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Editor’s Note

The UN peacebuilding architecture sometimes finds it difficult to focus on an urgent priority. After all, we were created with a multifaceted mandate and with competing priorities. This reality can hinder our ability to capture the globe’s attention in support of our peace efforts. Case in point: Yemen. It seems this is a forgotten war. It seems the mounting human suffering is not cause enough for the global media to raise the awareness necessary to reach a negotiated peace. We invite you to learn more about this conflict in this issue’s opening article and in its centerpiece, as well as to get a glimpse of how WHO works on the ground, and how migrants continue to seek refuge in a war zone.

In this edition we also commemorate the International Day of Peace and give you a preview of the 2017 Geneva Peace Talks. Along the same lines, there is an article on Muslim-Jewish inter-religious dialogue and another on the last Secretary-General of the League of Nations and his legacy. We also offer you coverage of WHO partnerships to address critical health issues, on the renovation of WHO headquarters, and two interviews with WHO experts on the International Health Regulations (IHR) and on antibiotic resistance. You may also read and interesting article on the Musée d’Ethnographie de Genève, and another on cycling librarians. Last but not least, we continue to inform you on the efforts of the Staff Associations with regard to the recent blood drive! We appreciate you as valued members of our community.

La structure de l’ONU pour la consolidation de la paix a parfois du mal à se concentrer sur une priorité. Nous avons été créés avec un mandat à multiples facettes avec des priorités concurrentes, et cela peut générer notre capacité à attirer l’attention du monde à appuyer nos efforts de paix. Exemple concret: Le Yémen. Il semble que cette guerre est oubliée et que ce drame humain est incapable d’attirer les médias internationaux et d’arriver à une paix négociée. Nous vous invitons dans cette édition à en savoir plus dans l’article d’ouverture et dans la page centrale, ainsi que dans un article sur le travail de l’OMS sur le terrain et un autre sur les migrants en zone de guerre.


Si vous êtes diplomate à Genève, sachez que nous vous invitons à nous écrire, comme l’a fait la Mission du Bangladesh sur leur participation au don de sang (p. 22). Nous vous comptons parmi les membres importants de notre communauté.
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Give peace another chance
An overview of the conflict in Yemen

The Yemeni situation is a multifaceted conflict coupled with sensitive regional geopolitics. A poor country torn by a war between forces loyal to the internationally-recognised government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and forces supporting the Houthi rebel movement.

In 2011 the Arab Spring raised expectations for change and President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had been in power for 30 years, was forced to resign in the face of popular protests. The period that followed has been dramatically complex and civil war erupted in 2014 when expectations were left unfulfilled. The current crisis was ignited by widespread frustration with the economic situation and continued corruption. There was a growing armed conflict in the north that involved a group called the Houthis, a Zaidi rebel movement that had fought six rounds of armed conflict against the Saleh regime in the past. After the departure of President Saleh and during the transition, the Houthis participated in a national dialogue called by the transitional government, but at the same time, increased fighting against the Sunni Islamist party Al-Islah, their ideological enemy. Former President Saleh eventually formed an alliance with the Houthis who managed to occupy Sanaa, the capital of the country, and to overthrow the new government. In March 2015, Arab armed forces intervened, in a coalition led by Saudi Arabia. Since then, the country continues to be ravaged by a war between forces loyal to the government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and those allied to the Houthi rebel movement.

As of February of this year, WHO reports that more than 7,600 people have been killed and 42,000 injured

The conflict and a blockade imposed by the coalition have also triggered a humanitarian disaster, leaving 70% of the population in need of aid and protection. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), an alarming 18.8 million people – almost two thirds of the population – need humanitarian or protection support. Some 10.3 million people are food insecure and at risk of famine. At least 3 million people have fled their homes, public services are limited, less than half of the nation’s health centres are functional and medicine and equipment are limited.
A young state created in 1990

Today Yemen is in an acute crisis; however, before the conflict faced the trials of widespread poverty, poor governance and weak rule of law, including widely reported human rights violations. To truly understand the heart-breaking chaos going on today, we must also examine the context in which it arose. To begin with, Yemen is located at the south-western tip of the Arabian Peninsula, in the Strait of Bab-el-mandeb, which means, in Arabic, “Gate of Tears”. It is quite a young state, created in 1990 just as the Soviet Union imploded, from the reunification of the Northern Arab Republic of Yemen and the Southern Democratic and Popular Republic of Yemen. Mr. Saleh was its first president.

Tension between the two former Republics persisted after reunification and, in 1992, the state erupted into its first crisis, consisting of food price riots in major towns. In the wake of these events, a coalition government was formed in April 1993, made up of ruling parties from both north and south. The coalition was as an attempt to relieve the tension; however, in August of the same year, Vice-President Ali Salim al-Baid withdrew to Aden, declaring that the south continued to be marginalised and that southern residents were being attacked by northerners. An accord between northern and southern leaders was signed in Jordan in February 1994, but it could not stop a new conflict. Fighting erupted from May to July, 1994, and resulted in the defeat of the southern armed forces, as well as flight into exile for many southern leaders, who were sentenced to death in absentia. Saudi Arabia actively aided the south during the 1994 civil war. From those difficult beginnings and until today, much water has passed under the bridge and old rivalries and perceptions are still fuelling enmity and creating havoc.

In its most recent phase, this crisis has been prolonged by regional military intervention. Arab countries assume the Houthi’s ascendancy in Yemen is supported by Iran and intervened to push back the Houthis and reinstate the transitional government. To understand this domestic conflict is important to analyse the regional struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Both have a profound influence in Yemen. Most of the funding for the conflict comes from Saudi Arabia, who support various, and sometimes competing, components of the anti-Houthi side called the “Hadi government”. According to the Gulf States, Iranian intervention is evidenced by connections between the Houthi movement and Hezbollah, with the support of the Iranians. Saudi Arabia has always considered Yemen to be part of its primary zone of influence, so they reject Iran’s support of an armed group struggling for control of the Yemeni state.

A forgotten conflict

To exacerbate the humanitarian crisis, it seems that the Western world simply doesn’t have time to declare this conflict a priority. It is hard to keep Yemen in the eye of the press, because there is some degree of fatigue when it comes to conflict in the Middle East. The news are focused on Syria, Iraq, Israel/Palestine, and the fight against IS. Headlines fail to raise awareness about the conflict and the fact that it has created the world’s largest humanitarian crisis and the world’s most acute hunger crisis. 17 million people face food insecurity and parts of the country are on the verge of famine. This is a problem mainly because people cannot buy food even if there is enough supply in some areas of the country. Public sector employees have not been paid for months in a row and private sector activity is very limited, with high unemployment and lack of income for a majority of the Yemeni families. The economy has collapsed because of the conflict and the central bank is not operating normally. Unfortunately, it seems that the economy is another weapon of war and too many people are dying of hunger and disease. In recent months the country is facing a cholera epidemic complicated by attacks against health workers.

Experts and diplomats have been working for several years to solve this conflict to no avail, but most agree that a military solution is not plausible. Many assume that the framework for negotiations is failing to motivate all stakeholders involved. The structure of UN talks is complex and based on UN Security Council Resolution 2216, that calls for the surrender of the rebel Houthi/Saleh bloc. There is little room for a negotiated settlement in the resolution, which calls on one side the internationally recognized government and on the other the rebel bloc. However, there are more actors to be reckoned with and external governments in the region whose security concerns should be a critical part of a negotiated peace.

The Yemeni conflict is in its third year of war and a political settlement seems to be distant

A political solution is imperative and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, is aiming to bring all parties together. During his latest briefing of the Security Council in New York he expressed his deep concern about the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian and economic situation amidst a worrying escalation of military operations. The Special Envoy had recently presented to the warring parties a framework that included a set of sequenced political and security measures which were designed to ensure a rapid end to the war, withdrawals of military formations and disarmament in key areas, leading to the creation of an inclusive transitional government. He urged the Security Council members to put pressure on all parties to engage constructively in discussing the framework. The Special Envoy also called the International Community to increase its participation in a negotiated solution. He concluded by urging the Council to use all of its diplomatic weight to push for the relevant parties to make the concessions required to reach a final agreement before more lives are lost. He concluded saying: “We must give peace another chance.”
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Interview with Dr. Nevio Zagaria, WHO Yemen Representative

Insight into the situation in Yemen

The health situation in Yemen has been volatile from the very beginning of the conflict. WHO and other health agencies have been present to make sure the people of Yemen suffer as little as possible.

What is the health situation on the ground in Yemen right now?
Two and a half years of war in Yemen have created the conditions for an unprecedented cholera outbreak that continues to cause more than 4,000 suspected cases a day more than three months after the beginning of the second wave. Rising malnutrition is leaving people, particularly children, vulnerable to disease. At the same time, thousands of women, men, boys and girls are quietly dying of conflict-related injuries, of complications during childbirth or of treatable conditions like diabetes or high blood pressure because they cannot access care.

What is the state of the health system?
Yemen’s health emergency is a man-made crisis, primarily caused by the ongoing conflict. More than half of the country’s health facilities are no longer fully functioning, not only because some were damaged during fighting, but because they lack the supplies or the staff to keep functioning. Of the health workers still in the country, around 30,000 have not received their salaries in almost a year. As a result of all these factors, almost 15 million people lack access to basic health care.
WHO is working together with more than 46 health partners, including UN agencies, national and international NGOs, to support the local health authorities in delivering health services to vulnerable people across Yemen. In addition, we have recently initiated an innovative partnership with the World Bank to tackle immediate health needs at the same time as we scale up the health system so that it can continue to serve the people of Yemen into the future.

**Working in Yemen in the midst of a conflict must be difficult at times. How do the WHO Yemen staff deal with the challenges?**

This is definitely a challenging environment, but I’ve been lucky to inherit an extremely committed team in Yemen.

In particular, I want to highlight the Yemeni national staff, many of whom kept the office running through the sudden escalation of the crisis in 2015 when the bombs were raining down and the international staff had to evacuate. Their dedication was seen again this Eid: our staff were there in the office, reporting for duty all through the holiday at the end of Ramadan, doing what they could to respond to cholera.

**Do you have any stories or eyewitness account testimonial you would like to share?**

Recently, when the heads of UNICEF, WFP and WHO came to visit Yemen, we visited a local children’s hospital where we met a four-year-old child battling a deadly combination of cholera and malnutrition. When we saw him, he was lying on a hospital bed, struggling to breathe. We almost missed his mother, sitting quietly nearby. She was so severely malnourished that she could no longer properly care for or breastfeed her children.

