Eiffel Tower has become one of the chief attractions of Paris, visited by people from all over the world who admire, climb and photograph it. Indeed, the Eiffel Tower is part of the area of Paris that is inscribed on the World Heritage List.

When Vienna adopted an ambitious modern development plan for its Historic Centre, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2001, the Austrian authorities incurred the displeasure of the World Heritage Committee. It warned that the property could be taken off the List because the new building project would undermine the features for which the city had been inscribed.

UNESCO has been working to sensitize conservationists and urban developers around the world about these issues and the World Heritage Committee has been able to convince some countries and cities to alter plans deemed incompatible with heritage preservation: thus the low skyline of St Petersburg was preserved from the planned construction of a huge tower very close to the city centre that is inscribed on the World Heritage List. Likewise, the city of Cologne whose Cathedral, inscribed on the World Heritage List, was spared the humiliation of being dwarfed by high rises that threatened to change the city’s ancient skyline beyond recognition.

Through the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, the lessons of urban World Heritage preservation are being learned by professionals around the world. Through seminars and workshops, UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre is sharing these lessons with professionals; bringing architects and conservationists somewhat closer to reconciling their different, often autonomous, priorities.

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Мы берем лучшее из практики мировой урбанистики

Interview with Sergei Sobyanin, Moscow Mayor
Интервью с Сергеем Собяниным, Мэром г. Москвы

Moscow is one of the rapidly developing megalopolis of the world with almost 12 mln population. As many other big cities, it is growing at a fast pace and has to grapple with many challenges, from environment protection to preservation of cultural heritage.

See the full text of the interview in Russian on p. 10

Moscow has always been a city of opportunities for many people. So it was for the present Mayor of the Russian capital. It was years ago, when little Serezha, at that time a schoolboy, came to Moscow for the first time with his father from his native village of Nyaksimvol in Siberia. The brightest impression of that period was Moscow metro – a beautiful underground city. Today Mr. Sergey Sobyanin manages both underground and aboveground cities and is proud to say that
the first one will expand by 2020 by 150 km of new lines to ensure 90% of Moscow residents live in close vicinity to metro stations.

The city-planning strategy of the Moscow’s Mayor dwells on the combination of world’s best urbanization practices and local innovations designed to address specific problems of the city. Moscow today is a city with no slums and almost zero unemployment which makes it a more secure place. A modern central system of video surveillance covers almost the whole city from the public places to the entrances of apartment buildings and enables to prevent and rapidly solve crimes.

Moscow is a healthier city with average life expectancy 75-76 years. The backbone of the city’s health system are public clinics which have been recently modernized and provide free services under the nation-wide medical insurance programme. Online appointment forms helped solve queuing problems.

Moscow is a home to many historical buildings and monuments. Three of them are on the UNESCO world heritage list: Moscow Kremlin and Red Square, Ensemble of the Novodevichy Convent, and the Church of the Ascension in Kolomenskoye. All of them have been restored in line with the UNESCO guidelines and are open to millions of tourists. A new modern urban trend of the Moscow Government is the development of pedestrian itineraries both in peripheral areas and in the center: a new city park in the historical district of Zaryadye by the side of Kremlin will open soon on the shores of the Moscow River.

With the upcoming sustainable development goals of post-2015 era, Moscow is ready to embark on a sustainable future. The main goal here is to improve quality of life by improving environment and reducing the density of dwellings in urban area.

In recent years, the city territory has increased almost 2.5 times, mainly in the South West. The Mayor’s plan is to create compact zones both for business and comfortable residence while keeping the greenbelt intact.

Besides managing his daily challenging Mayor’s chores, Mr. Sobyanin is a frequent visitor of Moscow green areas and famous Moscow city parks – Gorky park, Sokolniki, VDNKh Exhibition Centre Park, Izmailovo, Losiny Ostrov. These are the places where people come after work to breathe fresh air, do exercise, stroll with their families and friends on a nice weekend evening, the places where positive emotions are felt stronger and smiles are more frequent.

After all, the Mayor of Moscow City is truly convinced that a comfort city is a place where one feels happy and lives in harmony with oneself and the others.
Наталия де Франсиско (Шаповалова)
Вы — коренной северянин, родились в селе Никсимволь Тюменской области. Когда Вы в первый раз приехали в Москву? И что Вас больше всего поразило в этом городе? Как сильно он изменился с тех пор?
Впервые я приехал в Москву в школьные годы вместе с отцом. Больше всего поразило метро — целый подземный город, красивый и ярко освещенный. С тех пор Москва, конечно, сильно изменилась. Население города выросло практически вдвое — с 6 до 12-миллионов человек. Хотя и тогда, больше 40 лет назад, и сегодня — Московский метрополитен был и останется одной из крупнейших систем общественного транспорта в мире. Каждый день им пользуется 7 млн. человек. Используя опыт других мегаполисов и своих собственных наработок, мы активно развиваем московскую подземку.
К 2020 году планируется построить еще 150 км новых линий и 70 станций. В результате более 90% москвичей будут жить в шаговой доступности от станций метро.

2. Сегодня Москва — один из крупнейших финансовых и экономических центров в мире и, кроме того, один из самых насыщенных. Как Ваш градостроительный план решает задачи обеспечения безопасности и стандартов здравоохранения для различных категорий населения — людей разного возраста, пола, достатка, как местных жителей, так и приезжих?
К счастью, за последние десятилетия Москва превратилась в успешный и бурно развивающийся мегаполис. Жизнь в нашем городе превратилась в успешный и бурно развивающийся бизнес-район. Например, число убийств за последние 10 лет снизилось в 3 раза. А распространённость таких преступлений, как, например, карманные кражи или угонь машины в Москве намного меньше, чем в других крупных европейских столицах. Правительство Москвы уделяет большое внимание обеспечению безопасности жителей города и туристов. Мы активно инвестируем в улучшение материально-технической базы московской полиции. За последние годы в Москве была создана современная централизованная система видеонаблюдения, охватившая подъезды жилых домов, дворы, образовательные учреждения и места массового нахождения граждан. Всего в Москве установлено свыше 120 тысяч видеокамер.
С помощью этой системы в городе раскрываются тысячи самых разных преступлений. Кроме того, появление видеокамер стало профилактической мерой, сдерживающей криминальные посягательства на жизнь, здоровье и собственность граждан. С помощью этой системы в городе раскрываются тысячи самых разных преступлений. Кроме того, появление видеокамер стало профилактической мерой, сдерживающей криминальные посягательства на жизнь, здоровье и собственность граждан.
Помимо этого, мы активно занимаемся вопросами общественной безопасности. В Москве, как и в других регионах России, городской поликлинике платят госпиталями, городскими поликлиниками. За последние 3 года мы провели модернизацию этих учреждений, оснастив их самым современным медицинским оборудованием: ангиографами, томографами, УЗИ, лабораториями и так далее. Были созданы удобные сервисы для пациентов, например, электронная запись к врачам. Гражданам России медицинская помощь в городских учреждениях оказывается бесплатно и улучшённая по общероссийской программе обязательного медицинского страхования. За последние 3 года мы провели модернизацию этих учреждений, оснастив их самым современным медицинским оборудованием: ангиографами, томографами, УЗИ, лабораториями и так далее. Были созданы удобные сервисы для пациентов, например, электронная запись к врачам. Гражданам России медицинская помощь в городских учреждениях оказывается бесплатно и улучшённая по общероссийской программе обязательного медицинского страхования.

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Ко мне, как продавцу, которые делали все возможное для благоустройства города. В Москве — практически нет безработных, и есть множество возможностей для профессиональной самореализации. В Москве — практически нет безработных, и есть множество возможностей для профессиональной самореализации. В Москве — практически нет безработных, и есть множество возможностей для профессиональной самореализации. В Москве — практически нет безработных, и есть множество возможностей для профессиональной самореализации.
Церковь Вознесения находится на территории музея-заповедника "Коломенское", одного из крупнейших в Москве. Масштабная реставрация, завершенная в 2007 году, позволила открыть этот памятник для посещения туристами. Интерьер церкви можно осмотреть с мая по сентябрь.

В ходе работ по реставрации и охране объектов Всемирного культурного наследия Россия полностью учитывает рекомендации ЮНЕСКО.

ООН активно работает в сфере устойчивого развития. Какие Вы видите возможности и новые пути развития для города Москвы в этот важный момент перехода от Цели развития тысячелетия (устойчивость окружающей среды) к более обширной программе Целей устойчивого развития после 2015 года?

По индексу развития человеческого потенциала Москва входит в группу регионов очень высокого уровня. Достаточно сказать, что средняя продолжительность жизни в Москве составляет 75-76 лет, больше 40% взрослых москвичей имеют высшее образование.

Устойчивое развитие для Москвы – это, прежде всего, повышение качества жизни за счет улучшения экологических показателей и возможности реализовать себя и быть полезным обществу. Жить в гармонии с самим собой и окружающими.

Есть ли другой город на земле, в котором Вы чувствовали бы себя так же комфортно, как в городе, в котором Вы являетесь государственным деятелем? В чем заключается секрет комфортного пребывания? Мне нравится не только Москва, но и весь мир. Но по-настоящему комфортно ощущаю себя – если говорить о столицах, мегаполисах, – только в Москве.

Что касается "секрета", то любому человеку комфортно, наверное, там, где он счастлив.

И в заключении: не могли бы Вы "провести" нас по Вашим самым любимым местам в Москве? Куда обычно ходят москвичи?

Мои любимые места совпадают с предпочтениями многих москвичей. Это парки и пешеходные зоны. В общем, объекты общественного пространства, благоустройство которых является важнейшим приоритетом Правительства Москвы. Абсолютное большинство москвичей отдыхают в больших московских парках – Парке Горького, Сокольниках, ВДНХ, Измайлово, Лосином острое.

Москва не была и не является модельным городом, но в ней есть открытая, дружелюбная среда, возможности реализовать себя и быть полезным обществу. Жить в гармонии с самим собой и окружающими. Прекрасно, когда внести свою лепту в общий процесс устойчивого развития города.

UN Special выражает благодарность за помощь в подготовке интервью офису ВОЗ в Российской Федерации в лице его специального руководителя д-ра Луиджи Мильорини и его заместителя, сотрудника по координации и связи, д-ра Татьяны Колпаковой, а также пресс-службе Мэра и Правительства Москвы и пресс-секретарь Мэра г-же Гульнаре Пеньковой и её коллективу.
Did you ever wonder how urban spaces, design and architecture can impact our emotions and lives? Many researchers have confirmed that ambient sounds affect human behaviors, creativity cognition and productivity too. Lights, colors, temperatures and noises are combined elements able to influence our mood and consequently our relations, perception and activities. It is important to be aware of that, to get the most out of it and make the ambient become the added value to our daily life. To learn more, UN Special is presenting the interview to architect Stephanie Akkaoui, founder of AKKA and author of the “Architecting Interaction” vision.

**What is the influence of architecture on human behavior?**
More and more it is becoming recognized and proven that space does affect people together with others elements such as: colors, smell, noise, sound, temperature (if it is too hot you might fall asleep). Open spaces and busy cafés with moderate noise level in the background, for instance, are considered as special containers to trigger our brain to “think outside the box” and fire up creativity. It has been studied that those environments encourage thinking outside the usual mind’s patterns. Some background noises, as those of coffee machine or people chatting are distracting enough to facilitate new connections and new patterns of thinking, which opens up the way to creativity.

**As author of “Architecting interaction”, can you explain the meaning of this vision?**
Architecting Interaction is the vision about the real responsibility of designers. The emphasis of this approach is on human interaction. Architecture is only a tool that can help facilitate interaction. The term “architecting” refers to an ongoing process, while the word “interaction” is the action happening in between different entities, be it space, objects or people. All our actions are interactions happening inside a space; that could be a room, a garden, a street or else.

The role of architecture is to create a context that enables successful interactions. On a higher level, these interactions facilitate a comprehensive vision where things are interconnected and interdependent. Indeed, in our globalized world, we cannot look at things in an isolated way anymore; rather we need to shift to a comprehensive view. According to AKKA, “that fragmentation is at the root of all our global problems today.

