Les piliers des Nations Unies
The pillars of the United Nations

ENTRETIEN/INTERVIEW
Acting Director-General, UNOG

OMS/WHO
The Ebola outbreak in West Africa

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Les pilliers des Nations Unies
Sommes-nous de super héros?

Comment définir un(e) super héroïque ?
La littérature l’affuble de pouvoirs exceptionnels, le 7e art le dote d’une panoplie de gadgets en tout genre l’aidant à réaliser ses exploits.

Il agit selon un code de conduite irréprochable. Sans relâche, il défend les plus faibles et risque sa vie pour en préserver d’autres. Ses actions le mènent au cœur de situations complexes et pour protéger son anonymat, il possède une double identité et opère masqué.

Comment se différencie le héros ordinaire du super héro ?

Alors que le costume du super héro lui confère ses pouvoirs magiques, pour le héros ordinaire la magie s’opère lorsqu’il se révèle au grand jour, sans artifice et sans masque. C’est au travers de simples actes de compassion, de courage et de générosité que l’homme ordinaire peut devenir un héros du quotidien.

Il n’est pas identifiable au premier coup d’œil car il ne correspond pas à l’image que l’on s’en fait. Il ne porte pas de tenue extraordinaire, n’est pas équipé de gadgets sensationnels, et n’a pas de muscles saillants, mais on le croise là où l’on s’y attend le moins.

Aux Nations Unies, ces héros ordinaires constituent les piliers de l’organisation. Indépendamment de tout niveau hiérarchique, leurs qualités morales les poussent à accomplir des actes sans espoir de retour dans l’anonymat le plus complet.

The pillars of the United Nations
Are we superheroes?

What defines a superhero? Our literature endows them with superhuman powers, while on the big screen they are equipped with an array of gadgets to help them pull off their feats.

Superheroes follow the highest code of conduct. They tirelessly defend the most vulnerable, and risk their lives to protect others. They act in the most difficult of situations, with a mask and a dual identity to stay anonymous.

How is an “ordinary” hero any different?

Whereas a superhero’s costume gives magical powers, an “ordinary” hero’s magic happens in plain sight, without any tricks or masks. Through simple acts of compassion, courage and generosity, an ordinary person can become a real-life hero.

Real-life heroes are not recognizable at first glance because they don’t match the image in our minds. They don’t have an incredible outfit, nor any amazing gadgets, and don’t have huge muscles, but we come across them when we least expect it.

These “ordinary” heroes are the pillars of the United Nations. No matter what their position, their moral qualities push them to achieve great feats without expecting additional reward, and all the while keeping their anonymity.
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Peace, Rights and Well-being

The Cornerstone of Perception Change

Mr. Michael Møller, Acting Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva is the Guest of UN Special.

INTERVIEW BY EVELINA RIOUKHINA AND SARAH JORDAN, WITH PARTICIPATION OF IAN RICHARDS

UN Special: Thank you for accepting our invitation to be guest of the month in this special issue dedicated to the UN and Member States. Your position is unique and unprecedented as you had the opportunity to act as two Under-Secretaries-General, as Director-General of UNOG, with its 193 Member States and as Executive Secretary of UNECE, with its 56 member States. But is it really 193 + 56?

Michael Møller: Those 193+56 countries are all members of the same organization- the UN. We all work towards a common goal, but with emphasis on different specific objectives. So the key difference between the two are the issues addressed. They require various points of view as well as language and focus, and the two jobs have me working with different people. With different substance, comes a different personal approach, but it always seemed to come together.

In this sense, you might have totally different relations with Switzerland, on one hand, the host country of UNOG, and on the other hand, a member of ECE. What kind of relation do you have?

With regard to UNECE, my dealings are with Ambassador Remigi Winzap, who as the Vice-Chair of the Commission and its Executive Committee plays a very important role within the organization. When we meet with him at that platform, we discuss issues related to the substance of ECE’s work. But to discuss UNOG-specific matters and issues related to the financial and political support of the host country to the UN in general, I interact with Ambassador Alexandre Fasel. Switzerland is very welcoming and generous and has shown a consistent readiness to help on both fronts.

Such a nuanced relationship must be difficult to build and require outstanding diplomatic skills. Could you tell us about your career and how you acquired such skills?

I have been working at the UN all of my professional life, since 1979, within various functions and in the field. This has given me a broad range of experiences and responsibilities that have allowed me to develop my diplomatic abilities. There is no magic in this, just experience and hard work.

You have initiated and promoted a project for “Perception Change”. As you said in one of your interviews, you are “marked by the UN principles and the UN is anchored in you”. In this sense, being a genuine “UN staffer” your vision for perception change carries more weight than that of a person appointed from outside the Organization. Why do you
I realize that people on the outside often do not know the extent of the impact of the UN in their daily lives. It is vital that people understand this. After the financial crisis of 2008, which affected most of the countries and organizations in the UN, it is important to put the focus back on substance and point to new priorities.

Towards this aim, we need to improve and better manage our communication with people so they know what we are doing. Everything that is done here in Geneva has a direct impact on every person on this planet, in any 24-hour period. We target every single member state, each with different priorities, levels of development, languages and media. Everything we do, from meetings, facts, data, standards and concepts needs to be made relevant. And we want to do it through meaningful stories to emotionally connect with people.

We have distilled everything we do in international Geneva to three main points: peace, rights and well-being. And this is true for all organizations. That being said I would like to add that the UNECE is one of the hidden pearls of the UN family. Although those in the technical Ministries of Member States are probably aware of it, people on the street don’t know enough about it. And yet it is an organization that punches well above its weight. For example, does the average person know that the ECE is responsible for the standardization of the street signs they read every day? Or that their babies’ car seats are certified thanks to the work of ECE? We need thousands of stories like these to be told so people can make personal connections between what we do and their lives.

In an article in the Tribune de Genève you are highly praised by the journalist Alain Jourdan, who applied to you a very interesting metaphor “Presque un OVNI dans le monde feutré de la diplomatie onusiennne…”. (meaning “almost a UFO in the UN diplomatic world”(TDG, 12.05.14). This journalist is not the only person to have been struck by you being different – it is also recognized by your colleagues here – What is your secret?

There is no secret to it. I have a long career behind me, I grew up in the system, and I have an understanding of how things work. I do what I think is right, and I say things how I see them. There may also be a cultural aspect to it. I come from a country (Editor’s note – Denmark) which is very open and democratic and perhaps this has also shaped me. But at the end of the day I use my best judgment to do the right thing, and that’s about it.

When you speak about changing perception, is the Strategic Heritage Plan part of your concept of change? For me, the Strategic Heritage Plan (SHP) is part of this change. Renovating the Palais goes hand in hand with the perception change project as we take steps to mobilize resources to fund the renovation. But this goes beyond the renovation itself. The Palais is the symbol of International Geneva. It is the physical manifestation of multilateral diplomacy, a historical heritage site and an architectural landmark not only for Geneva and Switzerland but also for the entire world.

When you look at yourself in the mirror, you should like what you see. This implies integrity, honesty and the necessity to overcome one’s fear and speak up in the name of justice when something is wrong. Second, you need to know how to listen and to act on what you hear as you move up the ladder. Third, treat people equally, irrespective of gender, age or nationality. Fourth: mobility shapes a career so you should be ready to move and work in other duty stations and international organizations and deliver to the maximum of your capacity. Finally, I’m a firm believer in the precept of “mens sana in corpore sano” – staying fit and healthy helps a person to perform at his or her peak.

You speak about communication. You indeed inspire the whole of UNGO, and the idea of “changing perception” is what we all need – the Organization, and maybe each and every one of us in our daily work. Is there any way for us, without encroaching on your time, to see what you are doing and how you are thinking? Yes, I recently created a Twitter account to which I contribute regularly. You can follow on UNOG, DG. I also have a blog in the Huffington Post, in English, French, German and Spanish, where I regularly publish articles on issues that illustrate or touch upon the relevance of our work. Also, if you take a look at our website you will also get a good sense of what we are working on.
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This particular outbreak originated in Guinea. Within six months, Ebola spread to Sierra Leone and Liberia, two countries which had never before experienced cases of the disease.

As more cases were identified, WHO worked with UN agencies and other close partners to coordinate efforts to prevent and control the disease.

One major problem was the lack of resources within the countries affected.

“I knew it was going to be hard, but I did not expect this extent of challenges, in terms of lack of equipment and gaps in infection prevention and control measures,” said Dr Mauricio Ferri, a Brazilian intensive care specialist deployed to the region through WHO’s Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN).

WHO estimates that there are on average just 1-2 doctors per 100,000 people.

One of the GOARN functions is to bring much-needed expertise to field, ranging from clinicians to treat patients to epidemiologists to work in surveillance and monitoring the outbreak.

“One of the priorities is to train health workers in affected countries on how they can protect themselves when they provide care for the sick,” says Pierre Formenty, one of WHO’s experts in Ebola. Trained volunteers across the region now provide support in laboratories, participate in social mobilization and awareness-raising efforts, handle contact tracing responsibilities, and also perform safe burials.

Another challenge is to ensure that people understand how to avoid the virus, and what to do if they think they or their loved ones have become infected.

“To actively find sick people,
“The countries affected to date simply do not have the capacity to manage an outbreak of this size and complexity on their own,” said Dr Margaret Chan. “I urge the international community to provide this support on the most urgent basis possible.”

While bans on international travel or trade were discouraged in the guidance issued by the IHR, the recommendations did advise Member States to be vigilant.

Although there is no registered treatment or vaccine, people showing symptoms improve their chances of survival if they get to hospital. Early supportive care – such as maintaining blood pressure and fluids, allowing the immune system to fight the virus – helps recovery. Nonetheless, a specific treatment or vaccine would be crucial, but no interventions are ready for the global market. Considering the size and scale of this outbreak, a WHO panel of medical and ethical experts agreed that it can be ethical to offer unregistered interventions.

As of 19 August 2014, 1,229 patients had died from Ebola virus disease across West Africa. While efforts are under way to accelerate the production of experimental interventions, supplies will not be augmented for several months to come. Sadly, for some patients, this could be too late.

