UNECE @ 70

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This edition commemorates the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. If you look at the annals of UN history from the perspective of economic development, few events have been more auspicious than the founding of UNECE, and yet at the same time more taken for granted. It seems to be human nature to focus on the crises, conflicts and negative events of world affairs, as opposed to giving due importance to natural progression and to the peaceful and positive achievements that come from hard work and strategic vision. This is one of those cases, and we aim to raise awareness about a UN agency that impacts our lives every day – working tirelessly, right here at the Palais des Nations.

From the staff’s perspective, you will see a piece on “getting women to the top” at the UN, but emphasizing all women – not only senior-level female colleagues. We also share with you an interview with our dear friend Francesco Pisano, and his views on the marriage between culture and diplomacy; we bring you the second part of a scholarly reflection on “Integrity and accountability for UN staff”; and, the Young Reporters at UNOG write about the Taekwondo Humanitarian Foundation in Lausanne.

In addition, you will find interesting articles on a new functional paradigm for Human Rights, on lethal autonomous weapons, and on SESAME, the unique particle accelerator modeled after CERN and about to be inaugurated in Jordan – quite an export from Geneva! You can also read about this year’s 5th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games to be hosted by Turkmenistan, and another article on Ethiopia with pictorial coverage from our regular contributor Claude Maillard. Plenty of flavors to whet your appetite!

La revue officielle des fonctionnaires internationaux des Nations Unies à Genève et de l’Organisation mondiale de la Santé

The official magazine of the international civil servants of the United Nations at Geneva and of the World Health Organization
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**Nuts and bolts of Sustainable Development in Europe**

**The pioneering work of UNECE**

_This year the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) celebrates seven decades of service to Europe and to the world. Born out of the ashes of the Second World War, founded by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to address the transnational needs of a ravished continent, UNECE has grown into a sustainable development powerhouse and an unsung hero of international cooperation._

_JESSICA HANEY, UNITAR_

The _Palais des Nations_ has played host to an abundance of contemporary European history, but few people are aware of just how much. As home of UNECE, these hallowed grounds – so familiar to us – have borne witness to countless negotiations that continue to shape the way we live on this continent: from the food we eat, to the roads we drive on, to even the air we breathe. Today, the city of Brussels serves as unofficial capital of the European Union (EU); but before the EU, there was UNECE, and before Brussels as _de facto_ capital, there was International Geneva. Indeed, for the past 70 years through UNECE, our _Palais_ has played a foundational role in the modern pan-European movement.

UNECE is one of five regional commissions of the UN, and its main mandate is to promote economic integration and cooperation among countries in the region, as well as with other countries in the world. The UN General Assembly, on 11 December 1946, declared the mission in no uncertain terms:

_”In order to give effective aid to the countries devastated by the war, the Economic and Social Council, at its next session, [should] give prompt and favourable consideration to the establishment of an Economic Commission for Europe.”_

Within months, the recommendation was adopted, and with its founding in 1947, UNECE took as its members all state participants in the reconstruction of post-war Europe. It remains – alongside the body now known as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) – one of the first two regional economic commissions to be established by the UN._
With the onset of the Cold War, the newly-formed UNECE suddenly found itself in another unique and critical position: as the organization responsible for economic dialogue across the Iron Curtain. Nevertheless, the Commission persisted, even in the context of this stark and seemingly impenetrable continental divide. For over 40 years, it held down the fort as the only forum for economic cooperation across two diametrically opposed systems: a remarkable feat.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the war in the former Yugoslavia brought some twenty new member states to UNECE, hailing from Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Caucasus, and central Asia. This lattermost group sought dual membership in both UNECE and ESCAP. As it stands today, the organization has grown to include 56 member states across Europe, North America, and Asia: indeed, the UNECE region comprises more than 74 million square kilometres and a whopping 20% of the world population. In addition, over 70 international professional organizations and other non-governmental organizations participate in UNECE activities, and many more of the 193 UN member states do the same. It may be called the Economic Commission for Europe, but the impact of some UNECE programs today spans the globe.

The reach of UNECE is not only characterized by breadth, but also diversity. The Commission includes at once some of the world’s richest countries and some that are less economically well-off. Such variance can of course at times present challenges, but also remains a distinct advantage for the organization. It encourages sharing amongst nations with different levels of knowledge and expertise, which not only helps bolster countries in need, but also provides the most fertile soil possible for exchange and growth amongst all parties.

The scope and diversity of UNECE is evident not only in its geography, but also in the content of its work towards global sustainable development. The Commission is responsible for pioneering efforts across a broad portfolio of transnational issues, from air pollution and water cooperation, to road safety, to statistical capacity, to the safe handling of chemicals, to clean energy, to trade, to population management, and beyond. The list is long, and the work often unglamorous. Conventions, norms, and indicators are not exactly sound-byte material, but they are the nuts and bolts of international cooperation across two diametrically opposed systems: a remarkable feat.

Similarly, the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention), signed in 1979 by 32 countries in the pan-European region, was the first international treaty to tackle air pollution on a regional basis by fixing emission ceilings. Fifty-one states are now parties to the Convention, and the results are in: since 1990, the emissions of a series of harmful substances have been reduced by 40 to 80 percent in Europe, and by 30 to 40 percent in North America. This achievement is not merely a pleasant-sounding indicator, but speaks hope into an issue that amounts to a global health crisis: air pollution is more deadly than malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS combined. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it kills around 7 million people per year, including some 600,000 people in the European region alone. It is by far the world’s largest single environmental health risk and cancer-related cause of death. The Air Convention consists not merely in nice words on paper, but in lives saved, around the globe.

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Interview
Christian Friis Bach, UNECE Executive Secretary

ALEX MEJIA, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is a highly respected component of the UN System, with a strategic portfolio and an enormous outreach that goes well beyond Europe. However, people outside government spheres often know little about this agency, and are unaware of the many ways in which the work of UNECE impacts our daily lives. After reading this interview with the organization’s departing Executive Secretary, we hope you will find yourself with new insight into the important work of UNECE.

You have you been with UNECE for almost three years. Tell us about your career before this appointment.
Well, my career hasn’t been particularly straightforward, but I have been given many opportunities in life. I started off as a farmer, then I became an agronomist and later obtained a supplementary degree in journalism. I got very engaged in the fair trade movement in Denmark: specifically, with importing fair trade coffee. I would spend all my spare time cycling around Copenhagen, trying to sell the fair trade coffee to commercial shops. Because of my exposure to international trade with developing countries, I then did a PhD in economics and trade modelling, after which my career completely shifted. I worked at the World Bank in Washington D.C., and later joined the University as first assistant and then associate Professor in international economics. From there, I also worked for a while as a journalist at the Danish Radio. Throughout my life I have been heavily engaged in civil society, and have led the international work of one of Denmark’s largest humanitarian organizations. I have also worked in the private sector, where I ran two start-up companies. After being elected to the Danish Parliament, I became Minister of Development Cooperation, and this position led me to the UN. So it has been a diverse career, but almost all of it has been related to global issues. I have been driven by a strong sense of social justice, which I learned from my parents, and I use my broad experience every single day at UNECE.

Had you worked with the UN before?
No. I have followed and been keenly interested in the UN throughout my life, but had only ever done a few consultancies with the organization. However, as Minister in Denmark, I was responsible for engagement with the UN and led a new policy for “active multilateralism”. We engaged at a more strategic level with the UN, increased our core funding and established innovation funds to support new ideas and approaches. I believe these methods are still very much needed, and I know they were very appreciated by the UN organizations we supported. It has always been a dream for me to be able to work at our organization. I believe it to be the best workplace in the world in terms of its vision and ambition, its values, and its potential impact.

What is your perspective on the future role of the UN agencies in Geneva?
The need for the UN is critical, perhaps even more than has been the case in past decades, because of the serious tensions and turbulence we are currently witnessing across the world and even in the heart of Europe. The global community has some significant challenges ahead, including eradicating poverty, tackling climate change, addressing a wide range of security issues, and standing firmly in defense of the human rights of every single individual. The UN agencies in Geneva, with their array of targeted and vital mandates, will play an essential role for the countries and citizens of the world in the coming years.
With regard to my own agency, I often say that UNECE is, in many ways, an organization whose time has come: especially since the international community is now in the beginning stages of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNECE has been working these past 70 years on developing hundreds of normative instruments; these are global public goods, which can assist countries in achieving the SDGs by helping them produce quality agricultural products, avoid road accidents, use the best available energy, achieve and maintain clean air and water, and so on down the list. Over the course of its history, UNECE has become the place where countries in the region, and sometimes beyond the region, come together to try to resolve key issues that no single nation can address on its own. Indeed, all of the norms, standards and conventions hosted at UNECE may be mapped, almost one-to-one, alongside the SDGs, their targets and their indicators. For example, these days we see countries coming in unprecedented numbers to the UNECE Inland Transport Committee, to shape sustainable and safe mobility systems for the future. They do so because UNECE hosts the 50+ conventions and legal agreements that shape inland transport. We see a similar trend regarding our 100+ agricultural quality standards, where countries join in still larger numbers as they struggle to figure out how to enter world markets. Our work on standards for “people-first” public-private partnerships (PPPs) in support of the SDGs now attracts hundreds of experts from all over the world. So countries realize that our many norms, standards and conventions can be used to implement the SDGs, and we are eager to lend that experience and enthusiasm to the international community.

I truly hope that the SDGs will change the world. If that transformation is to happen, the UN will be a crucial player, and the city of Geneva and the UN organizations here will be on the front lines.

What are the main assets of UNECE as an organization?
The main assets of UNECE are its staff members, as well as its member states, who bring their experts and delegates to the work of the agency. These staff members, experts, and delegates make up the core of the organization, which functions as the secretariat for an extensive inter-governmental negotiation machine, engaging a huge array of issues: from air pollution and trade facilitation, to housing standards and statistical recommendations.

We at UNECE have known how to deliver on these issues for 70 years. The hundreds of norms, standards, and conventions developed over this time are now at the disposal of member states, and provide them with concrete and practical advice on how to move forward towards sustainable development. And because of this wide-ranging and cross-sectoral approach, I would say that UNECE was born to be a sustainable development organization. We can discuss air pollution, mobility, road safety, climate change, and a myriad of other subjects, but also explore the linkages between them. In this way, we are a sustainable development organization perhaps to an even larger extent than some of the more sectoral UN organizations that have shaped the world. I believe that we in the international community need to use this cross-sectional approach to a much greater extent. Such is my vision as leader of UNECE.

Furthermore, I would emphasize that UNECE needs the rest of the UN. For example, we need the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to actively engage with our Committee on Environmental Policy; and
we need the UN Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT) to actively engage with our committee on housing. We need all UN organizations to come and be part of our inter-governmental platform on statistics, called the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). And we need everyone in the UN family that is engaged in transport to work with the UNECE Inland Transport Committee. We hope to mold regional commissions like ourselves into hubs for regional solutions. And therefore, we aspire to turn each of our committees into a place where the global community can engage in these issues together: not merely within the silo of that single issue, but with a holistic appreciation for the task of sustainable development at large.

What is the relationship between UNECE and its four counterparts around the world? How do you interact with these other regional commissions?

As Executive Secretary of UNECE, I made it a priority to try to strengthen cooperation between regional commissions. I think it is absolutely essential for us to share our best ideas, innovations, and results. If a certain commission is skilled at tackling a certain issue – take Latin America on food security and inequality, or Asia-Pacific on certain aspects of trade facilitation – we should all learn from those commissions, and we should bring their methods to our region as well. And vice versa, of course. In UNECE, we have many useful norms, standards and conventions to share with the rest of the world.