This is the kind of story that breaks your heart, but there is hope here in Yemen also. Every day I meet dedicated Yemeni health workers who, despite not having been paid in almost a year, are working long hours to fight off death and help their patients recover.

**What can the international community do to help the people of Yemen?**

First, we must find a solution for the payment of health workers’ salaries. These men and women are the heroes of the cholera response to date and are a key reason why 99% of people with suspected cholera are surviving. WHO, UNICEF and our NGO partners are supporting them with incentives and stipends, but this is not enough.

Second, we need the parties to the conflict to respect the safety and neutrality of health workers and health facilities.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the people of Yemen need a peaceful political solution to the conflict. Only then will the healing begin. ■
Migration to Yemen

When refugees flee into a war zone

Refugees from the Horn of Africa continue to flee across the water towards Yemen, despite the ongoing violence there.

ANILKUMAR NAGANURI, UNITAR
A shocking number of migrants and refugees continue to head not from but to war-torn Yemen, fleeing across the waters from the Horn of Africa towards the Gulf countries, and straight into a conflict zone. Many of the desperate people who embark on the journey to Yemen are unaware of the dangers they face. The risks go so far as deliberate drowning by smugglers, who, in an epic display of human cruelty, have been known to force passengers out of the boats upon glimpsing official-looking people or other threats on the Yemeni shore. The smuggler seizes his own chance to live to traffic and to profit another day, while the human beings he was ferrying are left to drown.

According to the UN, on 9 and 10 August, 2017, migrants headed towards the Gulf countries, mostly from Somalia and Ethiopia, were indeed “deliberately drowned” when a smuggler forced them into the sea off Yemen’s coast. In a report from Al Jazeera, survivors told International Organization for Migration (IOM) staff that the smuggler had literally pushed them into the ocean, afraid of the people he saw on the beach, who looked to be authority figures. The UN migration agency called the drownings “shocking and inhumane”.

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International Organization for Migration (IOM) staffers found the shallow graves of 29 of the refugees and migrants on a beach in Yemen during a routine patrol, the agency’s statement said. The dead had been buried quickly by those who survived. Medical staff said they provided urgent care for the 27 surviving migrants who remained on the beach, while some other survivors had already left the area. The agency said 22 people are still unaccounted for. The average age of the passengers on the boat is believed to have been 16 years old, according to the UN agency.

Mr. William Lacy Swing, the head of IOM, lamented the deaths in a video posted on Twitter, saying there was “something fundamentally wrong with this world if countless number of children can be deliberately and ruthlessly drowned”. He described the smuggling route from the Horn of Africa to Yemen as “a busy and extremely dangerous route” because of the conflict there. “It is indeed a very dramatic situation,” Laurent de Boeck, the IOM’s chief for Yemen, told Al Jazeera from Brussels. He described the survivors as “exhausted and under shock”.

The chaos and violence in Yemen lends huge support to the smugglers, and is reflected in the size and strength of the people-smuggling business in Yemen. Refugees and migrants continue to land unabated on Yemen’s shores, despite the conflict there. Over the past two years, there has even been a substantial increase in such arrivals. In 2016, more than 111,500 refugees and migrants arrived in the country, compared to 100,000 the year before. The IOM estimates that since January of this year, around 55,000 people have already left Horn of Africa nations for Yemen.

In an article published by the New York Times on 14 August 2017, an 18-year old refugee named Toje Jamal Yousef, from the Ethiopian town of Gelemso, described his nightmarish journey. He recounted that the smugglers on his boat took his dates and his bottle of water. They also had guns. “The voyage was frightening,” he said. He didn’t even have shoes, but was still determined to keep his gaze fixed on a promising future in a safe and secure destination. “I am dreaming of traveling to Saudi Arabia,” he said. “When I get money there, I will bring my father and mother to Saudi Arabia.” But for now,” he said, “I am planning to work anywhere in Yemen.”

Unscrupulous smugglers continue to succeed in luring the most vulnerable people – such as Mr. Yousef – into the dangers of a war-torn country; and this, only if they manage to survive the voyage at sea.

Refugees looking for better opportunities in the Gulf countries need to know that the conflict in Yemen itself is a deadly risk. Due to the nation’s prolonged violence, deteriorating conditions, buckling state institutions and challenges to the preservation of governance and the rule of law, vulnerable new arrivals, if they make it that far, will still face the gravest of dangers. And yet, this particular sea route into war remains a draw for some of the world’s poorest and most desperate people.
Building bridges at 2017 Geneva Peace Talks

Geneva Peace Talks, an important event to celebrate the International Day of Peace.

SALMAN BAL, UNOG
A former neo-Nazi who helps people liberate themselves from the clutches of extremism, a South Korean violinist who believes music can build bridges between the divided Koreas, and a Colombian police officer who helped steer the negotiation with the FARC in Havana, Cuba, are among the dozen exciting personalities who will be part of the upcoming Geneva Peace Talks on 21 September.

The fifth edition of the Geneva Peace Talks, organized annually on the International Day of Peace, will this year focus on the theme “Building Bridges”. Drawing on the unique spirit of innovation and creative thinking in International Geneva, the event aims to show that conflicts can be resolved through dialogue and negotiation, and partnerships for resolving conflicts need to cut across institutions and sectors.

The event will bring together people from different walks of life to share their ideas on peace and expand the space for discussions on conflict resolution, peacebuilding and practical solutions to violent conflict. Through their personal stories, this year’s speakers from the fields of science, art, business, mediation, sport, security and more will share tangible experiences and ideas to inspire people and spark a discussion on how each and every one of us can play a role in reaching out and building bridges. They will explain how they have personally overcome communication challenges, and how their lessons can be inspirational and applicable.

“The Geneva Peace Talks is about breaking silos and working together to generate common understandings and solutions in today’s times, where uncertainty has become the new norm,” says Achim Wennmann, Executive Coordinator of the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, one of the co-organizers of the event.

Initiated in 2013, the Geneva Peace Talks is an annual public event organized on the occasion of the International Day of Peace by the United Nations Office in Geneva, Interpeace and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, with support from Switzerland and other partners.

Following their successful launch in Geneva, Peace Talks have been organized in Stockholm (2014 and 2017), Nairobi (2015) and Ottawa (2016). Other cities are considering organizing future Peace Talks.

1 In the past, the Geneva Peace Talks were sponsored by Fondation pour Genève, Switzerland, République et Canton de Genève, Mirabaud, Ville de Genève and the Global Shapers Community in Geneva.

Join us for the fifth edition of the Geneva Peace Talks to mark the International Day of Peace.

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Building bridges of peace through interfaith dialogue

A personal journey at the Muslim-Jewish Conference and how such initiatives can foster sustainable peace.

SARAH BENCHERIF, UNOG

A quick look at the news shows that the world today is plagued with inter-religious and cultural tensions that often lead to conflicts and human suffering. Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, sexism and other forms of discrimination occupy world headlines on a day-to-day basis.

As we approach the International Day of Peace on the 21st of September, it is of the utmost importance that the world should come together to address the underlying critical issues that fuel these prejudices in order to achieve sustainable peace and universal wellbeing for humanity. Each year, the International Day of Peace is observed around the world and the General Assembly has declared it “a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples”.

This year’s theme is “Together for Peace”. In leading efforts to address growing global discrimination, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has noted that: “In times of insecurity, communities that look different become convenient scapegoats,” and has highlighted that “We must resist cynical efforts to divide communities and portray neighbours as the other”. “Discrimination diminishes us all. It prevents people – and societies – from achieving their full potential”, he added.

As a firm believer in peace through education and that inter-religious dialogue contributes to a culture of peace, I participated in a global interfaith initiative, the "Muslim-Jewish Conference", which took place in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) from August 6 to 13, 2017.

This Muslim-Jewish Conference (MJC) is a dialogue and leadership organization that brings together annually young representatives from Muslim and Jewish communities and other religions. It is an innovative and progressive educational non-profit organization based in Vienna, Austria, the goal of which is to deepen interest in intercultural communication and interfaith issues. Its charismatic founder, Ilja Sichrovsky, from Austria, had the idea of such an initiative after attending a conference of the Harvard World Model United Nations (WorldMUN), where, for the first time in his life, he discussed shared values with a Muslim peer.
This year, over 100 Jews, Muslims and members of other religions, came together from over 30 countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Israel, State of Palestine, the U.S.A. and Syria. We were divided into committees, covering particular themes of interest allowing in-depth discussions on subjects such as “Power, Religion, and Human Rights” and “Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and hate speech”.

I was assigned to the committee that aimed to look at; “Gender, Religion, Intersectionality and Prejudice”, whose purpose is to gain an understanding of the role of gender in Islam and Judaism; to find means of empowerment and education; and to break stereotypes and misconceptions about the way women and the LGBTQ community are treated in religions. During our discussions, we reflected on a number of topics and all agreed that religious and gender identities can be invisible to individuals who tend not to label people, on the wealth of diversity we have within our own communities, and on how they impact our experiences. This is not to say that challenges do not exist within our communities, and all over the world for that matter, but what we took away from our debates was that we needed to educate ourselves constantly, because ignorance leads to rejection, and rejection leads to fear, and fear ignites hatred.

We live in a world full of inequalities but what brought all of the participants to this gathering was their belief in a common ground: we all have faith in something that unites and the belief that we can change things for the better through our actions. We also acknowledge that the moral imperatives of all religions call for peace and mutual understanding.

In addition to the philosophical discussions, we also had many difficult conversations with varying opinions and shared our own personal experiences about discrimination or spirituality. However, we listened to each other with openness and always showed each other respect.

The most emotional part of the conference for me was the visit to the “Srebrenica Genocide Memorial”. This was a very special, emotionally-charged day that none of the participants will forget. I knew about the war in Bosnia, had read about it and seen documentaries, but being there, in the middle of thousands of graves shook me to the core and left me feeling depressed and incapable of understanding how such atrocities could have happened in a mountain town surrounded by so much natural beauty. It is only through the painstaking work of DNA researchers that the remains of the 8,372 victims have been identified through the excavation of mass graves. The victims were mainly men and boys from the Muslim Bosniak community, all of whose lives were needlessly and brutally ended before their time. May Srebrenica never happen again to anyone, anywhere.