ABOUT EBOLA
Ebola virus disease (formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever) is a severe, often fatal illness. It is one of the world’s most virulent diseases. The infection is transmitted by direct contact with blood, bodily fluids and tissues of infected animals or people. Severely ill patients require intensive supportive care. Typical signs and symptoms include the sudden onset of fever, intense weakness, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. This is followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, impaired kidney and liver function, and in some cases, both internal and external bleeding. There is no licensed specific treatment or vaccine. During an outbreak, those at higher risk of infection are health workers, family members and others in close contact with sick people and deceased patients. The infection can be controlled through the use of recommended protective measures in clinics and hospitals, at community gatherings, or at home.
Storytelling may be as old as humanity itself, and the pleasure of sharing knowledge through stories starts when we are children. Storytelling can also be a powerful device to communicate important messages, one that the World Health Organization’s (WHO) is deploying to explain its work through its book *Bugs, Drugs and Smoke: Stories from Public Health*.

By telling seven powerful stories, the book shows how the United Nations agency has been at the heart of the major milestones in public health, and how it continues to be a crucial actor in global health.

Initially conceived as a book for young people, it became clear soon after it was published two years ago that it could serve as a highly accessible and engaging read for anyone who wants to know what WHO actually does.

“Every year WHO publishes many books, guidelines and reports – virtually all of them are technical. This book speaks to wider audience,” says WHO’s Fiona Fleck, who edited the book. “It conveys some of the history of public health and WHO’s role in narrative form, in a language that everyone can understand.”

The book was conceived and written in collaboration with technical experts and units from across the UN agency, and was based in part on interviews with public health pioneers, such as Donald A. Henderson, who headed WHO’s smallpox campaign in the 1960s and 1970s, and the late Sir John Crofton, who developed ground-breaking treatments for tuberculosis in the 1950s.

“Storytelling in science is quite well established and there is a whole genre of popular science literature, but this is not the case with public health, which

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**Stories give the UN’s health agency**

**A “human face”**

*The World Health Organization is introducing visitors and new staff to its work with a... storybook? Now the book has been snapped up by a Chinese publisher and will be published in Chinese later this year.*

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is surprising considering the amazingly powerful human stories behind the public health programmes and campaigns,” says Fleck, who is also the news editor of the Bulletin of the World Health Organization, a monthly peer-review journal.

The chapter on tobacco control, for example, provides the back-story to WHO’s leadership in this area since the late 1990s, says Dr. Douglas Bettcher, WHO’s Director for prevention of noncommunicable diseases and one of the collaborators on the book. “It has a very good balance, reflecting WHO’s work at global and country level, and represents a step forward in WHO’s publications, since it cuts through expert jargon and makes WHO more understandable as an organization with a human face.”

“It cuts through the expert jargon and makes WHO more understandable.”

Douglas Bettcher

While on internship with WHO, science communications students from Imperial College London worked on the content to make it more appealing to their age group (mid-20’s) and the chapters were tested on a group of young people aged 13 to 16 years who provided feedback to make it more readable.

Each chapter focuses on a field of public health where WHO has played and continues to play an important role: smallpox, oral rehydration salts, mental health, tobacco, AIDS, tuberculosis and disease outbreaks.

Zooming in on just seven topics was a challenge: “We really tried to boil each one down to its essence and convey just a few important public health messages,” says Fleck.

Often these are stories of courageous individuals who went out on a limb to try something new or take on a powerful foe: be it a fast-spreading epidemic of smallpox, cholera or SARS; a medical establishment that was reluctant to relinquish control of a simple treatment for diarrhoea; the powerful business interests of the global tobacco industry; or the stigma faced by people living with mental illness or HIV.

“The book shows how the work of WHO affects everyone’s health. For example, it was the success of the smallpox eradication campaign that inspired WHO’s Expanded Programme of Immunization, the basis of national childhood immunization programmes around the world that have saved millions of lives. Smoke-free workplaces policies are a direct result of WHO’s Tobacco Free Initiative, while treatment and prevention guidelines on many health areas are constantly being developed and kept up-to-date by WHO.

The book, which has only been published in English, will be available in Chinese later this year, thanks to an agreement with the Beijing-based People’s Medical Publishing House. It will be distributed through its sales department, medical bookstores and some online bookstores to public health professionals in China. “I’m delighted that the book will soon appear in Chinese,” says Fleck. “We’re always looking for partners who can help produce the book in other United Nations languages.”
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DETERMINED to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind. To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. To establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained. To promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

The following series of events led to the writing of the Charter, and the UN’s founding.

In 1941, the great British capital had already seen twenty-two months of war and in the bomb-marked city, air-raid sirens wailed all too frequently. Practically all Europe had fallen to the Axis and ships on the Atlantic, carrying vital supplies, sank with grim regularity. But on June 12, 1941, the representatives of Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa and of the exiled governments of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Yugoslavia and of General de Gaulle of France, met and signed The Declaration of St. James’s Palace.

Two months after the London Declaration, on August 14, 1941, came the next step to a world organization, the result of a dramatic meeting between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill. This document was called The Atlantic Charter. Of the eight points of the Atlantic Charter, two bear directly on world organization, and the eighth concluded the document with the outline of peace organization.

The complete alliance thus effected was in the light of the principles of the Atlantic Charter, and the first clause of the United Nations Declaration.

Thus by 1943 all the principal Allied nations were committed to outright victory, but the basis for a world organization had yet to be defined, and such a definition came at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union on October 30, when the Moscow Declaration was signed. The Declaration pledged further joint action in dealing with the enemies’ surrender. In December, two months after the previous Declaration, Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill, meeting for the first time at Teheran, declared that they had worked out concerted plans for final victory.

From defining the principles and purpose of a world organization to setting up the composition, representatives of China, Great Britain, the USSR and the United States met for a business-like conference at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C. The discussions were completed on October 7, 1944. According to the proposals, for the structure of the world organization, four principal bodies were to constitute the organization to be known as the United Nations. There was to be a General Assembly, a Security Council, an International Court of Justice, and the fourth a Secretariat. An Economic and Social Council, working under the authority of the General Assembly, was also provided for.

One important gap in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals had yet to be filled: the voting procedure in the Security Council. This was done at Yalta in the Crimea where Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, met Axis, decide to sign the Declaration of the United Nations. This important document pledged the signatory governments to the maximum war effort and bound them against making a separate peace.
on February 11, 1945, the conference announced that this question had been resolved.

Next step was when representatives of 50 countries met for the San Francisco Conference to draw up the United Nations Charter. Those delegates deliberated based on proposals worked out atDumbarton Oaks, United States in August-October 1944. The representatives of the 50 countries signed the Charter on June 26, 1945. Poland, which was not represented at the Conference, signed it later and became one of the original 51 Member States.

It entered into force on October 24, 1945, after being ratified by the five permanent members of the Security Council – the Republic of China under Chapter II of the United Nations Charter (and currently by the People’s Republic of China), France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (later replaced by the Russian Federation), the United Kingdom, and the United States – and a majority of the other signatories. The Statute of the International Court of Justice is an integral part of the Charter. Four years of planning and the hope of many years had materialized in an international organization designed to end war and promote peace, justice and better living for all humankind.

The Charter of the United Nations is the first and foundational treaty of the biggest international organization called the United Nations, with a global coverage in support of facilitating peace and cooperation among others; already 193 countries in the world have now ratified the constituent treaty. One of the main purposes that can be concluded from the Charter was and is still present in our minds: the prevention of the outbreak of a future world war, promoting and maintaining peace, justice and the development of humanity, our nations through the United Nations brought us closer as individuals, sharing the same goals, and the force and desire to maintain world peace through diplomacy. Its staff at each meeting, large, small, at the highest level, or smaller importance implements United Nations Charter principles every day; this is the way of the United Nations, which brings together the most important factor of stability, the desire to move forward and cooperate with and between our countries, developed or less developed.

Here in the United Nations, all countries have a voice a say, and each of us can bring a contribution to the continuation and the development of humanity, our people, and only together, we can move forward in the greatest family that is called the United Nations.}


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The UN Security Council: Calling for international peace and security

The United Nations Security Council’s main responsibility is upholding international peace and security.

CHRISTOPHER KARL STREBEL

It is composed of five permanent Members (France, The Democratic People’s Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America) with veto power and ten non-permanent members. The non-permanent members are elected by the United Nations General Assembly on a regional basis to serve two year terms.

Article 27 of the United Nations Charter lays out the rules for voting in the Security Council. Each Member has one vote and the five permanent Members can veto any decision. According to Article 27, for a vote to be approved by the Security Council it must be approved by at least nine members and not be vetoed by any member. Under the Charter, all Member States must comply with decisions made by the Security Council.
Role of the Security Council
Meetings of the Security Council can be called at any time when the need arises. Under Chapter VI of the Charter the Security Council is permitted by the UN Charter to investigate any situation that could be detrimental to international peace in its role to contribute to the “Pacific Settlement of Disputes”. The Council can recommend measures to reach a peaceful resolution of a conflict or it can advocate sanctions or cutting diplomatic relations or even call on Member States to implement its decisions militarily. The UN may, after Security Council approval, send peacekeepers (often called “Blue Helmets” or “Blue Berets”) to territories to deter combatants from fighting and to enforce the terms of a Security Council resolution. According to the UN, there are currently over 111,000 peacekeepers assisting in 16 Department of Peacekeeping Operations.¹

Other important functions of the Security Council are to recommend new countries for admission as Member States of the United Nations and propose a new Secretary General to the United Nations General Assembly.

President of the Security Council
The president of the Security Council is in charge of presiding over Council meetings, setting the agenda and overseeing any crisis. The presidency of the Council rotates on a monthly basis amongst the members of the Council and goes in alphabetical order of the Member States names in English.

Reform
Historically, there have been many calls to reform and improve the functioning of the Security Council and the UN. However, even though the power structure of the world has changed dramatically since 1945, when the UN was created, the Council has changed very little over the past 69 years.

During the 1990s there were increasing appeals to reform the United Nations and the Security Council and on 1 June 2011, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Atul Khare of India to be in charge of leading efforts to create a reform agenda to improve and streamline the efficiency of the UN.

More recently in 2013, speakers at the sixty-eighth UN General Assembly urged reform of the Council. “Overhaul of the Security Council must include streamlined working methods and a broader, more representative membership that reflected geopolitical realities and prepared the body to fulfill its mandate of maintaining global peace and security.”²

Whether it is reformed in one year or many years the Security Council remains one of the six principal UN organs and arguably the most visible to the general public. As a result, its successes or lack thereof reflects on the UN system as a whole and influences public perception of the UN in general.