However, such sharing does not happen to the extent that it should. I believe that the UN often works too much in silos, and that UN agencies have a tendency to defend their own turf instead of engaging in the kind of constructive cooperation that could benefit all our countries. We need to break down these barriers, and we need to ensure that there is always a strong incentive amongst all UN entities to work together. I hope that our new UN Secretary-General, Mr. Gutteres, will push us all even harder to do so.

What can member states do?

I believe member states should “set the UN free”. The enormous potential of the UN is held back because of micromanagement, narrow mandates, outdated personnel rules and project funding. I sometimes say, to my old friends in the private sector, that there are only three things I cannot do as a leader in the UN: hire, fire and change the organization. Then they ask me: so what can you do?

There is truth behind this question. It is very difficult to adapt the organization because of micromanagement, even on financial and administrative issues. It is difficult for us to work together, because we are often blocked from doing so by our narrow and historical mandates. It is difficult to ensure accountability because of the personnel rules, and even more difficult when member states intervene to protect non-performing staff. And it is difficult to ensure efficiency, because of the project funding that can overburden us with reporting and bureaucracy. Together, all of these factors limit the role of leadership and strategy.

This situation is also our own responsibility within the UN. Our new Secretary-General has said on several occasions that there is no accountability in the UN, and I tend to agree. We have not been able to build the necessary trust with member states. Here, we need to invest much more heavily in accountability, transparency, participation and equality: the four leadership principles from the human rights world, to which I have always subscribed. I believe we have come a long way in UNECE over the past three years. We have extensively upgraded all our rules and regulations; we have created an “Open UNECE” section on the website, with full transparency on everything from budgets to audits; we have increased our partnership with numerous organizations; and we have engaged much more forcefully in gender equality. It has not been easy. There has been resistance, both internally and on the part of some member states; and perhaps I have been too impatient. As a senior UN colleague from another organization told me half a year after I joined the UN, upon seeing the many changes I tried to introduce: “You should know, the UN is not used to leadership”. I do, however, believe that UNECE is in a much stronger position today than it was a few years back.

Every leadership position carries its own particular set of challenges. Could you tell us about any regrets or frustrations you have experienced during your tenure?

My time at the UN has, as I have mentioned, not always been easy. I took over an organization that was in a difficult situation, and there is still work to do and problems to deal with. The UN does not welcome change easily. Having said as much, I have enjoyed my time at UNECE and leave with very few regrets. The world is changing rapidly, and the UN needs to change accordingly. I have tried my best to provide the necessary leadership, and we have indeed changed a lot. I hope the reforms will continue.

One last question: what overall message would you like to convey to UNECE staff?

I know the future of UNECE is bright, because of the very practical and useful nature of the work and, especially, because of the many committed and professional staff. There are incredible and outstanding people at UNECE doing their best to ensure that the citizens we serve drink the best water; breathe the cleanest air; travel on safe roads, and have energy-efficient houses, among our staff’s many other contributions to life on this planet. To these unique staff members, I present my appreciation and thanks, at the same time as I tell them that their work is crucial. I know they will continue with vision and energy, and I hope our member states and stakeholders will help them, trust them and empower them. If so, UNECE can really help to change the world and to achieve the SDGs.
YOUR FUTURE IS UNIQUE

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Road safety is our collective responsibility

How many of us know the true magnitude of the road-accident epidemic? This global tragedy killed 1.23 million people last year. And it injured between 20 and 50 million more.

JEAN RODRIGUEZ, UNECE
We all know people – be it ourselves, relatives or friends – who have suffered a car accident. If they were lucky, the crash was minor. If not, they might well have been severely injured or even lost their life, or they might have been responsible for the deaths or injuries or others. The day I was putting the final touches on this article, one of my former interns was hit by a scooter on a pedestrian lane in Geneva. Her broken leg required three operations, and she will need several weeks of physiotherapy. But she was lucky: she’s alive.

How many of us know the exact magnitude of the global tragedy of road accidents, which killed 1.23 million people last year and injured between 20 and 50 million? When we at the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) work on the issue of road safety, we remain conscious that each of those 1.23 million lives is a person who was taken from their family, who was removed from society. We are aware that each and every one of the 500 children killed every day on the world’s roads is a child cut down in the most innocent part of
their lives, while their potential is infinite. Road accidents can lead to the loss of a family breadwinner, or crippling medical bills, or a lifelong injury that reduces one’s ability to study and work.

Today, 90% of road deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries. This fact is especially worrying when one considers that these countries account for only 54% of the world’s vehicles. Currently, Africa has the highest road-accident mortality rate, with 26.6 victims for 100,000 inhabitants (versus 9.3 in Europe), and represents 43% of road traffic victims.

Six years ago, the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020) set the ambitious goal of stabilizing, then reversing, the growing trend of road crash death and injury, thereby aiming to save an estimated 5 million lives. Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the international community promised to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020. These goals are worthy and ambitious, but in order to meet them, we will need all countries and stakeholders to significantly increase their efforts.

Solutions exist
The good news is that through more than six decades of work, we have the blueprints for increasing road safety. Beginning as far back as 1949, the Geneva Convention on Road Traffic and the Protocol on Road Signs and Signals kick-started international cooperation on road safety under the auspices of UNECE. In 1950, UNECE pioneered road safety activities in the UN system with the establishment of an Ad Hoc Working Group on the prevention of road accidents. In 1988, it established the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1), the only permanent intergovernmental body in the UN system dedicated to improving road safety. Today, in recognition of the global scope of its activities, WP.1 has been renamed the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety.

Year after year, decade after decade, UNECE has continued bringing countries together to address road safety internationally. Today, UNECE is the custodian of 58 UN inland transport conventions and agreements, addressing virtually all aspects of road safety. Such aspects include more than just safety belts and road signs; they consist of traffic rules, vehicle and road construction standards, helmet standards, child restraint systems and so on. These legal instruments are constantly being updated to reflect new research and technology. These conventions and agreements are in place and at the disposal of any country in the world looking to ensure that its vehicles and roads are safer, and
that it applies consistent traffic rules and road signs, which are key to protecting its road users.

These legal instruments contain the means to help countries implement legislation that addresses all the major causes of accidents. They are built on 60-plus years of research and collection of best practices. For instance, wearing a UNECE Regulation 22 helmet correctly can reduce the risk of death by almost 40%, and the risk of severe injury by over 70%; yet many countries do not enforce such use. A recent UNECE study estimated that helmets could save up to 15,000 lives per year in India alone! Furthermore, only 47 countries have implemented an urban speed limit of 50 kilometres per hour or less, and also allow local authorities to further reduce these limits. And while 161 countries have national seatbelt laws, only 105 have laws that include rear-seat occupants.

In April 2015, the UN Secretary-General appointed the first ever Special Envoy for Road Safety, Mr. Jean Todt, to help speed up efforts towards achieving the objectives of the Decade of Action. Because UNECE manages these legal instruments, we were a natural choice to host his secretariat. Recent accessions to the UN road safety conventions include countries as diverse as Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Cyprus, Egypt, Georgia, Iceland, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Qatar, Tajikistan, Turkey and Viet Nam. But many more nations need to join, and hopefully will, thanks to the advocacy efforts of the Special Envoy, who is touring the world to promote them. Today, 24% of all countries have not acceded to any road safety convention, meaning that about 1 billion people live in countries with no road safety framework.

Engaging citizens and youth through sport and cinema

However, good governance alone is not sufficient. Experience in countries like Sweden, which has made great strides in road safety, shows that legislation – clear, national road safety strategies that contain targets and goals – should be coupled with information campaigns in civil society.

In this respect, reaching out to larger audiences and especially to young people, who are among the most affected by road accidents, is crucial. UNECE has employed all sorts of tools to accomplish this outreach, including, recently, cinema. UNECE hosted the first Global Road Safety Film Festival back in 2006, and this year hosted the 2017 festival at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The festival’s 232 films from more than 40 countries demonstrated how this call for road safety resonated around the globe, with the top three awards going to films from the United States, the People’s Republic of China and Slovenia.

In 2010, UNECE partnered with the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) to promote road safety at the Basketball World Championship in Turkey. The campaign, under the slogan “We play and drive by the rules”, mobilised basketball stars such as Spain’s José Calderon and Turkey’s Kerem Tunçeri. In view of its success, the campaign was extended to EuroBasket 2011 in Lithuania. It reached a high note during the two semifinals when, just before the start of the games, players from the four teams – France, the Russian Federation, Spain and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – unrolled a banner with the campaign’s motto, spreading the road safety message to millions of viewers and basketball fans around the world.

Powerful road safety films and outreach by role models like sports heroes allow us to reach the public at large. But let’s not forget that we are all part of the public at large. By showing children how to safely cross roads and ride their bikes, by making sure that we always respect traffic rules and that we do not use the phone while driving, by raising awareness amongst our friends and relatives, and by insisting that those who drive us respect the same rules, we can all have an impact.
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Celebrating 70 years of private-sector cooperation

The work of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) contributes to solving many of the most critical and challenging governance issues facing humanity today. The business sector plays an integral role in developing the norms and infrastructure that facilitate this work under the UNECE umbrella.

As member states implement and monitor progress towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN’s Agenda 2030, UNECE is a key platform where they can discuss practical and solution-oriented approaches. An important characteristic of UNECE is its inclusiveness and the large spectrum of stakeholders that participate in decision-making. These stakeholders engage on the basis of structured and inclusive policy dialogue, technical expertise, and a demand-driven approach. The business sector

CHRISTOPHER ATHEY, UNECE

UNECE is a unique platform where, every day, key decisions are made that save and improve the lives of millions of people around the world. Much of this work does not make media headlines – conventions, standards, recommendations, regulations, action plans – yet it contributes to solving many of the most critical and challenging governance issues facing humanity today. Businesses and member states need these instruments in order to translate global frameworks into action on the ground.
is an integral part of the process of developing norms and standards under the UNECE umbrella.

From early beginnings
Founded in the aftermath of the Second World War, UNECE was, by necessity and at the demand of its member states, focused on the urgent material needs of the population. Reconstruction was hampered by acute transport difficulties and shortages of the most basic materials, including coal, steel, timber and wood products, as well as the lack of certain critical industrial products, ranging from silicate bricks to ball bearings. Eliminating these bottlenecks often required international cooperation, and UNECE’s early mandate prioritized this task.

Needs in the region have become ever more sophisticated over time, and valuable work continues at UNECE to improve housing, manage forests sustainably, improve the quality of agricultural produce and ease trade across borders, while driving forward innovation in the provision of public services and infrastructure, in cooperation with the private sector.

The food we eat – today and tomorrow
The private sector is at the heart of our work on food and quality. Our standards are in fact developed together with the private sector, and reflect current trade and market practice as opposed to abstract, normative ideals. They need to keep up with fast-changing consumer demands, the sourcing of fruit and vegetables from around the world and the latest in agriculture research. Our work on agriculture focuses on a crucial niche in the “farm to fork chain”, and our work could be neither relevant nor usable without the help of the private sector.

How could governments decide what consumers want to eat? Governments need to make sure that food is safe, healthy, nutritious and affordable; however, the private sector lets us at UNECE know how these standards can be achieved. When new varieties of fruit require fewer pesticides, or ever more organic production methods are used, or transport and logistics improve, or consumers start buying less cosmically-appealing fruit: all these shifts on the ground will influence our standards. It is the farmer and the trader who will decide which avocados will be sent around the world to end up in a supermarket in Europe. It is the buyer who will source in the most remote regions of the world, and make sure that the produce in supermarkets has the same quality at the end of the supply chain. And it is the private sector that can change buying practices and demands, to reduce food waste along the supply chain.