The MJC offered a safe learning environment for intensive personal interaction and exchange of knowledge and experiences. Beyond our religious affiliations, we prayed, laughed and mourned together and shared a transformative and unforgettable experience. MJC has definitely built bridges of peace.
For the International Day of Peace

He believed that tomorrow should come

Sean Lester, the last Secretary-General of the League of Nations, an extraordinary person, to whom we owe our own determination to preserve the dignity and the ideas of the organization, as well as its historical heritage.

EVELINA RIIOUKHINA, RYAN KENNEDY, UNECE

Without experience in foreign affairs, he became a politician. With the strongest integrity and through his firm convictions, he managed to defend not only the rules governing civilized society, but also the sacred notion (and legacy) of the symbol of Peace that our building, the Palais des Nations, embodies. He was motivated by his strong beliefs and perseverance in fighting for the right cause. His name was Sean Lester, the last Secretary-General of the League of Nations.
Our Palace (Palais des Nations) accommodates thousands and thousands of delegates coming from all parts of the Globe to discuss peace, sustainable development and human rights. They all believe in and hope for a better Planet for future generations. These delegates, if lost, usually meet in the Salle des pas perdus (the highest hall, which visitors use as a meeting point to avoid getting lost in our truly immense building). From this Salle, the delegates can enjoy a gorgeous view of the Celestial Sphere, proudly shining in the Court of Honour. Behind it, in turn, there is a huge Assembly Hall. These three components cannot be dissociated, as together they represent the heart of the hearts of the Palais and embody the symbol of peace that it is usually associated with. And if we, staff members, come here on Sundays and discover the totally lonely Palace, we enjoy the calm of the high galleries, the majesty of the Salle des pas perdus, the beauty of the Cour d’honneur, the view of the Celestial Sphere, and we feel for at least a day that we are “the Masters” of the Palace. But we also know that tomorrow will come, together with thousands and thousands of delegates, who will once again fill our Palace with their firm beliefs and hope for peace, for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), or any other related topic that they came to discuss at the UNOG Palais.

Now imagine a totally different scene. High ceilings, dark halls, and not only on Sundays, but also on Mondays, Tuesdays, etc. The Palace is abandoned. Nobody will come tomorrow; nobody will search for the Salle des pas perdus. “Tomorrow” is not coming and it is not clear whether it will ever come again. And there is only one person walking through the halls and the Salle des pas perdus. He knows that there is no tomorrow, because there is a war on all around. Everywhere except in the tiny country of Switzerland, which manages to keep its neutrality. This tiny country also has a marvel – a huge and majestic Palace of Peace. But in those dark times, precious peace has been violated by the...
The book written by Marit Fosse and John Fox: “Sean Lester: The Guardian of a Small Flickering Light”.

outbreak of war. The lonely person in the Palace cannot abandon his post – a captain who never abandons his ship. Not only does he have perseverance and faith, but he also feels a responsibility towards the high ideals of humanity. Therefore, he continues to fight to maintain the remaining dignity and prestige of the institution and he has a resolve as well as a firm belief that “tomorrow should and will come.” He fights despite the fact that he knows that his tasks are coming to an end, that the League of Nations, the Organization of which he is the Secretary General, is crumbling, that it failed to prevent the dramatic turn of history and the outbreak of World War II. He fights despite the feeling of being the “captain of a waterlogged boat”, with only a skeleton crew in a deserted Palais des Nations. He does so because he has a high mission – he feels responsible for preserving the heritage of peace, or at least, the symbol of peace (which the Palais des Nations, the building constructed between 1929 and 1938 for the League of Nations, the first, and at that time the only, International Organization servicing international peace undoubtedly is). It is this strong belief, this conviction, which compels him to stay and to defend the heritage, the “foundation” of the idea and the symbol of peace. His name is Sean Lester.

He was the last Secretary General of the League of Nations. He was neither a diplomat, nor a politician. But he was an extraordinary person, to whom we owe our own determination to preserve the dignity and the ideas of the organization, as well as its historical heritage. And if you want to make a journey through time and history, I recommend you read the book written by Marit Fosse and John Fox entitled Sean Lester – The Guardian of a Small Flickering Light.

The talented pen of Marit Fosse in co-authorship with John Fox, will allow you to dive into the atmosphere of that time and to make a journey with Sean Lester through the abandoned Palace, during the last days of the League of Nations. What was he really thinking? Why, contrary to many of his colleagues, was he unable to abandon the Palace? While there were only a few remaining in his “crew”, he nevertheless remained an exemplary “captain” and took due care of them until the very end. Was it because of his convictions? Because of the strength of his belief? Or was it because he was an extraordinary person? He said of himself that he was a man “without an ambition”. He had left school at the age of fourteen. He had no experience in foreign affairs (which might have been the secret of his strong determination, as professional politicians are usually much more sceptical?). He spoke no languages other than English. Having become an Irish representative to the League of Nations in Geneva in 1929, and having served as the League’s High Commissioner in the Free City of Danzig from 1934 to 1936, he was selected on August 311,940 to serve as the Secretary-General of the League of Nations. From that very day and for the next six years he fought to keep the institution alive, and to maintain the sparkle of the small flickering light of the Palace, i.e. the symbol of peace the Palace signified in people’s minds. He simply believed that there was tomorrow.

It is to him that we all should be grateful for preserving, despite the war, not only the Palace itself, but also the image of peace that our Palace embodied at that time. For it is thanks to him that today our Palace continues to embody the image of peace worldwide. Even when our Organization, the United Nations, was established and chose New York to be its headquarter, the Palais des Nations continued (and still continues, today more than ever) to embody the image of peace, giving assurance and the hope for peace to the people of the world.

What has changed at the Palais of today as compared to the times of Sean Lester? Definitely not its heart – the Salle des pas perdus, the Celestial Sphere in at the Court of Honours – its main arteries, fortunately, remain intact. The new building of 10 floors (building E) complemented the Palais between 1968-1973, making the majestic Palace more modern, more spacious, and more visible from the City. Nowadays there are also more statues in the Ariana Park. Many of them symbolise peace. Recently another sphere was donated to the UNOG, adding to the long list of symbols of peace that govern at the Palace and in its surroundings. But people, while admiring all the statues in the Ariana park, still go to look at the Celestial Sphere because IT THIS IS THE ONE. And they still go to the heart of the majestic Palace, the Salle des pas perdus, to touch the walls and breathe the history. It is because this is the place where the HEART of peace beats.

1 The Celestial Sphere, called Pax Universalis, was built between 1937 and 1939 by Paul Manship. It was donated to the League of Nations by Woodrow Wilson. The presence of this bronze sphere in front of the Salle des pas perdus reinforces the meaning of “peace guardian”, and reassures that the ideals of peace will always govern in this place. UN Special has written numerous articles on this issue appealing for the restoration of the Celestial Sphere, please see UNS Nos 652, 670, 671, 721 and 722).
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The art and science of partnerships to address critical health issues

Partnerships are key to the success of TDR. We could only have accomplished what we have done through working with others.

GARRY ASLANYAN, WHO

This has been a main tenet throughout our history, and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals agreed by United Nations members even have a goal focused on this: Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Since the establishment of TDR (the Special Programme in Research and Training in Tropical Diseases) in the 1970s, many global health initiatives have been created. This interest and support is greatly appreciated, but it brings new challenges of coherence and synergy. How do we make sure we are not duplicating services? How do multiple agencies and institutions agree on global health priorities?

At TDR, we have discussed and analysed this a great deal, and have developed principles and a methodology to help guide us in the types of partnerships we seek and those we are offered. These can be partnerships of research, or funding, or a range of technical cooperation agreements. We use these principles and methodology to assess the coherence and alignment with what we are trying to do. The goal is to have a greater impact than if we were alone.

I’d like to share with you how TDR uses this framework with a few examples.

The Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa raised issues of the ethics of conducting research in a complex environment, community engagement and local research capacity. The European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) specialises in clinical trials in Africa, and TDR has experience in community-based projects and implementation research. Together, we agreed to address the questions raised in this outbreak through a joint grant programme.
We are funding research conducted by scientists living in six sub-Saharan countries to conduct high quality health research during health emergencies and/or epidemic outbreaks. So together, we are solving important research questions while strengthening the capacity of those countries to find and test local solutions – this is a key goal of TDR.

The spread of the Zika virus in the Americas identified gaps in monitoring and surveillance, and sharing information across countries. The transmission of the mosquito vector, the role of reproductive health and the behaviour and resilience of the surveillance systems all played a role in the outbreak. TDR partnered with the World Health Organization’s regional office of the Americas (the Pan American Health Organization) and the Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction to bring our knowledge and strengths together.

This resulted in a grant programme to foster regional, national and institutional knowledge sharing and networking. The 17 grantees are identifying solutions to address the Zika virus in seven Latin American countries. The projects range from identifying transmission risk factors to evaluating diagnostic tools and examining the use of prenatal counselling and contraceptives.

Social innovation is another type of TDR partnership. Social innovation engages communities in grassroots actions that can develop sustainable solutions. TDR

provided start-up funding to begin research into what works and what does not, through the new Social Innovation in Health Initiative.

This is a collaboration initiated with the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the University of Cape Town, the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at Oxford University, and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The partnership has been extended to research institutions in low and middle-income countries and to international organizations. The goal is to create new social innovation research hubs within this initiative, which are funded from a variety of sources.

These are just a few examples of how we are building on successful partnerships to improve the health of people in the most vulnerable situations. The principles and processes behind how we identify potential partnerships and conduct them can be found in our strategy, which has just been updated for 2018-23. I encourage you to find out more, and I’d be happy to discuss any ideas you have for new collaborations.

1 Garry Aslanyan is Deputy Editor-in-Chief and Manager of Partnerships and Governance at WHO’s Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR).
The Bangladeshi expatriate community in Switzerland participated in a voluntary blood donation program on 19 August 2017 at the Geneva University Hospital (HUG). The program, first ever of this kind arranged in Switzerland by the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh, was part of the commemoration of the 42nd Death Anniversary of the Father of Bengali Nation Bangabandhu Sheik Mujibur Rahman.

This undisputed leader of the liberation movement of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheik Mujibur Rahman was an ardent proponent of Bangali nationalism. His vision to attain democracy and freedom for his people inspired him to take part in every political movement in the fifties and sixties including the Language Movement in 1952, Jukta-Front elections of 1954, movement against Martial Law in 1958, Six-point movement in 1966, Mass Uprising of 1969 and the General Elections in 1970. Finally, on 26 March 1971, he declared Bangladesh’s independence in the face of mass atrocities perpetrated on the unarmed civilian population. This clarion call was heard far and wide throughout the country and beyond. Thus the War of Liberation started.