To tackle today’s challenges, to create opportunities in today’s climate, we need to shift from fragmented thinking to “Comprehensive Thinking”.

In this perspective it becomes necessary to extend the word architecture to architecting, to refer to all the movements around our relations, which means considering “architecture” as something lively instead of static and as a great means to encourage interactions.
What is the extra value of the “Interacting” approach to architecture?

Space affects us and we are always in a ‘space’. As architects we need to be aware of that, be able to use it, to improve conditions and deliver innovation. Creating a space means being responsible for its consequences. For AKKA each strategic decision about an intervention is taken to encourage positive consequences. We want to produce spaces that are conducive, respond to people’s needs and stimulate interaction, which is the added value of any space. Think about sugar for example. Its chemical formula is made of Carbon C₁₂, Hydrogen H₂₂ and Oxygen O₁₁. If we look at each of these three elements separately, none of them are or contain sugar; only when they come together, they become sugar. That is the sweet spot happening when things come together, the real added value. This is all coming from nature which is a great inspirer that should make us stop and think about it.

One of the goals of “Interacting Architecture” is to involve the final users to get insights. Why?

Architecture is not about imagining spaces, it’s a service to be used by people. Architecture is a work of art, which has a social responsibility intrinsically related to it, because it is for people to live in. People, by using the spaces know things as users, that we, as architects don’t. It is about getting insights from people and different pieces of knowledge, to complete the whole vision. Every single contribution comes together like in a puzzle. Each piece is fundamental for the final picture which comes together in a harmonious result thanks to the architect’s expertise.

How architects involve people in their work?

There is a curious story to share about an architect who had to design a University campus. She designed all the departments and built them on site and contrary to people’s expectations, she did not design any routes to connect those buildings. Instead, she planted the whole campus with grass. After the first semester, paths had formed in the grass. She then came back and paved them. Result? None of the paths were straight. The uncompleted design invited people to participate, and to take part in the project.

How do people respond to this involvement?

Obviously there are various levels of involvement for different people and at different stages of the process described. Most users are delighted by this approach, since they now have a say in a space they use every day. Sometimes, individuals involved are surprised or even detached since they might think that space is none of their concerns and do not know what to say about such matters. This is not due to the fact that they have no thoughts about it, but rather due to the fact that they are inexperienced in formulating such thoughts, simply because they have never been asked for it. They unconsciously know enough about their use of space but they are not aware to express it through words. Sometimes working spaces are considered as places to get the job done and leave, which demands only to be clean and comfortable. Beyond basic requirements, it is not about what the space looks like rather what it can do for people. In this context, space, as an inspiring container, turns to be the added value offered.
Copenhagen
European Green Capital 2014

We all want to live in an environment which offers a good quality of life – free from air pollution, with good sanitation and hygiene services, is safe and secure and provides the health care and medicines we need when we are sick. Copenhagen, home to many UN staff (UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS, WFP, UN Women and WHO) offers all of these, and in addition has just been voted European Green Capital 2014.

VERONICA Riemer (WHO Staff Association)
Among the 18 cities which applied for the award, Copenhagen was given the top marks. It was assessed on the basis of twelve areas of special interest: Transport, wastewater management, energy efficiency, environmental management, noise, air quality, waste, water consumption, biodiversity, green growth, climate and green areas. In particular, the jury were impressed by the efforts in Copenhagen to get more people to cycle, and to be carbon neutral by 2025.

The UN City complex in Copenhagen’s Free Port, which forms the central location for all United Nations organizations based in Copenhagen, demonstrates the United Nations’ commitment to promote environmental sustainability though green building. Designed by Danish architect firm 3XN, the office complex contains a number of energy-reducing and eco-friendly features that control the amount of energy used for heating, cooling, lighting and ventilation. To reduce pollution from transportation and encourage employees to cycle to work, the UN City has also made more than 680 bicycle racks available.

In 2012, the sustainable features earned the UN complex the “Green Building Award”. More than 1,400 solar panels have been installed on the roof of the building to support the goal of generating renewable energy, while seawater is pumped into the basement to act as a refrigerant in the building’s cooling system. Furthermore, water use in the building’s toilets, kitchens and showers is predicted to be reduced by more than 60%, largely thanks to the reuse of rainwater. It has been estimated that the UN City will capture an average of almost 3 million litres of rainwater annually, almost enough to flush the entire building’s toilets for a year.

The overarching message that the Green Capital award scheme aims to communicate is that Europeans have a right to live in healthy urban areas. Cities should therefore strive to improve the
quality of life of their citizens and reduce their impact on the global environment. This message is brought together in the Award’s slogan “Green cities – fit for life”.

Copenhagen has placed public-private partnerships at the core of its approach to eco-innovation and sustainable employment. The city works with companies, universities and organisations in dedicated forums to develop and implement green growth. Its North Harbour project, for example, will include a “Green laboratory” that will focus on eco-technologies, a model that can be transferred to other towns and cities. This example of green economic development tackling environmental, economic and social concerns has high potential for replication in the region around the city and beyond.

Communication actions to engage citizens are very effective, as Copenhageners feel they are part of the solution. Faith Kilford Vorting, Communications Officer at WHO Copenhagen who has adopted the Danish nationality explains that “greenness” is a lifestyle choice that most Copenhageners take to heart. “Living in Copenhagen we have many green spaces; parks, the proximity to the country side and sea, and clear air. The increasing availability and popularity of organic food, the use of recyclable energy and energy conservation, swimming in the ocean (summer and winter), and – of course – riding your bike everywhere (summer and winter) means that people are more than just environmentally aware. “Being green” is a natural part of everyday life”.

Her WHO colleague Rebecca Hodge, who hails from the US, says biking is one of the best aspects of living in Denmark – “In the United States we drive cars everywhere. I do not like exercising to exercise, but exercise with the purpose of transportation is my ideal way of working out – now there’s always a part of my day where I feel active. I also think it’s really refreshing to be able to be outside for a little bit every day, especially when most of the time Copenhageners are indoors working”.

And how do the city’s residents feel about winning the award? “It is the recognition of the leaps and hurdles this city has taken to achieve its current status of green-ness” said Kristiana Berriochoa, another WHO staff member. “The city has worked incredibly hard to achieve its level of environmental awareness. A Green Business Network has been established offering free advice to companies wishing to reduce their energy consumption. There are numerous organic gourmet restaurants, guided “green” tours of the city, as well as environmental centres splattered throughout neighbourhoods”.

“As a visitor to the country, you feel the magic that Copenhagen has to offer from the moment you arrive” she enthuses. “Illuminated by charm, it is packed with cafés, shops and endless winding streets full of historical significance. It is essentially a perfect European mixture of old world and new – you simply cannot find another city like Copenhagen in Europe, no matter how hard you try”.

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National Model United Nations
A great opportunity for talented brilliant students from all over the world

GIOVANNA MARIA DE MARCO
National Model United Nation is one of the largest simulation conferences organized every year by UN. It brings together more than 5,000 students from all over the world. It is a unique chance for students to live an international experience, to learn about multilateral diplomacy and to discuss current topics such as climate change and many other challenging global matters. Students try to understand international matters with a view ultimately to becoming informed future business and political leaders.

The National Model simulation represents a good chance for cultural integration, it reflects the diversity of United Nations and offers a direct opportunity to learn about real collaboration. According to Francesca Rattalino, Director of ESCP Torino (one of the best ranked business schools in the world), “having the student participating at such an high international and competitive environment like the NMUN is a perfect training ground for students who have chosen a path which is multi-cultural and very challenging and this has been a priceless opportunity for them to come face to face with this reality, that so far, has been limited to the classroom. ESCP Europe Torino is very proud to send to the UN Model some of our best students. It is a great honour to be able to participate as it will also be in the future”. One of the coaches, Professor Patrick O’Sullivan, who helps to prepare the ESCP Torino students for the NMUN experience believes that “it offers to business students an invaluable opportunity to immerse themselves in the minutiae of international politics and diplomacy, fields in which they often have little or no preparation or experience and with which they tend to have still less patience even though international politics and diplomacy will hugely condition the business world in which they will operate in the future after completion of their studies”. The UN Special magazine met some Italian students of the Master in Management to collect their impressions about NMUN.

What does the NMUN represent today for young students?
NMUN is a unique experience to join a multilateral environment, where future leaders cooperate to tackle global issues. Thanks to a first-hand experience, the simulation represents both a chance to understand how international diplomacy actually works and a chance for networking with young, idealist and ambitious students with diverse backgrounds. Many of the students appeared very motivated in having a chance to work at the UN and also to make one day a real difference through their involvement. It is difficult to list all the aspects that make the NMUN a truly valuable experience since there are so many ways in which it contributes to personal development.

What were your expectations about NMUN before the big simulation in NY?
We were expecting a smaller context, differently organized. Once we were there, we were pleasantly surprised to see a large number of delegates very impressively prepared and interested in relevant, international subjects. The simulation was highly demanding and formal, contrary to our expectations. The enthusiasm was contagious and students seemed to be very confident.

Attending the NMUN must be a unique opportunity to prepare the leaders of tomorrow. How can you define the experience?
It was definitely a very inspiring and challenging experience at the same time. We had strict deadlines and worked for many hours sharing perspectives with students from all over the world. As a group, we learned that sometimes knowledge and education are not enough to solve demanding worldwide matters. Often situations require to be managed with tact, negotiation, interpersonal, leadership skills, and a good public speaking attitude too. During the simulation we felt that competitiveness was high, therefore we tried to create a collaborative environment. That perception together with our effort to foster cooperative behavior was fundamental to move on from our small impression to a larger and macro level view, and in this way we realized the importance of the collaboration between leaders to achieve common goals when global issues are at stake, in the real decisional process of the UN. There is no doubt, that NMUN is the most impressive role-play simulation conference ever seen, which is also a wonderful example of respect among and promotion of different cultures.

NMUN is like a melting pot of languages and cultures together to face solutions for global matters. Usually, international meetings require some knowledge about cross cultural differences and strategies for mutual and successful understanding. What role does diplomacy play in such context?
Communication plays a crucial role in international diplomacy. All participants at NMUN shared the same values of cooperation and mutual respect which made exchange easy. Despite students gathered in New York coming from each corner of the world, the similarity of age between all participants facilitated mutual understanding. Indeed, cultural differences were not at all perceived as barrier during the whole debate. Diplomatic communication becomes the common language that allows all countries to express their vision from which hopefully can arise one single voice that defends global principles.

■
Voluntourism: Doing Good or Doing Bad?

NIENKE BOSKMA, OMAR BAWA

When I was seventeen I travelled with two friends to the Philippines to help a project that builds communities for the poor. It was not until years later, when I grew out of my teenager naivety, that I started doubting the impact of my being there and “doing good”. I struggled during the experience. It was my first time outside Europe, I had zero knowledge of the country, and I barely did anything the first week because I was fighting a horrible jet lag and had to get used to the humidity and heat. I had a hard time adapting to the culture: I had to dress more conservatively, and was not allowed to do the heavy work such as digging and lifting, because that was a man’s job, as the project leader told me. And then there was this so-called “white saviour complex”. Everywhere we went, we were called Americans, while none of us actually were Americans. On Christmas Day we spent the day handing out bags with rice to families, and they would not stop thanking us. This made me feel so incredibly uncomfortable, because the truth is; I had no idea where the rice came from.

So, how good did I actually do? Did I make a lasting impact on the lives of the people there? I don’t think so. Did I learn something? Oh yes. Years later I went on to study international law and human rights at university, and this choice was largely due to my trip to the Philippines. I was confronted with a completely different world, with a culture so different from mine, and with people who suffered so much more than I will ever know or understand. But is that the purpose of volunteering? To learn something about yourself and your place in this world, rather than truly helping those who need it?