A single rotten mango can destroy a container full of fruit on its travels across the world, and can cost the importer and producer a lot of money. UNECE standards help uphold quality at the beginning of the supply chain, and protect consumer interests via checks and controls. They help the private sector to produce better quality and less waste, and to earn an amount consistent with the quality of goods sold.

Managing the risks of Agenda 2030
The transition to a world where we make best use of our shared
resources requires a careful management of the risks that confront workers, consumers, citizens and communities alike. The UNECE programme on regulatory cooperation builds on best practices that were originally developed by business, and which were codified in standards in order to develop responsive and risk-based regulatory frameworks.

The fisheries sector is a prime example. With support from the Technical Barriers to Trade (EU ACP TBT) Programme (a joint endeavor of the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP)), UNECE has developed a project to tackle challenges in the fisheries industry in Uganda and Namibia. The project documented that overfishing, illegal fishing techniques, and ecological pressures were potentially leading to the loss of over 200 species, putting the industry’s very survival at risk, and proposed reform. The two countries have now developed a Fishery Risk Management Action Plan with inputs from the business community.

Facilitating trade

The UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and eBusiness (UN/CEFACT) works with the private sector to ease trade across borders. In Odessa, Ukraine in 2014, UNECE advice coupled with UN/CEFACT best-practice recommendations and standards helped to establish a Port Community System, which brought economic gains for business estimated at $185.5 million per year, as well as increased trade volumes and reduced time for clearing containers (from 14 hours in 2014 to 2 hours). The Greek Trade Facilitation Strategy, developed with support from UNECE in 2015, also delivered results for Greek businesses through significantly lowered costs and time to export.

The 40 policy recommendations and 440 standards produced by UNECE (under the UN/CEFACT), help governments and traders access global markets, and are extensively reflected in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement. For example, another entity, UN/EDIFACT, comprises a set of international standards that accounts for over 90% of all electronic data interchange (EDI) messages exchanged globally. Likewise, the UNECE Recommendations on the Single Window – the recommendation for a single entry point to fulfill all import, export and transit-related regulatory requirements – is already established in around 100 countries. And there is also the eCITES Declaration, an electronic message based on UN/CEFACT standards, which is used to control trade in endangered species of flora and fauna.

Infrastructure for the future

Achieving Agenda 2030 and its 17 SDGs will carry a huge price tag, placing another area of UNECE expertise – public-private partnerships (PPPs) – high on the agenda. Governments have insufficient resources to achieve the SDGs on their own, and must focus on private sector expertise and financing. With the infrastructure financing gap in the trillions rather than billions, work with the private sector is not an optional add-on for UNECE, but rather an intrinsic part of what we do.

Work is ongoing to develop guiding principles on the type of PPPs we need, and this work is crucial. There is a growing focus on “people first” PPPs, which would treat Agenda 2030 more like a social project than would a traditional PPP model, prioritizing vulnerable members of society and poverty eradication. UNECE seeks to raise awareness and to mobilize the private sector in support of Agenda 2030, and has launched a campaign to develop 500 people-first PPPs by the end of 2017. This initiative was kick-started at the International UNECE PPP Forum, and was supported by the UNECE Business Advisory Board and an evaluation methodology for people-first PPPs.

Innovation for sustainable development

The 2030 Agenda is a clarion call for action to fundamentally change the way we live together and the way we use the resources of Planet Earth. Business-as-usual will not do; we will need innovative solutions. And we will need the business community to develop them. This development is already happening in many places: eco-systems have evolved in which innovative companies are flourishing and creating products, services, production processes and business models that sustain more and better paying jobs, all while reducing pollution and resource depletion. Other places still lack these eco-systems, but UNECE is working closely with the business community to close that gap. We draw on the rich experience of business angels, venture capital associations, entrepreneurs and start-ups, social enterprises, impact investors, business incubators and accelerators, and big corporations, with one overarching goal: to develop international good practices that guide governments in nurturing these innovation eco-systems, upon which sustainable development will depend.
EASTER OPENING HOURS

› WEDNESDAY, 12
  LATE OPENING
  9:00AM TO 9:00PM

› THURSDAY, 13
  9:00AM TO 7:00PM

› SATURDAY, 15
  9:00AM TO 7:00PM

› WEDNESDAY, 12
  FROM 5:00PM TO 9:00PM
  SILENT PARTY
  3 DJS / 3 MOODS
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Defending UNECE staff through the years

Miodrag (Misha) Pesut, recently-retired President of the UNECE Sectoral Assembly (SA), reflects on over a decade of service.

ELIZABETH JAMES, UNECE
When I joined the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Misha Pesut was the long-standing President of the UNECE SA. He was one of the most popular Presidents, remaining in the position for more than a decade, and celebrating UNECE at both its 50th and 60th jubilees. This month, on the eve of its 70th anniversary, Misha retired, and I had the privilege to have an open conversation with him about our roles as former and current SA Presidents, and to speak about how staff concerns and our role have changed over the years.

How did we come to work for UNECE and what prompted us to become President of the SA?
M. Pesut: I arrived at UNECE from the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Africa (ESCWA) in 1992, and was recruited by then-retiring Chairman Bruce Cohen to take over his post. The Executive Secretary of UNECE was Mr. Yves Berthelot: a real gentleman, a well-known French economist and “Chevalier de la Légion d’honneur”. It was a privilege and a great pleasure to be the SA President and to communicate with such an intellectual.

E. James: I came to UNECE from the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). I become SA President with a vision to strengthen staff-management relations, and to help enable amicable solutions to inter-personal problems. I strongly believe in effective communication and in open and honest dialogue.

How did we perceive our roles as President of the SA? What were the main challenges and difficulties during our tenure, and how did we resolve them?
M. Pesut: I learned from a seasoned predecessor, and it is clear that the life of SA President during his time was easier. E-mail did not exist, internal communication was tête-à-tête, and colleagues were friendlier. The atmosphere was different: I would say, warmer, more enthusiastic. Of course challenges existed and were similar to today: Performance Appraisal System (PAS) rebuttals, foregone promotions, reforms… However, staff were intensely involved with the management in vital decision making, and the SA President had strong support from more experienced colleagues. Mind you, the rules and regulations at that time were different and, I believe, more appropriate for international civil servants.

E. James: My role as a Staff Representative at the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council and then as SA President was to find win-win solutions by giving concrete advice on various concerns, irrespective of the staff grade or context. One challenge proved to be obtaining protection against retaliation for colleagues who had voiced a grievance, thereby making them vulnerable to further abuse. I worked with the UNOG Staff Council and, in New York, the UN Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) and the Secretary-General’s Office to resolve a case in which a number of UNECE staff were being harassed. The main issues were abuse of authority, harassment and performance management, disparity in the selection process and dealing with budget cuts. However, through continuous dialogue with the aggrieved colleagues and the supervisors, as well as through mediation and collaborative negotiations, we were able to find enough common ground to amicably resolve these inter-personal disputes.

What is the most striking memory we have of our work dedicated to staff? What do we see as our biggest achievements?
M. Pesut: I can think of two distinct cases. One, which has a happy ending, was when we managed to save a colleague’s post, which had been threatened as collateral damage from...
another reform. The other, which had an unfortunate outcome, was when a colleague’s job could not be saved. The bitter taste of this episode still lingers, since this colleague was sacked indiscriminately. As far as achievements go, I would not suggest that I have any particularly big ones; but I would like to think that this interview is a recognition of some small achievements for which the colleagues will remember my tenure as SA President.

**E. James:** Through collaborative negotiations and effective mediation, we have been able to resolve some serious concerns. We have been able to resolve some grave issues by building confidence and an excellent rapport between staff representatives and colleagues.

Misha, you have just retired after serving UNECE for 25 years, half of those as SA President. I am privileged to be elected to this post now, and would like to know what you wish for UNECE staff in the future?

**M. Pesut:** In these volatile times, it is very difficult to give any sound advice. Through my entire career, I did my utmost to respect my colleagues and the organization, and to do my job in the most professional way. Working at the UN gives you the opportunity to build your professional knowledge and expertise; but you should not stay glued to your job for your entire career. Moving through the organization has become much easier today, and such movement creates career opportunities. For my colleagues in UNECE, I wish them well, and I wish a long life to UNECE. And for you as my successor, President Elizabeth, I wish a tenure without turbulence, and the opportunity to carry the torch of defender of staff rights for many years ahead.

**E. James:** I am grateful and touched by Misha’s wishes. As staff members, we each come with great skills and experience to contribute to the work of the UN, and I believe that we must always adhere to respect and compassion, as well as to all of the core values of the UN. We spend more than eight hours of our waking time each day at the UN, and colleagues need to feel appreciated and recognized for the tremendous work they do to fulfil the mandates imparted to us by member states. My motto, in the words of Stephen R. Covey: “Always treat your employees exactly as you want them to treat your best customers.”

Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you will help them become what they are capable of becoming.”

Goethe

Elizabeth James, current UNECE Sectoral Assembly President
A new functional Human Rights paradigm

The time has come to shift the human rights paradigm away from narrow positivism and towards a broader understanding of human rights norms.

ALFRED DE ZAYAS, OHCHR

Civilization does not mean expanding Gross Domestic Products (GDPs), ever-growing consumption, and aggressive exploitation of natural resources – but respect for human and animal life, sustainable management of the environment, local, regional and international solidarity, social justice and a culture of peace.

Civilization does not entail building ever-higher skyscrapers, producing more gadgets, and accumulating material goods – but affirming one’s identity, uniqueness and history, while celebrating diversity and the common heritage of mankind, and demonstrating a sense for proportions and creating beauty for future generations, in literature, art and music.

All rights derive from human dignity. Codification of human rights is never definitive and never exhaustive, but constitutes an evolutionary mode d’emploi for the exercise of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. Alas, the interpretation and application of human rights is hindered by wrong priorities, sterile positivism and a regrettable tendency to focus only on individual rights while forgetting collective rights. Alas, many rights advocates show little or no interest for the social responsibilities that accompany the exercise of rights, and fail to see the necessary symbiosis of rights and obligations, notwithstanding the letter and spirit of Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The time has come to shift the human rights paradigm away from narrow positivism and towards a broader understanding of human rights norms, in the context of an emerging customary international law of human rights. Law is neither physics nor mathematics, but a dynamic human institution that, day-by-day, addresses the needs and aspirations of society, adjusting here, filling lacunae there. Every human rights lawyer knows that the spirit of the law (Montesquieu) transcends the limitations of the letter of the law, and hence that codified norms should always be interpreted in the light of those general principles of law that inform all legal systems, such as good faith, proportionality and ex injuria non oritur jus.

I propose discarding the obsolete and artificial division of human rights into the falsely called first generation (civil and political), second generation (economic, social and cultural) and third generation (environment, peace, development) rights: a division with an obvious predisposition to favour civil and political rights. This generational divide is part of a structure that perpetuates a world order that much too often appears to allow injustice.

Instead, I propose a functional paradigm that would consider rights in the light of their function within a coherent system. It would be a paradigm not of competing rights and aspirations, but of interrelated, mutually reinforcing rights, which should be applied in their interdependence and understood in the context of a coordinated strategy to serve an ultimate goal: achieving human dignity in all of its manifestations. Four categories would replace the skewed narrative of three generations of rights.

First, we would recognize enabling rights, among which I would list the rights to food, water, shelter, development, and homeland; but also the right to peace, since one cannot enjoy human rights unless there is an environment conducive to the exercise of those rights. Article 28 of the UDHR postulates the right of every human being “to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized”. This order entails the basic necessities of life and the right to a level playing field.