Because of the unique leadership he provided and the contribution he made to the cause of the Bangali nation and its independence, Sheikh Mujib is fondly remembered as “Bangabandhu” or “Friend of Bengal”. His brutal death at the hands of conspirators on 15 August 1975 is remembered by the whole nation every year on this day.

The nearly four thousand-strong expatriate Bangladeshi community and diaspora is spread over the length and breadth of Switzerland. Many of whom are working in various international organizations, Swiss Government and Private Offices as well as own or work in restaurants. In commemorating the spirit of service to the nation, the thought of ensuring the well-being and protecting the rights of the people which inspired the Father of the Nation, one cannot but be imbued with an attitude of giving. Living and prospering in this beautiful country Switzerland and being nurtured by its resources, the Bangladeshi expatriate community and diaspora would naturally avail any opportunity to be of service to the society at large.

The Permanent Mission of Bangladesh through this initiative sought to capture this spirit in organizing this voluntary blood donation program. No doubt, it kindled their humanitarian spirit in the city of International Red Cross and Red Crescent as they enthusiastically joined in. Hopefully, this will mark the beginning of a sense of sacrifice belonging and care, as well as readiness to respond to call at critical times in the service of humanity.

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**Another Human Rights perspective**

**ALFRED DE ZAYAS, UN INDEPENDENT EXPERT (UNHRC RETIRED)**

“Progressive” is an over-used adjective with many positive connotations. Now, does it always entail the promotion of progress? In contemporary “newspeak” the label progressive has mutated into an all-purpose tag to describe regression to the pre-civilized state of non-law, non-values, “anything goes”. Truly progressive politics imply socially-responsible strategies which make use of science and technology to advance the well-being of mankind. Yet, the label “progressive” is being used to imply acceptance of socially destructive practices, including legalized pornography, sex “education” of minors, easy access to soft- and hard-drugs, nudity, exhibitionism, voyeurism, promiscuity, adultery, same-sex marriage, and abortion ad libitum. Regression to Sodom and Gomorrah, Dionysian orgies, and paleolithic infanticide are currently promoted as a form of “liberation” from moral constraints in the name of “modernity” or even “progress”. Civilisation, however, is precisely the recognition that ethics, moderation, proportion and self-restraint are necessary: Μέτρον ἀρίστον.  

1 Ancien greek proverb, which means “Moderation is best”.

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**MD. ROBIUL ISLAM**

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Mrs Rebecca Mars
Email: rmars@swissschools.com
Tel: +41 21 966 47 28
WHO is renovating its headquarters campus, with a view to addressing the Organization’s changing needs, tackle urgent safety and important efficiency issues. A new work environment is underway.

VERONICA RIEMER, WHO

The current building designed by famed Swiss architect Jean Tschumi has housed the WHO Headquarters since 1966 and over the past 50 years the campus has been extended with additional annexes and buildings to accommodate the growing numbers of staff.

But the need for an infrastructure and environmental transformation was pressing. The management, operations, maintenance and cost of WHO’s headquarters campus are challenging in terms of human and financial resources, as well as energy and space. Today, approximately 2,700 WHO staff and consultants are based at the WHO Headquarters, and an estimated 18,000 people visit the campus every year. The way we work now has transformed dramatically since the building’s inauguration, so with a view to addressing the Organization’s changing needs, tackle urgent safety and important efficiency issues, and to bring the campus in line with Swiss environmental initiatives and norms, a new work environment is underway.

A ground-breaking ceremony was held on 8th June to mark the start of construction, with completion of the eight-floor building expected in 2021. Addressing the guests and representatives of partner organizations, including Mr. François Longchamp, President of the State Council of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, and Ambassador Valentin Zellweger, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, former Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan acknowledged the outstanding partnership of the Swiss authorities and their support in enabling this complex project.

She said “We’re upgrading our space to accommodate changes in our ways of working; meet modern standards for health, safety and well-being; support the environment; and eliminate operational inefficiencies. As we lift the first soil today, the future we are building looks like this. A harmonious campus, with four buildings instead of ten, all with practical workspaces that logically and coherently support our work”.

In studies conducted over the past five years, significant safety issues, including fire safety, were identified, and as responses to the Ebola crisis and other key events have shown, the ever-changing landscape of WHO’s work and needs requires a shift in how office space is used today and how flexible it can be for the future.

An architectural competition was announced in 2014 and in March 2015 a design called Yin Yang, by Zurich-based architectural firm Berrel Berrel Kräutler...
AG, was selected. The new building has been designed to offer maximum flexibility with a university campus in mind, rather than a standard office building. An atrium at the centre of the new building will provide daylight to the interior, as well as a view of the different floors. Meeting and office spaces – big or small, secluded or open, bright or shady – will each have a specific quality, such as natural light and interesting views.

It has been designed to work as one with the existing main building and will be fully accessible for people with disabilities. The heart of the campus will link both buildings and house a flexible conference facility, with four rooms that can each accommodate 100 people or that can be combined into a single area to provide space for 700 participants; a restaurant and an indoor/outdoor dining space, with seating capacity for 450 people and a large terrace; and several other spaces that can be used for different purposes, such as informal meetings. The green outdoor space will be much more accessible and integrated with the buildings. An enlarged Strategic Health Operations Centre (SHOC) will be housed in the new building, with a function to track and respond to rapidly evolving outbreaks and health emergencies.

WHO’s upgraded consolidated campus in Geneva will be composed of a total of four constructions: a new, state-of-the-art building that respectfully integrates with the iconic main building, the Executive Board room and the UNAIDS building. Together, these four buildings will create a balanced campus that will be energy efficient, conform to Swiss environmental and safety norms, and accommodate the same number of staff as are on-site today.

Scheduled for completion in 2024, the renovated campus will be highly sustainable, reducing energy consumption and costs. A significant reduction in CO₂ emissions is also projected. These modern, low-maintenance buildings will reduce the space needed for facility services, such as those used for handling air circulation, boilers and storage. The existing space allocated to these activities will be repurposed, for example, an expanded fitness and well-being facility will enable staff to continue to adopt a healthier lifestyle and enhance their personal effectiveness, as well as benefiting the organization’s performance in the future.

As a respectful and grateful guest of the Swiss Government, WHO has been responsive to Switzerland’s well-known sense of responsibility for protecting the environment. The WHO campus will be climate-friendly, using 100% renewable heating and cooling energy, thanks to the innovative GeniLac project, which uses hydrothermal energy. This is a project, pioneered by the city of Geneva, that reduces dependence on fossil fuels as a priority energy policy for a sustainable future. The campus is designed to be energy-efficient, reducing our consumption of heating energy by half and cutting building-related carbon dioxide emissions by an estimated 90%.

Breaking ground, lifting a first symbolic shovel of soil at the ceremony in June, Dr. Chan’s action made a statement about the importance of health to the world’s prosperity and security. As WHO contributes to our future for better health, at the same time it shows respect for our planet’s capacity to sustain human life in good health.
1990
Unification of the two states in the united Republic of Yemen, with Mr. Saleh as president.

1992
Food price riots in major towns.
December - First known al-Qaeda attack in Yemen.

1993
April – Coalition government is formed.

1994
May – President Saleh declares a state of emergency as former armies square off on the old border.
May-July – Vice-President Al-Baid declares the independence of the Democratic Republic of Yemen.

2000
October – Suicide attack on destroyer USS Cole in Aden.

2002
February – Yemen expels more than 100 foreign Islamic clerics in crackdown on al-Qaeda.

2004
September – Government says its forces have killed dissident cleric Hussein al-Houthi, the leader of a revolt in the north.

2005
March-April – More than 200 people are killed in a resurgence of fighting between government forces and supporters of the slain rebel cleric Hussein al-Houthi.

2006
September - President Saleh is elected for another term.

2007
January-March - Scores are killed or wounded in clashes between security forces and al-Houthi rebels in the north.
June - Rebel leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi accepts a ceasefire.

2008
January - Renewed clashes between security forces and rebels loyal to Abdul-Malik al-Houthi.
March-April – Series of bomb attacks on police, official, diplomatic, foreign business and tourism targets.
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2009
January – Saudi and Yemeni Al-Qaeda branches merge to form Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).
December - ‘Underwear bomber’ Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab tries to down US airliner in plot claimed by AQAP.

2010
February – Government signs ceasefire with Al-Houthi rebels, which lasted until December.
October - Global terror alert after packages containing explosives originating in Yemen are intercepted on cargo planes bound for the US.

2011
January - Tunisian street protests encourage similar demonstrations in other countries, including Yemen. President Saleh pledges not to extend his presidency in 2013.
May - AQAP takes control of southern city of Zinjibar.
September - US-born Al-Qaeda leader Anwar al-Awlaki is assassinated by US forces.
June - After months of mounting protests, President Saleh is injured in rocket attack and flown to Saudi Arabia, returning home in September.

November - President Saleh agrees to hand over power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. Unity government including prime minister from opposition formed.

2012
February – President Hadi is sworn in; on the same day, a suicide attack on presidential palace, claimed by AQAP, kills 26 Republican Guards
May - 96 soldiers are killed by a suicide bomber in Sanaa. AQAP claims the attack.
June - Army retakes Zinjibar from AQAP after month-long offensive.

2014
January - National Dialogue Conference winds up after ten months of deliberation, agreeing a document on which the new constitution will be based.
August - President Hadi sacks his cabinet and overturns a controversial fuel price rise following two weeks of anti-government protests in which Houthi rebels are heavily involved.

September - Houthi rebels take control of the most of capital Sanaa.

2015
January - Houthis reject draft constitution proposed by government.
February - Houthis appoint presidential council to replace President Hadi, who flees to Aden southern stronghold.
March - Islamic State carries out its first major attacks inside Yemen - two suicide bombings targeting Shia mosques in Sanaa in which 137 people are killed.
September - President Hadi returns to Aden after Saudi-backed government forces recapture the port city from Houthi forces and launch advance on Aden.

2016
April - Start of UN-sponsored talks between the government on one side and Houthis and former President Saleh’s General People’s Congress (GPC) on the other.
October - Airstrike by Saudi-led coalition hits a crowded funeral in Sanaa, killing 140 mourners and injuring 500.

2017
May - Houthis continue firing missiles into Saudi Arabia, claiming to have fired one at the capital Riyadh.
July – WHO says 1,500 people have died as a result of a cholera outbreak.
La CFPI: organe technique ou régime totalitaire?