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Investing in space is investing in life

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), as Secretariat to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, facilitates international cooperation in space activities within the UN in order to bring the benefits of space to humankind. In March 2014 Italian astrophysicist Simonetta Di Pippo was appointed as Director of UNOOSA by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

In our interview with Ms. Di Pippo, she explains how investing in space research is vital for global sustainable development. Space technologies enrich our daily lives in many ways and have become vital for the growth and development of society. Therefore, space’s future is also linked to the legitimate expectations of discovering new fields of application for technology transfer and its impact on future generations.

How then is space contributing to the socio-economic development of our planet?
One of the roles of exploration is mainly to allow humanity to develop new technologies which can then be used on Earth to improve life conditions. Space exploration can also bring humanity beyond the Earth’s limits, allowing the human race to open unexpected gateways to the future. The process of trying to know the unknown will trigger creativity and collaborations, requiring the global coordinated efforts. New space technologies are being developed which are more and more becoming directly applicable in developing nations where they have proven to be vital in sustainable development and improving social conditions.

In a globalized world it becomes fundamental to share space competences at international level to achieve targeted goals. How does space impact our daily lives?
Space pervades our daily life in so many ways. We use satellites several times per day: to check the weather, to navigate to the office, to track pollution levels, to watch TV shows, etc. What is most relevant for the work of the United Nations is the use of space-derived technologies for humanitarian purposes, that is, using satellite-derived information on agriculture and food production and health related activities such as humanitarian telemedicine for socio-economic benefits and to combat disasters. For instance, the UN-SPIDER program works to ensure the equal use of space-based information to support the full disaster management cycle.

What do you see as the future of space exploration?
UNOOSA works to strengthen the role of space technologies and their applications for the socio-economic development of the Earth, in particular for developing nations. As we move forward with the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, UNOOSA will work towards promoting the unique role of space in socio-economic development.

The future role for space exploration is then, not only to transmit the accumulated heritage, but also to envisage new areas of application. Which role plays sustainability in space?
The long-term sustainability of outer space activities is a matter of interest and importance for the international community. The space environment is being used more and more by states, international intergovernmental organizations, private sector and other non-governmental entities,
and it is, in the interest of all these actors, that both the safety and the security of space activities are improved. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, through its working group on the long-term sustainability of space activities, is working on the development of a set of guidelines on topics such as sustainable space utilization for sustainable development on Earth, space debris, space weather, regulatory guidance for space actors, space operations and tools to support collaborative space situational awareness.

The aim is to develop the guidelines so that they form the foundation for the development of national and international practices for the benefit of all nations.

Guidelines, standards and to guarantee the existing space technology in use and project it towards innovative future developments is very important. How space technologies could contribute to prevent climate change?

Climate change is a global phenomenon threatening the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The use of integrated satellite technology applications can help to protect the Earth’s environment. Satellites offer a unique way of observing climate change, such as sea-level rise, deforestation trends and carbon emissions, and factors not always possible to be observed from the ground, such as the melting of polar ice caps and glaciers. UNOOSA coordinates international efforts to share information on the observation and monitoring of the planet and the utilization of space derived data to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, and to help with humanitarian aid, agricultural and food support, to name just a few.

The International Space Station (ISS) can be seen as one of the “wonders of the world”, as it represents a unique historical achievement for mankind and a true example of international cooperation. Why is that so significant?

The ISS is, without a doubt, a masterpiece. It’s the biggest international collaboration in space ever developed, and it is permanently inhabited by a crew of six astronauts of at least three nationalities at any one time. This space laboratory, permanently in Low Earth Orbit allows countries to collaborate on experiments in microgravity conditions for their application to the betterment of humanity. It is a fruitful example of the benefits of the coordination in space activities and the result of collaboration between countries.

How does UNOOSA communicate its work to the global community?

My office is working more on more on improving the communication of our work. This is a vital element in the fulfillment of our mission and comprises an important step in any operational endeavor. Raising awareness of the importance of space activities in our daily life is paramount in highlighting the need for space technologies in the goal of sustainable development. In relation to our efforts in communication, I intend to engage the youth through our activities in UNOOSA in order to ensure young people are involved in policy formulation. The youth of today will be travelling, working and living in space in the near-medium term and their involvement in space policy today is fundamental for tomorrow’s success.

The Un Magazine thanks kindly the UNOOSA Director for having opened up a window on how we are surrounded by space technologies in our daily activities without being not always so that immediately aware of the extraordinary relevance on how living a comfortable life on earth depends on space too.

1 Simonetta Di Pippo has held prestigious positions of responsibility as head of ASI European Space Policy Observatory and as former Director of Human Spaceflight at the European Space Agency (ESA). She is also co-founder and President of the international association Women in Aerospace Europe (WAE).
There is always a gift in any challenge.” – Bronnie Ware

Saving lives of people living with HIV, repatriating refugees, settling displaced people, finding peaceful solutions to conflict are some of the missions carried out by a United Nations (UN) staff member. His life is not a bed of roses. He faces many challenges on his job – at times risking and costing his life.

The world will never forget the sacrifice of Sérgio Vieira de Mello the UN diplomat and his colleagues who lost their lives in the 2003 bombing of the United Nations offices in Baghdad or Glenn Thomas of the WHO, who along with many prominent HIV/AIDS researchers and advocates, lost his life on the doomed Malaysian Airlines Flight 17.

More recently 11 UN staff lost their lives during a bombing of a school in Gaza. These and many other UN staff who lost their lives in the line of duty are heroes. They will be remembered forever.

As a UN spouse I understand what it takes to see our husbands off to some of the most dangerous hot spots – war torn Iraq, South Sudan, Central Africa, Afghanistan to name a few. Living from moment to moment, from one phone call to the next.

The UN staff has a family at home. Every change has repercussions. Serving in dangerous non-family duty stations, he misses many memorable moments: his children’s first words, academic and sports achievements and graduation ceremonies. I still remember that precious moment our baby boy took his first steps – his father far away serving in Iraq.

He comes home briefly only to return back to the field. He is often absent when his family needs him most. The horrors, misery, emotions and the traumas in the field make him immune to the everyday “little” problems and emotions of family life. Problems multiply and resentments build up. His family drifts apart. I once heard someone say that UN agencies have one of the highest divorce rates in the world. I have witnessed the homes of friends break up and once happy couples go their separate ways.

It is ironic that he who strives to settle the displaced, lives a life of upheaval himself. Every time he is posted to a new country, his entire life turns upside down. As a UN spouse, I felt and understood the pain of a displaced and uprooted refugee. With every move I and the children felt more vulnerable – leaving behind the known moving towards the unknown. It takes years to build a home, make friends, settle down and only days to pack up and move on leaving everything behind.

The kids of a UN staff have their own share of challenges. Raised outside the culture of either parent, they are global nomads, they are referred to as Third Culture Kids. To them, the hardest questions are “where are you from?” And “where is home?” I remember the year our children had to change school five times in one year in four countries on three continents.

That said, the life of a UN staff is not all bleak. He holds one of the most prestigious jobs in the world. He represents his organization and his country. He stands as the symbol of integrity, courage, diplomacy, honor, justice and peace. He is highly compensated by his organization for his good work and sacrifices. He travels to the far corners of the earth and lives in privileged and protected neighborhoods. He benefits from good health care and his children receive the best education possible. The UN family feels at ease interacting with various cultures. They learn to speak several international languages and get to see distant lands. They see the world as one big family.

Every UN family is an unsung hero. They are the support and the backbone of the organization. Their love and comfort provide the courage and determination to step out of the comfort zone and address the many challenges faced by the United Nations.
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Nonviolent Communication in the Workforce

On average, adults 25 to 54 years old spend more time at work than any other place in any given work day.

GEMMA VESTAL WITH RESEARCH ASSISTANCE BY HANNAH PATZKE

In reality, whether we like it or not, we do spend a lot of time at work. Therefore, it makes sense that we all work hard at creating an empowering and motivating work environment. This should not just be managerial competence but a core competence for all staff. This article got hatched after a fellow staff member, in my capacity as one of the Vice-Presidents of the WHO headquarters Staff Association, confided that she was really deeply bothered when a colleague recently shouted in a corridor, “Give me a Kalashnikov! I want to kill someone!” For some reason, I was deeply affected as well. The feeling of “that’s not right” lingered until I decided to respond to it in a more productive way by writing about and articulating why it was not right.

Responses may be polarized and intensely different. One person might laugh and understand the context to be joking – simply symbolic of a very frustrating day at work. For another person, however, it might evoke gruesome memories of murdered friends and relatives. Even if there is no personal horror associated with the statement, the violent imagery can still bring profound offense and revulsion to many people. In a culturally diverse work environment, it is crucial to avoid statements which can be distressing and repugnant to our co-workers and colleagues. Although rarely used with purposeful Schadenfreude, such phrases may cause a rift between colleagues, the feeling of a hostile work environment, or even an international incident.

Nonviolent communication, cultural sensitivity, cultural competency – anyone working in the corporate environment or in an international organization has heard these words bandied about in meetings and training sessions. But what do they actually mean? If one is careful not to say anything offensive, surely that is enough? The problem is that our background has given us a unique perspective
on what is offensive, acceptable, aggressive, friendly, or humorous. What is funny to one person may be grossly offensive in another culture, or might trigger bad memories of the past. So, how can good and appropriate communication be achieved?

Primarily it is crucial to be aware, to educate oneself, and to be open to differences. Jargon and local vernacular should be avoided. What is acceptable in one milieu, might not be acceptable in a work setting. Here is another example from personal experience that illustrates a point. Up to 10 years ago, out of habit, I frequently used the expression, “I’m going to kill you” in a joking way to any close friend or colleague whose behaviour somehow annoyed me. No one challenged me until someone just nicely said, “Whoa, I know you’re joking, but that is quite violent.” That single statement from a friendly and non-threatening person made me pause and ponder. She was absolutely right. And since then, I have never uttered those words.

Another sentence that I hear often is “that person is crazy.” It is a relatively easy label to use for colleagues one does not like or agree with. And if called on it, one can simply say, “I was only joking. Don’t be too sensitive.” Words are powerful. They can destroy. And if used in a compassionate way, words can heal, empower, inspire, and bring hope. It is said that words are the tracks on which the reality train follows. So, why not use kind, empowering, inspiring, nonviolent words to create our work reality.