Secondly, I would propose a category of inherent or immanent rights, such as the right to equality and the right to non-arbitrariness; indeed, every right necessarily contains in itself the element of equality, the self-evident requirement...
that it be applied equally and equitably, that there be uniformity and predictability (what the Germans call Rechtssicherheit). Immanent rights also encompass the rights to life, integrity, liberty and security of person, in the light of which other rights must be interpreted and applied. There are also inherent limitations to the exercise of rights. The general principle of law prohibiting abuse of rights (sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas – use your right without harming others) is a principle advocated by Sir Hersh Lauterpacht as an overarching norm, prohibiting the egoistic exercise of rights to achieve anti-social results or unjust enrichment. This principle means that every right, including all human rights, must be exercised in the context of other rights and must not be instrumentalized to destroy other rights or to harm others. There is no right to intransigence, as we know from the character of Shylock in Shakespeare’s play The Merchant of Venice. The letter of the law must never be used against the spirit of the law.

Third, I would propose a category of procedural or instrumental rights, such as the rights to due process, access to information, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, work, education, social security, leisure: rights that we need to achieve our potential, to complete our personalities, and to engage in the pursuit of happiness.

Finally, I would postulate the category of end rights or outcome rights: that is, the concrete exercise of human dignity, that condition of life that allows each human being to be himself or herself. This ultimate right is the right to our identity, to our privacy, the right to be ourselves, to think by ourselves and to express our humanity without indoctrination, without intimidation, without pressures of political correctness, without having to sell ourselves, without having to engage in self-censorship. The absence of this outcome right to identity and self-respect is reflected in much of the strife we see in the world today. It is through the consciousness and exercise of the right to our identity and the respect of the identity of others that we will enjoy the individual and collective right to peace.

The UN Human Rights Council should become the international arena where governments compete to show how best to implement human rights, how to strengthen the rule of law, and how to achieve social justice; where they display best practices and give life to this new functional paradigm of human rights. This kind of competition in human rights performance is the noblest goal and challenge for civilization. The Council should become the preeminent forum where governments elucidate what they themselves have done and are doing to deliver on human rights: in good-faith implementation of pledges, and in adherence to a daily culture of human rights, characterized by generous interpretation of human rights treaties and a commitment to the inclusion of all stakeholders. What the Council must not be is a politicized arena, where gladiators use human rights as weapons to defeat their political adversaries, and where human rights are undermined through “side shows”, the “flavor of the month” or “legal black holes.” The civilization model of the globalized world must not be one of positivism, legalisms and loopholes, but one of ethics, direct democracy, respect for the environment, international solidarity and human dignity.

Alfred de Zayas is currently UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order. For further remarks on the category of outcome rights, please see the 2013 Report of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order (GA A/68/68/284, paras. 67-68).
UNECE @ 70: Economic integration and cooperation in support of sustainable development

- **1947**: UNECE and FAO start their partnership on forests to tackle timber shortage and reforestation in post-war Europe. UNECE also tasked with tackling housing and coal shortages, and with reviving inland transport infrastructure and facilitating trade.

- **1949**: First Meeting of predecessor of Conference of European Statisticians, later expanded to include 60 major countries from around the world.

- **1957**: Protocol on Standardization of Fruit and Vegetables paves the way for international agricultural quality standards (>100 standards today).

- **1967**: UNECE report recommends lowering trade barriers to encourage East-West trade (East-West trade only constituted 6% of intra-European trade in 1969). Report stressing limitations imposed to energy in the long-term in view of the need to preserve biosphere voices early climate change concerns.

- **1977**: 31 countries sign the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution. It has helped to reduce emissions of a series of harmful substances in the region by 40% to 70% since 1990.

- **1991**: Launch of UNECE assistance for countries in transition. First Environmental Performance Review for countries in transition.

- **1993**: 1.5 billion UN/LOCODE codes, used to control in the world.

- **1996**: Launch of UNECE Programme on Energy Efficiency. UNECE launches Road Maps on energy efficiency in the long-term in view of the need to preserve biosphere voices early climate change concerns.

- **2001**: 20 new countries become member States of UNECE.

- **2013**: Mainstreaming Ageing for Armenia. First country profile on the housing sector of Bulgaria – Country housing profiles. First Environmental Performance Review for countries in transition.

- **2016**: UNECE Recommendation No. 4 helps countries establish National Trade Facilitation Bodies, a key requirement of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, which entered into force in 2017. 59 countries now have such a body in place.

- **2017**: Launch of the Trans-European Motorway project (TEM) to ensure seamless connections throughout a still fragmented Europe and facilitate access to markets.

- **2030 Agenda through exchange of experiences and peer learning.**

- **2014**: Launch of UN Special Programme for the Empowerment of Women.

- **2017**: UN Member States encourage accession to conventions and agreements on road safety. UNECE launches Road Maps on fuel and mineral commodities – energy sources.


- **2019**: Report to the UN Security Council meeting, confirming the need for an intergovernmental body in the UN system for the facilitation of trade and transport.

- **2020**: First Environmental Performance Review for countries in transition.

- **2021**: EU and UN members of the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC) sign the Action Plan for the Political Dialogue on Urban Mobility.

- **2022**: Report to the UN Security Council meeting, confirming the need for an intergovernmental body in the UN system for the facilitation of trade and transport.

- **2023**: World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations starts defining UN regulations for safer and cleaner vehicles (>142 regulations today).
UNECE also tasked with tackling housing regulations for safer and cleaner vehicles on forests to tackle timber shortage and with reviving Europe's intermodal transport infrastructure and inland transport infrastructure and preserving the environment. First Meeting of predecessor of the Conference of European Statisticians, appointed as first UNECE Executive Secretary (1947-1957). Formerly Sweden's Minister of Trade. He would be awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1977. UNECE report recommends lowering trade barriers to encourage East-West trade still fragmented Europe and facilitate access to markets.

First issue of UN/LOCODE, used to identify locations where goods are subject to customs control in the world (UN/LOCODE). In 2017, UN/LOCODE includes 100,000 codes, used 1.5 billion times per year.

1980 Launch of UNECE assistance programme on energy efficiency.
1990 First Environmental Performance Review for countries in transition. Since then, 24 countries have been assessed, with some countries already undertaking their third reviews.
1991 Espoo Convention provides a framework for Parties to assess the transboundary environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning. It is open to all UN Member States since August 2014.
1993 Country Profile on the Housing Sector of Bulgaria - Country housing profiles have been compiled for 16 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.
2004 UN Framework Classification for coal shortages, and with reviving World Forum for Harmonization of (142 regulations today).
1952 (100 standards today). Vegetable paves the way for international trade and cooperation for peace, security and stability.
1958 becomes one of the main priorities of the WTO Trade Facilitation body in place.
2002 China accedes to the TIR Convention, opening prospects for new commercial routes by land.
2011 Innovation Performance Review of Belarus, followed by those of Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Armenia and Tajikistan.
2013 UNECE International Centre of Excellence on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) starts developing best practices for the use of PPPs in support of sustainable development.
2013 Rovaniemi Action Plan provides blueprint for a shift towards a greener economy in the forest sector.
2013-2014 Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development and Climate Change dive the way for measuring the SDGs and countries' commitments under the Paris Agreement.
2014 UNECE member States issue urgent call for action to achieve gender equality. 20 years after Global UN Conference on Women in Beijing.
2015 J ean Todt appointed first Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Road Safety. The secretariat for the Special Envoy is hosted by UNECE, as custodian of the global UN conventions and agreements on road safety.
2015 Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing supports countries in ensuring access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all.
2016 UN Member States encourage accession to the UNECE Water Convention (1992) at a Security Council meeting, confirming the importance of transboundary water cooperation for peace, security and stability.
Lethal autonomous weapons: Where do we go from here?

Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) could bring military advantage to the states that possess them, and could possibly reduce collateral damage to civilians. However, the risk of ethical and legal danger runs at least as high, and the framework of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) has yet to catch up to these new innovations in warfare.

Guillaume Fournier, IIHL

Arms around the world have always sought to lessen the human cost of war and to gain military advantage. Unmanned vehicles have been developed and used for thousands of years in an attempt to limit military casualties. But not until the two World Wars and the Cold War did the world experience the major development and use of unmanned weapons. The last two decades have seen a rapid evolution of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) and, as a consequence, a significant increase in the development of Unmanned Combat Vehicles by states such as the USA, China, Russia, Israel, France and the United Kingdom. These unmanned vehicles still rely on the supervision of human operators when it comes to finding their way, targeting and shooting. However, such reliance will not be a given for much longer.

Armies around the world have now developing new weapons with increasing autonomy, requiring limited or no supervision from human operators. These new weapons would be known as Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). They could bring military advantage to the states that possess them, and could possibly reduce collateral damage to civilians.

Western societies are increasingly unwilling to send troops on military operations and risk casualties. LAWS would limit this risk, as well as the long-term issues and costs related to the injury and death of troops. Unlike a human being, if an autonomous weapon is damaged, it may simply be destroyed or repaired. Concerning military advantage, LAWS could potentially target and fire on their own, fight for longer hours, or wait for specific targets, thereby reducing the risk of missing a target because of a delay in decision-making or communication with the operator. LAWS would not possess human feelings and emotions, and so would also eliminate the risk of inappropriate, uncontrolled or unreliable behavior; unlike human soldiers, they would not be able to hate, get mad or know fear, and they would possess no survival instinct.

It may be easy to understand the potential capacities and military advantages of LAWS. However, several more important definitional, legal, practical and ethical issues remain to be considered. For starters, there is currently no international definition as to what constitutes an autonomous weapon, or of how and under what regulations such a weapon may be used. The absence of an international definition leaves significant latitude for many countries to continue developing weapons with more and more autonomy, but without any overriding guidelines.

In Geneva, both states and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have started to address some definitional and legal aspects of these weapons, under the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) of 1980. Since 2014, experts on LAWS have met three times, and in 2016 the Fifth Review Conference established a Group of Governmental Experts on LAWS. States attempted to come up with an international definition of LAWS, and also expressed their views about the ability of these weapons to respect International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

Despite these efforts, no agreement has been reached so far on a common international definition, mostly because states cannot seem to agree on what constitutes autonomy versus automation, and on the level of human control involved in each. Today’s unmanned weapons are considered automated because, except for some defensive weapons, they are under the constant supervision and control of a human operator, and are incapable of learning new information or of choosing or changing their goals or targets on their own. LAWS, on the contrary, would potentially be able to choose a valid target, to fire, to change or stop attacks on their own, and to learn, evolve and possibly cooperate with each other. So far, most countries have agreed not to develop or launch fully autonomous weapons that would operate without any human supervision. However, no agreement exists on the degree of human control that differentiates an automated weapon from an autonomous weapon.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as well as states such as Switzerland, France, the USA and the United Kingdom have each proposed different and sometimes conflicting definitions of LAWS.

The lack of a definition should not stop the international community from assessing the risks that the use of LAWS would pose, especially concerning their capacity to respect IHL. In particular, before developing and fielding autonomous weapons, armed forces would need to ensure that the weapons would be able to distinguish between lawful and unlawful targets, as well as to function in populated areas, or in unclear scenarios such as counterinsurgencies or entangled offensive situations. LAWS would need
IHL was meant to be applied by humans, and this application may involve decisions of a subjective or moral nature. For now, only humans have the ability to make such decisions. Technical and legal experts are therefore still debating whether LAWS could one day have the ability to respect IHL. A few states (Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, the Holy See, and Pakistan), as well as a coalition of NGOs (the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots and others) have called for a preemptive ban on fully autonomous LAWS, in the belief that these weapons will never be capable of abiding by IHL. Other experts say that LAWS may be programmed to follow IHL.