Les milliers de fonctionnaires qui ont dit non à la baisse de salaire ont finalement eu gain de cause et le masque que portait la Commission de la fonction publique internationale (CFPI) est tombé...

PRISCA CHAOUI, ONUG
La session tant attendue de la CFPI s’est tenue du 10 au 21 juillet à Vienne, pour discuter des différents points qui étaient à son ordre du jour, dont la baisse des salaires des fonctionnaires de la catégorie professionnelle et supérieure à Genève. Cette baisse de plus de 7,5% avait été décidée suite à l’enquête sur le coût de la vie qu’avait menée la commission au mois de novembre 2016.
La baisse a été décriée par les fonctionnaires et par les administrations des organisations qui les emploient. Rassemblements, manifestations, assemblées extraordinaires et enfin une pétition signée par plus de 10000 fonctionnaires et un arrêt de travail ont marqué la campagne menée par les syndicats du personnel depuis que la nouvelle des baisses est tombée comme un couperet.

À Vienne, les syndicats du personnel s’attendaient à ce que la commission reconnaisse les incohérences commises dans l’analyse des données statistiques relevées lors de l’enquête. Ces incohérences avaient été mises en avant par une équipe de trois experts statisticiens qui avaient revu lesdites données. L’examen des données, qui en temps normal aurait exigé plus de trois semaines de travail, s’est fait en trois jours et a relevé plus de 51 erreurs. Si ces erreurs n’avaient pas été commises, la baisse n’aurait jamais dû dépasser les 2%. Mais, à quoi bon admettre les erreurs et les corriger pour un organe qui semble au-dessus de tout?

En effet, au grand dam de tout le monde, la commission n’a pas voulu reconnaître les erreurs commises, ni répondre aux requêtes des syndicats qui se résumaient en trois points principaux, à savoir réintroduire la mesure palliative : ou gap closure measure de 5% (supprimée après la révision de la méthodologie en 2015), réexaminer les calculs et la méthodologie qui ont mené à la baisse et enfin geler les salaires jusqu’à ce que le réexamen soit parachevé. Tout comme un régime totalitaire, la commission a préféré faire fi de toutes ces demandes et a décidé de son propre chef, d’introduire une « marge » de 3% à l’index d’ajustement de poste. Elle a par ailleurs décidé de reporter la mise en œuvre de la baisse de salaire jusqu’en février 2018 pour les fonctionnaires déjà employés (au lieu d’août 2018) et de revoir sa méthodologie. Cette décision, couplée d’une augmentation des salaires de la fonction publique fédérale américaine sur laquelle le salaire de la catégorie professionnelle est fixé, va certes considérablement réduire la baisse initialement prévue. À première vue, cela constitue une victoire pour les milliers de fonctionnaires qui se sont mobilisés aux côtés de leurs employeurs pour lutter contre cette baisse.

Toutefois, le caractère arbitraire de la décision est préoccupant à maints égards et démontre que la commission qui est censée être un organe technique, est au bout du compte un organe capricieux qui prend des décisions sans fondement.

Le temps n’est-il pas venu de se débarrasser de cet organe en qui les fonctionnaires n’ont plus confiance? Je pense que la réponse est oui. Les 120000 fonctionnaires dont les salaires dépendent de la commission, méritent mieux que cela. Ils méritent respect et reconnaissance pour leur dévouement au système de l’ONU et la commission est malheureusement loin d’être l’organe qui pourra les récompenser à leur juste valeur. Il est certain que pour les syndicats du personnel, la campagne n’est pas finie. Emprunter la voie juridique et réviser la méthodologie, tels sont les prochains défis que les fonctionnaires devront relever ensemble. ■
What happened at this year’s meeting of the pension fund’s board

Our pension fund is worth over $60 billion. But is it well-managed and can it continue to guarantee a secure retirement? The UN’s participant representatives report back from this year’s board meeting in Vienna.

MARY ABU RAKABEH, IBRAHIMA FAYE, AISSATOU NDEYE NDIAYE, BERNADETTE NYIRATUNGA, IAN RICHARDS, MICHELLE ROCKCLIFFE, UN PARTICIPANT REPRESENTATIVES

The annual meeting of the UN Pension Board recently concluded and we would like to inform you of the outcome. It is important to know that UN staff representatives numbered 4 of the 33 board members. In addition, a statement by the staff federations is attached.

Negative audit reports

The Board considered a number of audit reports from OIOS and the Board of Auditors. Some were quite damning, raising among other things non-cooperation by the Fund’s management with auditors, incorrect figures supplied to the actuaries resulting in the actuarial report having to be dropped, and false information provided to UN staff on the size of the payment backlog.
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A family of pensioners meet to share a moment in Switzerland

Extension of the CEO
In view of the above, and taking into account the serious payment backlog, lack of contingency planning and poor staff-management relations at the fund, we worked with others on the Board for the non-renewal of CEO Sergio Arvizu for another five years. The reduction to three years of the second term, with no possibility of renewal, installation of special oversight measures, a search committee to find a successor and a limit on the CEO’s ability to start new projects without Board approval, is the result of a long and difficult session. It nevertheless sends a strong signal. However, the Board’s decision on renewal is only a recommendation to the Secretary-General who alone must make the final decision.

Budget
The Board approved a large increase in the budget of the Fund’s secretariat, with new posts mainly at the top levels. We made clear our reservations about a budget increase we found to be irresponsible, especially as these posts are paid for by you and will eat into the fund’s future financial position. This will now be decided by the General Assembly in the fall.

Long-term sustainability
The Fund faces an environment in which lower investment returns and a growing budget are paired with an increasing ratio of beneficiaries to contributors and an increasing ratio of non-staff to staff. This fundamental issue was not discussed even though we consider it the most important challenge for the fund right now. We hope to get this on next year’s agenda.

Attempts by the CEO to prevent elected board members from attending: Two staff representatives from the UN were prevented from attending the Board despite 4,600 of you signing a petition. The CEO cited conflict of interest. We are not convinced. Nor did the Secretary-General appear to be in last week’s town hall meeting. The matter is currently at the UN Appeals Tribunal.

Monitoring and follow-up
In order to contribute to the monitoring and follow-up of the Fund between Board meetings we were pleased that one of us was elected to the Audit Committee and another as second Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee.

In conclusion
This was our first year at the board meeting during which we worked closely with other board members.

However, we do feel that in the future, Board members must pay more attention to issues of sustainability, governance and management of liabilities. Further, there is an important lack of expertise in areas of finance and management that needs to be corrected.

We also question the ability of a board composed of 33 members and an almost equal number of alternates, all meeting only once a year for five days, to properly oversee the ongoing operations of a complex fund with $60 billion in assets and obligations to 200,000 beneficiaries and contributors. This isn’t without risk and we have suggested more frequent Standing Committee meetings which would place the Board in a better position to exercise its responsibilities on a more regular and sustained basis. We have much to work on.

We will continue to keep you updated and thank you for your trust and support. We will continue to advocate on your behalf.
An interview with Professor Otto Cars

Antibiotic Resistance

This interview aims to clarify the present situation of Antibiotic Resistance (AMR) as perceived by Professor Otto Cars’, Senior Advisor for ReAct, an independent global network for concerted action on AMR that collaborates with many organizations, including WHO.

Could you please describe what AMR is?
Resistance to all antimicrobial agents can develop, but of particular concern is resistance to antibiotics, which are essential medicines for the treatment of bacterial infections (pneumonia, wound infections, etc.). AMR is a natural evolutionary phenomenon. The human body has millions of bacteria (1.5-2 kilograms). Some of these undergo changes in their genetic material by spontaneous mutation resulting in AMR. When bacteria are exposed to antibiotics, these resistant bacteria have an advantage and eventually grow and propagate. As long as we are using antibiotics, bacteria will always find ways to overcome them. So we will constantly require new drugs for treatment. We received the last class of antibiotics in 1987 and with few drugs in the pipeline, the pharmaceutical industry and medical chemists are struggling with AMR. We require new resources for the development of new drugs and strong determination to preserve the drugs we already have.

What are the present challenges for ReAct?
Although global awareness of the AMR crisis has improved significantly in recent years, knowledge about the nature of AMR and its medical and economic consequences is a primary barrier that still needs to be overcome. AMR does not have a face like TB, HIV or malaria and therefore has generated far fewer resources e.g. within WHO and among donors. All health systems, even the weakest, are dependent on effective antibiotics and the actions on AMR need to be seen as an important part of the strengthening of health systems. Moreover, new incentive structures for the development of new, effective antibiotics that are accessible and affordable for all is required. Massive promotions and unregulated sales in countries must be stopped. The system needs to be changed through strong political commitment.

What motivates you?
We are in a real crisis due to decades of ignorance and complacency. My driving force has been concerns for the coming generation and, particularly for me, my eight grandchildren. The strong political commitment from Sweden on the issue, including support to ReAct, has been very encouraging. In September 2016, this issue reached the General Assembly of the United Nations where Member States agreed on a political declaration. There is hope for a global commitment as long as the policy makers, politicians and world leaders understand the dimensions of the crisis.

Would you like to share any recent interesting statistics related to AMR?
In Sweden, antibiotic use is among the lowest in the world, with low AMR. Located in the north of the world, we have good systems, but a concern is travel and trade. One striking
example is a recent PhD study that shows an alarmingly high level of ESBL (Extended spectrum beta lactamase), which has risen from 3-4% in 2010 to 20% in recent times in fecal samples taken from children.

Who are the key players in efforts to fight AMR?
It took a while to start global efforts, but they were the driving force behind the establishment of ReAct. Now there is a global action plan, adopted by all WHO Member States in 2015, with greater momentum and a commitment from all nations. Governments are clearly responsible at the national level to secure access to antibiotics. Low and middle-income countries (LMIC) will need time and support and assistance from high-income countries. The health system requires the distribution of essential medicines and the prevention of over consumption whilst ensuring sufficient access. This issue at the UN level gives hope. It is an enormous global problem, but we have no global fund for AMR like the one we have for TB, malaria or HIV.

Which countries are doing well with AMR? Do you see any flashes of light?
There are flashes of light all the time especially the engagement of many LMICs such as Ghana. Most countries have experts who are fully aware of the complexities of this problem from their contexts, e.g. hospitals or research labs. Governments can identify these experts and provide funding for cost effective interventions. The EU, although a strong international player in AMR, still has a lot left to do. Sweden adopted a national target for antibiotic prescription of not more than 250 prescriptions per 1,000 patients per year based on good epidemiological evidence and research.