I was a 17-year old girl with no specific skills. I did not know how to construct a house, properly paint a wall or plant a tree. I did not know the culture or the language, and up to this day (6 years later) I still remember the two words that were said to us the most in Tagalog: *maganda* (pretty), and *salamat* (thank you). Most of the time I felt that I was slowing down the process rather than contributing to it. It would have been so much more effective to spend the money of my plane ticket on locally hired construction builders and gardeners, in order to promote the local economy and employment, and that way make a lasting difference.

Still, I think that volunteering is good. All help, even if it is just a little, can contribute to improving the lives of those who need it. It also raises awareness among young people from the developed world, a lesson that they hopefully will pass on when they return home. However, we need to be wary of the growing voluntourism market where the main focus is on the volunteer’s experience, rather than the needs of the communities. **Volunteers can take away the jobs of the locals that could do the work so much better than them.** Hiring locals can contribute to the development of the country and reduce unemployment. To that extent it might be better to donate money so that these people can get paid, rather than spending the money on a plane ticket to go to the country yourself. Another factor is that the volunteers often are young and inexperienced, with no familiarity to the country and its culture. Only when there is a strong knowledge of the background of the country and the root causes of its problems and how to address those, will there be lasting results.
Qui est le plus vert?

On assiste, depuis des années, à une multiplication de labels verts, environnementaux, écologiques, durables, bio, éthiques ou équitables.

OLIVIER BORIE

À ce jour, le site, ecolabel index¹, recense près de 450 écolabels dans le monde contre 378 il y a trois ans. Ce décompte n’est, bien entendu, pas exhaustif, et ce chiffre continue à augmenter dans toutes sortes de secteurs: matières premières, alimentation, énergie, transports, vêtements, voyages, événements, papier, meubles, peintures, produits ménagers, habitat, etc.

Ces labels servent à garantir et différencier les qualités environnementales, sociales ou économiques d’un produit, que ce soit dans sa filière de production ou pour ses qualités intrinsèques. Ils sont généralement volontaires, payants et vérifiables. Leurs cahiers des charges et les critères choisis sont variables, rendant leur comparaison difficile: les labels énergétiques ou de commerce équitable se valent-ils tous?

Cette multitude et cette complexité occasionnent de la confusion, voire du scepticisme. Même à l’ère de l’Internet mobile, peu d’entre nous ont la motivation, le temps ou même la compréhension nécessaires pour faire un choix en toute connaissance de cause.

La prise de conscience des enjeux du développement durable a favorisé l’émergence de labels et des certifications. Le secteur privé n’a pas tardé à saisir ces opportunités « d’autorégulation » en vue de développer des parts de marché. Parallèlement, les collectivités publiques conditionnent de plus en plus l’accès à leurs marchés à l’adoption de critères environnementaux et sociaux.

Pour illustrer cette tendance, le « State of Sustainability Initiatives », une étude publiée en janvier 2014 par une initiative conjointe de la CNUCED et de l’Institut international du Développement durable (IISD)², observe qu’en 2012, la croissance de la production de matières premières certifiées dans les seize secteurs étudiés a progressé, en moyenne de plus de 40%, c’est-à-dire vingt fois plus vite que dans le marché conventionnel! Les plus fortes hausses ont été observées dans le secteur de l’huile de palme, le sucre, le cacao et le coton. Des marchés de niche donnent le jour à des marques mondiales « mainstream ».

Les labels vont de l’allégation ou l’auto-proclamation, sans justification ni contrôle, au label certifié par une tierce partie indépendante, avec un cahier des charges précis, accessible et transparent. Certaines auto-déclarations sont chiffrées et documentées, ce qui permet leur vérification.

Un produit peut très bien n’être certifié que sur une seule de ses caractéristiques, sans prendre en compte sa filière ou son cycle de vie, c’est-à-dire de l’extraction des matières premières jusqu’à son élimination sous forme de déchet. Cela s’explique, en partie, par le fait qu’un label trop strict risque de limiter son marché potentiel. Difficile, en effet, de trouver le bon équilibre entre la commercialisation d’un produit et la protection de l’environnement.

Les différentes dimensions du développement durable entrent régulièrement en concurrence dans le choix des critères. Un produit certifié bio n’offre pas forcément de garanties sociales, et peut même avoir des impacts environnementaux négatifs résultant du mode de transport utilisé ou de son conditionnement.

Les labels sont élaborés et décernés aussi bien par des organismes publics que privés. Certains même se restreignent à leur propre enseigne. Ils ne sont donc pas officiellement reconnus, mais la plupart intègrent une ou plusieurs cautions environnementales, souvent des ONG qui jouissent, généralement, d’une bonne réputation auprès du public.

Leur certification reste soumise aux impératifs du marché, même si plusieurs organismes prennent la forme d’associations aux buts non lucratifs. De façon à être facilement repérables, ils se présentent le plus souvent sous la forme d’un nom et un logo reconnaissables.

La compétition entre les labels pour de nouveaux consommateurs, il s’agit de « faire autorité », paraître plus légitime que les autres en revendiquant l’antériorité, un cahier des charges rigoureux, le tout accompagné par des notions plus subjectives comme de « l’engagement » ou des valeurs.

On en arrive à certifier des organismes qui eux-mêmes délivrent des labels aux autres. C’est le cas du label ZEWO³ dont l’objectif est d’assurer la transparence des organisations d’utilité publique. ISEAL Alliance⁴, regroupe des organismes certificateurs dans le domaine de la durabilité engagés dans un processus commun d’amélioration continue. Le Global Ecolabelling Network⁵ fédère également des labels écologiques en vue, entre autres, d’encourager leur reconnaissance mutuelle, peut-être un premier pas vers une consolidation.

En dépit de certaines faiblesses, et même si nous avons plutôt tendance à les choisir en fonction de l’image qu’ils nous inspirent plutôt que pour les informations qu’ils nous donnent, les labels sont des repères utiles. Leur développement commercial rapide, favorisé par des taux de croissance et de rentabilité attrayants, facilite une accélération de la diffusion de critères de développement durable dans nos modes de consommation.

Toutefois, il faut veiller à ce que, plus que l’exacerbation d’une concurrence toujours plus poussée entre certifica- tions, l’objectif premier de la labellisation soit d’abord la poursuite d’un système de marché durable au service d’une économie verte.

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Les pierres se souviennent...

NATASHA DE FRANCISCO
Les Bouddhas à la chevelure d’inspiration grecque gardent les trésors de Gandhara dans le silence sacré du musée de Taxila. Les anciens murs de St Thaddeus, St Stepanos et Dzordzor au nord-ouest de l’Iran témoignent du mélange des cultures byzantine, orthodoxe et perse et les pierres de la ville de Zanzibar d’une fusion éclectique des influences africaine, arabe, indienne et européenne.

Pourquoi mentionner tous ces exemples? Pour rappeler que les cultures – matérielles ou immatérielles – ne se développent jamais dans l’isolement. Elles s’influencent, interagissent, parfois pacifiquement, parfois dans la douleur. Ce fut le cas aux siècles derniers, c’est toujours le cas aujourd’hui dans un monde de plus en plus globalisé, parfois déchiré par des conflits et de nouvelles formes de guerres entre les États et au sein même des sociétés civiles.

Lors des récents conflits armés en Syrie, Mali, Égypte, Lybie, et Iraq, quand des milliers de civils perdent leurs vies, la destruction de biens culturels peut être perçue comme mineure. Cependant, lorsqu’on y réfléchit, on réalise aïsement que la culture et l’être humain sont indissociables. À long terme, la destruction du patrimoine affecte les sociétés en les empêchant de se reconstruire car notre identité est dans sa culture qui fait partie intégrante de notre histoire.

Le patrimoine est porteur de valeurs et d’identités. C’est pour cette raison qu’il n’est pas une victime collatérale d’un conflit mais une cible directe et délibérée.

Mme Irina Bokova, Directrice générale de l’UNESCO (Organisation des Nations Unies pour l’Éducation, la Science et la Culture) a relayé ce message important le 16 avril 2014 lors de sa conférence publique à Genève (Uni Dufour).

Le travail remarquable que l’UNESCO effectue depuis septante ans n’est plus à rappeler. Afin d’assurer la protection du patrimoine dans les situations de conflit, elle dispose d’une multitude de moyens dont les plus essentiels sont:

1. la consolidation du cadre juridique: en d’autres termes, les conventions qui obligent les États à protéger leur patrimoine, et à en rendre compte;
2. la collaboration avec les responsables et les citoyens pour les sensibiliser et les informer de l’importance de la protection du patrimoine;

Grâce à sa coopération avec les pays et les citoyens, l’UNESCO a déjà ramené à la vie beaucoup de trésors mondiaux. Elle a reconstruit le vieux pont piéton de Mostar – le pont des amoureux – en Bosnie-Herzégovine qui fut détruit pendant la guerre civile; elle s’est engagée dans les travaux de restauration de la vallée de Bamiyan en Afghanistan et dans la reconstruction des mausolées de Tombouctou au Mali. Ce dialogue culturel nous rappelle que ce qui nous rassemble est plus fort que ce qui nous divise.

À l’université, notre vieux professeur d’arabe nous parlait souvent de Halab, de son histoire unique, de ses mosquées et de ses souks. C’était sa ville préférée où il avait vécu pendant de nombreuses années et où il rêvait de nous emmener et être notre guide. Mon professeur nous a quitté sans savoir que quatre ans plus tard la vieille ville d’Alep fut totalement ravagée. Je n’ai pas eu la chance de découvrir la ville d’Alep dans sa beauté originelle. Peut-être que grâce à l’UNESCO ce sera possible un jour.


La grande mosquée d’Alep après les violents combats entre les forces gouvernementales et les rebelles, Avril 2013

Photo: Aleppo Media Center
C’est avec une profonde tristesse que nous avons appris la terrible nouvelle de la mort tragique de notre collègue Yannick Gagneret, survenue au Népal sur les pentes du Makalu. Yannick faisait partie du Service de la Sécurité et de la sûreté de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève. Ses fonctions sont, de par leur nature, liées à de très hauts risques au sein de notre Organisation. Ce n’est pas au cours d’une mission officielle que Yannick nous a quitté, mais il a été emporté en vivant pleinement sa passion… jusqu’au bout.

Yannick Gagneret est né à Oyonnax (France) en 1975. Après ses études, il s’est engagé dans la Légion étrangère de l’Armée française. Il y est resté huit ans, autant d’années à se forger un physique et « surtout un mental » à toute épreuve. En 2005, il est entré au service de la Sécurité de l’ONUG. Ses collègues l’admi- raient pour son travail, ainsi que pour sa persévérance d’affronter les plus difficiles défis, sans les craindre ! Yannick a toujours aimé se surpasser. Il avait réussi à faire ce qui est au-delà du possible – conquérir l’un des plus hauts sommets du monde, en solitaire et sans oxygène !

Il avait réalisé de très beaux projets comme celui « Du Salève au Manaslu (8163 m, au Népal) » en équipe (automne 2013). Il s’était fixé de très hauts et difficiles objectifs : ascension en 2014 du Makalu (8463 m, le cinquième plus haut sommet du monde au Népal), en solitaire sans oxygène, et ensuite la traversée entre deux sommets de 8000 m au Pakistan, toujours sans oxygène. C’était sa préparation pour son gros objectif en 2015.

Et c’est ainsi qu’il s’est embarqué pour l’ascension du Makalu en avril 2014. Le Makalu est considéré par les alpinistes comme l’un des sommets les plus techniques de l’Himalaya, avec de nombreux passages difficiles (rocheux ou mixtes). De plus, l’itinéraire est soumis à divers contraintes, notamment les avalanches. Il avait débuté son ascension le 13 avril et sa dernière position connue datait du 30 avril. Le sort en a décidé autrement : il n’avait que 39 ans.

Il y a trois ans, il avait conquis le Pic Lénine perché à 7134 m au Kirghizistan, ensuite il s’est attaqué aux pentes du Broad Peak à 8051 m (frontière Chine-Pakistan). Il a mis la barre toujours plus haut. Après le Broad Peak, il a révélé du Lhotse (le quatrième plus haut sommet du monde, à la frontière du Népal-Tibet (Chine), et il l’a honoré en 2013 en deuxième tentative: 8516 mètres, en solitaire et sans oxygène.