Beyond the definitional and legal issues, it remains clear that weapons with increasing degrees of autonomy and AI will continue to raise important ethical issues. Should human-kind delegate to machines the ability and the will to kill other human beings? Placing life and death decisions in the hands of machines – even machines with AI – remains a troubling, dangerous and dehumanizing idea. The use of such weapons would potentially create an accountability gap in cases of IHL violation, error, malfunction or hacking. For now, machines cannot willingly decide to violate IHL; but if such were the case in the future, who would then be accountable, since International Criminal Law only punishes voluntary violations of IHL and only applies to humans? Who would be held responsible should a machine turn against its own troops, or against civilian populations?

As technological development inevitably continues to enable the introduction – albeit gradual – of such weapons, we must urgently define and address the issues that they will create, and we must press for an international framework for the use of this burgeoning technology.

Guillaume Fournier works at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (IIHL), Geneva office. www.iihl.org
Non seulement le sport peut aider à vivre en bonne santé et à promouvoir le bien-être, mais il favorise aussi l’intégration, l’apprentissage et le respect entre les jeunes. La résolution 70/1 de l’ONU, adopté en 2015 et intitulée « Transformer le monde: le Programme de développement durable à l’horizon 2030 » le mentionne clairement:

« Le sport est lui aussi un élément important du développement durable. Nous apprécions sa contribution croissante au développement et à la paix par la tolérance et le respect qu’il préconise; à l’autonomisation des femmes et des jeunes, de l’individu et de la collectivité; et à la réalisation des objectifs de santé, d’éducation et d’inclusion sociale. »

Développer les qualités morales
Pour atteindre les objectifs proposés à travers le sport, la Taekwondo Humanitarian Foundation (THF) a été créée en 2016. Son but est d’offrir de meilleures chances d’intégration aux personnes particulièrement vulnérables et la possibilité de devenir des citoyens globaux.

« La pratique sportive permet le développement des qualités physiques, mais aussi morales, ainsi que des objectifs d’éducation plus larges », a expliqué Delphine Schmutz, chargée de projet de la THF.

Grâce à la conférence sur le sport au service du développement et de la cohésion sociale, qui a eu lieu à l’ONUG le 9 novembre 2016, nous en avons appris davantage sur cette nouvelle fondation. Elle permet d’aider les réfugiés à surmonter les traumatismes,
à s’intégrer, à acquérir des compétences et à augmenter leurs chances d’employabilité. La pratique de cet art martial coréen permet aussi aux réfugiés d’améliorer leurs conditions de vie dans les camps et offre une alternative aux comportements destructeurs.

Des chances égales
Pour les jeunes réfugiés arrivés en Suisse, l’intégration paraît parfois compliquée. Ils rencontrent souvent des difficultés économiques. La barrière linguistique peut également constituer un frein pour créer des liens sociaux. La THF utilise le Taekwondo comme moyen pour intégrer ces jeunes dans la société, car dans le sport il n’y a pas de différence entre un réfugié et un citoyen : les deux ont les mêmes capacités.

Contrairement aux préjugés habituels, il n’y a pas que l’école comme moyen d’apprentissage; le sport l’est aussi. Il favorise l’autonomie et nous apprend à atteindre nos objectifs. De plus, le respect est une qualité primordiale promue par le sport, qui permet le travail de groupe. Se respecter est donc essentiel pour la réussite de tous. Ainsi, la pratique régulière du sport, à l’exemple du Taekwondo, est un excellent moyen d’intégration, d’apprentissage et de respect, parce qu’il est accessible à tous. C’est aussi pendant ces moments de partage que tous parlent la même langue. ■


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Turkmenistan to host the 5th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games

Turkmenistan will mark 2017 by hosting a major international sporting event. The motto of the Games will be “Health. Inspiration. Friendship.”, and their emblem will be a caravan en route through the country, journeying across the centuries along the Great Silk Road.

AMBASSADOR ATAGELDI HALJANOV
Sport is an effective and flexible instrument for the promotion of peace and development. The outcome document of the United Nations Summit for the post-2015 development agenda acknowledges this fact, and the UN at large explicitly recognizes the significance of sports in promoting tolerance and respect, the empowerment of women and youth, health, education and social integration.

This year, our nation will host the 5th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games, a major international sporting event. On 19 December 2010, as a result of the Memorandum (signed in Kuwait) between the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and the National Olympic Committee of Turkmenistan to host the 5th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games, Turkmenistan will mark 2017 by hosting a major international sporting event. The motto of the Games will be “Health. Inspiration. Friendship.”, and their emblem will be a caravan en route through the country, journeying across the centuries along the Great Silk Road.
(NOC) of Turkmenistan, the Turkmen capital Ashgabat was designated host of this important tournament. This decision bears witness to the policy of international cooperation that Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov has pursued. It may also be perceived as a sign of trust in the country, and a recognition of its successes in the political and socio-economic arenas, as well as the nation’s adherence to the high humanistic ideals of the Olympic movement.

Playing host to complex international games requires a strong foundation in national sports. President Berdimuhamedov pays great attention to the development of sports in Turkmenistan, and the state has invested significantly in constructing modern sports and recreational complexes. Of particular importance is the modernization of sporting infrastructure, which is not only the basis for the development of high-performance sport, but also fosters the conditions for bringing up a strong and healthy next generation, and signals a society’s approval for the principle of a healthy and active lifestyle.

In recent years, we have built a number of stadiums, an “Ice Palace”, a water sports complex, a winter sports complex, the National Institute of Sports and Tourism, and many other facilities in Ashgabat. Across all regions of the country, dozens of other sports facilities have been modernized, and schools undertake different areas of sports training. In addition, the country has already organized a variety of national and international tournaments and championships. All of this development has created favorable conditions for physical culture and sports. As a result, the number of children and young people engaged in various sports has increased many times over.

One of the main impacts of the 5th Asian Indoor Games will be not only to augment Turkmenistan’s presence in the international arena, but also to popularize the sports themselves: and not just elite sports, but also a mass culture of sports, recreation and movement, in which a growing number of Turkmen citizens are involved every year. In this context, and on the initiative of the head of state, the nation holds a monthly “Health and Happiness” event, in order to help foster the principles of a healthy lifestyle and the development of physical and sports culture across the country. Indeed, in Turkmenistan, the World Health Organization (WHO) World Health Day, celebrated every year on 7 April, is considered a public holiday.

Another important component of the development of our country as a sports power is the creation of the necessary legal framework. In particular, we have recently adopted laws “On Physical Culture and Sport”, “On professional sports”, “On volunteering” and “On the organization and holding of the 2017 5th Asian Indoor Games and Martial Arts in the city of Ashgabat.”

President Berdimuhamedov, who is also President of the Turkmen NOC, also frequently introduces the theme of sports into the agendas of high-level diplomatic talks and visits. As head of state, he often allocates time in his busy schedule to observe other countries’ experiences in organizing modern sports infrastructures.

In preparation for the Asian Indoor Games, Turkmenistan is undertaking an extensive transformation of the capital. It is constructing hotel complexes, building shopping and entertainment venues, commissioning a new international airport, and more. Perhaps the main emblem of our drive to achieve new sporting heights is the construction of the Olympic Village in Ashgabat, where participants of the 2017 Asian Games will compete for medals.

This September, the Ashgabat Asian Games will be the largest in a series of Asian games: for the first time, teams not only from Asia but also from Oceania will attend. According to the Memorandum between the Organizing Committee of the 2017 Asian Games, the OCA and the NOCs of Oceania, signed in Ashgabat in November 2014, the competition will be attended by delegations from...
45 Asian NOCs, as well as the 17 NOCs of Oceania. In all, the tally comes to 5,500 athletes from 62 countries. The games will include 21 different sports, including some that have been added at the initiative of President Berdimuhamedov: among them, Goresh (traditional Turkmen wrestling) and some popular types of equestrian sports, including show jumping.

The Olympic Village in Ashgabat remains unparalleled in Central Asia. The main construction is almost completed, and includes 30 buildings, ready to cater to the full needs of the competition and of the athletes themselves. Technology providing information and communication support for the games has already been installed by the Spanish company ATOS, an official Information Technology (IT) partner of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). In addition to the games scheduled for this September, a number of other tournaments have already been organized for the venue: these include the Asian Sambo Championship, the Goresh national championship, and tournaments for jiu-jitsu, basketball, tennis, and track and field events. The Olympic Village is thus ready and eager to welcome the participants in September.

Many people follow the coverage of the Asian Games. Therefore, in April 2015, Turkmenistan began to organize the International Sports Media Forum, in which media representatives from 30 countries were introduced to the construction of the Ashgabat Olympic Village. The forum took place from 19 to 24 September, 2016. As a result of this initiative, the Association of NOCs presented President Berdimuhamedov with a special award for his outstanding contribution to the development of the sports movement. The award was announced by Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah, President of the OCA and the Association of NOCs, during the 34th General Assembly of the OAC last September.

On 5 May 2016, President Berdimuhamedov and Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah launched yet another preparatory event: a 500-day horse relay, leading up to the start of the Games. Over the course of this period, 17 riders on Akhal-Teke horses – a special Turkmen breed and a national emblem – have been traversing each region of the country, in time to ride straight into the opening ceremony in Ashgabat this September.

The motto for the 2017 Games is Health. Inspiration. Friendship. The mascot is a friendly central Asian shepherd puppy named Alabai, depicted in both Turkmen national dress and in a tracksuit. The Games will also be branded with a specific narrative: of a symbolic caravan, en route through the territory of Turkmenistan for centuries. The travels of the caravan depict traditional Turkmen culture and art, as well as features of the country’s modern era, including the renewed Ashgabat. The story incorporates Turkmen jewelry, architecture, patterns and decorative techniques, and reveals both the nation’s cultural heritage and its natural beauty. The emblem of the caravan serves as an invitation for guests to journey along the Great Silk Road, and conceives of the 5th Asian Games and sport in general as a force for cultural diplomacy and peace.

Turkmenistan looks forward to welcoming the athletes and sports enthusiasts who will be coming to Ashgabat in September. The 2017 Games will serve as an impetus for future major international sporting events, and their success will strengthen the nation’s reputation, as well as stimulate the national economy, tourist industry, and cultural life. Furthermore, events on such a scale often yield further opportunities for multi-pronged international partnerships, help to build friendships and business contacts, and establish an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding in the region and the world at large.

H.E. Atageldi Haljanov is the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva. For more information about the 5th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games in Ashgabat: www.ashgabat2017.gov.tm
CERN
More than just physics

The European Organization for Nuclear Research, better known as CERN, is far more than a laboratory for physics research; central to its mission is also the human endeavour to bring people together from across the world in peaceful pursuit of knowledge to the benefit of all society.

The idea of science for peace is in CERN’s DNA. It is laid out in our convention, which was developed in the early 1950s, and charges CERN with the mission of bringing the formerly warring countries of Europe together. To take just one example: throughout the 1960s, scientists from both the Soviet Union and the United States collaborated at CERN. That joint work led
to exchanges of people and equipment. As a result – and it’s a little known fact – CERN provided the neutral ground for preparatory talks leading to arms limitation meetings in the 1980s. The spirit that guided those developments in the 1960s is still very much alive and well today, and is fully embraced by the over 13,000 people of more than 100 nationalities who use CERN’s facilities.

Since 2010, CERN has adopted an official policy of geographic enlargement. Our membership has grown to 22 countries, and we have been joined by six associate members. This expansion is great for the scientific life of CERN, and for extending the benefits of CERN membership to an ever-growing family of nations. But CERN’s mission for bringing people together goes further. It is also about inclusivity at a human level and about capacity-building. For example, CERN works with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to organize digital library schools in Africa. We regularly donate IT equipment to developing nations. Our summer programme for undergraduates is open to students from around the world, as are our programmes for high school teachers. Some 50% of our summer students come from non-Member States. We also contribute to physics, accelerator and computing schools in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

CERN is an integral part of the international Geneva landscape. We host the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Programme, also known as UNOSAT. And, we have a vital contribution to make to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We have been formalizing our links with international Geneva over recent years, and we are now taking those ties to the next level, systematically mapping our arrangements with UN agencies to work out where we can best contribute.