How can the general population assist or can we use media?
I think this is a great question. The EU started with the European Antibiotic Awareness Day that has moved to Global Antibiotic Awareness Week. We need to move forward using communicative tools like social media. The Awareness Week is fine, but much more can be done involving young people and innovative messages. The issue is as big as that of climate change and we need to build a global movement. We share the problem, the resources and the responsibility to deal with it as human beings. I think the challenge is that AMR is very technical and the discussion is very confined within groups and preaching to the already converted does not really reach out. We need to involve more experts from anthropology and behavioral sciences to change deep-rooted misperceptions and cultural beliefs.

1 Professor Otto Cars, Former Head of the Department of Infectious Diseases, Uppsala University Hospital, Former Lead of Swedish Strategic Programme Against Antibiotic Resistance, Senior Advisor for ReAct, Member of newly formed UN Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance, Winner of H.M. The King’s Medal.

2 The interviewer, Dr. Md Anwarul Quadir, MBBS (Dhaka University), MSc. in Public Health (Karolinska Institute, Sweden), Former Intern in the Secretariat of Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, WHO, developed a keen interest in AMR further to a lecture delivered by Professor Otto Cars at Karolinska Institute, Sweden.
Keeping people safe and secure from health threats

Dr. Rodier\(^1\) is the architect of the IHR, an international law that deals with the international spread of diseases and public health risks. We talked about the impact over the last ten years and the future of the Regulations.

\(^1\)Dr Guénaël Rodier, Director of WHO’s Department of Country Health Emergency Preparedness and International Health Regulations.

The IHR have been in force since 2007. What difference have they made and why are they important for public health?

The entry into force of the revised Regulations was a revolution in public health. It introduced many new concepts, such as changing the idea that outbreaks always come from other countries when outbreaks can actually emerge in YOUR own country. For example, the variant of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD, also referred to as “mad cow disease”), emerged in the UK and not in a developing country. Therefore it is important for humanity to come together to agree on and coordinate the response to outbreaks and epidemics which must be contained not only at borders, but also at source. We now have a renewed and legally-binding instrument to detect, report, investigate and respond to emergencies globally.

Another major change is that we have moved away from a list of diseases, to procedures for international alert and coordination for all situations, including those where we have no advance knowledge such as emerging diseases. We are requiring countries to notify WHO of a problem in context. For example, cholera in an endemic country in sub-Saharan Africa is not that unusual, but a cholera outbreak in Geneva would be the sign that something new is occurring.

Another important new concept is that of compliance with public health measures...
at borders and for travellers. Countries can apply additional health measures, but they must provide a rationale. These may vary from one country to another – a Pacific island state may rightly have a different approach to a particular event than a land-locked country, but for each measure, a justification is required.

Furthermore, we introduced human rights into the Regulations, ensuring people cannot be placed in quarantine without providing appropriate accommodation, food and beverages.

When the original Regulations were discussed, the international spread of disease was through the maritime route. Due to the length of the journey, passengers would often develop disease symptoms before arriving at the port, or were placed in a short quarantine to detect cases and avoid international spread. But now the vast majority of the spread is through air travel, which is much faster. According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) there are now four billion travellers every year, many of whom appear healthy, but who could be carrying a disease which is incubating and may only show symptoms hours or even days after arriving at their destination. At this point they have been in touch with hundreds of people, which is hugely challenging for detecting, containing and treating diseases.

Can you give some examples of how the revised IHR have made a difference in the past ten years with regard to specific health emergencies? The Regulations provide a framework for the sharing of information and the coordination of an international response. It is rather like traffic regulations, the simple fact that you have them helps you to coordinate traffic and avoid accidents.

We have also engaged the support of international, external experts who come together when the WHO Director-General decides on the need for an Emergency Committee to provide advice and to determine whether or not an event constitutes a “public health emergency of international concern” (PHEIC).

In 2009, in response to the outbreak of the Influenza A (H1N1) virus, we convened our first Emergency Committee meeting, resulting in the declaring of a PHEIC. The pandemic was actually addressed under the IHR framework. Countries wishing to go their own way understood that they had made a commitment to the Regulations and therefore to the recommendations of the WHO Director-General. When you have a battle against the microbial world, you need one general leading and not 196 countries making their own decisions.

A similar situation occurred during the Zika virus outbreak. Despite differing opinions, in the end everyone agreed that a mandate had been given to WHO and its Director-General to coordinate and guide the international response. For example, there was much pressure for WHO to support the cancellation of the summer Olympics in Brazil, on public health grounds. However, the IHR Zika Emergency Committee, together with WHO Secretariat and the Director-General, concurred that there was no evidence to suggest cancelling the games for public health reasons. Thanks to a number of measures taken by the Brazilian health authorities supported by WHO, the Olympics

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went ahead with a successful outcome. Moreover, a key objective of the IHR is to avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.

**How would you say the Regulations affect the day-to-day work of public health professionals and WHO?**

We feel that the Regulations could be much more effective in the work of public health professionals if they were more widely known. It is like drivers ignoring traffic regulations: our job is to ensure that the IHR are better known, understood and applied.

There is always a high turnover of people in ministries of health and public health institutions and many are not aware of the Regulations. In addition to this, the effective implementation of the IHR requires engagement across many sectors of government such as the veterinary sector, for animal to human disease transmission; the transport sector which is negatively hit by health emergencies and is so important for deploying people and materials to respond to an event; and the security sector, such as military health hospitals providing laboratories to the affected country for addressing public health emergencies, particularly chemical and nuclear events.

Public health events can have a huge negative economic impact, so adhering to the Regulations is good for public health, the economy and business, as well as for reducing human suffering and loss.

**What do you see as the main challenges for IHR implementation over the next 5 to 10 years?**

The main challenge is the lack of a global workforce with a thorough understanding of field and intervention epidemiology. These are people who understand how to detect, investigate, document and respond to infectious disease outbreaks.

We saw this with the recent Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) outbreak in the Republic of Korea which occurred in a modern hospital and similarly with the Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreaks in 2003 in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Toronto. We are not dealing with developing country infrastructure, but we are dealing with people unfamiliar with infectious disease or infection prevention and control.

The same applies for chemical and radio nuclear events, for which we do not have a sufficient number of skilled personnel. A major investment is therefore required to provide training in human resources for global health security.

Additionally, western societies have lost the culture of hygiene and infection control (e.g. washing hands, coughing away etc.) which used to exist at the beginning of the 20th century when diseases such as tuberculosis were much more common. At that time people were conscious of germs, but now people believe that with antibiotics and vaccines they are protected. But antibiotics are losing strength because of antimicrobial resistance and vaccines cannot be developed as for reducing human suffering and loss.

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Many issues need to be addressed as the world changes rapidly: aging populations with decreased immunity, changes of behaviour in urban environments, population movement across borders, changes in diet etc. as well as the issue of massive and rapid transportation at the international scale (not just among neighbouring countries). These, I believe are going to be changes in the coming decades that will have a direct impact on global health security.

1 Dr. Rodier is the modern architect of the International Health Regulations (IHR), an international law that is legally-binding for 196 countries and deals with the international spread of diseases and other public health risks. These Regulations were adopted by the World Health Assembly on 23 May 2005 and entered into force for most countries on 15 June 2007. This year marks the tenth anniversary of this agreement. We talked to Dr. Rodier about the impact over the last ten years and the future of the Regulations.
MEG

European Museum of the Year

The Musée d’Ethnographie de Genève (MEG), a magnificent museum recompensed this year by the prestigious European Museum of the Year Award – EMYA 2017.

SARAH JORDAN, DEPUTY EDITOR

In my article in UN Special number 745 at the end of 2014 announcing the re-opening of the Musée d’Ethnographie de Genève (MEG) further to its extension and renovation, I described it as “magnificent”. I haven’t changed my mind and am therefore delighted to see it recompensed this year by the prestigious European Museum of the Year Award – EMYA 2017. I encourage readers to visit or re-visit this treasure trove on our doorstep.

To quote Director Boris Wastiau speaking at the EMYA 2017 awards ceremony in Zagreb, Croatia in May: “The MEG’s success is that of a museum which, in its desire to be cosmopolitan, relates to everyone, whatever their culture... we together build and develop the shared values of openness, respect and benevolence, as well as the will to learn and know about the diversity of societies, arts and cultures.”

As UN staff members, these words are particularly relevant to us. The MEG is a museum that celebrates multiculturalism with an interdisciplinary and unbiased approach. “Let the...
objects speak for themselves” is its leitmotiv.

In early August in Geneva, it was very hot. On the afternoon, I went to visit the museum’s temporary exhibition “The Aboriginal Arts of Australia – the Boomerang Effect”, it was 36 degrees in fact! But I couldn’t have chosen a better day. In the air-conditioned underground exhibition space there was no one and I could take my time to take in a profoundly touching presentation of objects that is both visually stunning and intellectually challenging.

What does a boomerang do? You don’t need to be an Aussie to be able to answer that question – it spins back to its point of departure! I soon understood that the boomerang symbolizes the message of this exhibition – attempts to crush Aboriginal culture from the 18th century onwards have backfired and had the opposite of the desired effect. Indigenous Australians have strengthened their identity and demands and today display unprecedented creativity. Since the second half of the 20th century, their art has even become a tool for political struggle.

The exhibition is in four parts and like a good book, it constantly draws the visitor into a dialogue, provoking questions, setting you thinking and leaving you curious to know more.

The exhibition space is reminiscent of an art gallery. At the entrance to Part 1 is a painting entitled “Undiscovered”, by Michael Cook. The captain standing in front of his galleon is not James Cook, who laid claim to Australia for the British crown in 1770, but an Aborigine. It asks the question “what would have happened if the colonizers had been able to see Australia through the eyes of its first inhabitants?” Can you “discover” a country in which populations have lived for 60,000 years and ignore its culture? Was Australia in the 18th century an “empty land” (the colonial perspective), or a “full land” (the indigenous perspective)? Thus opens the debate. In this first room, there is a second work by Michael Cook, “Mother” – six photos in which a very young and lost looking mother is portrayed in a deserted Australian landscape surrounded by the paraphernalia habitually associated with children: an empty pram, toys, a roundabout – but no child in sight. This work dating from 2016 and composed of a total of 13 photos refers to a painful period in Australian history, which lasted almost a century until the late 1960s: Stolen Generations. More than 50,000 mixed-race children were forcibly taken from their parents by the Australian government and placed in orphanages, Christian missions and with white foster parents. It was only in 2008 that the Australian Prime Minister made an official apology to the Aborigine people for this injustice. In Michael Cook’s words, this series of six photos represents indigenous people’s “loves, longings and losses”.