De là, il avait confié sur son journal de bord:

« Je regarde mon altimètre : 8300 m, 8400 m, 8500 m… La cornée de mes yeux est gelée. Dix mètres plus haut, j’arrive sur une plateforme minuscule. Il me faut plusieurs secondes pour réaliser que je suis au sommet. Je suis seul sur la paroi du Lhotse, face à l’Everest. Je suis conscient de vivre un moment unique. J’avais imaginé ce moment des centaines de fois… La réalité est différente : je ne ressens aucune émotion… Une seule pensée en tête : vite redescendre pour retrouver un taux d’oxygène viable. Un alpiniste et son sherpa arrivent juste à ce moment. Ils ont l’air surpris de me voir ici sans oxygène. L’alpiniste hurle au travers de son masque à oxy- gène « Congratulations ! », je n’ai même pas la force de répondre, je lui tape juste sur l’épaule en guise de remerciement. La descente est interminable. Je suis épuisé et je m’arrête toutes les deux minutes pour m’allonger sur le sol. Je mange de la neige pour me désaltérer. Il faut rester concentré ! »

Il avait réalisé de très beaux projets comme celui « Du Salève au Manaslu (8163 m, au Népal) » en équipe (automne 2013). Il s’était fixé de très hauts et difficiles objectifs : ascension en 2014 du Makalu (8463 m, le cinquième plus haut sommet du monde au Népal), en solitaire sans oxygène, et ensuite la traversée entre deux sommets de 8000 m au Pakistan, toujours sans oxygène. C’était sa préparation pour son gros objectif en 2015.

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L’équipe de UN Special et le Conseil de Coordination du personnel de l’ONUG pré- sentent à sa famille, ses amis et ses proches leurs sincères condoléances.
Tribute to Anja Niedringhaus

UN Special and UNOG Coordination Council join to the deepest condolencies expressed by the Geneva Association of the United Nations correspondents (ACANU) to John Heilprin, the Associated Press Chief in Switzerland and the Vice-President of ACANU over the tragic death of Anja Niedringhaus, photographer for the Associated Press, who was killed in an attack in Kabul on 4 April 2014.

Anja Niedringhaus, German photojournalist, was based in Geneva. She spent her life documenting wars. She never allowed the difficult job to get the best of her. Her colleagues describe “how she deserved respect as a professional. Her tenacity and commitment to telling the human story in some of the world’s most dangerous settings set a benchmark for us all”.

Bosnia. Kosovo. Libya. Iraq. Pakistan. Afghanistan. She covered every major conflict, every massive world-changing event of the past 25 years. From her colleagues we know about her talent and her extraordinary courage. Her talent earned her a Pulitzer Prize in 2005, as part of a team of AP photographers covering the Iraq War. “She was unflinchingly brave. Not in a cavalier way, but more like ‘This is very dangerous. But it’s important. It has to be done. It has to be covered. Who else is going to do it? I’m going.’”, described her colleagues-photographers. She had a special love for Afghanistan and its people. She traveled to Afghanistan numerous times, photographing events from 2001 until today, sending photos from Kandahar, documenting a decades-long story like the Afghanistan War and telling people’s stories of the war-torn nation through her photos. Her essay last November, called “Afghanistan: Seen through the Lens of Anja Niedringhaus” was highly praised, she spent almost the whole year there and then came back to Geneva.

Several weeks before the tragedy, she returned to Afghanistan to cover the upcoming national elections, i.e. photographing people in the run-up to the presidential election: women and men registering for voting, with hope for the better future of their country. And to report on the people’s fragile hope that normal life might someday return to the region.

At the time of her death, Anja Niedringhaus had been traveling together with AP’s longtime Afghanistan correspondent in a convoy carrying election workers to Khost in the far eastern part of the country. In the Tani district, where election ballots were to be distributed, they waited on the door to a police compound, part of the routine. At the post, a policeman lifted his gun and began firing at the car carrying the journalists. Kathy Gannon, 60, survived, but Anja Niedringhaus died instantly. Earlier this year, our UN family in Afghanistan were a direct target of a cruel terrorist attack, which took the lives of four staff members working for UNAMA, UNICEF and IMF, along with another 17 victims.

On behalf of UN Special and UNOG Coordination Council (by Evelina Rioukhina and Ian Richards)
Urbanization, a blessing not a curse

“Continually creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and developing to their maximum potential”.

MAHMOUD HAMMOUD, DR. AHMED ZOUITEN

Urbanization and healthy cities have roots as deep as the early 900s when al-Razi (Rhazes) was instrumental in determining the location in Baghdad of the hospital founded by ‘Adud al-Dawlah, for he is said to have chosen its position by hanging pieces of meat in various quarters of the city and finding the quarter in which the putrefaction of the meat was the slowest. In 1986, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined healthy cities as those that are “continually creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and developing to their maximum potential”.

One of the most important aspects of a healthy city is to take into consideration health and sustainability standards at its very conception. 120 companies, many from the Middle East, took part in the CityScape 2014 exposition, indicating the presence in the region of a big market to compete for. The Arab world is changing, though slowly and not uniformly, and is becoming aware of the importance of future healthy cities that are sustainable. Masdar in Abu Dhabi is a good example.

There is a great discrepancy on the ground between the WHO recommendations on healthy cities and how governments follow, if and when they do. In the last two decades, we have seen dazzling exponential growth of urbanization in many countries in the region. Most cities lack actual infrastructure to provide indispensable services to their inhabitants. More alarming is the fact that they are also unable to build infrastructure at the swift rate of urbanization.

In 2010, the WHO warned that for the first time in history, more than 50% of people live in urban areas. By 2050, 70% would, potentially creating an array of unprecedented challenges, such as new lifestyles and standards of living, insufficient water...
supplies, the impact on the environment and widespread violence, plus diseases and the risk of epidemics, unhealthy eating, and lack of physical activity, obesity and its consequences, as well as alcohol abuse. More than 30% of city dwellers, that is more than one billion, live today in impoverished slums where basic services are unavailable. Engine vehicles come at the top of the list of factors leading to air pollution in cities, which is responsible for about 1.2 million deaths around the world every year.

In 2014, we are at a very dangerous decision point. We must enact and enforce the right policies that guarantee tangible precise actions to put healthy cities at the top of priorities. In this way, urbanization can continue to be a blessing and not become a curse.
“A city isn’t so unlike a person. They both have the marks to show they have many stories to tell. They see many faces. They tear things down and make new again.”

Rasmenia Massoud
Du jamais vu

Forests and Haute Couture

by Maestro Michelangelo Pistoletto in Palais des Nations

The Salle des pas perdus – turned into a forest with flourishing trees, and the birth and re-birth eternal circle of Michelangelo Pistoletto on the ceiling of the hall – just behind of the Salle des Assemblée – no, I am not dreaming, I am describing the reality – this is exactly what happened at the Palais des Nations.

EVELINA RIOUKHINA
World renowned Maestro Michelangelo Pistoletto, an icon of Italian art and culture, and one of the leading figures of the Italian Arte Povera movement, together with the staff members of the UNOG, UNECE and FAO came to deliver a message. The message is simple: our choices, even on how we dress, can make a difference and lead us towards a more sustainable world.

“Forests for Fashion – Fashion for Forests”; difficult to create more innovative way to celebrate the International Day of Forest and to advocate the linkages between sustainable fashion and sustainable forest management. The eternal re-birth circle on the ceiling of the Salle des pas perdus, synthesized by the Maestro Pistoletto’s “Third Paradise Tree” was the symbol of the Forests for Fashion – Forests event. This design of the “Third Paradise Tree” metaphorically describes the area where the sphere of nature and that of the artificial come together, defining a new world where nature thrives and humankind lives sustainably.
Forests and fashion are related in many different ways. Many cellulose fibers produced from wood pulp, such as lyocell and tencel, are already used in the fashion industry because of their properties. They can be an excellent alternative to synthetic textiles, cotton or wool, as their manufacturing process is often more environmentally friendly. At the same time, fashion also can drive the unsustainable use of natural resources, but the “level of risk depends on how it is managed,” said Mr. John Scanlon, Secretary General of CITES. He also pointed out that given the world population (7 billion people) and the massive volume of international trade connected to fashion, mismanagement could be potentially devastating and “wipe out a species in very little time”.

According to Mr. Paolo Naldini, Managing Director, Città dell’Arte – Fondazione Pistoletto, we are currently witnessing a paradigm shift in the management of forests and environmental resources “from their exploitation to their sustainable utilization”. “We see already a market shift to making more use of biotic raw material,” said Mr. Rob Busink, Chair of the European Forestry Commission. He then added that without sustainable forest management there is no sustainable fashion because “sustainable forest management is needed both to secure supply of raw material and to demonstrate that ecological, social and economic aspects have been taken into account during the production”.

“Forests for Fashion – Fashion for Forests” was structured around a series of initiatives including, an art performance; a conference with high level speakers drawn from the public and the private sector; the opening of a fashion exhibit created with clothes made of forest fibers and wood accessories designed by fifteen emerging young designers; and a dance performance by choreographer Marthe Krummennacher. Among the high-level keynote speakers for the event there were Mr. Møller, Acting Director-General of the UNOG, high-level representatives of UNECE, FAO, Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives of Switzerland, the Russian Federation, Italy and Finland, as well as Mr. Mario Boselli, President of the Italian National Chamber of Fashion, and Maestro Michelangelo Pistoletto himself. Michelangelo Pistoletto is one of the world acknowledged main representatives of the Italian Arte Povera. Since the 1950s, he has exhibited extensively and his work is owned by numerous museums and institutions worldwide including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC, the Tate Modern, London, and the Reina Sofia Museum, Madrid. Important exhibitions have been presented all over the world and his work has been included in major international exhibitions including the Venice Biennale on eleven separate occasions and at the Louvre in Paris in 2013. Michelangelo lives and works in Biella, where he founded the interdisciplinary laboratory Cittadellarte. He has been awarded numerous international art prizes and recognitions, including the prestigious Imperial Price (Præmiun Imperiale) of the Japan Art Association. Meastro Pistoletto is also a champion of sustainability, as he is committed to societal change through the use of art. His personal involvement and his presence in this event in the Palais des Nations in UNOG demonstrates in a practical way how he fosters this change. He addressed the audience and showed his vision.

The moderator and “host” of the event, Paola Deda, came to the podium, herself as a woman-tree, in the fabulous and fairy-tales haute couture dress designed by Tiziano Guardini. The dress is made literally of pieces of bark of the Mediterranean Pine tree, sewed together as if showing an evolution from women into a tree and re-birth of the tree into a woman, symbolically and in the proper sense making real Maestro Pistoletto’s Paradise Tree re-birth cycle (see the photo). Not only her speech, but her symbolic tree-dress and look were speaking loud – nature and humankind should live together sustainably. Maria Teresa Pisani, the other UNECE colleague and moderator, also wore an haute couture dress, designed and made of natural material (straw), carrying through her dress the message of nature and sustainability. The dancers, also dressed with forest-fibres clothes, performed a magnificent choreography underneath the “Third Paradise Tree” thus making unity in the eternal re-birth circle linking nature and humankind in living together sustainably and in harmony. And they all made the message pass! ■
A greener city
with a greater quality of life

Curitiba, Brazil is a success story in urban planning. The major Jaime Lerner has turned the rapidly growing city into an exemplary model of sustainable development. As a result, 99% of Curitibans, according to one survey, are happy with their city.¹

CHRISTOPHER KARL STREBEL

Curitiba is the capital and largest city in the Brazilian state of Paraná. From 1960 to 2010 the city’s population grew five-fold, expanding from 360,000 to 1,760,000 inhabitants. Rapid growth in cities often creates both environmental and socio-economic challenges. However, Curitiba has followed a more ecological and a more sustainable path.