We very much look forward to seeing these links develop and thrive. In a world of ever-more complex, interconnected challenges, science needs to be fully embedded in global policy debates. And CERN is ready to play its role, drawing on its long tradition of engaging people from across the world in peaceful pursuit of knowledge to the benefit of all society.

**SESAME – open for business**

In 1995, Israelis and Egyptians, scientists and government ministers, sat down together in a tent in the Sinai Peninsula to explore the possibilities for Middle Eastern scientific cooperation. Two decades later, those who dared to dream have seen their dreams become reality, as the SESAME laboratory in Jordan prepares to start its research programme. SESAME, which stands for Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East, is modelled on CERN. Its members are the nations of Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Pakistan, the Palestinian Authority and Turkey. The laboratory’s first two Presidents of council, as well as its President elect, are all former CERN Directors General, and CERN has played a very tangible role in designing and coordinating the production of vital components for the facility. CERN and SESAME share a very important mission: both were founded as places where the neutral language of science can bring people together to advance human knowledge and well-being. Both institutions are beacons of science for peace.

The SESAME laboratory will be officially inaugurated in May 2017, with the research programme scheduled to get underway soon after.
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Getting women to the top is fine, but how can the UN help all its women?

PRISCA CHAOUI, UNOG
IAN RICHARDS, UNCTAD
On International Women’s Day, much will be said about how the UN can do more to get women to the top, and whether UN Secretary-General Guterres is delivering on all his pledges. But is addressing gender balance at D-1 and D-2 levels all that matters? Is an organization defined only by its most senior and highest paid employees? What about everyone else? After all, there are 14,000 women in the UN Secretariat, but only 690 D-level positions. So perhaps we should look at the issue from other angles as well. For example, many women will come into their own professionally around the same age that they are ready to build families; and according to feedback received regularly by the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council, the burden still falls on the UN woman to prove herself at work as well as at home. So how can the UN also respond to the hopes of many young women: that is, how can it provide fair conditions for women to get their careers going, enable women to balance work and family life, give them access to stable contracts, retain them in the organization and motivate them in their work? Here are some ideas to get the discussion started:

Precarious contracts and unequal pay
Many staff in their thirties are either on temporary appointments or consultancies. Consultancy contracts don’t provide maternity leave. Temporary appointments do, but only so long as the staff member starts her maternity leave while on contract, which most managers would not be keen to allow in the first place. And for junior staff on fixed-term appointments – who are more likely to be on extra-budgetary funds with projects to complete within a defined time period – managers will not be keen to employ a woman who might leave a project mid-course while continuing to be paid. For these reasons, many women put off having children for fear of interrupting their careers.

Furthermore, while staff contracts set pay according to a fixed salary scale – suggesting that men and women should earn the same amounts – consultancy fees are negotiated individually with managers. So far, no study has been conducted to determine whether, amongst the 30 percent of the UN workforce with consultancy contracts, women and men are paid equally for equal work. As the UN and other organizations

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NATIONS UNIES/UNITED NATIONS

PRISCA CHAOUI, UNOG
IAN RICHARDS, UNCTAD

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Precarious contracts and unequal pay
Many staff in their thirties are either on temporary appointments or consultancies. Consultancy contracts don’t provide
push for greater contract “flexibility”, we should pay attention to these existing ambiguities.

**Changing parental leave**

The UN Secretariat provides four months of fully-paid parental leave. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) provide six, by adding two months of special leave with pay.

However, we must fix the policy that requires expectant mothers who fall ill within six weeks of their due date to start their maternity leave immediately, even if they are fit to return to work. This policy reduces the time these mothers have off after the baby is born.

Furthermore, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria allows fathers to assume some of the maternity leave, so that the mother can return to work earlier. This policy works there; why not make that 60% line the starting point in every office job vacancy.

**Lack of childcare**

For expatriate staff, the education grant covers the 17 years of primary, secondary and university education, but not pre-school. Yet in some countries, pre-school is more expensive than university. The International Civil Service Commission recently declined a proposal to allow parents to choose to allocate those 17 years between pre-school and university. Perhaps it’s time to modernize? What’s more, many UN campuses still do not have pre-school facilities on-site, despite the fact that many other international employers hold themselves to this standard.

**Inflexible working arrangements**

In theory, staff can choose from a range of options to balance work and family life, including telecommuting up to two days a week. In reality, getting flexible working arrangements entails an unpredictable negotiation between a staff member and his or her manager. The practice of hot-desking has already made it difficult for managers to locate their staff, and so their willingness to allow for telecommuting is decreasing. Some organizations now state upfront in job postings that employees must spend all working time at the office, leaving nothing to negotiate. Nevertheless, given current technology, most UN office jobs probably require only a 60% physical presence. We should make that 60% line the starting point in every office job vacancy.

**Mobility**

While no-one at the UN does or should question the equality of men and women, many women still live in patriarchal domestic arrangements. Should a woman need to move for career reasons, it cannot be taken for granted that she will be able to convince her husband to follow her. This difficulty can lead to split families or to women having to leave the UN in order to keep their family together; indeed, a recent UN Women report raised this very issue. As our organization rolls out mobility, it should bear this fact in mind.

**The objectivity of our promotion system**

There is major concern that promotion decisions may be subject to unconscious biases and subjective preferences, and that these biases may more likely influence outcomes in favour of men. In such an environment, it is essential for us to ensure that a hiring manager sticks to the objective requirements for a post. Traditionally, the central review bodies have had a role in policing this aspect of the hiring process. Therefore, the idea of weakening central review bodies by the new mobility policy, as well as proposals to scrap central review bodies outright, should absolutely be re-considered.

**In conclusion**

Too often we look only to top as role models. And yet neither most women nor most men will reach the very top; so how about we also look for role models closer to home? We should look to women who have made an impact regardless of their grade, not only to those of P-level, as well as to women in the field. Let’s find women of all ranks and backgrounds to inspire us!

It will require more than simple targets to ensure that all staff, regardless of gender, can fully participate in the UN and prove themselves professionally. It will require resources, a change of mindset and the review of difficult issues, such as precarious contracts and the use of consultancies. On International Women’s Day, let’s think about what we can do for all of the 14,000 women who work at the UN.

Prisca Chaoui is an Arabic interpreter and Deputy Executive Secretary of the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

Ian Richards is an Economic affairs officer at the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and Executive Secretary of the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council.

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manifestations destinées à démontrer le pouvoir national ne peuvent pas atteindre ce but, en revanche l’art et la gastronomie constituent des moyens formidables de séduire et de rassembler, ce qui fournit un socle intéressant au dialogue et à la paix. Ce concept de diplomatie culturelle existe depuis longtemps? 

Autrefois, on parlait « d’échanges culturels » et chaque ambassade avait son attaché culturel et chacun s’attachait à mettre en valeur les atouts de son pays. Quand le Président américain Lyndon B. Johnson en 1956 lance la campagne « Jazz Ambassadors », il n’a pas pour intention d’influencer les politiciens du bloc soviétique ou d’Afrique. Ce qu’il veut, c’est toucher les étudiants et les artistes de l’autre côté du rideau de fer et envoyer des messages de liberté à travers une forme musicale qui incarne la liberté de par sa structure même.

En quoi l’époque actuelle est-elle différente? Avec l’Internet et les réseaux sociaux, nous sommes passés de l’époque du multilatéralisme à celle du « poly-latéralisme ». Quand un ambassadeur parle au nom d’un gouvernement dans une conférence multilatérale, il est limité par le cadre institutionnel et ne touche que les représentants officiels des gouvernements présents. Lorsqu’un Président envoie des tweets, il parle directement au peuple, à des millions de personnes. Ses messages atterrissent dans leurs téléphones privés, au milieu de leurs messages personnels. Il fait du poly-latéralisme. Dans ce monde poly-dimensionnel la diplomatie culturelle est bien plus efficace que ce que l’on croit. Les gouvernements s’en rendent compte et profitent de l’espace que l’on leur réserve ici au Palais des Nations.

Quel est l’impact de cette nouvelle manière de communiquer? L’impact est important et il va vraisemblablement augmenter dans le futur. La construction des accords sur le
changement climatique est un exemple typique de ce monde à deux vitesses et de ses implications. La quinzième session de la Conférence des Parties (COP 15) à Copenhague (réunion sous les auspices de la Convention-Cadre des Nations Unies sur les Changements Climatiques (CCNUCC), qui ne peut pas être qualifiée de succès, réunissait plus de 1000 délégués. Tandis que les échanges « multilatéraux » de ces délégués se déroulaient dans des sessions officielles, des millions de gens échangeaient sur les réseaux sociaux, donnant leur opinion et voulant être entendus. Il était facile de constater que les délégués allaient plus lentement et pas assez loin par rapport au peuple.

Ce poly-latéralisme constitue un terreau idéal pour la diplomatie culturelle, puisqu’il va permettre de toucher les gens directement et de passer par les arts et les émotions qu’ils suscitent pour solliciter des échanges humains. C’est un instrument infiniment plus puissant que le discours politique.

Combien d’événements sont organisés dans ce contexte?
En 2016, la Bibliothèque a organisé 102 événements. On estime qu’environ 12 000 personnes y ont assisté lors des cérémonies d’inauguration. En plus, on estime que des milliers de visiteurs sont de passage sur une exposition de deux semaines, ce chiffre varie selon qu’elle a lieu dans la Galerie des Pas Perdus ou ailleurs.

La diplomatie culturelle prend-elle d’autres formes que la musique et les arts visuels?
Ah oui, bien sûr! Un domaine essentiel est celui de la gastronomie. La cuisine et les plaisirs de la table nous réunissent tous. La Géorgie a organisé en 2016 une dégustation de vin traditionnel et a offert à l’ONU un Qvevri qui est désormais installé près de la villa La Pelouse dans le parc. Il s’agit d’une cuve de terre cuite que l’on enfouit sous terre et qui permet de produire et conserver le vin selon une méthode ancestrale qui date de 8 000 ans. À travers cette donation, nous avons appris qu’il existe des traces de la tradition vinicole géorgienne qui remontent à 8 000 ans, bien avant les Romains – dont la plupart des gens pensent qu’ils avaient été les premiers à découvrir le vin.

Comment ces événements sont-ils financés?
Suite aux coupures successives de budget de ces dernières années, nous sommes obligés de couvrir les coûts de l’organisation de ces événements en demandant une participation financière aux missions permanentes. A cela s’ajoute bien évidemment le temps consacré par les employés de la Bibliothèque. Pour les missions diplomatiques, le montant s’élève à moins de 2000 francs suisses par événement.

Je souhaiterais d’ailleurs que l’Assemblée générale de l’ONU vote, un jour, un budget régulier pour les activités de diplomatie culturelle. C’est une erreur de ne pas encourager activement ces activités qui contribuent réellement à une meilleure compréhension entre les peuples et à partager les trésors de l’art et la culture de nos états membres. Après tout, ce Palais a été fondé pour ça. Dès la fondation de la Société des Nations, ce lieu a été au service de la paix. Or, sans compréhension entre les peuples, il n’y a pas de paix, il y a – au mieux – l’absence de guerre.

Vous savez, Martin Luther King, Jr. a dit «On est condamné à vivre ensemble comme des frères ou à s’entretuer comme des fous». Or, la compréhension entre individus est la base de toute coexistence sociale.