Part 2 of the exhibition presents a selection of the 850 works in the MEG’s Aboriginal art collection and traces their acquisition, paying particular
attention to the evolution in how the collectors saw each of these objects. When the first objects arrived in Geneva in 1880, the Aboriginal people were considered by scientists as “primitive”, yet in the late 20th century their creations entered the contemporary art market. In the centre of the room is the first of two installations by Australian artist Brook Andrew of indigenous Wiradjuri (New South Wales) and Scottish descent – artist in residence for the duration of this exhibition. It examines the same period of history from the Aboriginal Australian perspective – depicting people in their real life contexts when these collectors were gathering their objects for museums. The contrast between how these people were in reality and how they were perceived by supposedly “civilized” people is enlightening... and disturbing.

Part 3 is a celebration of indigenous art since collectors first began collecting. Through works produced both for internal use and for the art market, it tells us about the history of their creators, their view of the world and their ceremonial life; in a nutshell, what matters to them. One of the most contemporary exhibits features ghost-net art, developed by the Torres Strait Islanders. In the north of Australia, thousands of drifting nets from industrial fishing ensnare and cause the death of numerous marine animals. In reusing these nets, artists draw attention to endangered species and to the cause of oceanographic pollution.

Part 4 presents a second installation by Brook Andrew. This immersive experience takes the visitor into a space surrounded by black and white murals – a contemporary rendering of traditional tree carvings of the Aboriginal people of New South Wales. The artist questions ethnocentric attitudes towards indigenous peoples and shows that the dominant narratives are often misinterpretations. Video interviews with Aboriginal representatives and experts offer a range of different points of view on cultural and religious issues. Museums are also brought into this “dialogue” with Brook Andrew challenging the normal modes of museum display and the protocols to be followed when dealing with the Indigenous Australian cultural heritage.

This exhibition runs until 7 January 2018 and comes highly recommended.

Further details: www.meg-geneve.ch
Cycling for knowledge
Cyclo-Biblio at the Palais

Cyclo-Biblio, a great opportunity for the cycling librarians to discover an amazingly rich and diverse collection of the UN Library at Geneva.

CRISTINA GIORDANO, UN LIBRARY
The day is 19 June 2017; it is hot and sunny. It is a Monday and the beginning of an extraordinary heat wave in Geneva.

Around noon, UN Security officers open the gate known as “La Fenêtre”, an entrance to the UN compound that is usually closed, to let in a colourful group of cyclists in yellow and orange vests. They arrive in small groups, climbing the Route de Pregny under the sun. After the compulsory identity checks, these unusual visitors get on their bikes and ride through the Ariana Park, escorted by a Security Land Rover, watched from above by the UN drone.

Ringing their bells, they make a joyful entrance into the parking lot in front of the building of the UN Library. Mr. Pisano, the Chief Librarian, comes to greet them, he too on his bike. Colleagues from UNCTAD, UNECE, ITC, IBE and various UN entities also join in the welcome. After parking their bikes, the group quickly spreads on the nearby lawn and forms a circle around the fountain of the Armillary Sphere, waving at the drone that keeps flying around, filming and taking pictures.

Who are these special guests? Diplomats supporting the cause of sport and slow mobility? In a way, yes, they are ambassadors, but of a special kind. They come from different European countries. Most of them are from France; many are from Switzerland, but also from Belgium, Spain and Finland. They are all professional librarians and they are on an advocacy tour called “Cyclo-Biblio”. According to the definition of the organizer, the dynamic Lara Jovignot, of the Lausanne Municipal Library, “Cyclo-Biblio is a librarians’ conference on bikes”. The initiative originated in Finland, where the concept was developed in 2011 as “Cycling for Libraries”. Lara Jovignot
liked the idea so much that she decided to import it into the world of French-speaking libraries. This year Cyclo-Biblio celebrates its fourth edition with a tour of the Leman Lake. Lara has organized three of its four editions. The 2017 programme includes the visit of 21 libraries and almost 300 kilometres of road over one week (18-24 June 2017). More than 70 people are taking part, and the waiting list was much longer.

But why do so many librarians feel the need to take the road and go to such an effort?

“Ten years ago”, says Antoine Torrens, one of the participants and vice-president of CFIBD, the International French Committee of Libraries and Documentation, “we were not even sure that libraries would survive. Nowadays we know they will, but we need to figure out how they will change and adapt to the new realities”. Biking is an original way to meet colleagues, users, local administrators, maybe even politicians, in order to explain that “libraries are not only about books”, stress their role and importance, exchange professional experiences, share best practices, and learn from each other. It changes the way librarians are perceived and draws the public’s attention to their role as dynamic innovators.

Lara herself is a perfect example of this: a former UN Library intern, she has left her very own mark on the institution by creating the first online resource guide ever (on disarmament) and teaching her colleagues how to make more.

No wonder she decided to include the UN Library in the Cyclo-Biblio tour this year. It is a great opportunity for the cycling librarians to discover an amazingly rich and diverse collection, which includes: the League of Nations’ unique archives, UN documents going back to the very beginning of the organization, rare books such as the first edition of Montesquieu’s “The spirit of the laws”, official documents from most countries of the world, books on international law and economics, treaties and constitutions, but also databases, e-books, online resource guides… Let’s face it, you do not often see such a complete specialized collection, with a time coverage exceeding more than one century. Is there a better place to learn about the challenges ahead?

The UN Sustainable Development Goals, also known as Agenda 2030, are the topic of Mr. Pisano’s presentation to the cycling librarians. In particular, he stresses how the 17 goals and 169 targets for a better world are interrelated and the importance that knowledge plays in their implementation.

“Never before has knowledge been such a vital asset for the international community”, he says, “In an era of accelerated technological change, great opportunities present themselves at a fast pace and humankind needs knowledge to make wise choices. The knowledge accumulated by the UN system in 70 years of multilateral policy making and action is fundamental for the success of Agenda 2030.” How can librarians fit in this ambitious plan?

“Our Library, together with other UN libraries and resource centers,” Mr. Pisano continues, “has a central role in mobilizing this knowledge by making it discoverable and shared in countries engaged in realizing the SDGs. That’s why we have started categorizing our resources in a way that facilitates the sharing of knowledge in support of Agenda 2030 and other global policy frameworks that will shape the world for future generations.”

Ms. Ruth Hahn-Weinert, Chief, Library Services, gives more details, presenting two concrete examples of the engagement of the Library in favour of the SDGs: the creation of a new resource guide, totally free on the Internet, that embraces conceptually and substantively the full sustainable development agenda captured in the 17 SDGs. The Library team has curated knowledge assets in categories matching the 17 SDGs to point researchers to UN and non-UN resources. The Library also took part in the Geneva Hackathon 2017, an event of a new kind, where technology is used to mine for information and to create new meaningful relations among data.

The cycling librarians listen with attention. It would be nice if the conversation could evolve into a questions and answers session, but time flies, our guests have to get back on their bikes and continue their tour (destination for the day: Coppet).

“The UN Library has been the longest stop in our tour”, says Lara.

For a good reason, we think. We have so much to offer and we are happy to share it with our colleagues. We hope they will keep a special memory of their visit and they will spread the news that our Library is there to promote research and knowledge at a high level, but at the same time, it is open and welcoming to everyone, according to the noblest ideals of our Organization.
Would you pay 100 CHF for a cup of freshly brewed gourmet coffee?

The latest trend making its way to your nearest coffee house boasts an unconventional origin. And a hefty price tag.

ALEXANDRA THACKER¹, GEMMA VESTAL, WHO

Kopi luwak or civet coffee, as it’s more commonly known, is a rich flavoured artisanal coffee harvested from the partly digested coffee cherries found in the excrement of Asian palm civets.

Now available to buy at your earliest convenience

A combination of its scarcity, originality and unusual manufacturing process all contribute to its elevated selling price. Depending on the grade and branding of the kopi luwak, a cup of the brewed coffee can cost upwards of 35 CHF, extending to 100 CHF in coffee shops in the USA. A speciality range of Vietnamese “weasel” coffee exists, which is sold at 3,000 CHF per Kilo. However, the price can considerably vary with regards to the country of purchase. Exported kopi luwak to Europe and North America is subject to inflated prices whilst local civet coffee bought in Indonesia, Vietnam, Sumatra and the Philippines can be enjoyed at much reduced prices, seeing as it is a local delicacy there.

However, the exorbitant price tag can be justified. Firstly, as previously mentioned, civet coffee is rare. Only around 5,000 pounds of legitimate civet-digested coffee berries can be harvested in the jungles of the producing countries each year. It is not due to a lack of Asian palm civet waste that this coffee is scarce; rather, collection of the fresh droppings within several hours of excretion is the arduous task. If the digested coffee is not harvested within these few hours, it can start to decompose naturally and no longer be able to yield its...
renowned flavour and character during roasting.

Another factor that may dictate the going rate for the kopi is the need for hand foraging to gather the coffee. Given the elusive nature of these toddy cats, despite there being flourishing populations in many South East Asian countries, collecting the coffee cherries requires rigorous hunting by skilled gatherers in obscure corners of forests and jungles. However, this extra time and effort needed pays off in the unique flavour profile of the coffee.

But what gives civet coffee the distinctive flavour that people are so willing to splash out for? The passing of the coffee cherries through the civet’s digestion system is more than just a novelty fact. In this way, the coffee adopts some of its distinguishing taste. A civet will choose only the ripest berries from a coffee plant and ingest the whole fruit. This selection of only high quality coffee berries is also a determining factor in civet coffee’s superior flavour. Contained within these berries are important indigestible beans, which are the coffee beans. The pulp around the beans will be digested whilst the beans themselves will remain intact and travel unharmed through the rest of the system. Exposure to a variety of enzymes and digestive juices commences the fermentation process these gourmet beans must undergo to become kopi luwak. This process develops and enhances the beans’ characteristic flavour and after a sufficient period of fermentation, these beans are promptly expelled. Farmers who are lucky enough to come across fresh samples of these can collect them for further processing.