To reiterate, there are certain things which should never be said or done in an international, culturally diverse work environment. Communication using words of violence is one of those things. There is too much potential for misunderstanding when violence imagery is used. Pugnacious words about hitting, throwing, or lashing out are automatically associated with aggression and may be perceived as a personal threat. Particularly unacceptable are words evoking war and bloodshed. Many of our colleagues have personally experienced these nightmares and should not be reminded of them in routine conversation. Speaking of shooting or blowing something up may seem innocuous to the speaker, but may trigger terror or trauma for others. All communication in a culturally diverse work environment should be nonviolent.

Cultural sensitivity and non-violent communication go hand in hand, but are different in their application. The former requires humility and an openness to constant education and awareness. The latter is simply an imperative that must be observed. Let’s not use violent words at work. Instead, let’s make our workplace bearable if not enjoyable by consciously contributing to a peaceful environment. After all, we spend so much of our waking moments at work. Isn’t it everybody’s dream to work productively and in peace?
Population growth, climate change and other factors are increasing the pressure on availability of good-quality freshwater resources.

PEEP MARDISTE, UNECE

At national level there are normally traditions and mechanisms to determine water allocation between different economic sectors such as agriculture or hydropower production. However, as over 45 percent of the land surface of the world is covered by river basins that are shared by two or more countries, need for bilateral agreements arises. The UNECE Water Convention offers some of the tools for what is increasingly described with the concept of ‘water diplomacy’.

The UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes has provided framework for agreements on joint water management between neighbouring countries since 1992. In Western Europe, the UNECE Member States have long history of multilateral cooperation for joint management of shared rivers such as Danube or Rhine. Today there is increasing need to apply similar approaches in subregions of Caucasus and Central Asia. Kazakh-Kyrgyz inter-state Chu-Talas river basin commission constitutes a good example on fruitful cooperation on water allocation that UNECE has been helping to develop. UNECE is currently supporting the bilateral negotiations between Azerbaijan and Georgia that wish to reach water cooperation agreement on the shared Kura river basin. Possibilities for joint projects on other transboundary rivers will be explored, potentially including Ural river between Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation.

Central Asia is an example of a sub-region where tensions around water security are common and where water diplomacy can contribute to peace. It was not without reason that in its 2013 paper on water diplomacy, the Council of the European Union outlined Central Asia as one of the key regions, requiring attention. Following the recent lessons from the pilot inter-sectoral (or nexus) assessment in Alazani basin of the Caucasus region, the UNECE is planning to start similar assessment of truly transboundary and complex Syr Darya basin in Central Asia. The National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) on water sector reforms that UNECE is conducting in the region since 2006 is considering water diplomacy as one of the future priorities. As UNECE Water Convention is becoming global, there will be new opportunities for transboundary cooperation with countries on Southern borders of UNECE region. A project on joint hydrological monitoring in river Pyanch between Tajikistan and Afghanistan is a pioneering case of such cooperation.

Transboundary water diplomacy also benefits from activities which promote water efficiency and water quality management in upstream countries. National NPD processes are open to provide input into wider regional discussions for water resource management, such as in the framework of IFAS, the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. The IFAS and its subsidiary bodies, the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination of Central Asia (ICWC) and the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development of Central Asia (ICSD) are key regional bodies to enhance water diplomacy and thus security in the region. Considerable economic and population growth of the region can lead to water scarcity and efforts for reaching collaborative arrangements on management of freshwater resources are very timely.
On Thursday, 7 August 2014, the United Nations Flag was lowered to half-mast at UN headquarters as a mark of respect for the personnel of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) who were killed in Gaza. Other offices and duty stations lowered their flags on this occasion.

On the same day, on the initiative of the Staff Associations of UNOG, CCISUA, FISCA and UNISERV, a special ceremony took place at the Place des Nations in Geneva, commemorating tragic death of UNRWA staff perished in Gaza. “These were people who had dedicated years or decades to serving the Palestine refugees of Gaza”, said UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krahenbuhl. “Many of them were educators, inculcating in children the hope of a brighter future and supporting them through the most difficult times.”

Ian Richards, the Executive Secretary of the Coordination Council of UNOH and the President, Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations opened the ceremony. Speech on behalf of UNRWA staff was delivered by Brett Fitzgerald, General Secretary, Federation of International Civil Servants’ Associations.

The names of the perished UNRWA colleagues were read out. Eleven white roses – this is the number of United Nations personnel perished in Gaza – were as a symbolic tribute to each of them. The minute of silence was solemnly observed. Deep condolences were expressed to the families and friends of the perished colleagues.

On the eve of the Commemoration ceremony, Ian Richards, in his capacity as the President of the UNOG Coordination Council and the President of CCISUA, together with Diab El-Tabari, President of Fisca, and Dimitri Samaras, President of UNISERV also addressed with the letter to the Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to The President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. John William Ashe and to the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Mr. Mark Lyall Grant on the above.
«Nous faisons tous des choix, mais au final ce sont nos choix qui nous façonnent»

“We all make choices, but in the end our choices make us”

— Ken Levine
A personal account of a vaccine warrior

Reaching countries with life-saving vaccines

When I first started work in WHO European Region five years ago, I knew it was diverse and complex, but had no real concept of the extent of its rich and varied cultures, languages and values, not to mention socio-economic characteristics and approaches to health.

Over time, I have come to appreciate this diversity as a resource I draw on everyday when tackling the challenges in WHO’s work to prevent disease and promote immunization. I have the opportunity to work closely with the whole range of WHO stakeholders, from senior decision-making levels to frontline health workers and their communities. It’s rewarding and enjoyable to support countries strengthen their risk and crisis communications capacities, tailor their immunization services, and advocate for political commitment.

Vaccines are available to the vast majority of people living in our Region, yet commitment to action varies across countries. This gets in the way of finding innovative solutions and extension of services. It particularly affects groups of people who are socially vulnerable and underserved, with less opportunities for access to health services and health education.

Of the 11.2 million children born in the WHO European Region in 2012, nearly 554,150 did not receive the complete three-dose series of diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus vaccine by the age of one year. That’s half a million babies left vulnerable to disease. In 2013 alone, European Member
States reported 31,685 cases of measles, 39,367 cases of rubella, and wild polio circulation was detected in the Region.

So what are the problems? Same issues are raised by countries again and again: knowledge of disease is uneven across societies, attitudes and behaviours can be worlds apart and service delivery and vaccination monitoring can be sub-optimal, even in high-income countries. As a result, authorities are sometimes simply unable to meet the needs of vulnerable populations. It is increasingly difficult to counter anti-vaccination sentiments and to tackle vaccine hesitancy. Many countries need to be able to manage and respond to public concerns related to vaccine safety.

WHO supports its European Member States to build these much-needed capacities and I am part of the vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization team that works on this. We recently conducted vaccine-communications reviews in Estonia and Romania, and some recommendations are already taken up: both countries have already established their vaccine communications working groups. Two more reviews will be done in 2014, in Montenegro and Kazakhstan.

We also helped Sweden and Bulgaria to adjust vaccination services and communications activities to meet the needs of populations with different ethnic origin and from certain belief-based communities. This was possible thanks to our new Tailoring Immunization Programme Guide, also currently used in the United Kingdom by local immunization services to tailor their responses and messaging for ultra-conservative communities.

When the Ministry of Health of Azerbaijan approached us, keen to establish a dedicated vaccines and immunization website, we were glad to assist. Now the product has also evolved into a template for a “gold-standard” immunization website available to be used by other national health authorities.

I am also heartened when I see countries driving innovation and tailoring new ideas to their needs. For example, a vaccine-reminder smartphone app was recently developed and launched in three countries in versions that would work for them. We recently trained experts in five central Asian republics on outbreak and vaccine-safety communications, and we conducted polio outbreak communication exercises in the Western Balkans, the Caucasus and Ukraine.

The more we do, the more I realize needs to be done in terms of developing capacities for risk and crisis communications. It’s a daunting task but our team is inspired by a vision of high-quality people-centred health systems that are universal, equitable and sustainable. We are part of a bigger picture, achieving the goals of the Global Vaccine Action Plan and the soon to be launched European Vaccine Action Plan (EVAP). It’s good to know that our work counts.

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Mylène Paquette

Rameuse des océans

Mylène Paquette est devenue la première femme nord-américaine à réussir la traversée de l’Atlantique Nord à la rame, en solitaire.

CHANTAL STREIJFFERT-GARON

En relevant un défi extraordinaire: parcourir les 2700 miles nautiques (5000 km) entre la ville d’Halifax au Canada et le port de Lorient en France. Par la route du Nord, d’ouest en est, la plus redoutée des navigateurs à cause de son caractère imprévisible et ses conditions extrêmes.

C’est à 27 ans, alors qu’elle œuvre auprès d’enfants malades au CHU Sainte-Justine de Montréal, qu’une bouleversante conversation avec une adolescente leucémique en fin de vie provoque LE déclic. « Tu ne sais pas ce que c’est que de se battre » résonne encore en elle. En quête d’absolu, Mylène largue les amarres de son train-train quotidien. Pour se dépasser, « se battre ». Elle a une peur panique de l’eau et ne sait pas nager. Qu’à cela ne tienne, elle tombe littéralement amoureuse d’une discipline extrême entre toutes, la rame océanique.

Traverser l’Atlantique à la rame, en solitaire, devient son cheval de bataille. Pour se confronter à ses propres limites. Pour témoigner de la fragilité des océans et de leur écosystème, de
l’interdépendance entre l’humain et l’océan. Pour partager son amour de l’environnement.

Sur trente-cinq tentatives de traversée, douze seulement ont été couronnées de succès. «Plus de personnes sont allées dans l’espace que de rameurs n’ont franchi des océans!». Mylène est devenue la troisième femme de l’histoire à réussir la redoutable traversée de l’Atlantique d’ouest en est, après les Françaises Anne Quéméré et Maud Fontenoy. Son exploit lui a valu le titre de Personnalité de l’année au Gala Excellence de La Presse/Radio-Canada à Montréal le 12 janvier 2014.

Mylène, pourquoi la rame océanique et pourquoi partir seule?