Much of the success in creating a greener, healthier and more sustainable city has been attributed to Jaime Lerner. Originally, he studied as an architect and helped create an institute of urban planning for Curitiba. Lerner was elected mayor three times (1971–75, 1979–84 and 1989–92) and it was during his terms as mayor that most of the city’s radical green transformation took place.

Creating a pedestrian shopping street
His first important achievement was turning the main central shopping street in a weekend into a pedestrian zone in 1972. “We started one Friday night, and finished on Monday morning. If we’d had to stop and do things regularly, I would not have made it, and I could have been fired. So we took the risk,” Lerner said.² The pedestrian zone now spans 15 city blocks and it is one of the city’s hubs of commerce and activity.

Improving public transit
When Lerner took up office the city was clogged with cars. He knew that public transport would help solve the problem but it was not evident how to pay for something as costly as a new public transportation system in a city where the challenge was to find enough resources for almost any project.

So Lerner focused on focusing on creating main arteries into the city to enable traffic to more efficiently enter and exit the city. Each artery has three roads one leading into the city, one leading out of the city and a central one with two-way traffic dedicated for buses. The buses were triple articulated, meaning there were three rigid sections carrying seating linked by two pivoting joints, which enable the buses to carry more people while still being able to manoeuvre on curvy sections of the road. Lerner claims these buses can transport more passengers than a subway, while the cost is one hundred to two hundred times less expensive than a...
The mayor also thought of other methods to make the rapid bus transit system (Rede Integrada de Transporte) more efficient. For example, Lerner discovered having passengers buy tickets at the station rather than on the bus made the system more fluid. Consequently, the former architect designed glass boarding tubes to better organize the bus stops and make for a quicker and more efficient embarkation experience.

"As a result of integrated urban planning, Curitiba has the highest rate of public transport use in Brazil (45% of journeys), and one of the country’s lowest rates of urban air pollution. Additional benefits are:

- reduced transportation time: where the time lost in severe congestion is 11 times lower than in Sao Paulo and 7 times lower than in Rio de Janeiro;
- improved outdoor air quality resulting in better health;
- fuel usage is lower in Curitiba than in Brazil’s other major cities.

A green city
Another striking element of Curitiba is its extensive network of parks that ring the city. Previously unusable land that often flooded was turned into parks. Instead of creating a concrete canal to stop the flooding and control the rivers as many cities have done, the land around the river was turned into green oasis with artificial lakes that retain the water minimizing flooding.

More than just reducing flooding the parks provide clean air and recreational space for the city’s inhabitants. The space encourages physical and leisure activity in an area safe from traffic and congestion. Curitiba is now the greenest city in Brazil.

In addition, to the parks making the city green, Lerner implemented a programme in slums that traded residents bags trash for bags of fruits and vegetables and transit passes. Not only did the slums get much cleaner but its inhabitants are eating more nutritious food as well.

Sustainability awards
In 2010 the Global Sustainable City Award was given to Curitiba. The award is given to recognize and encourage societies that have excelled in the area of sustainability. Further acknowledgement of the important work, Jaime Lerner was awarded the United Nations Environmental Award 1990 by UNEP and in 1991 Scroll of Honor by the United Nations Settlements Programme.

Curitiba is now a well-cited example of how to create greener, healthier and more sustainable urban areas. The city is now a best practice for urban planners trying to develop healthier cities around the globe.

References
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRD3l3rlMpo
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaime_Lerner

If the skyscrapers of past decades were built of glass, steel and polished stones, the current era of skyscrapers focuses on sustainability, including the performance of structures, types of materials and construction practices.

EVELINA RIOUKHINA
While studying some of the modern buildings and projects, and being totally overwhelmed by some of the futuristic designs, a strange idea struck me: are they not a modern inspiration or personal architectural interpretation of one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World – the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, mythical gardens whose exact location is still a mystery and which even today nourish the imagination? Traditionally they were said to have been built in the ancient city of Babylon, near present-day Hillah, Babil province, in Iraq. The Babylonian priest Berossus attributed the gardens to the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II, who ruled between 605 and 562 BC. In fact, there are no extant Babylonian texts that mention the gardens, and no definitive archaeological evidence has so far been found. Only some paintings, based on imagination, serve as symbolic proof that such gardens existed in antique times.

If to speak about the notion of Hanging Gardens, it is impossible not to mention the Bahai’s Hanging Gardens of Haifa (included in the UNESCO World Heritage List). These gardens include nineteen terraces, designed in concentric circles, planted with trees and flowers. They have elements of the Persian gardens of Shiraz in Iran, the Nishat Bagh gardens of Kashmir, India and English gardens. The gardens are not only a magnificent creation, they together represent the tallest hanging gardens of the world.

An interesting concept of urban “hanging” gardens was recently implemented in

Marina Bay Sands with the park on the top deck
Osaka in Japan (called Namba Parks) and represents 128 gardens, hanging at different heights, from the ground up to 10 meters, all connected to a huge tower-skyscraper. This very modern hanging gardens concept is an important effort to give back some environmental quality to the city, without losing the opportunity to offer living and commercial space in a very dense urban area.

The architectural genius of Moshe Sadfie, a Canadian architect, proposed a solution which is beyond any imagination. He created his magnificent garden on the top of three of the tallest skyscrapers in Singapore. His fantasy and inspiration are truly astounding. Inspired perhaps by the beauty and height of the Bahai’s Gardens of Haifa, the city where he was born, or by the Gardens of Babylon and architecture of other ancient cities, Sadfie proposed his chef d’oeuvre: he made his own garden literally hanging “in the skies”. His garden is the highest in the world, on the 56th floor of his glamorous Singapore Marina Bay Sands, where he created a huge green oasis of 12,400 m² of gardens and trees with jogging and walking areas. Not only did he design an outstanding architectural complex, he also proposed one of the most intelligent and sustainable eco-buildings, which was awarded prestigious Green Mark Gold award for its sustainability efforts. Sadfie believes that “Marina Bay Sands is really more than a building project; it’s a microcosm of a city rooted in Singapore’s culture, climate, and contemporary life. Our challenge was to create a vital public place at the district-urban scale, in other words, to address the issue of megascale and invent an urban landscape that would work at the human scale.”

The Italian architect Stefano Boeri proposed his own interpretation of hanging gardens and parks, and even forests, and his genius creation called Vertical Forest is now being completed in Milan. The hanging parks are neither on the top nor at the bottom of the building, but are an integral part of it. Planted on transparent terraces, it appears as though the trees are “hanging”, and even climbing up along with the apartment blocks, which are as if hidden inside this magnificent green creation. The project consists of two towers with 480 large and medium-size trees, 250 small trees, and roughly 11,000 groundcover plants (the equivalent of a hectare, or almost 2.5 acres of forest). These trees and plants will also contribute to a healthy living environment and will help to filter out air pollution, a major problem in big cities. According to the Boeri Studio, “Vertical Forest helps to build a micro-climate and to filter dust particles which are present in the urban environment. The diversity of the plants helps to create humidity, and absorb CO² and dust, produces oxygen, protects people and houses from the sun’s rays and from acoustic pollution.”

I leave it up to the readers to decide whether all the above buildings have been inspired by the mysterious Hanging Gardens of Babylon (this can be a topic for serious philosophical debates). However, all these buildings are undoubtedly fascinating and represent intelligent and sustainable eco-solutions for healthy living, especially in megacities.
Jazz evening at the Palais des Nations

April 30 was proclaimed International Jazz Day by UNESCO in 2011. Its goal is to raise awareness of the virtues of jazz as an educational tool and to promote it as a force for peace, unity, dialogue and enhanced cooperation among people.

EVELINA RIOUKHINA
On the occasion of this 4th edition, UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova delivered the following message: “The history of jazz tells of the power of music to bring together artists from different cultures and backgrounds, as a driver of integration and mutual respect. […] Through jazz, millions of people have sung and still sing today their desire for freedom, tolerance and human dignity.” Osaka, Japan was the official host this year, and fittingly so, as this city has been considered as “Japan’s jazz Mecca” since the 1920s. An All Stars Global Concert took place and was broadcast simultaneously as a Webcast in New York, London, Istanbul, Tokyo and Sydney.

This year, the celebration is particularly important. To reiterate this message for peace, unity and dialogue in a venue that particularly symbolises it, the UNOG and the Permanent Mission of the USA organized their own special event in the Palais des Nations co-sponsored by the Coordinating Council and with the active participation of the UN Music Club (staff band).

The event was co-hosted by Michael Møller, Acting Director-General of UNOG, and Peter F. Mulrean, Chargé d’Affaires ad interim of the USA to the UNOG. Addressing the audience, Michael Møller noted that in organizing the Jazz Evening “we communicate in a universal language. Jazz speaks to everyone – across common barriers of age, gender and ethnicity. In breaking down these barriers, it creates opportunities for mutual understanding, cooperation and tolerance”. Peter F. Mulrean joined in welcoming the audience, highlighting the importance of jazz as a common heritage, with which to defend our common values.

Ian Richards, Executive Secretary of the Coordinating Council commented: “Jazz changed the role of music for the better. Imagine if we could do to the UN what Jazz has done to music”.

Alex Ezana, President of the UN Music Ensemble, deeming that the power of music is greater than that of words proved his point by then giving the floor to jazz: the UN Music Ensemble and the Evaristo Perez Quintet filled the Assembly hall with the many sounds of jazz giving a magnificent two-hour concert to the distinguished Geneva international community, guests and staff members present. Before the show, the great pianist Yves Poupin and the violinist John Intrator performed in the “Jazz in the Lobby Quartet” as a prelude to this event.

A collection in the interval raised funds for victims of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, a country which has great affinities with jazz.
When the Mermaids Cry: The Great Plastic Tide

There are no angels in plastic hell.

HAILEY WALLER, OMAR BAHA

Plastic; it is versatile, long-lasting, and inexpensive. So there is no wonder why manufacturers choose to use around 100 million tons of this material making their products every year. Anything can be made from it, just about. But just as this material has been a major part in the construction of our generation, it is becoming the destruction of it as well.

Plastic is a flexible, but durable, synthetic material made from various organic polymers. There are two major categories of plastics: thermoplastics and thermostets. Thermoplastics are flexible and the most common plastic type, used for milk jugs, plastic bags, and other thin containers. Thermostets are less common, used in construction and automotives for their strength and durability.

Plastic waste is any form of plastic material, no matter from what it came, that is not being reused or recycled in the proper manner. Every year, the average American will throw away about 185 pounds of plastic. That is approximately 58 billion pounds of plastic being just thrown away in the U.S. alone!

The problem with plastic is that it is not biodegradable. Over a period of time, all other forms of waste material will break down and be absorbed back into the earth. Plastic does not biodegrade. It is photodegradable, meaning that it will gradually break down only into smaller and smaller pieces over time with sun exposure. That being said, it never goes away.

Surprisingly, only 7% of our used plastic goods get recycled. The other 93% ends up in landfills along with our other garbage. From there, it gets to our oceans. 80% of marine debris originates from the land. There are about 46,000 pieces of plastic per square mile in our oceans. It accounts for 90% of all trash floating in the water. Unfortunately, it is not just particles floating here and there. Ocean currents cause small plastic patches to continually move for miles. When these currents mix, they create circular vortices called gyres, swirling the gathering patches in one large radius. These gyres form a sort of plastic-made black hole, constantly gathering strength and size; sucking all the life of the sea with it. The largest and most well known of these is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, located off the coast of California in the North Pacific Gyre. Being twice the size of Texas, the number of plastic particles outnumber the sea life 6:1.

Our neglect to proper disposal of our used products has created a plastic hell for marine life all over the world. One million sea birds die each year from ingesting and getting tangled in plastic waste. The plastic consumes and kills off their food source, leaving them only the particles to sustain their hunger – but not their lives. It is no different with marine mammals, with over 100,000 dying annually from the same fate.

So why can’t we just clean it up? Why not just scoop it up out of the water? The particles have provided shelter for smaller creatures out in Open Ocean. Thousands of new small fish and organisms have found shelter farther out than usual. Of course, these creatures would not normally be there, so their new presence greatly affects the ecosystems miles out, away from shore. If we were to attempt to scoop out all of the debris, we would need a very fine net, because most particles are microscopic. Using that, we would take out every other living creature as well. We have created a problem that we cannot reverse. All there is to do is prevent the problem from escalating, for the sake of our planet.