Pour trouver des informations sur les nombreuses activités culturelles de la Bibliothèque de l’ONUG, veuillez consulter le site de l’ONUG, qui inclut des pages dédiées à l’histoire et aux services de la Bibliothèque. En plus, la Bibliothèque utilise l’envoi de Broadcast ainsi que des messages sur les réseaux sociaux pour informer l’ensemble du personnel et la communauté diplomatique.
Competencies, and Core Managerial Competencies. Integrity is the first of the three Core Values and accountability is one of the eight Core Competencies.

At the core of integrity is the commitment to live consistently with one’s values (moral goodness). At the core of accountability is the commitment to take responsibility for one’s actions (good practice). Resolute honesty with oneself and others links them both together. Both are inseparable competencies that help maintain a moral course in UN work.

There is no health and development without moral health and development.

As I highlighted in Part One (UN Special, March 2017), cognitive dissonance is one of the most relevant concepts from social psychology that can help us understand our propensity for prevarication (i.e. evading or distorting the truth; lying). It refers to the disturbing, internal incongruence that we feel as we try to harmonize discrepant thoughts about ourselves.

In their book *Mistakes Were Made but Not By Me* (2007), social psychologists Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson describe cognitive dissonance, the inner disharmony between our ideal self and actual self, as follows: “When we make mistakes, we must calm the cognitive dissonance that jars our feelings of self-worth. And so we create fictions that absolve us of responsibility, restoring our belief that we are smart, moral, and right – a belief that is dumb, immoral, and wrong.”

KELLY O’DONNELL, WFMH

As both a psychologist and a UN representative for the World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH), I am very interested in understanding the qualities needed to work effectively in the UN and other sectors. The UN has high expectations for its personnel, and rightly so: our personal and professional competencies, including moral competencies, matter. The *UN Core Competency Framework: A Practical Guide* (2010) describes the skills, attitudes, and behaviours that all UN staff are expected to have and to develop further. The Framework includes 17 competencies and is organized into three categories: Core Values, Core Competencies, and Core Managerial Competencies.

Cognitive dissonance provides a useful grid to understand what we are up against when we try to act with integrity in bringing ourselves and our organizations to account. For example, what type of mental gymnastics can go on when assessing how we are putting into practice our ethical and good practice standards? Greater self-awareness is no guarantee of better practice, but it certainly can help! The description below from Tavris and Aronson sheds more light on managing our internal moral manoeuvres:

“Most people, when directly confronted by evidence that they are wrong, do not change their point of view or course of action but justify it even more tenaciously. Even irrefutable evidence is rarely enough to pierce the mental armor of self-justification... It lets us sleep at night... And it keeps many professionals from changing outdated attitudes and procedures that can be harmful to the public... We can’t wait around for people to have moral conversions, personality transplants, sudden changes of heart, and new insights that will cause them to sit up straight, admit error, and do the right thing. Most human beings and institutions are going to do everything in their power to reduce dissonance in ways that are favorable to them, that allow them to justify their mistakes, and maintain business as usual... The ultimate correction... is more light... Once we understand how and when we need to reduce dissonance, we can become more vigilant about the
Five strategies for integrity and accountability

How can we bring out the best of who we are, in particular as it concerns staying the course with our integrity and accountability? Here are five suggested areas for developing these competencies and for navigating the illusory realm of cognitive dissonance. Also helpful is Albert Bandura’s book, Moral Disengagement: How People Do Harm and Live with Themselves (2016) and the TedXTalk (2013) by Margaret Heffernan on Willful Blindness.

1. Yourself. Examine your own integrity and accountability as you review this article. What strengths and weaknesses are you aware of? Give some examples of cognitive dissonance in your life. Going further: review the rating scales for integrity and accountability in the UN Competency Framework for “Staff, Managers, and Managers of Managers” (pp. 12-14; 76-78) and the “Suggested Development Activities” (pp. 15-18; 79-82).

2. Colleagues. Discuss this topic or article with colleagues. To what extent are colleagues accountable with one another for their integrity? Identify some personal, group, organizational and sectoral vulnerabilities for prevarication as well as safeguards for ethical action. For example, as a group, watch social psychologist Phil Zimbardo’s classic TedTalk (2008) on The Psychology of Evil – what makes good people turn bad?

3. Managers. Explore how one’s moral values are expressed and modelled in the workplace as managers. It is especially important to detect how one’s private morality may differ from one’s workplace morality. Crisis times and peer pressure can be especially risky for compromising one’s core values. See the short Introduction about this common and serious discrepancy in Moral Mazes: The World of Corporate Managers (2010) by Robert Jackal. Also helpful is Managing Executive Health (2008, chapter nine on Ethical Character) by James Campbell Quick et al.

4. Leaders. Model and mentor integrity with transparency and accountability as leaders. Admit mistakes. Welcome feedback from others. Encourage colleagues to share “uncomfortable” information with you. Know, review, and refer to relevant good practice codes. As necessary, support the development of clear policies on whistle-blower protection and non-retaliation. Chapter one in Bennis et al’s book is very helpful for leadership integrity: Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor (2008).

5. Ethos. Cultivate an organizational “culture of integrity” as encouraged by the UN Global Compact: “By incorporating the Global Compact principles into strategies, policies and procedures, and establishing a culture of integrity, companies are not only upholding their basic responsibilities to people and planet, but also setting the stage for long-term success.” Actively foster “accountability at all levels” as per Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” Intentionally weave integrity and accountability into “how we do things” in our organization, department, and team thinking, strategies, polices, and procedures. Normalize it. Reward it. Organizational integrity and accountability are collective mentalities that shape our work for better or worse. Like the other core competencies, they are inculcated throughout the life cycle of staff (from recruitment to end of service) and not just mentioned, for instance, as part of an orientation package or during a crisis time.

Moral wholeness for a more whole world starts with ourselves. Integrity and accountability are key. The UN Core Competency Framework, social psychology, and the five strategy areas above, point us in the right direction. They can help us stay the moral course in the face of the many internal and external challenges that are part of UN work.

Dr. Kelly O’Donnell is a consulting psychologist based in Geneva. He is the CEO of Member Care Associates and focuses on personnel development, global mental health, and integrity/ anti-corruption. He is also a UN representative on behalf of the World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH). He may be reached at MCAresources@gmail.com.

Related blog postings by the author:
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Rencontre au Pasta Corner du bâtiment E du Palais de Nations. Marie Laure choisit la recette chinoise sans surprise, elle a une License d’histoire et un DEA en chinois (mandarin) de relations internationales à l’Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales de Paris. Sa première réponse sonne comme une évidence :
« Pas du tout ! Un homme quand il voyage peut passer partout – le monde est encore très macho aujourd’hui – une femme doit s’adapter pour passer inaperçue, surtout si elle parcourt des « pays difficiles », sans vouloir stigmatiser des régions, religions ou cultures. Elle doit se rendre invisible pour survivre, anticiper, prendre des précautions, diminuer sa féminité.

Je regarde mes pâtes napolitaines et j’avale sa dernière phrase avec amertume. Après tant de siècles de luttes pour l’égalité des femmes, pour essayer de nous débarrasser, en tant que sociétés, des préjugés – « Elle l’a provoqué, elle portait une minijupe », « qu’est-ce qu’elle faisait seule à huit heure du soir ? », « une femme qui voyage seule est une prostituée » et malheureusement bien d’autres stéréotypes – nous revenons au point de départ.

Cela voudrait dire qu’à l’heure de faire ses valises, une femme doit choisir ses vêtements en fonction de son vagin ? Marie Laure sourit. « Oui, c’est clair que dans plusieurs pays, surtout en Orient, une femme doit remplir sa valise de vêtements XXL, quand elle n’est pas obligée de porter un voile ». Cela dit, pour cette bloggeuse française qui a voyagé au Brésil, en Irak, en Libye, un peu partout dans le Moyen Orient, vécu six ans à Hong Kong, donné des cours de français à des femmes de tycoons de Hong Kong au expatriés anglophones et aux business executives hong kongais, il s’agit plutôt d’une question culturelle et de respecter les traditions pour pouvoir regarder le monde, découvrir des beaux paysages et des cultures en mettant toutes les chances de son côté pour pouvoir le faire.

« Si tu considères que tout est agression, mieux vaut rester chez soi », dit-elle. L’écrivain Paul Coelho a dit : « Si vous pensez que l’aventure est dangereuse, essayez la routine, elle est mortelle ». Un classique mexicain : « El que tenga miedo que no salga de su casa. » Marie Laure sait de quoi elle parle. De retour en France, après un voyage par voie terrestre de près d’un an en passant par l’Asie du Sud Est, l’Asie, le Moyen Orient et l’Europe, elle écrit pour des guides de voyage sur la Chine, Hong Kong, la Thaïlande et le Cambodge pour des maisons d’édition comme Hachette (les guides bleus et Evasion Michelin et Le Petit Futé). Alors, en attendant que le monde change et pour celles qui choisissent de sortir de la routine, elle suggère de :
• Se vêtir de manière appropriée. Essayer d’être transparente, tenue ample.
• Ne pas soutenir le regard d’un homme.
• Quand le jour tombe « se retrancher dans ses quartiers ».
• Ne pas sortir trop des sentiers battus, rester avec le groupe, oublier les trajets de nuit.
• En bus, s’assoir devant et si possible à côté d’une femme.
• Fermer bien à clé la porte de son hôtel.
• Etre toujours en alerte sans tomber non plus dans la paranoïa.

Veuillez trouver d’autres articles de Marie Laure de Saint Rémy sur son blog. Ecrit sur un ton décalé qui fait rêver le lecteur, l’idée du blog est de donner des clés, comme à quoi ressemble un pays, les sites à ne pas manquer, des aspects pratiques... de parler de Genève aussi et de la Suisse : http://genevetrotter.com.

On en est au café maintenant, avec au moins cette certitude : on n’est pas égaux en matière de liberté de voyager. ■
MARIE-JOSÉ ASTRE-DÉMOULIN, UNOG

8 mars au matin, allitée. Café qui goutte lentement sur le filtre. Passage sur Facebook pour me changer les idées. Accueillie par le visage de notre Secrétaire général dans mon fil d’actualité. Je relaie souvent les messages de l’ONU, alors en ce fameux 8 mars, je m’apprête à cliquer sur « partager », sans même réfléchir.

La situation des femmes membres du personnel de l’ONU est plutôt meilleure que dans la plupart des entreprises dans le monde. L’ONU œuvre pour obtenir l’égalité des droits entre hommes et femmes; je suis fière de tout cela, j’ai envie de le faire savoir.

Le titre du post officiel de l’ONU m’étonne un peu : « Journée internationale des femmes ». Je pensais qu’il était acquis que nous étions désormais passés à une journée des droits des femmes. Apparemment, je me suis trompée. Étrange découverte ! Quelqu’un sait ce qu’il en est ?

Je jette un coup d’œil au clip avant de partager la vidéo : première phrase de M. Guterres : « Les droits des femmes font partie intégrante des droits de l’homme »....

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La suite de la vidéo montre des images du chaos du monde, entrecoupées par des interventions de femmes qui parlent de la mission de l’ONU (sans mention ni de leur nom ni de leur titre mais, au moins, on les voit engagées dans la lutte – ça fait du bien).

Engagés, nous le sommes tous, et nous ne doutons pas des intentions de notre Secrétaire général dans ce sens – malgré la bouffée d’angoisse que génère l’image finale du clip, à savoir un homme de pouvoir solidolement planté devant un groupe de femmes (!?).

Nous ne pouvons que soutenir et encourager M. Guterres, à l’unisson de cet internaute qui écrit, sous le post :

« Sauf erreur de ma part, c’est la première fois qu’un secrétaire général de l’ONU poste une telle vidéo dans le cadre de la célébration du 8 mars. Un pas de géant. Félicitations !»