Un coup de foudre, ça ne s’explique pas vraiment. Mais mon goût prononcé pour l’aventure, la nature, l’environnement avec lequel je fais corps lorsque je suis sur l’eau m’ont naturellement conduit vers la rame océanique. Etre seule sur l’océan pour me confronter à mes propres limites, cette quête d’absolu, c’est qui m’a poussée à me lancer dans cette aventure. Partir en équipage, je l’ai fait en 2010 et 2012. Les défis ne sont pas les mêmes. Je devais vivre cette aventure en solo. C’était la seule façon de repousser toutes mes limites. L’immensité, le vide, la solitude ne me font pas peur, bien au contraire. L’essence de ce que je suis me paraît plus accessible sur l’eau, dans un milieu rude et hostile.

Quelles sont les qualités physiques et psychiques indispensables pour réaliser un tel exploit? Doit-on être une sorte de Rambo pour y arriver? Aussi surprenant que cela puisse paraître, c’est la préparation mentale qui est la clé de tout. Un navigateur qui se contente d’une préparation physique ne tiendra pas le coup. J’avais bien sûr un plan d’entraînement, mais très simple. Développer et maintenir une bonne sangle abdominale, un dos et des jambes fortes. Quelques exercices cardiovasculaires. C’est tout!

Comment se déroulait une journée-type à bord du bateau?


Communiquer avec mon équipage au sol ainsi qu’avec mes proches et supporters via Facebook et Twitter. Tenir à jour mon carnet de bord, mon blogue, lire mes courriels et y répondre.

Déposer un hydrophone sous l’eau afin de participer à la recherche scientifique.

Regarder les étoiles, les vagues, les poissons, les dauphins et les oiseaux. Il y a même eu deux oiseaux qui sont venus dormir sur le pont de mon bateau pendant 15 jours, heureux d’avoir ce port d’attache flottant.

Et ramer!

De quoi as-tu eu le plus peur au cours de la traversée?

As-tu vécu des moments difficiles, voire dramatiques?

Comme j’ai très peur de l’eau (rires), ce que je redoutais le plus était de devoir aller sous l’eau pour nettoyer la coque de mon embarcation. Ce que je devais faire tous les dix jours pour enlever les crustacés qui s’y fixaient, ce qui ralentissait ma progression. J’ai aussi chaviré pas moins de dix fois. Il faut dire que la première moitié de la traversée a été très difficile en raison de conditions météo extrêmes.
Après le troisième chavirage au cours duquel mon ancre flottante, mes antennes satellites et un de mes téléphones ont été endommagés, l’équipe au sol (sans qui je n’aurais jamais réussi ce défi) a décidé de demander assistance au Queen Mary II qui se trouvait dans les « parages ». Douze heures plus tard, le paquebot était là avec ses quelques 2000 passagers ! Grâce aux membres d’équipage, j’ai pu récupérer des appareils de navigation de remplacement dans des ballots lancés à la mer ! Avec en prime quelques douceurs comme des croissants et chocolats, des articles de toilette et un de mes téléphones flottante, mes antennes satellites et une quantité phénoménale d’objets non-identifiables et d’objets non-identifiables et de moulusques. La tâche de sauver les océans peut paraître insurmontable devant l’ampleur des dégâts, mais la question ne se pose même pas ! Il y a urgence !


D’ailleurs, ma première rencontre avec eux m’a vraiment donné des sueurs froides. Ce sont d’énormes mammifères mesurant entre 3,5 et 5 mètres environ. L’un d’entre eux était si proche de mon bateau que son jet d’eau a complètement détroué mon sac de couche qui séchait sur le pont. Plus tard, cette baleine est revenue avec ses petits et a nagé auprès de moi pendant que je ramais doucement.

Quels sont tes projets futurs ?
J’ai envie de continuer à partager mon expérience, surtout avec les jeunes. Ils m’ont beaucoup suivie et encouragée sur les réseaux sociaux. Je donne beaucoup de conférences, je vais dans les écoles, dans les entreprises aussi. Je termine un livre. J’ai aussi des projets de courses à la voile ! Je veux retourner naviguer, mais autrement ! Ce qui m’amènera à faire l’aller-retour entre l’Europe et le Québec au cours des prochaines années. J’ai hâte de me lancer !

Quel message souhaites-tu transmettre aux jeunes (et au moins jeunes) ?
Qu’ils poursuivent leurs rêves ! Et l’engagement, ne pas avoir peur de s’engager ! Passer à l’action ! Et, surtout, ne jamais baisser les bras ! Tout est possible ! Un coup de rame à la fois… un geste à la fois.

Pour en savoir plus sur Mylène :
http://www.mylenepaquette.com
https://fr-ca.facebook.com/DefisMylenePaquette
https://twitter.com/MylenePaquette

Glenn joined WHO more than 10 years ago having previously worked for the BBC in the UK. His first WHO post in Geneva was with the Stop TB department. With his wealth of newspaper and broadcasting experience he revolutionised the way the Department worked with the media. He acted tirelessly to promote the work of the Organization but even in the most stressful situations maintained his humour and a smile. In 2012, Glenn moved to the Department of Communications in the Office of the Director-General, though he never lost his passion for ending TB. He was a familiar face at the weekly briefings to UN Palais journalists as WHO spokesperson.
Back at the office, he organized interviews and media trainings for WHO technical staff and group visits of international journalists who came to learn more about WHO and its work.

He travelled extensively in his role as Media Officer and loved the challenge of new environments and new people. Gregory Hartl, Head of the Media team, described Glenn as a consummate professional. “He was very knowledgeable in his field of work and constantly on the lookout for new ways to present information to the media. He could make even the most-normal report enticing to a journalist and therefore was hugely important in our efforts to spread the word about public health far and wide.”

Even in times of great pressure, he was calm and confident and always produced his work on deadline. He had a positive attitude and was a strong team player but I shall miss him as much for what he brought apart from his professionalism – his sense of fun, his adventurism, and his genuine caring for and interest in others – as for what he brought to his work.

Also aboard the flight were two people who worked closely with WHO – Joep Lange and Nora Rahimmah Noor-Tournier. Joep Lange was a leading pioneer in the field of AIDS research and was a former president of the International AIDS Society. Nora Rahimmah Noor-Tournier was a former UN staff member with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Residing in Geneva following her retirement, she was on her way to Malaysia to visit her family.
Etats-nations et mondialisation

Le phénomène des Etats-nations est relativement récent. Il a permis, il y a plusieurs siècles, aux monarchies européennes de se renforcer. Leur émergence n’est pas une évolution naturelle en ce sens qu’elle résulte d’une volonté d’homogénéisation de la population, notamment à travers l’adoption d’une langue et de valeurs communes.

OLIVIER BORIE
Cette ‘standardisation’ a favorisé la constitution d’unités politiques et territoriales offrant un espace de mobilité et un marché intérieur plus vaste et plus efficace. La souveraineté des États qui se sont progressivement constitués leur a conféré une autorité politique, juridiquement reconnue sur un territoire donné.

Le concept de souveraineté est souvent associé à celui d’autodétermination et d’indépendance, en opposition à toute forme d’ingérence externe, un principe fondamental des relations internationales. Il ne s’agit donc pas seulement de se limiter à contrôler les frontières d’un territoire et ce qui se passe à l’intérieur.

De fait, la souveraineté nationale, pouvoir suprême, libre et indépendant, est bien protégée par le droit international, sans toutefois freiner les velléités d’influence. Soulignons également que l’avènement de régimes démocratiques n’a, hélas, pas modifié le jeu politique des relations internationales, toujours fait de conquêtes, de mercantilisme et, heureusement aussi, de coopérations.

Une approche rationnelle voulant que les problèmes internationaux soient abordés par les dirigeants politiques que sous l’angle des intérêts de leur propre pays qu’il faut servir et protéger, on cherche alors à utiliser les organisations internationales pour défendre de mieux l’idée que l’on se fait de son intérêt, ainsi que pour répondre aux préoccupations de son opinion publique.

La souveraineté et l’intérêt national ont un caractère presque sacré. L’armée est un facteur essentiel d’unité. L’identification de l’ennemi facilite la cohésion du groupe. L’esprit de défense cimente l’unité de la nation. La guerre, autrefois acceptée comme un mal nécessaire, ou, plus sobrement, comme la poursuite de la politique par d’autres moyens était une donnée quasiment constante, mis à part durant quelques périodes hégémoniques.

La révolution industrielle et la boucherie de la première guerre mondiale, il y a juste 100 ans de cela, vont radicalement transformer cette vision. Désormais, c’était ‘plus jamais ça’, la paix devenant une priorité. C’était sans compter l’apparition de l’arme atomique qui changeait à nouveau la donne et rendant lidee d’engager une guerre nucléaire.

Les organisations internationales qui ont résulté des conflits mondiaux serviront principalement à préserver les résultats politiques des victoires obtenues, et à pérenniser les alliances en codifiant leur fonctionnement, la volonté de paix pouvant se résumer à un maintien de l’ordre établi.

De plus en plus, les pays doivent composer avec des organisations régionales, supranationales et des acteurs non-étatiques. On assiste également à une mondialisation des structures de production et à une harmonisation sociale et culturelle où chacun aspire à vivre sa vie comme il l’entend, dans une approche individualliste nourrie par l’espoir de s’enrichir. Le développement de modes de consommation communs tend à uniformiser nos de modes de vie, et peuvent même de pensée.

La mondialisation remet-elle en cause la souveraineté des États? S’il arrive que certaines fonctions soient confiées à des organisations à un échelon supérieur, cela ne signifie pas pour autant une perdu de souveraineté. Elle est plutôt déléguée, transmise. Il ne s’agit-là que d’un transfert de compétence. Concernant l’Union européenne, on ne peut que se réjouir de la contribution de son intégration économique à la pacification des relations entre ses membres.

Un attachement à une souveraineté absolue de l’État s’oppose à la nécessité d’accepter plus de supranationalité pour traiter de questions dépassant le cadre national. Or, l’échelle planétaire de phénomènes comme le changement climatique requiert une approche concertée au niveau mondial.

Même si l’on attribue régulièrement à l’ONU une importance qu’elle n’a pas, et qu’on lui reproche tout aussi souvent de ne pas accomplir ce qu’on ne lui donne pas les moyens de faire, elle forme l’ébauche d’un espace politique mondial. En améliorant ses processus de prise de décision, elle servira mieux et plus efficacement les intérêts des peuples de ses États membres. D’ici là, même si la mondialisation et l’intégration de notre planète progressent, nous sommes encore loin d’avoir atteint un ensemble homogène. Les États on de beaux jours devant eux.
Humanitarian Workers who save lives, also need training!