To learn more about how plastic is destroying our planet, visit: http://www.goodwall.org/posts/there-are-no-angels-plastic-hell
Ensemble, faisons d’Internet un lieu plus sûr!

TIZIANA BELLUCCI
Devons-nous considérer le web comme l’œuvre du diable, entré dans nos vies pour y semer le danger et le chaos? Non! Il est trop tard, Internet fait partie de nos vies, Internet est notre vie. Nous n’héritons pas du cyberspace, nous le construisons.

Cela implique nécessairement de s’interroger sur ce que l’on accepte d’Internet et sur les dérives qu’il autorise.

Nous avons pu lire dans les journaux ces derniers mois de nombreux articles concernant le cyber-harcèlement. Certains malheureusement relataient même des histoires qui ont mené jusqu’au suicide de jeunes adolescents.

Nous avons également pu lire que le cyber-harcèlement existait bien mais qu’il était surestimé! Que faut-il comprendre? Le pourcentage actuel d’enfants cyber-harcelés est trop faible pour que l’on s’en préoccupe? Faut-il attendre que le taux de suicide chez les jeunes augmente pour agir?

Le harcèlement a toujours existé mais le phénomène est amplifié par les nouvelles technologies.

Faut-il que le pourcentage d’enfants abusés via Internet augmente et devienne significatif? Quel chiffre devons nous atteindre: 5, 10, 20, 100 ou encore 1000 enfants abusés par an pour combattre l’inacceptable?

Les agresseurs d’enfants et les images de leurs crimes existaient bien avant l’avènement d’Internet. Mais si Internet n’a pas créé de pédophiles, il leur fournit: l’anonymat, l’acceptation et l’accès facile.

Internet fournit un raccourci qui mène à des images et vidéos les plus viles et les plus choquantes de sévices sexuels infligés à des enfants.

A toutes ces questions, une seule réponse: nous nous devons d’agir! Il est primordial de mettre en garde les jeunes des dangers liés à l’utilisation d’Internet et des nouvelles technologies.

Il est indispensable de lutter encore plus activement contre la pédocriminalité. Action Innocence se mobilise depuis plus de 14 ans.

L’Association a été fondée à Genève en 1999 par la Présidente, Valérie Wertheimer, qui, lors d’un voyage en Thaïlande en 1997, est confrontée à un trafic en pleine expansion qui offre la possibilité à des touristes de réserver sur Internet un séjour avec des enfants pour assouvir leurs perversions sexuelles pendant leurs vacances.

La mission première de l’Association a été de pointer du doigt les dérives naissantes de cet outil d’échange et de communication et de dénoncer ce qui se préparait en matière de pédocriminalité sur Internet.

Aujourd’hui, Action Innocence lutte pour préserver la dignité et l’intégrité des enfants sur Internet en formant, notamment, les jeunes internautes à un usage sécurisé mais aussi
civique de cet outil incontournable et en les sensibilisant aux dangers liés à la toile, tels que: images choquantes et illégales, cyberprédation, cyberharcèlement, diffusion d’informations personnelles, arnaques, escroqueries et usages excessifs.

L’une de nos premières actions a été de développer un programme de prévention «Surfer avec prudence sur Internet» à l’intention des jeunes internautes âgés de 10 à 11 ans.

Aujourd’hui, le programme s’est étoffé et est composé de plusieurs modules afin de s’adresser aux enfants de 8 à 12 ans, aux adolescents de 13 à 15 ans, aux parents, aux professionnels de l’éducation, du social et de la santé, aux populations à risques telles que les jeunes sourds et muets et les adolescents atteints de handicap mental.

À ce jour, en Suisse, plus de 150 000 enfants et adolescents ont été informés et sensibilisés aux dangers liés à Internet.

En 2013, l’équipe prévention d’Action Innocence, a rencontré en Suisse Romande plus de 32 000 personnes, enfants, adolescents et adultes confondus.

Parallèlement à la diffusion de notre programme de prévention «Surfer avec prudence sur Internet», nous visons à sensibiliser le grand public au travers de grandes campagnes dans les médias.

Fin 2012, nous avons lancé la campagne «Ne laisse pas ton image t’échapper». Dans la lignée choc des précédentes, elle vise à sensibiliser les adolescents et les jeunes adultes à la protection de leur identité numérique.

En 2003, Action Innocence a débuté le programme AntiPedoFiles. Nous développons à l’intention des services de police, des solutions informatiques permettant de lutter, encore plus efficacement, contre le trafic de fichiers pédopornographiques sur Internet.


En 2013, en Suisse, grâce à l’un de nos logiciels, la Police judiciaire fédérale, plus particulièrement son Service de coordination de la lutte contre la criminalité sur Internet, a pu identifier, dans le cadre de ses recherches actives sur les réseaux peer-to-peer, 238 utilisateurs échangeant de la pédopornographie. Comme vous pouvez le constater, depuis la création de l’Association, nous avons mené un grand nombre de projets et remporté de nombreuses victoires, mais notre tâche est difficile, car l’environnement dans lequel nous évoluons est en perpétuelle mutation: ce qui est actuel aujourd’hui sera obsolète demain!

On parle déjà du web 3.0, du web sémantique, du web intelligent, capable de réfléchir comme un internaute... Mais sera-t-il capable de protéger nos enfants?

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Pour nous soutenir: CCP 17-71192-0 en faveur d’Action Innocence avec mention «don»
Thank you in song

PAULINE ANNE ESCALANTE, UNOG

The world has never seen such a storm as the storm surge of Typhoon Haiyan. A new category of typhoon strength was created. The typhoon named Yolanda when it made landfall in the Philippines, wiped out entire towns. The country was gravely hit.

Filipinos who were affected appealed to the world for help as news of missing relatives and lack of food and water reached the international community. Filipinos abroad and the world responded to the cry of those affected.

Closer to home, Filipinos in the United Nations Office at Geneva launched a fund drive to raise money to help the victims of Haiyan. With the help of the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council, the total collection amounted to CHF 45,435. This was split equally three ways and donated to the World Food Programme, the Philippine Red Cross and UNICEF.

To thank UNOG and all who helped contribute to the collection, the University of the Philippines Alumni Association in Geneva, along with the Filipinos in UNOG, invited the UP Los Banos Chorale Ensemble to render songs. The event took place on 30 April and was attended by the Philippine Ambassador to the UN and other international organizations, H.E. Cecilia Rebong, the Acting Director-General of UNOG, Mr. Michael Møller and the Executive Secretary of the Staff Coordinating Council, Ian Richards.

Ms. Rebong said that the Filipino people always remember those who help them. They see it as a debt of gratitude. In line with this, the Chorale Ensemble serenaded the officials and staff of UNOG as a way of showing the deep gratitude of the Filipinos at UNOG. She also emphasized that singing was a way of expressing one’s soul in the Philippines. The concert entitled “Burst of Joy” was a testament that despite the sadness of the tragedy of Haiyan, there is hope and there is joy for a better tomorrow. Mr. Møller said that what happened to the Philippines was a great tragedy and that he was happy that many answered the call for help.

The Choral Ensemble was in Geneva to compete in a choral competition in Montreux, where they earned the distinction of “Très bien” and went on to Germany for another competition where they won third place.

Journée du volontariat
L’ONU au cœur, l’ONU du cœur

JEAN FABRE, MURIEL SCIBILIA

Bureaucrates, les onusiens ? Au contraire, à en juger par le succès remporté par la première journée du bénévolat organisée au Palais des Nations. La diversité des stands témoignait de la vitalité du volontariat qui imprègne l’ONU face aux urgences multiples qui affectent notre planète.

Dans une ambiance festive, animée par le Club de jazz des Nations Unies, le Directeur général de l’ONUG, Michael Möller, et de nombreux fonctionnaires ont pu s’entretenir avec des collègues qui mettent leur enthousiasme et leur expertise au service de diverses causes, découvrir des produits artisanaux et culinaires d’Asie et d’Afrique et tenter leur chance à la tombola.


On doit cette initiative exemplaire à Jo Butler qui, au moment de prendre sa retraite de la CNUCED, a voulu mettre en lumière l’esprit de service de ceux pour qui être à l’ONU n’est pas juste un emploi. Elle a elle-même fondée une association, l’Ethiopian Children Food Appeal, qui permet à plusieurs centaines d’enfants de se nourrir et d’être scolarisés. Une action récompensée l’an dernier par le Prix ONU21. Le succès de cette manifestation, soutenue par le Conseil de coordination, a été tel qu’elle devrait être reconduite l’an prochain. A vous de faire en sorte qu’elle prenne toujours plus d’ampleur.
Tackling tuberculosis in big cities
A problem of poverty amidst plenty

HANNAH MONICA DIAS

Tuberculosis – a major challenge in big cities
Tuberculosis (TB) is an airborne disease that has affected mankind for millennia. The germ that causes TB was discovered by Robert Koch in 1882. Although preventable and curable, TB kills about two people every minute. Its victims are mainly young adults, living in poor and marginalized settings.

Urbanization with pockets of extreme deprivation alongside extreme wealth is a dominant force today particularly in low and middle-income countries, which have over 90% of the world’s slums1. Currently, over half the world’s people are urban dwellers and nearly one billion people (one in four) live in urban slums. This poses a huge population at risk of infectious diseases like TB.

TB burden is higher in big cities. A study of European Union cities (with over 500,000 population) found that on average the rate of TB incidence was twice the national one. In Britain, of the nearly 9000 TB cases reported in 2012, 40 percent were in London2. In New York in 2012, TB incidence was twice the national average. In developing countries, data on the dynamics of urban TB burden remain scarce.

Turning the tide of TB in big cities
There has been remarkable progress in the fight against TB in the past two decades. Between 1995 and 2012, 56 million people were successfully treated for TB, saving 22 million lives. The TB death rate decreased by 45% since 1990 and the UN Millennium Development Goal of turning around the TB epidemic has been met3. These achievements have been secured through country-led efforts, with the support of partners and WHO guidance.

However, a great deal of work remains to be done. One in three persons with TB is still ‘missed’ by health systems and many of these “hard-to-reach” populations live in urban areas. Furthermore, the challenges of rising drug resistance and TB/HIV co-infection, which are exacerbated in urban settings, also impede success.

Reaching the most vulnerable and excluded
TB control in big cities takes serving those most affected and engaging them. Vulnerable population groups in big cities include: slum-dwellers, migrants, people who use drugs, homeless people, prison inmates and people living with HIV. For these groups, the urban experience is one of poverty and exclusion, made worse by illegality, limited voice, lack of security and discrimination. Preventing TB in urban settings means working with development agencies, urban planners and social services. Reaching these vulnerable groups with TB services requires working with those they trust, civil society organizations and local social service providers. This can make a difference in designing and providing health and social services that these populations need. Beyond service delivery, there is need to address the problem of exclusion. This entails including TB in the broader social, economic development and human rights agendas in the country.

Better coordination of TB services
In big cities, efforts to control TB are typically fraught with the problem of poverty amidst plenty. Generally, there are too many and very diverse care providers that deliver TB care often of doubtful quality. There are many authorities, such as metropolitan, regional and national ones, that exercise control over but do not coordinate care delivery. Furthermore, the less formal part of the private sector are main care providers in slums. The quality of TB services to slum-dwellers thus varies greatly within settings.

Delivering quality care through diverse providers and institutions requires sophisticated collaboration4. This entails defining roles in governance, management and accountability, facilitated by TB programmes. Involvement of grassroots organizations and communities can help create sustainable and empowering solutions to reach those most in need.