(texre retranscrit tel qu’écrit sur Facebook).

Un pas de géant, en effet. Et il va en faîtel bien d’autres car le chemin est jonché d’embûches ! Des embûches de taille énorme ! Puisque...

Puisque Google... Non, ce n’est pas possible, je dois rêver – j’aimerais être en train de rêver! Ça ne peut pas être la réalité…

Je viens d’ouvrir Google et je découvre que Google – Google que j’aime, Google que je côtoie chaque jour, Google en qui je croyais – Google « célèbre » le 8 mars par le biais d’une insertion de 7 écrans de dessins sur lesquels toutes les images, sans exception, mettent en scène une femme avec un enfant à ses côtés.

Les femmes réduites au rôle de mères en ce 8 mars. Sur le plus grand moteur de recherche du monde. Quelqu’un peut m’expliquer?

Hâte de me relever et de reprendre, aux côtés de mon SG et de toutes les personnes de bonne volonté, la lutte pour les droits des femmes – qui sont des hommes comme les autres, ne sont-elles pas? Ou... sont-elles? Ou...

Perplexité. Tout de même... ce matin... vaguement amer mon café. ■
Ethiopie (1ère partie)

Sur les terres de Lucy

L’Ethiopie, pays fabuleux et mythique, est immense et plein de contrastes

CLAUDE MAILLARD

Des 4000 m d’altitude à la dépression du Danakil et à la vallée du grand Rift situées bien au-dessous du niveau de la mer, l’Ethiopie, pays fabuleux et mythique, est immense et plein de contrastes. Il offre au voyageur des paysages sans cesse changeants et toujours grandioses.

C’est également en Ethiopie que fut découverte en 1974 la célèbre Lucy. À l’époque elle fut considérée comme le plus vieux spécimen d’hominidé au monde avec ses 3,3 millions d’années.

D’Addis-Abeba, la route qui mène au lac Tana distant de 560 kilomètres traverse les régions verdoyantes peuplées par les Oromos et les Amharas. Notre 4X4 se fraye un passage entre deux files ininterrompues de villageois qui se rendent aux marchés locaux afin d’y vendre leurs produits. Beaucoup d’enfants rejoignent également leur école souvent très éloignée. Slalomant entre les carrioles tirées par des ânes et les camions aux chargements surdimensionnés, évitant les nids-de-poules et les troupeaux de zébus qui déambulent de toutes parts, notre chauffeur Geteye reste vigilant. Construits autour de leurs places où s’échangent céréales, fruits, légumes et bestiaux, les villages débordent d’animation et au moindre arrêt, nous sommes bien vite entourés d’une foule impressionnante, avide de contact et toujours prête à communiquer malgré la barrière de la langue.

A la source du Nil Bleu

La cuisine éthiopienne est connue pour sa préparation raffinée et ses subtils mélanges d’épices. Chaque plat est servi, comme le veut la tradition, avec l’injera, une crêpe confectionnée à base de farine de teff, céréale endémique des hauts plateaux éthiopiens. Et, dès notre première pause-déjeuner près du pont portugais nous ne résisterons pas à la tentation. Accompagnée de légumes, de viande de chèvre et de différentes sauces, elle est franchement délicieuse. Construit au XVIIe siècle sous le règne de Fasilidas, lors de la brève présence de Portugais dans le pays, ce petit pont de pierre franchit un ruisseau, à l’aplomb d’un immense canyon de 1000 m de profondeur. Plus loin, avant d’accéder aux chutes du Nil Bleu, l’envie de fruits nous conduira sur le marché de Dembecha où nous ne passerons pas inaperçus!

Traversé par le Nil Bleu, qui prend sa source dans les montagnes environnantes de l’Agaumeder à 2900 m d’altitude, le lac Tana est le plus grand d’Ethiopie. D’origine volcanique, il couvre une superficie de 3630 km² pour une profondeur moyenne de seulement 14 m. Émergeant à peine de la surface de l’eau, un hippopotame nous observe de son œil noir et malicieux. Nous sommes à Bahar Dar, ville commerciale importante située à la pointe sud du lac. Avec ses larges avenues bordées de palmeres, l’endroit n’est pas sans faire penser à une cité balnéaire. Nous embarquerons à bord d’une longue barque à moteur en direction de l’île de Dek réputée pour son église Nerga Sélassié. Avant de pouvoir contempler ce plus bel exemple des églises circulaires de style gondarien, l’une des plus richement décorées, construite sous le règne de la reine Mentewab, nous passerons au large de l’île de Kebran qui abrite l’église de Kebran Gabriel. Puis nous
accosterons sur la presqu’île de Zéghé pour découvrir l’église d’Uhra Kidane Mehret. Après 80 km de navigation, au ras des flots, nous rejoindrons Gorgora où l’église de Debre Sina datant du début du XVIIe siècle vaut le détour.

Gondar, capitale du royaume

Gondar est édifiée sur les contreforts du massif du Simien où l’on trouve le Ras Dashen, le plus haut sommet d’Éthiopie qui culmine à 4 543 m. La ville et ses alentours possèdent quelques richesses architecturales et religieuses qui témoignent du glorieux passé de Gondar, capitale des souverains éthiopiens du XVIIe au XIXe siècle. Flanqué de quatre tours d’angle et d’une imposante vigie carrée, le palais de Fasilidas domine la ville où l’on peut notamment admirer l’église Dabra Birhan Sélassié : la richesse de son décor pictural en fait l’une des plus célèbres d’Éthiopie. Proches, entourés d’arbres imposants et lieu d’une grande sérénité, les bains de Fasilidas s’animent une fois l’an lors de la grande fête de Timkat qui commémore le bapteme du Christ par Saint-Jean-Baptiste dans les eaux du Jourdain. La route qui conduit à Sankaber offre un splendide panorama sur les vallées situées en contrebas. Nous sommes à 3 200 m d’altitude, en direction du parc national du Simien. Couvrant une superficie de 179 km², il a été créé en 1969 afin de protéger les espèces endémiques qui le peuplent, dont les babouins geladas qui vont partager notre quotidien durant trois journées. Formidable terrain d’excursion pour les amateurs de trekking, le Simien est le résultat d’une intense activité volcanique vieille de 40 millions d’années. Façonné par l’érosion au cours des siècles, il offre un invraisemblable relief escarpé constitué de pics, d’étroites vallées et de plateaux tabulaire surplombant des gorges vertigineuses plongeant de 1500 m. Après un premier campement sous la pluie, nous retrouvons bien vite un soleil bienfaiteur et les colonies de geladas. Les mâles dominants aux impressionnantes crinières et de nombreuses femelles auxquelles s’agrippent des petits, gambadent parmi les *kniphofia foliosa* (splendides fleurs aux tons jaunes et rouges). S’ils font notre bonheur, ces singes qui s’attaque aux cultures d’orge représentent par contre un sérieux fléau pour les paysans qui ont beaucoup de mal à les chasser de leurs terres.

**Bivouac sur les hauts plateaux**

Accompagnés de nos deux gardes armés «Kalach» et «Nikov», de six muletiers et trois cuisiniers, nous progressions vers le village de Guich après avoir longé la rivière Ginbahre. Une cascade haute de 543 m la propulse au bas d’une falaise. L’accueil des villageois est extraordinaire et une famille nous reçoit chaleureusement dans sa hutte en bois recouverte de chaume pour la cérémonie du café. Dès la nuit tombée, le froid s’installe et au matin une fine pellicule de glace recouvra même nos tentes. Réchauffés par un copieux petit-déjeuner, nous poursuivons notre périple parmi les lobélies géantes, plantes endémiques des montagnes d’Éthiopie qui peuvent atteindre plusieurs mètres de haut. Puis nous évoluons sur une crête dépassant les 4000 m d’altitude qui surplombe le canyon de Sholoke Gedel aux parois vertigineuses. Au loin, les imposants pitons volcaniques d’Imate Gogo émergent d’un vaste paysage qui s’étend à perte de vue. A cette altitude, le mal des montagnes commencera à agir sur des membres du groupe et il faudra rapidement redescendre au camp de base. Là, nous sera servie une délicieuse soupe revigorante suivie d’un traditionnel repas local, le tout arrosé d’un inattendu vin rouge provenant d’Addis-Abeba.

Pourtant craintif et difficilement approchable, un loup d’Abyssinie viendra roder près de notre campement, comme pour nous saluer et nous souhaiter bonne continuation dans notre découverte de l’Éthiopie. Aventure à vivre dans le prochain numéro de l’*UN Special.*
The President of CCISUA seems not to have invested the necessary time, if he believes that these 33 members were herded like sheep at the 63rd Board Meeting in Vienna, because they were not. But they can speak for themselves.

Concerning the investments of the Pension Fund: these are the responsibility of the Secretary-General, so his office will need to respond to those charges. Though neither CCISUA nor its President would ever say so, the hardworking staff at the Pension Fund have actually made incredible progress over the last 12 months. In spite of the narrative of doom and gloom and all-things-are-awful-thanks-to-the-CEO, the Fund is paying more pensions, faster than at any time in the last decade. Today, the Fund serves 202,372 people: a record. The average waiting time for those separating, from the day that the Fund receives all correct documentation, is 20 business days. The Fund is refining its new computer system, making information available to all participants and retirees; and now, new retirees or people separating can see in real time when their documents arrive at the Fund.

Regardless of baseless complaints, the Fund cannot calculate a benefit before it receives the required documentation. And though the Fund can and does send reminder mails, it cannot checkout staff from member organizations, nor reconcile internal payrolls, nor print and sign separation documents, even if it were given 100 million dollars a year. The Fund is opening its first pilot office on the African continent next month; is launching a new, easier to use website; is expanding its client service; and has drawn up an ambitious budget, to ensure that the aging population depending upon the Fund receives the service they deserve. Positive developments will continue.

Lee Woodyear
Senior Communications Officer, UN Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF)
Vous aimeriez partager votre opinion sur le magazine et son contenu?

N'hésitez plus et écrivez-nous !

Nous serions heureux de recevoir votre avis. Les plus pertinents, les plus intéressants, les plus originaux seront publiés dans le magazine.

Si vous souhaitez proposer un article, n'hésitez pas à me contacter à tout moment.

Et maintenant, à vos plumes!

Adressez vos commentaires à:
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Message from the editor-in-chief

Would you like to share your opinion about UN Special and its contents?

Write to us!

We will be glad to hear from you. The most interesting, relevant, or even ingenious responses will be published in the magazine.

Should you wish to submit an article, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Now, put pen to paper!

Send your thoughts to:
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Nos remerciements vont également aux personnes qui ont participé à l’élaboration de ce numéro:

Sarah Bencherif
Angela Montano
Nicolas Plouviez

The official magazine of the international civil servants of the United Nations at Geneva and of the World Health Organization

Les opinions exprimées dans UNS sont celles des auteurs, et non forcément celles de l’ONU, de l’OMS ou de ses agences spécialisées. La parution de ce magazine dépend uniquement du support financier de la publicité prise en charge par une régie.

The opinions in UNS are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the United Nations, the WHO or its specialized agencies. The publication of this magazine relies solely on the financial support of its advertisers.

Impression / Printer
Imprimerie du Moléson SA
Route du Nant d’Avril 107 – 1217 Meyrin – T. +41 22 782 50 82
Rue des Mouettes 12 – 1227 Carouge – T. +41 22 307 26 10
www.molesonimpressions.ch

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Composition of the Editorial Board

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Quai Gustave-Ador 42, 1207 Genève
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Imprimé sur du papier certifié FSC.
Tirage: 10 500 exemplaires

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