DOMINIQUE VANZO

The United Nations Office in Geneva Medical Service in collaboration with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs organized a half-day biannual Emergency First Aid Training (EFA) for OCHA Response Personnel.

This course is held semi-annually with focus on strengthening the skills and confidence of OCHA rapid response personnel with emphasis placed on concrete, field-based scenarios with practical tips and tools to respond to basic medical emergencies far from professional help.

Gathering in the morning hours, the 12 participants of the EFA were met by the OCHA and Medical Services staff at the outdoor location on the Palais grounds to start the training. A combination of theory and practice was applied which allowed the participants to first gain theoretical knowledge of the first aid they would be performing and later being able to put this knowledge into practice on the volunteers that were present.

The exercises completed were of great variety and included, amongst other things, removing an unconscious victim from a smoke-filled car, performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), treating burns, and dressing various wounds.

They were made all the more realistic as the training was held in a field tent on the Palais grounds and the volunteers’ injuries were realistically depicted with fake blood and make-up.

The next Emergency First Aid Training is to be scheduled for the fall of 2014 and we certainly hope that it will be helpful to the staff working on missions and providing humanitarian help.
A unique repository of WHO history

Going up Avenue Appia from the Palais des Nations towards the World Health Organization, one can take an inconspicuous side entrance to the right that would lead to the WHO Main Library beside the parking lot. Not far from it is a rock shaded by a tall plane tree, the 'WHO memorial rock'.

Commemorative plaques on the rock have diligently chronicled landmark events in WHO’s history during the first 40 years of its existence, and these have references to two former Directors-General:

- Dr. Marcolino G. Candau of Brazil, second Director-General, who served from 1953–1973, and
- Dr. Halfdan Mahler of Denmark, whose term of office was 1973–1988.

Five plaques were presented on different occasions between 1970 and 1998, such as on WHO’s 25th, 30th and 40th anniversaries, by organizations such as the Medical Society of WHO, International Hippocratic Foundation, the Federation of World Health Foundations and Association of Former WHO Staff Members.

Marking footprints on the sands of time

The earliest inscription dates from the 1970, and it was placed jointly by then staff members Dr. S. William A. Gunn, in the name of the WHO Medical Society, and Dr. John Burton, in the name of the WHO Staff Association, to honour personalities, dates and events that constantly enrich the mission of WHO.

The rock also bears a plaque from Dr. Mahler that marks WHO’s 25th anniversary in 1973, on which occasion the plane tree was planted at the spot. Two other plaques were placed on the occasion of WHO’s 40th anniversary. The words “WHO memorial rock” inscribed on the first plaque seem to encapsulate the purpose of the rock aptly.
As is inscribed, the rock was presented to WHO by the Medical Society in 1970, and has since become a continuing historical repository carrying different inscriptions, medals and records of important events associated with the Organization. The rock today attracts a wide array of visitors curious about WHO’s history, from medical students and professors to even Nobel Laureates, who stop by to admire it on their visit to the campus.

Dr. SWA Gunn recalls
Recalls Dr. S. William A. Gunn, a WHO retiree who is an active member of the Association of Former Staff Members, about the start of the colourful tale of the rock that coincided with the 25th birthday of the Organization: “I was new to the Organization then, and it was the 25th anniversary of WHO. On one occasion I had brought, with Professor William Gibson, a present from the University of British Columbia, Canada — a live seedling of the Hippocratic plane tree on the island of Cos in Greece. It was planted ceremoniously to mark the first 25 years of WHO, or in other words, the coming of age of the Organization.”

He vividly recalls the then Director-General Dr. M.G. Candau officiating at the ceremony. “The first D-G, Dr. Brock Chisholm, was also aware of the programme. A Canadian national, he had strong links with the University of British Columbia.”

This celebration was immortalized with a commemorative plaque on the rock, and since then momentous footprints of WHO on the sands of time, such as other worthy anniversaries, have been inscribed on it. The Golden Age of Ancient Greece (the age of Pericles) saw the school of Aesculapius and the power of healing blossom within the realms of both priestly liturgy as well as rational thought. The physician Hippocrates, a contemporary of Socrates and Pericles, is historically associated as one of the earliest exponents of clinical medicine and observational healing in the Western World. In fact, Hippocrates is referred to as the “father of western medicine”.

In the best Hippocratic tradition
Hippocrates founded his school of medicine in the Aegean (Greek) island of Cos (Kos), and was reputed to have held his clinical lessons and coined his aphorisms to initiates under the shade of a plane tree. This “Hippocratic tree” is a live and rare memorial spanning timespans from antiquity to the present. According to legend, this tree still survives in Cos and has now grown to 15 metres in circumference. In fact, it stands as a living arboreal monument held together with wooden beams and Grecian columns. The plane tree at WHO, below which stands the memorial rock, was grafted from a seedling of this tree, and is thus both its direct descendant and a fascinating continuum of that archival past.

Under the aegis of the Department of History of Medicine and Science, University of British Columbia, Canada, a programme was initiated in the latter half of the last century whereby the Hippocratic tradition could be honoured and explained to medical students and institutions all over the world. Seeds from Cos were scientifically selected and husbanded for planting at medical schools and health institutions around the world. The University presented some seedlings to the Medical Society of WHO and one such of this platanus tree was ceremonially planted by Dr. M.G. Candau in the spring of 1973.

Platanus trees around the world bear testimony to the colossal advancements in medical science recorded over the last 2500 years, and renew hope in the attainment of robust health for all people, which is the goal of WHO. The WHO memorial rock exemplifies this remarkable association of WHO with the best and time-honoured principles of health.

Postscript: It is believed that the rock is of glacial origin, and is one of many erratic boulders to be found in the sprawling WHO campus that prehistoric Alpine glaciers deposited there millennia ago, even before the era of Hippocrates.

Grateful acknowledgements to Dr. S.W.A. Gunn and all members of the Association of Former Staff Members for information used in this article

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Ella, a teenage girl activist

Answering the question “what would you like to do when you grow old?” she would reply “the activist.”

Ella is just 16 years old but she has been an activist who is leading the fight to free captive orcas since she was 12.

Ella Van Cleave became a prominent environmental activist after she watched the documentary ‘The Cove’. As she told The Dodo, that powerful film “opened the floodgates” for her advocacy career and turned her into one of the fiercest and youngest activist of her generation.

“Since then, I’ve been heavily involved in supporting an end to cetacean slaughtering and captive holding for entertainment purposes,” the girl from Chattanooga, Tennessee, said in the interview. “From there, you start to become aware that the particular issue you’re advocating for is just a small piece of the puzzle, and once you get a glimpse of the larger picture you’ve seen enough to know that you can’t just stop there, and that there will be a lifetime of work in all sorts of different issues ahead of you.”

The movie exposed the dolphins’ bloody hunt that is regularly taking place in Taiji.

Taking inspiration from the message of condemnation delivered in the film, Ella decided that she wanted to become a conservationist to help mankind save the planet. Over time she has built up a reputation as a public
speaker, managing to raise awareness on her favorite topics and attracted widespread attention. She held a speech at the national Environmental Education and Communications (EECOM) conference at the University of Regina and has been invited to speak at many other environmental conferences in San Francisco.

After a captivating TED's Talk speech, she has become a sort of loudspeaker for the younger ocean fanatics. Ella, who now lives in Victoria, Canada, couldn’t accept that sharks are murdered for their skins and that two thousands dolphins’ lives are stolen each year along the coast of Japan. So she decided to fight against it by taking action instead of doing nothing but some click activism.

To mention a few, the certified scuba diver launched a website, savethedolphinsmile.com, and an online petition to stop dolphin hunting. In 2012 she made a short film that includes dolphin slaughter footage by another friend into marine conservation. That movie made her win the public voting hands down. She then gave all the charity proceeds to One World One Ocean and Sea Shepherd.

To persuade people to pay attention to what happens in the ocean, an ecosystem where “everything happens”, she kept making movies and holding public speeches. But most of all Ella has also gone to the field many times. She was the youngest member of Mission Aquarius, the expedition to the last operating undersea research laboratory, in Florida.

The Florida Keys area is where her family usually goes on vacation.

A producer with MacGillivray Freeman Films, the world’s largest independent producer of Imax films, was so impressed by her video that he offered her to appear on camera at Aquarius Reef Station, the underwater ocean lab in the Florida Keys, Canada.com reports. “She would fly to Key Largo in July, dive into the undersea habitat and get to meet one of her heroes – Dr. Sylvia Earle, the famed oceanographer who has said human actions taken within 10 years will determine the ocean’s fate for 10,000 years.”

The goal of the mission was to bring public attention to Aquarius, the only remaining operating underwater research lab. The amount of research done in this place is unparalleled. After the researchers suffered a drastic funding cut, she helped them get back the grants they needed. Aquarius is owned by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and is operated by Florida International University. The laboratory is most often used by marine to study the coral reef, the fish and aquatic plants which live nearby.

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When going to school, students of the previous generation were used to carry heavy backpacks full of books on their backs. But carrying a classmate to school would be a pretty rare feat for them as well. In an incredibly kind gesture, 13-year-old Hunan girl had been carrying her polio-ridden classmate to school for 4 years. The daily good deed earned her praises from China’s netizens, who eventually named her the “most beautiful primary school student”.

From the age of 9, the girl, named He Qin-jiao, carried He Ying-hui, her disabled classmate, on her back to school. Due to the fact that her classmate’s family was not able to take her to school, the girl took the responsibility for three years until Fall 2013, when her classmate received a wheelchair with the help of the local government funds. Her classmate once wrote in her writing exercise that: “He Qin-jiao uses her little young shoulders to prop up my sky.”

Even after He Ying-hui received the wheelchair, He Qin-jiao would still wake up at 6 every morning and rush to her classmate’s house after finishing
houseworks so she could put her in her wheelchair and go with her to school. When they arrived she even carried her classmate on her back up to her class on the second floor. Both girls are graduating at primary school. He Qin-jiao said that she would keep taking care of her friend when they start secondary school together next year. Though, due to her family’s poor financial condition, tuition is still a big issue. Polio is a disease every child should be vaccinated against, as outbreaks can happen anywhere until the disease has been eradicated. Therefore, all children everywhere should be vaccinated against it, even if they live in polio-free areas.