Looking beyond 2015: the vision of ending the epidemic
The World Health Assembly adopted a new global strategy for TB in May 2014. It has a bold vision of making the world free of TB and an ambitious goal of ending the global TB epidemic5. This includes bold targets for 2035 (compared with 2015); 95% reduction in TB deaths; 90% reduction in TB incidence; and no affected families facing catastrophic costs due to TB. These targets will also contribute to overall post-2015 sustainable development goals. The vision and targets provide a powerful platform for collective action, and cities must be at the forefront of efforts to end the TB epidemic. WHO is working with Member States and partners in developing national strategic plans which focus on identifying those most at risk, adapting interventions to local needs such as in major cities, and using innovative partnerships to achieve results.
The City of Angels

“A story is like a moving train: no matter where you hop on board, you are bound to reach your destination sooner or later.”

— Khalid Hosseini ‘And the Mountains Echoed’

NILOFAR BAWA
Los Angeles, California is a huge metropolis stretching from the Pacific Ocean to the Hollywood hills surrounding it. The City of Angels could be many different countries sown together by invisible hands. The incredible city where dreams are made or destroyed has more than one face. It reserves the glamorous, the beautiful and the magical side for its visitors.

Like any other tourist visiting the city for the first time, we do what other tourists do: hop on the famous red colored Hop On and Hop Off Bus. Happily taking in the sights around us: Sunset Boulevard, Avenue of the Stars, Santa Monica...

The pristine lush green lawns of Beverley Hills, its silver water hydrants and tall picturesque palm trees swaying gently in the breeze; Rodeo Drive with its rows of high end designer boutiques, restaurants and cafés. There is an anticipated expectation in the air. At any moment one could run into a movie star or a celebrity taking a stroll outside their sheltered premises.

Here lives Al Pacino and there lives Simon Cowell. Houses of Stars and Celebrities go past our red bus. They all have one thing in common. High walls, cameras and impenetrable gates shrouded by tall trees and bougainvillea bushes. Those who live and earn their living by the limelight – under the scrutiny of the paparazzi and on the covers of glossy magazines yearn deeply for privacy.

Some say that one cannot truly get to know a city riding on a red double decker bus. They say, the best way to appreciate the hidden side of a city is by taking public transport.

My natural instinct to stay alive however tells me ‘perhaps its best to avoid public transport’.

That said, there is a place in Los Angeles I desperately want to visit that is not on the tourist bus route, a place a bit too far away to take a taxi given the size of the city. The place is the historic ‘Last Bookstore’: a colossal archaic library with aging pillars, a high ceiling, beautiful awnings and old wooden shelves overflowing with second-hand books. As an avid reader and a lover of literature, I cannot resist. Our hotel’s concierge warns me against visiting it, especially at night. But when I really want to see something, I have a bad habit of forgetting fear, at least temporarily.

So, I drag my younger son with me and we walk to the underground metro station nearest to
our hotel on Hollywood Boulevard. It is already dark and slightly cold when we step outside. We walk past aspiring musicians singing in handheld microphones or strumming their guitars. Some force their CDs into the unwary hands of startled pedestrians demanding money in return.

A throng of tourists are hanging around the Boulevard, dancing to the music or taking photos with their favorite star on the Walk of Fame. At the entrance of Madame Tussaud’s Wax Museum young girls take photos standing next to the wax statue of Johnny Depp.

We walk down the dark stairs of the metro station and to the platform waiting for the train to take us to Downtown Los Angeles. We quickly take in our surroundings. It honestly smells quite bad. The lights flicker as shadows searching the trash bins perhaps for food. The men, wearing Lakers basketball jerseys, survey fellow passengers. Some just inches from us. I can smell their breath. They laugh menacingly at something only they find amusing. No one else laughs. The other passengers stare silently stolidly ahead.

The metro stops. The doors open. A young man with the knife runs out the metro. We do not move. The metro does not move. A few minutes later, police officers walk in. They flash their torches looking everywhere. They investigate the crime scene. They say something in the walky-talkies. They check the man on the floor’s pulse. He is still alive. They drag him out. The doors close. The metro moves.

The metro stops. The doors open. A young boy walks in carrying a basket of sweets and chocolates. The doors close. The metro moves. The boy approaches the men and whispers in their ears. They hand him a couple of dollar bills. He puts his hand in a packet of skittles. He discretely takes out a small bag of what looks like cannabis. He gives the bag to the men.

The metro stops. The doors open. The boy turns around and exits the metro. The doors close. The metro moves. Suddenly, we hear shrieks. Two young girls are shouting and screaming. We hear a crack as one of the young men throws a punch at another man. He seems to stab him with a knife. With a sickening thud, the other man falls on the floor and his white t-shirt is now stained with red. He lies there. No one moves. No one dares to check his pulse.

The metro stops. The doors open. The young man with the knife runs out the metro. We do not move. The metro does not move. A few minutes later, police officers walk in. They flash their torches looking everywhere. They investigate the crime scene. They say something in the walky-talkies. They check the man on the floor’s pulse. He is still alive. They drag him out. The doors close. The metro moves.

Walking swiftly and silently we move in the dark mostly deserted streets. We walk past hooded homeless figures sleeping under cardboard boxes or silently standing hidden in the shadows searching the trash bins perhaps for food.

Downtown Los Angeles must be a hub of activity during the day when the offices and buildings are open for business but after 20h00 it is dead. Carefully, following the directions given to us by the hotel we finally find ourselves standing right in front of a brilliantly lit building: The Last Bookstore. At this moment, with the hooded zombies of the Walking Dead walking past us, it certainly does feel like the last bookstore on the planet!

Volunteers stand at the entrance of the bookstore welcoming visitors. A huge reception area with a majestic circular desk supported not by legs but by hundreds of books stand near the entrance. The librarian stands in the middle checking out and checking in books.

Huge white pillars support the high ceiling. Chandeliers and lamps lit every nook and corner. Rows of shelves with thousands of books fill up the space. Comfy leather sofas sit around the hall. A group is gathered in a corner sitting on chairs and sofas listening to a lecture. A second reception area invites visitors interested in selling old books.

The Last Bookstore is clearly more than a bookstore, it is a place of pilgrimage bringing together passionate book lovers from around the world to meet and exchange ideas and opinions. A truly magical place where the strident word flies over and around you.

Sometimes, its worth venturing into the unknown and necessary to put aside one’s fears, however real they may be, to discover the magic of our world.
Sanaa (or Sana’a)  
The capital of Yemen

Sanaa (or Sana’a) the capital of Yemen located by surrounding mountains at an altitude of 2300 meters (7500 ft) is the countries’ largest city with a population of about 2 million, and consists of two major parts; the New Sanaa and “Sanaa Al Gadeema” the Arabic name for Old Sanaa.

Dr. Ahmed Zouiten
The Old Sanaa was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986 thanks to the distinct architectural features of its houses, mosques, markets, walls and gates. Sanaa’s old town is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, although an exact date for its establishment is unknown. According to popular legend, it was founded by Shem, one of the three sons of Noah and was known as “Azal” in ancient times. It occupies the site of the ancient pre-Islamic stronghold of Ghumdān, which may date to the 1st and 2nd century BCE. The city boasts more than 2500 years of history, representing the old kingdoms of Saba, Hymeirate, and others. “Sanaa must be seen to be believed”, these were the words of Imam Muhammed ibn Idris al-Shafi in the ninth century and the same is true today, as the city makes you feel as if you were...
re-living the story of 1001 Arabian Nights through the majestic old palaces, you can almost reach out and virtually touch history.

The Old Sanaa is defined by an extraordinary density of rammed earth and burnt brick towers rising several stories above stone-built ground floors, strikingly decorated with geometric patterns of fired bricks and white gypsum and unique multi-coloured windows—the Qammaria—named after the Arabic word for moon (qamar) because their shape resemble a half moon. The ochre of the buildings blends into the bistre-coloured earth of the nearby mountains. Without doubt the most bustling spot in all of Sanaa is the Yemen Gate “Bäb al-Yaman” Arabic for the Gate of Yemen, is an iconic entry point of Old Sanaa which is surrounded by a massive ancient wall 20-30 feet (6-9 metres) high. In fact there are a few entrance points to the Old City, but this one is the most important as it lies at the major entry roads to the capital city. Until the early years of the 20th century, the gate of the Bab was closed every evening to protect the Old Sanaa residents from bandits coming in at night. A practice that is still applied in a few walled villages elsewhere in the country.

Within the city walls, minarets pierce the skyline and spacious green bustans (gardens) are scattered between the densely packed houses, mosques, bath buildings and caravanserais. Old Sanaa includes 103 mosques, 14 hammams (baths), and 6,500 houses, all built before the 11th century. The city’s most notable mosque, Al-Jamî’ al-Kabîr (Great Mosque), contains a sacred shrine that was once a principal object of Zaydî veneration. The old souks (Arabic suqs, marketplaces) begin at Bāb al-Yaman and extend northward past the Great Mosque. The area is called Sûq al-Milh (Salt Market) but consists of many smaller souks selling a wide variety of goods. Just minutes’ walk from Bab Al Yamen, Souk Al Khobz (Bread Market) catches the eye and the senses of the visitor, as bread sellers congregate near stalls selling out of oven bread, grilled meats and vegetables. Not far from the bread market, stands the Spice Market where the flavours of the east and west meet the local Mokha beans (Yemeni coffee) as well as other Arabian spices known to the Yemeni culinary culture. Few steps away is the at-tin souk, where daily life is on display in this panorama covered women haggle in over household items while in which other shopkeepers watch life go by from the shade of their shops.

The old Sanaa is like a page from the historical past, and walking around in Old Sanaa is an experience on its own. Because of the tall buildings, there is lots of shade, but you will have a difficult time finding orientation spots. The souks of Old Sanaa, can appear like a giant maze of small and atmospheric corridors where you can walk for hours not even noticing that you are going around in circles.

Impacts of Modernization

For nearly 2000 years and until the end of the Yemeni civil war in 1969, the city was preserved and closed to outsiders, its unique multi-story buildings protected behind mud walls. A traditional way of life was preserved in a society that shares very traditional values. The city, though in need of maintenance, was clean and sanitary. The opening of the country to the outside world in the 1970s, and the growth which accompanied the decision to make Sanaa the capital of the new Yemen Arab Republic, posed new challenges to the old city. The huge influx of dollars from the oil boom in neighbouring Saudi Arabia, combined with a rapidly growing population, placed considerable stress on the old city’s historic buildings and its inadequate infrastructure. Urban Yemenis abandoned their houses because they could not afford to maintain them, and preferred new villas out of town. Wealthier residents moved away due to the unsanitary condition of the streets, lack of services and the relative inaccessibility of their houses by vehicles. They relocated to areas that promised a modern lifestyle adjacent to new facilities. Lower income Yemenis moved in to the old city and conditions deteriorated.
He thought that the world would make more rapid progress without the burden of old people [...] He foresaw a more humanitarian and [...] civilized future in which men and women would be isolated in marginal cities when they could no longer take care of themselves so that they might be spared the humiliation, suffering, and frightful loneliness of old age.

– Gabriel García Márquez, Love in the Time of Cholera

Nearly one fourth of the population of any modern megalopolis are elderly people. This proportion, according to some estimates, will keep on increasing. Problems that come with age are multiple. One of them is loneliness that perhaps, is felt more strongly in urban settings, and paradoxically, in nursing homes, where quite often old people are put by their relatives with or without their own consent.

Older generations are leaving, and as “the elderly are all someone’s flesh and blood” (quoting the British actor Simon Callow), by leaving, they take away a big part of us. And yet, there are so many things we could learn from their wisdom and experience to become better people.

We visited old people in the nursing homes of the city of Milan and its surroundings to share with them their memories and ask them simple questions about life. We just tried to keep a small bit of this enormous human heritage.

GB, 83: “I remember myself at the age of 6. My father was strict and taught me to work hard. My first earned 10 liras... I remember them so well! That was not a lot, but made me feel so important...”

MR, 90: “My parents taught me to be honest and content with little. Our neighbour worked as a maid in Switzerland and once in a while she was bringing us a chocolate bar. We ate it in tiny bits trying to stretch the pleasure. When the chocolate bar was finished, I lived off those happy memories”

NB, 90: “The secret of a happy family is mutual respect. We did not have enough money or food but we were happy. Maybe it was better when it was worse?...”