If you crippled by polio, you will be irreversibly paralyzed within hours. It starts to kick in in your lower limbs and then you cannot move anymore or at least you cannot walk. It does not reveal itself gradually, but most of the time suddenly, by invading the nervous system. There is no cure – once you have polio, you have it for life. That is why preventing it, through vaccination, is so important.

It is a disease that used to be feared by parents all over the globe and can affect all population. Even the former President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt was polio-ridden. The extent of his sickness condition – which at some point got pretty bad – was kept from public view.

Most countries are polio-free, but polio spreads easily across borders with population movements, and so even children in polio-free countries are at risk from it.

Children in countries affected by conflict are at particular risk, as health systems in such settings tend to decline, and children go un-vaccinated. Poor hygienic conditions play a huge role, too. And the disease can spread silently very far – meaning many people can be infected, but not actually have any symptoms themselves. They, in turn, can spread the disease to others, without even knowing they have it. That is why a single case of polio must be considered an outbreak of the disease.

Not every child is as lucky as He Ying-hu. Even though in 2012 polio was endemic in only three countries of the world (Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan), down from more than 125 countries in 1988, when the World Health Assembly committed to eradicate polio globally. This disease must be stamped out completely and awareness on the symptoms must be raised, doctors say.

As long as a single child remains infected, in fact, children in all countries are at risk of contracting polio. In 2010-2012, more than 30 separate importations into previously polio-free countries occurred. In 2011, for instance, the disease was found in China for the first time since 1999 after spreading from Pakistan. China implemented a model response and stopped the outbreak in record time, but it underscores the danger this disease poses to children everywhere. That is why eradicating is so important. In the meantime, we need virtuous people like He Qin-jiao to running our country.
10 ans de plongée,
autant de photographies sous-marines

En 2004 le départ fut très hésitant. Des apprentissages longs et difficiles, ponctués de doutes, de frustrations, à la limite de l’abandon.

TEXTE ET PHOTOS ENRICO D’INCA
Même si j’avais déjà une vingtaine d’années d’expérience photographique « terrestre », il a fallu presque tout reapprendre : la technique, le matériel, le milieu marin, l’approche visuelle, les sujets, etc...

Par la suite, de grands moments de bonheur, de voyages, d’aventures, de rencontres, m’ont fait arriver à 1000 plongées et une belle collection d’images.

Ce palier important dans la vie d’un plongeur mérite bien que je me confronte au public et d’avoir son avis sur la qualité de mes photos.

Ce palier important dans la vie d’un plongeur mérite bien que je me confronte au public et d’avoir son avis sur la qualité de mes photos.

Ces moments que j’aimerais partager avec vous se déclineront en 3 expositions distinctes:

La première, organisée par la Fondation Clair Bois à Genève, qui est un organisme spécialisé dans l’accompagnement de personnes polyhandicapées. Elle offre une prise en charge professionnelle qui favorise la progression et l’émancipation des personnes. Ainsi dans le cadre des ateliers de type occupationnel, les participants se sont inspirés de mes photos pour faire émerger des œuvres d’un monde inaccessibles pour eux, faites d’argiles, de verres, de papiers, de sons... l’occasion d’admirer un projet collectif, créatif et insolite.

J’y exposerais environ 30 photos.

Du 4 septembre au 5 octobre à
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Les corridors de l’amour
une petite leçon de biologie

NATASHA DE FRANCISCO
Pour un grand nombre d’expatriés et leurs familles – surtout ceux qui travaillent aux Nations Unies – la région bordant la ville de Genève est presque devenue une deuxième patrie.

On y possède un logement, nos enfants y vont à l’école. En hiver certains montent skier dans le Jura, et en été on peut y faire de longues promenades à vélo parmi les fleurs jaunes de colza et les épis de blé. Et en automne on peut y déguster le bon vin de la région et savourer les menus de chasse préparés par les chefs locaux.

Depuis toujours, le bassin franco-valdo-genevois est bien connu pour la richesse de sa faune et de sa flore. Ces dernières années, ces dernières années, celles-ci se sont vues menacées par les effets de l’urbanisation et de l’expansion des territoires agricoles. En effet, la construction d’autoroutes difficilement franchissables pour les animaux ne permettent pas aux espèces – surtout les grands cerfs, chevreuils et sangliers – de se déplacer. Contraints de vivre dans des espaces trop petits, ils se trouvent isolés et risquent de disparaître.

Afin d’éliminer les obstacles sur le parcours des animaux, restaurer leurs voies de déplacements et préserver la biodiversité de la région, les trois partenaires de la région trans-frontalière : la République et le Canton de Genève, le Conseil régional du district de Nyon, et la Communauté de communes du Pays de Gex, ont signé un Contrat territorial de corridors biologiques « Vesancy-Versoix ».

Les corridors biologiques sont des voies utilisées par la faune pour se déplacer d’un milieu de vie à un autre pour se nourrir ou se reproduire. Ces traces dans le paysage permettent aussi aux plantes de se disséminer. Le périmètre du contrat englobe une superficie d’environ 17 700 hectares qui s’étend entre le Léman, la Versoix, la partie ouest du district de Nyon et le nord du pays de Gex, comprenant 5 communes genevoises, 13 vaudoises et 13 françaises.

Les corridors biologiques ont donné leur nom à l’exposition temporaire « Les corridors de l’amour ou les rencontres animales à pile ou face » qui s’adresse autant aux enfants qu’aux adultes. Elle se compose d’une partie fixe présentée à la Maison du Salève jusqu’au 31 mars 2015 et d’une partie itinérante qui se déplace dans les communes suisses et françaises concernées par ce contrat.

La prochaine étape itinérante sera présentée à Versoix du 16 septembre au 19 octobre 2014 sous l’égide de l’association patrimoine versoisien qui s’occupe de la protection des biens historiques et culturels ainsi que le patrimoine naturel.

La grande biodiversité présente dans la rivière la Versoix et ses abords est reconnue tant du côté français que suisse et est répertoriée par de nombreux périmètres d’inventaires et de protection. La rivière prend sa source en amont de la ville de Divonne et coule ensuite vers la Suisse. Avec ses zones de marais, de prairies humides, et ses massifs boisés adjacents, la Versoix constitue un réservoir de biodiversité en plein cœur du secteur Vesancy-Versoix. Elle abrite beaucoup d’espèces comme les truites lacustres, les castors, les sonneurs à ventre jaune, les papillons Maculinea, et l’Agrion de Mercure qui est une petite libellule rare et menacée.

Cette exposition-jeu destinée à toute la famille raconte les histoires de nos « petits frères » qui habitent juste à côté de nous et qui essayent de trouver l’âme sœur malgré les obstacles placés sur leur parcours.

Venez nombreux et n’oubliez pas vos enfants – ils trouveront les voies interactives pour découvrir le territoire genevois à travers les yeux des animaux!

Plus d’informations :
Le Grand Genève:
http://www.grand-geneve.org/
La Maison du Salève:
http://www.maisondoisaleve.com/
Le Patrimoine de Versoix:
http://patrimoine.versoix.com/
The rhythms of One World Festival celebrates the signing of the UN Charter

IRyna Dzyubyynska
Summer comes into full swing in Geneva with The Rhythms of One World 2014 International Choral Festival (TROW) organized on 4-8 July by the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation (FAF) and sponsored by Permanent Missions of Romania, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, Australia, and South Africa to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland and the City of Geneva.

The closing Gala Concert at the Palais des Nations’ Assembly Hall on 8 July commemorated the signing of the UN Charter on 26 June 1945. The United Nations Choir in Geneva performed the original composition Convención Relativa aux Droits of the Child written by the UN Music Club’s vice-president and composer Michael Wiener featuring the text of the Convention on the Rights of the Child sung in three languages – English, French, and Spanish.

”TROW transcends ideologies and political differences to unite us all through music. And in what better place than the symbolic home of 193 nations,” said Ms. Yin-Chu Jou, Festival Founder and Manager, who previously brought TROW to New York and to the UN General Assembly Hall in June 2012.

The choral extravaganza packed full house Tuesday night in the Assembly Hall at the Palais. It brought the whole place to its feet with a Romanian interpretive dance and vocal routine, Australian bush songs, Canadian folk music, spicy Caribbean beats, Broadway favorites, and R&B hits in South African gumboot style.

According to Mr. Gary Fry, the Festival Artistic Director, “If we all could enjoy a glorious worldwide jam session, the world, if only for a moment, would be a more peaceful, joyful, and beautiful place.”

While the intercultural ‘jam session’ at the Palais got the crowd in the mood, concluding TROW’s feisty weeklong celebration, the Victoria Hall event put smiles on faces and money from ticket sales into the Kofi Annan Foundation. Both galas were an undeniable hit with the Geneva community.

The Festival showcased the vocal talents of seven choral ensembles from five continents – Allegretto National Children Chorus (Romania), Echology: The University of Newcastle’s Chamber Choir (Australia), Canadian Ambassadors Choir (Canada), Signal Hill Alumni Choir (Trinidad and Tobago), The Singing Angels (United States), and Kearsney College Choir (South Africa), and the United Nations Choir in Geneva – each bringing their ethnic flavor and promoting cultural harmony. Another gala concert was held at the Victoria Hall on 6 July and performances and workshops by individual choirs took place throughout the week in venues around Geneva and in neighboring France.

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Entre Léman et Jura: Cessy

Un mois après avoir été réélu pour un deuxième mandat à la tête de la commune de Cessy, en France voisine, Christophe Bouvier succédait à la présidence de la Communauté de communes du Pays de Gex.

Texte et photos Claude Maillard
Cessy fait partie des 27 communes regroupées au sein de cette communauté. Blottie au pied du massif jurassien, à 540 mètres d’altitude, à deux pas de Genève et face au Mont-Blanc, Cessy est un « gros village » d’un peu plus de 4000 habitants, où il fait bon vivre.

L’histoire de Cessy au travers de son blason
Cessy tire probablement son nom de Sissus ou Sissius, septemvir romain (titre que portaient les prêtres chargés d’organiser les banquets donnés en l’honneur des dieux ou à la suite des jeux) de la colonie équestre (Nyon) dont on a conservé la pierre tombale à Versoix. A travers les âges, la commune se nomme Seyssiacus, Sessiaeum, Sessier puis Sessie et, à partir de 1801, Cessy.

La découverte des vestiges d’un bâtiment lié à l’activité agricole et artisanale datant du IIIe siècle, puis d’une villa romaine et enfin de tombes à dalle (Vᵉ siècle), atteste une présence gallo-romaine pendant une période relativement longue. Le prieuré apparaît comme l’héritier de la villa romaine. Une recherche menée aux archives a permis de découvrir un terrier (ancêtre de notre cadastre) daté de 1518, sur lequel une vignette est peinte aux armoiries du prieuré: Saint-Denis céphalophore (qui porte sa tête dans ses mains à la suite de son martyr) entouré d’angelots. Les moines du prieuré possèdent les terres qu’ils louent aux habitants du village. Autre privilège, ils rendent justice que ce soit pour des affaires criminelles ou pour des querelles de voisinage. Mais, en hommes d’église, ils n’ont pas le droit d’appliquer les peines et c’est bien souvent un seigneur de la région, en l’occurrence la famille de Pitegny (qui possède un petit château et des terres à Cessy) qui les exécute.

Fort de cette constatation, le choix du blason de Cessy...
Cessy Perspectives 2020
Même si sa population a été multipliée par neuf depuis 1833 (année où Cessy s’est séparé d’Echenevex pour devenir une commune à part entière), Cessy a su se protéger d’un “bétonnage” à outrance et les rares immeubles construits ne dépassent guère la cime des arbres. La commune n’en est pas pour autant isolée de tout, puisque, en plus des petits commerces de proximité, une vaste zone commerciale est implantée un peu à l’écart, préservant ainsi le charme du village. Et, pour les amoureux de la nature, qu’ils soient pêcheurs, amateurs de barbecue, adeptes du sport ou simples promeneurs, le petit lac de Cessy, entouré d’un parcours de remise en état, est l’endroit idéal pour se détendre et pour passer un agréable moment dans un cadre idyllique.


«Cessy Perspectives 2020» était le slogan évoqué par Christophe Bouvier lors de sa candidature aux élections du 20 mai dernier. Avec environ 600 élèves scolarisés à Cessy, la relève et l’avenir semblent bien assurés...

Cessy au cœur du «Big Bang»
Le 4 juillet 2012, les scientifiques de l’Organisation européenne pour la recherche nucléaire (CERN) annoncent avoir découvert le boson de Higgs. Après de longues expériences menées à bien au sein de l’accélérateur de particules LHC, ils ont pu ainsi expliquer l’origine des masses des particules de matière, améliorant considérablement la compréhension de la nature intime de celle-ci.

Le LHC (Large Hadron Collider) est situé dans un anneau de 27 kilomètres et enterré à 100 m sous terre à la frontière franco-suisse, entre Meyrin et le Pays de Gex. C’est le plus puissant des accélérateurs de particules au monde. Des protons (ou faisceaux) circulant à la vitesse de la lumière, dans deux faisceaux tournants à contre-sens, se choquent les uns contre les autres, dans le but de rechercher des indices de la matière noire et de l’origine de la masse des particules élémentaires. Dans la majeure partie de l’anneau, les faisceaux voyagent dans deux lignes sous vide séparées, mais en quatre points d’interactions, ils se heurtent, produisant une myriade de particules que des détecteurs observent et analysent avec attention.

Sur la commune de Cessy se trouve l’un de ces détecteurs, le CMS (Compact Muon Solenoid), et c’est grâce à lui, en tandem avec le détecteur ATLAS, que le boson de Higgs a été découvert. Le CMS est un «poids lourd» de technologie. Ce détecteur hors du commun est un véritable titan, long de 21,5 mètres, d’un diamètre de 15 mètres, et d’une masse de 12 500 tonnes (semblable à celle d’une quarantaine d’Airbus A 380!). Il possède le solénoïde supraconducteur le plus grand et le plus puissant jamais construit. Son champ magnétique, d’une intensité exceptionnelle, est équivalent à 100 000 fois le champ magnétique terrestre.

Plus de 2000 physiciens et ingénieurs provenant de 183 instituts répartis dans 39 pays ont œuvré sans relâche à la construction du CMS dont l’assemblage a été réalisé dans un gigantesque tunnel sous terre, avant d’être descendu en plusieurs blocs à 100 mètres sous terre.

Pour fêter ses 60 ans, le CERN invitait «ses voisins» à venir découvrir ses installations souterraines les 24 et 25 mai derniers. Au total, plus de 8 000 visiteurs sont descendus dans le tunnel dont 4 536 dans le puits de Cessy pour approcher une dernière fois le CMS. Dès le redémarrage du LHC en janvier, toute visite sera en effet impossible.

A noter enfin que le britannique Tim Berners-Lee, inventeur du World Wide Web (WWW) dans les années 90, alors qu’il était technicien au CERN et qui fut anobli par la Reine Elisabeth II, était citoyen de Cessy à l’époque de sa découverte.
A night at the theatre?

Get cultivated and/or improve your French!

September, perhaps even more than January, is often a month of resolutions: lose weight, get fit, learn a language, do more of this or less of that. And what if your resolution were to develop your cultural side?

Sarah Jordan, UNOG

Go to the cinema more often, to exhibitions or why not to the theatre? For those who already speak French, this “sixth art” can really help you to dis-connect from daily life and for those who are learning (at SDLS maybe), kill two birds with one stone: learn more about French history and culture and improve your understanding of the French language. After all, French often goes by the name of “the language of Molière” – a sixteenth century French playwright.

There are many theatres in Geneva with a very wide range of artistic performances to suit different tastes.

To name but a few: le Grand Théâtre, dating back to the late nineteenth century, is famous the world over for opera and ballet; the Théâtre du Léman hosts a very wide range of “shows” and in particular high-profile artistes on tour; the Théâtre du Grütli stages thought-provoking works sourced world-wide and the Théâtre Pitoëff, an architectural “bijou” in itself, which hosted the annual Genevan political satire “La R’vue” in English for the first time in 2013.

The Comédie de Genève’s 2014-2015 season is a good example of the eclecticism to be found in Geneva, as it will be offering 14 very different productions between October 2014 and May 2015. There’s no Molière this season, but Corneille, Shakespeare (in French) and Goethe (in German, sub-titled in French) are on offer for those who like their classics.

But if you are more into the “avant-garde”, here are some of the highlights of the coming season, selected for the accessibility of the level of French they feature.

“On ne paie pas, on ne paie pas”, written by Dario Fo, who won the Nobel prize for literature in 1997, is a fast-moving social comedy in which women from a working class part of town revolt against rising prices and decide on a “strike” of a very particular kind – refusing to pay for their purchases at the supermarket. This, predictably, has repercussions – some of which are not what one might imagine...

“Récits de femmes”, of which one of the co-authors is also Dario Fo, presents three monologues that evoke with humour three different facets of womanity, covering themes such as sexuality, solitude, adolescence, work and exploitation.

“Cinema Apollo” is a free adaptation of Alberto Moravia’s “Le Mépris.” Godard’s eponymous film (1963) starring Michel Piccoli and Brigitte Bardot is an earlier rendition that may ring a bell with readers. This contemporary version is simple and modern, yet tragic, raising themes such as the theatre, love, contempt, politics, solitude melancholy, suspicion and betrayal.

“Orlando ou l’impatience”, host from the Avignon Festival, is the first play written and directed by Olivier Py since he became the Director of the same Festival. His young hero, the impatient Orlando, goes looking for a father who has never met overcoming the false leads given to him by his actress mother. The themes of politics, art, sex, faith and philosophy intermingle under the pen of the writer and the eye of the Director.

Alongside the set programme, other events are organized at the Comédie, for example “la Nuit Folle” or Marathon GECA on 16 September – a long evening with a real melting pot of all types of live music. For further details, follow this link: http://www.genevacamerata.com/marathon

For UN Special readers who are keen to go to the theatre but really do not have sufficient mastery of French, the Geneva English Drama Society and Geneva Amateur Operatic Society offer performances in English. Check out the following for more information on the upcoming season: http://www.geds.ch/ http://www.gaos.ch/

Watch this space for future articles on cultural offerings in and around Geneva.

For further details: www.comedie.ch
Maybe you are enjoying a leisurely read of your UN Special magazine on a very welcome early September Thursday off work – the Jeûne genevois. Like many, you have maybe added a day of annual leave on Friday resulting in a nice long weekend and a last taste of summer before the autumn sets in.

But just what is this Genevan public holiday all about? First of all, for those whose French is more spoken than written and at the risk of stating the obvious, jeune and jeûne, although pronounced the same way, do not have the same meaning. The first is an adjective meaning young and the second a noun meaning fast (i.e. not eating). So, an accurate translation of Jeûne genevois would be Genevan Fast and not young Genevan!

Yet nobody appears to fast on this day. On the contrary, restaurants in and around Geneva do a roaring trade.

Well, the reason for this is certainly that the Jeûne genevois is an ancient holiday and as times have changed, it has become more secular.

The Jeûne genevois started in the 1560s, during the French Wars of Religion. The Genevans at that time were very close to French Protestants.

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and the Genevan authorities instituted a day of mourning and fasting in remembrance of those killed in massacres in France, notably in nearby Lyon. The Jeûne genevois later came to be associated with the Saint Bartholomew’s Day massacre, which took place in Paris in 1572.

Another question that perplexes those living in Geneva is precisely when does this holiday take place. It is common knowledge that the Jeûne genevois takes place on a Thursday but sometimes it’s the first Thursday of the month of September and sometimes the second. Now why is that?

Well, in fact, the Jeûne genevois is celebrated on the Thursday that follows the first Sunday of September. This year the first Sunday falls on the seventh so the Jeûne genevois is on the eleventh. With this system, it will never occur later than the eleventh nor earlier than the fifth.

So, what should one do on the Jeûne genevois? Well apart from relax, one could respect one of the last traditions remaining from the era when this day was a day of fasting and eat a plum tart!

In the sixteenth century fasting was observed and all the eating houses were closed. So that women and servants could attend the religious services held on that day, they prepared plum tarts the evening before. This became the traditional dish associated with the Jeûne genevois. And why plums? Quite simply because they were in season at the beginning of September. Bon appétit!

For further information on this subject:
http://goo.gl/jht5Ik

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