TB, 85: “Loving for me means bearing with one another. I have always loved my Marianna... Since the moment I saw her until her last day...”

AT, 92: “Miracles are to be done, not to be expected...”

RF, 95: “I think my generation is a very healthy one. We had less food, but never had problems with cholesterol or extra kilos!...”

DG, 83: “I survived the war and famine... I am 83 and have been to the doctor only three times my whole life!...”

LB, 95: “Consumerism spoils people. It is not that I am against progress. But happiness is in simplicity. Believe me!”
Jordanie
Du Wadi Rum à Pétra (1ère partie)

Dix ans après avoir parcouru la Jordanie de long en large, des frontières syriennes à celles de l’Arabie Saoudite, tutoyant celles de la Palestine, d’Israël et de l’Iraq, l’envie de retourner dans ce fabuleux pays était trop forte. Mais cette fois-ci, c’est à pied que je voulais le faire, et seul le Sud, non loin de la mer Rouge, sera exploré.

CLAUSE MAILLARD
La Jordanie, joyau longtemps caché du Proche-Orient, regorge de monuments (châteaux du désert), de sites historiques majeurs (Pétra, Jérash, Umm Al Jimal, Umm Qays, Kerak, Béthanie) et de paysages aussi superbes que variés comme la réserve de Dana, le désert du Wadi Rum, sans oublier la mer Morte, point le plus bas du globe (-420 m) et dont la salinité est 9 fois supérieure à celle des autres mers. Situé au carrefour des civilisations, le Royaume de Jordanie a su conserver ses traditions, dont celles des tribus du désert. C’est à la rencontre de ces bédouins, à l’hospitalité légendaire, qui vivent dans le désert du Wadi Rum que nous allons aller, avant de poursuivre notre périple à Pétra, au cœur de la cité nabatéenne, l’une des sept nouvelles merveilles du monde.

Cap plein sud
L’avion de la Royal Jordanian qui assure la liaison Genève-Amman se posera tard dans la nuit et nous ne verrons pas grand-chose de la capitale jordanienne. Construite dans une zone vallonnée, la ville de 2
millions d’habitants s’étend sur dix-neuf collines, et il est très difficile de s’y repérer, notamment lorsque l’on est au volant d’une voiture, au milieu d’une circulation très dense (souvenirs de mon premier voyage en Jordanie!). Appelée Philadelphia à l’époque romaine, Amman est l’une des plus vieilles villes du monde à être toujours habité.

Par la « route du désert » qui relie Amman à Aqaba, station balnéaire située sur la mer Rouge, cap plein sud en direction du Wadi Rum, le désert cher à Lawrence d’Arabie. Avant de rejointre le grand Royaume d’Arabie en 1917, aidé dans sa tâche par l’armée du roi Fayçal, l’officier de liaison britannique auprès des forces arabes lors de la révolte contre les Ottomans, y vécut quelques temps. Il mentionne d’ailleurs quelques lignes concernant ce désert dans son ouvrage « Les sept piliers de la sagesse ». Avec ses étendues de sable, variant de l’ocre au jaune en passant par des tons orangers, le Wadi Rum est hérissé de nombreux djebels de grès très spectaculaires.

Il constitue l’un des sites les plus beaux de Jordanie, pays à 90% désertique. Un véritable labyrinthe de roches monolithiques crée ainsi un terrain de jeu idéal pour les amateurs de randonnées. Pendant quatre jours, le trek organisé par Tirawa (infos@tirawa.ch), le spécialiste de la découverte du monde à pied, alternera successivement des marches dans le sable et des passages plus rocailleux avec la traversée de canyons étroits.

Seuls au monde!

Dominé par le Um Ad Dami, le plus haut sommet de Jordanie qui culmine à 1854 m, le Wadi Rum s’étend sur 700 km². Ce n’est pas un désert de type saharien, ponctué d’innombrables dunes de sable. Il se situe le long d’une faille tectonique qui a fait surgir du sol il y a des milliers d’années des massifs rocheux, parfois hallucinants, que l’érrosion a modelé au fil du temps. Réserve naturelle, il abrite une faune intéressante dont l’orx y, majestueuse gazelle aux longues cornes fines. La flore y est abondante et variée mais on n’y trouve pas l’iris noir, la fleur emblématique nationale de Jordanie, qui pousse le long de la route des Rois, notamment dans la région de Dana.

Accompagnés de notre guide Luay et d’Abdallah, véritable « chef » cuisinier qui nous réglera tout au long de notre trek, nous débuterons par l’ascension vertigineuse de Burdah, éperon rocheux de grès rose et blanc coiffé d’une spectaculaire arche naturelle qui domine le désert de ses 300 mètres de haut : sujets au vertige s’abstenir! À la nuit tombée, alors qu’Abdallah s’active près de son feu de bois pour nous préparer le mansaf, plat typique des bédouins à base d’agneau, de riz, de yaourt et d’amandes, nous installons nos tentes à l’abri du vent. La nuit sera fraîche et le réveil se fera au milieu d’une petite oasis tapisée de petites fleurs blanches qui ont profité de l’humidité.
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_{nocturne pour s’ouvrir : de toute beauté ! Estomacs bien remplis, nous prenons la direction de l’étroit canyon de Hamatah, qui abrite curieusement quelques figuiers, avant d’atteindre le massif d’Um Fruth et sa superbe petite arche rocheuse d’une vingtaine de mètres de haut. Après une première rencontre avec un berger qui fait brouter ses chèvres et ses moutons, nous poursuivons jusqu’à Um Muqur où nous ferons une halte bien méritée à l’ombre d’une cavité creusée dans la montagne. Nous avons quitté la réserve naturelle et sommes dans la partie la plus sauvage du désert. L’après-midi, la progression, sous un soleil de plomb et dans un sable mou, sera difficile et nous serons heureux d’arriver dans le Wadi Nuqra, terme de cette deuxième journée de marche. Entourés de formations rocheuses de grès violet et aux formes tournées, nous apprécions un bolé noir tout en observant le soleil qui se couche au loin, sur l’Arabie Saoudite. La journée suivante débuta par la visite d’un bédouin qui s’invite au petit déjeuner pendant que ses dromadaires prennent des forces près de notre campement. Avant de rejoindre la vallée de Sabat et ses dunes de sable rouge, nous devrons descendre le canyon étroit de Nuqra couvert d’un sable bien blanc : le contraste est saisissant! Notre périple nous conduit en direction des montagnes de Jarich aux formes de champignons ou de cathédrales gothiques, sculptées avec extravagance par les humeurs de l’eau et du vent. Dans le sable poussent d’étranges plantes que les bédouins nomment « cornes de gazelle » et des champignons ressemblant aux coprins, mais que nous ne nous hasardons pas à goûter! Par la suite, le sable fera place à un immense plateau recouvert de grès noir, puis à une étroite gorge arrosée de couleurs rouge et ocre, avant d’atteindre, épuisés, notre campement monté dans le secteur de Um Rade, loin des endroits fréquentés où nous nous sentons vraiment seuls au monde... _

Un désert vert

La neige qui a recouvert le Wadi Rum en fin d’année et les fortes pluies du printemps ont apporté beaucoup d’eau, pour le plus grand bonheur des troupeaux qui ont à leur disposition de vastes pâturages : étrange et surprenant, ce désert vert! Beaucoup de génets, prêts à fleurir, ont également profité des conditions météorologiques. De mémoire de baroudeur je n’ai jamais vu autant de verdure dans un désert. Une troisième arche sera au programme de la journée, après l’escalade d’une belle dune de sable rouge et avant de rejoindre Um Thabaan, puis Um Sabatah où un campement bédouin composé de tentes en poil de chèvre nous attend. Pour notre dernière nuit au milieu du désert, nous aurons droit au zarb, barbecue bédouin où viandes et légumes sont cuits dans un vaste four enterré.

Avant de rejoindre Pétra pour la deuxième partie de notre trek (récit dans le prochain numéro du UN Special), nous découvrons les étonnantes inscriptions nabatéennes rupestres de Khazali, gorge encaissée située près de Rum, village qui a donné son nom au désert qui l’entoure.
Summer in Geneva’s Region
From wandering troubadour to rock’n’roll!

Bring your friends along, enjoy your summer in Geneva!

CHRISTINA BRANDES BARBIER

Live the Medieval Fantasy
Summer is approaching and we are thinking about long-awaited holidays. Some of us will go south to the sunny beaches and to the lazy sea-side vacations; some active travellers will cross countries, oceans, mountains to discover new lands, new sports, and new emotions. But few will probably stay in Geneva enjoying visits of families and friends.

If you are in anguish at the idea of how to entertain your beloved “coming soon” parents, or your dearest “better stayed at home” in-laws, or where to bring your friend, keep your chin up, stay positive. There are plenty of entertainments going on in Geneva and surroundings.

You do not need a time machine to find yourself back in medieval France. Just half-an-hour drive across the French border (town of Annecy direction) and you will reach a local annual event – “Grandes Médiévales d’Andilly”. It is a mixture of a theme park, shows, theatre (where spectators can be actors), crafts-shops, and of course, various restaurants and small shops.

The idea of organizing this event was born more than twenty years ago in a small village with the funny name Charly (commune of Andilly). Villagers decided to share with others the history of their native place, and dedicated one week-end per year for performing the “real” everyday life as it was centuries ago. Year by year more and more people were attracted by scenes of “medieval” craftsmen at work, or the way a “medieval” healer treated his patient.

Today “Grandes Médiévales d’Andilly” is an annual show which always happens in June. This year it will be on 7-9 and 14-15 of June. Alone or accompanied by friends or family, with kids or adolescents, you will surely enjoy this event and will return there next year.

Rock’n’roll forever
If you feel like rock, hard rock, jazz, blues, country or punk, then the “Guitare en scène” festival is for you! First festival was organized in 2007 in Saint-Julien-en-Genevois (Haute Savoie, France) by enthusiasts and fans of the guitar music. The organizers were music obsessed amateurs and unknown garage bands, but slowly the Festival attracted professional musicians and even world-famous singers and groups as Bernie Marsden of Whitesnake, John Paul Jones of Led Zeppelin, Steve Morse of Deep Purple, Iggy (Pop) and Stooges, ZZ Top, Mark Knopfler of Dire Straits.

This year a special guest at the Festival will be the legendary rock group “Deep Purple”. The festival will take place, as usual, in July, from Thursday 17th to Sunday 20th. The number of entrances is limited and it is advised to book the tickets in advance.

www.lepetitpays.com/fr/les-grandes-medievales
EMPLOI/JOB

Secretary, "UN Special" Magazine

Application deadline: 20 June 2014 by email: unspecial@who.int

Temporary employment opportunity starting 1 July 2014.
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The overall purpose of this position is to provide administrative support functions to the "UN Special" Magazine. More specifically, the Secretary will assist the Editor and Deputy Editors in Chief, in preparing the monthly issues of the "UN Special" Magazine and manage the secretariat, including:

- Reviews, records, processes mail or other documents;
- Updates the web platform of the editorial committee;
- Edits articles in English and/or French, ensure copyright compliance of magazine articles and photos;
- Verifies the alignment of the articles with the editorial policy;
- Liaison with the external partners: editor, advertising, printers, lay-out;
- Takes minutes of the Editorial Committee meetings;
- Receives phone calls and visitors and responds to routine enquiries and information requests;
- Ensures the refill of the magazine’s displays in the Palais des Nations.

Education and Skills: Completion of secondary school education or equivalent is essential. A university degree is desirable.

Languages: Expert knowledge of English and French is essential. Intermediate knowledge of any other UN language is desirable.

Other skills: Ability to interact well with colleagues and demonstrate common sense and initiative in finding solutions to problems. The incumbent maintains and updates proficiency in the use of modern office technology and keeps abreast of changes in UN system relevant to the work of the "UN Special" magazine. Detail oriented, accuracy, proactive attitude.

Experience: At least 5 years of relevant experience.

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Magazine of the international civil servants of the United Nations at Geneva and of the Word Health Organization

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