What follows is a series of washing, cleaning, drying, de-hulling and then finally the all-important roasting. Like for all regular coffee beans, the roasting section of coffee production is crucial for the success of the coffee. Beans roasted at the source of harvest have been said to produce more intense flavours than kopi luwak beans that have been exported and roasted elsewhere. This could be mainly due to the different freshness of the beans before roasting; nonetheless all civet coffees exhibit the same trademark flavour. However, civet coffee is partially matured, having already gone through an organic fermentation process previously, so the roasting segment completes this coffee’s journey to becoming the famous drink.

Only the best quality coffee will do

Ironically, these civets used to be targeted by farmers and killed in order to prevent them from consuming the coffee fruit of South East Asian plantations, notably in the Philippines. Now, they are revered for doing so. Once it was realised that palm civet-digested coffee beans were more valuable than regular harvested coffee, these luwaks were saved from further harm. Consequently, these civets have gone from one extreme to another, from being hunted and killed to now being seized and enslaved.

It should be said that in order to enjoy the full experience of civet coffee, the source of the coffee must be taken into consideration. Although most civet coffee comes from certified and reputable providers, you should stay vigilant about coffee sourced from farms that capture and encage Asian palm civets under inhumane conditions. These captured civets are force-fed a diet containing only coffee cherries, and not allowed to roam free and choose the ripest fruit or any other food. Caged civets also suffer through a lower quality of life in their restrictive cages, whilst their wild counterparts have natural freedom to wander as they should. This extreme difference in their living situations causes a variance in the quality of the coffee. We should ensure that we drink only the genuine ethically and sustainably produced civet coffee in order to be responsible consumers.

Before you close your mind to trying this coffee due to reservations about its origins and price, try the unfamiliar and expand your gastronomic comfort zone. Having had the opportunity to taste and compare this remarkable kopi luwak with the standard variety during a visit to Bali, we can say the difference in taste is remarkable. Kopi luwak is definitely worth trying at least once.

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Interns pass Baton at Alumni Gathering

What do a German, a Peruvian and a French intern all have in common? The answer? All three have worked on the International Trade Centre’s new 2018-2021 strategy. First, Andreas, then Maria Jose, and now Sara have brought their diverse expertise and innovative ideas to ITC’s Strategic Planning and Partnerships team.

Although from very different backgrounds, these former and current interns came to ITC motivated by their desire to contribute to ITC’s goal of improving the international competitiveness of MSMEs in least developed countries. “My experience in ITC has allowed me to understand how a leading international organization works and how I can help them achieve their objectives”, stated Maria Jose.

“The great experience of this internship solidified my ambitions to get active in the development field, hence, the decision to pursue the masters in development economics I am now studying”, said Andreas. More than 7500 interns have passed through ITC since its creation. ITC is committed to making sure internships are equally beneficial for both parties. Andreas, Maria Jose, and Sara are an example of the growing ITC external network, pursuing trade routes to 2030.

Andreas Fiebelkorn (Germany)
Andreas is currently working on a feasibility study of an Impact Evaluation of a rural housing program in Burkina Faso as part of his thesis of the Master in International Economics at UPEC University in Paris. Before ITC, Andreas was an IT-Assistant in an engineering factory (JWFroehlich GmbH), and an assistant sales manager in a trading company (Kaechele GmbH) and fulfilled an internship in GIZ and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Maria Jose Meza-Cuadra (Peru)
Maria Jose is Fulbright scholar currently studying a Masters in Public Administration at Columbia University. Maria Jose started her professional career in the two leading management-consulting firms in Peru, and later, she worked as a journalist in the main business and economics magazine in Peru. Then, Maria Jose took the lessons she learned from the private sector to the Peruvian Ministry of Education. Here, amongst other achievements, she led the implementation of the Observatory and Education and Employment (ponteencarrera.pe). Maria Jose holds a BSc in Economics from Universidad del Pacifico in Peru.

Sara Caroni (France and Reunion Island)
Sara is currently pursuing a Masters in International Business and Geostrategy in Kedge Business School in Marseille, France. Sara was the head delegate of her school’s simulations of the General Assemblies of the United Nations (SimONU). Sara has a background in economics and finance, and she is a native English speaker. 

1 John Gillies is Senior Programme Manager of Trade Learning and Capacity Building at ITC. ITC is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.
La 4e édition du Festival international du film sur les glaciers s’installe à Genève.

BRUNO MOTTINI
Hausse des températures, sécheresse, inondations, fonte des glaciers... Aujourd’hui, les inquiétudes sur le climat futur, les ressources en eau douce, les risques glaciaires évolutsifs en montagne et l’augmentation exponentielle de la population mondiale, place l’étude et la surveillance des glaciers et calottes polaires au centre de l’intérêt scientifique mondial.

Les glaciers Alpins, berceau de la glaciologie, sont des terrains de prédilection pour comprendre, découvrir et mesurer les mécanismes de la dynamique glaciaire.

La Suisse compte 140 glaciers, dont celui d’Aletsch, joyau naturel et plus grand glacier des Alpes.

Avec la 4e édition du Festival international du film sur les glaciers, qui se déroulera les 22 et 23 septembre, à Genève, à la Maison du Grütli, le grand public aura l’occasion de se sensibiliser au recul des glaciers.

Une douzaine de films seront projetés et nous permettront de découvrir les glaciers du monde entier, dont certains sont encore grands comme plus de cinquante fois la Suisse.

Que ce soit sur la côte Est du Groenland, à l’entrée du plus grand fjord de la planète, au sein de la station Charcot en Antarctique, dans le massif du Mont-Blanc, dans l’Himalaya ou bien encore en survolant tout en douceur les « glaciers aux cœurs tendres » de la vallée de Chamonix, c’est à un voyage extraordinaire que nous sommes invités durant ces deux journées exceptionnelles à Genève.

Invité du Festival, l’ensemble Tétraflûtes présentera vendredi 22 septembre à 17h, à la Maison du Grütli, le Requiem des glaciers, inspiré de l’incroyable région du Valais, dont les glaciers font partie de la topographie. Deux des créations ont été imaginées à partir de bruits de gouttes, craquements et écoullement de glaciers qui apparaissent comme un contrepoint aux musiques jouées sur scène.

Un autre rendez-vous à ne pas manquer sera la table-ronde, qui se tiendra samedi 23 septembre, à 17h, toujours à la Maison du Grütli, en présence de glaciologues de renommée mondiale sur le thème du réchauffement climatique et des inégalités sociales. Jean Jouzel, paléo-climatologue et Prix Nobel de la Paix 2007 avec Al Gore sera notamment présent.

Dans un demi-siècle, bon nombre des glaciers pourraient avoir complètement disparus et les calottes glaciaires du Groenland et de l’Antarctique risquent de voir s’amplifier leur contribution à l’élévation du niveau des mers.

La démarche de l’association Mission Planète Terre s’inscrit dans un engagement et un combat: celui d’une nécessaire adaptation de tous aux effets du changement climatique.

Renseignements et programme sur www.fifg.ch et www.missionplaneteterre.ch

1 Bruno Mottini est le secrétaire général de l’Association Mission Planète Terre.

Bruno Mottini
Hausse des températures, sécheresse, inondations, fonte des glaciers... Aujourd’hui, les inquiétudes sur le climat futur, les ressources en eau douce, les risques glaciaires évolutsifs en montagne et l’augmentation exponentielle de la population mondiale, place l’étude et la surveillance des glaciers et calottes polaires au centre de l’intérêt scientifique mondial.

Les glaciers Alpins, berceau de la glaciologie, sont des terrains de prédilection pour comprendre, découvrir et mesurer les mécanismes de la dynamique glaciaire.

La Suisse compte 140 glaciers, dont celui d’Aletsch, joyau naturel et plus grand glacier des Alpes.

Avec la 4e édition du Festival international du film sur les glaciers, qui se déroulera les 22 et 23 septembre, à Genève, à la Maison du Grütli, le grand public aura l’occasion de se sensibiliser au recul des glaciers.

Une douzaine de films seront projetés et nous permettront de découvrir les glaciers du monde entier, dont certains sont encore grands comme plus de cinquante fois la Suisse.

Que ce soit sur la côte Est du Groenland, à l’entrée du plus grand fjord de la planète, au sein de la station Charcot en Antarctique, dans le massif du Mont-Blanc, dans l’Himalaya ou bien encore en survolant tout en douceur les « glaciers aux cœurs tendres » de la vallée de Chamonix, c’est à un voyage extraordinaire que nous sommes invités durant ces deux journées exceptionnelles à Genève.

Invité du Festival, l’ensemble Tétraflûtes présentera vendredi 22 septembre à 17h, à la Maison du Grütli, le Requiem des glaciers, inspiré de l’incroyable région du Valais, dont les glaciers font partie de la topographie. Deux des créations ont été imaginées à partir de bruits de gouttes, craquements etécoullement de glaciers qui apparaissent comme un contrepoint aux musiques jouées sur scène.

Un autre rendez-vous à ne pas manquer sera la table-ronde, qui se tiendra samedi 23 septembre, à 17h, toujours à la Maison du Grütli, en présence de glaciologues de renommée mondiale sur le thème du réchauffement climatique et des inégalités sociales. Jean Jouzel, paléo-climatologue et Prix Nobel de la Paix 2007 avec Al Gore sera notamment présent.

Dans un demi-siècle, bon nombre des glaciers pourraient avoir complètement disparus et les calottes glaciaires du Groenland et de l’Antarctique risquent de voir s’amplifier leur contribution à l’élévation du niveau des mers.

La démarche de l’association Mission Planète Terre s’inscrit dans un engagement et un combat: celui d’une nécessaire adaptation de tous aux effets du changement climatique.

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Yoga: an off-piste adventure

Yoga is an ancient science for wellbeing that can address all aspects of human life – body, mind, emotions and energy.

MICHELLE MAYES

In addition to improving health, perception and clarity, it can even help humanity face such huge modern problems as climate change.

Sadhguru’s Project Green Hands and #RallyForRivers campaign are examples of a yogi working to reverse climate change.

In 2014, 177 UN member states co-sponsored Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s resolution to adopt an International Day of Yoga. Never have so many countries agreed to anything. It’s as if the world had been waiting for that moment.

For three years now, Yoga Day has successfully brought yoga into the public eye. Yoga has been celebrated around the world – and even in the skies! In 2015, SpiceJet and Isha Foundation offered simple yoga sessions on selected long-haul flights.

In Geneva, Yoga Day has been celebrated at the statue of Gandhi, the Red Cross Museum, and within the UN premises, including inside the General Assembly Hall itself. The celebrations were attended by UNOG Director-General, Ambassadors, diplomats, representatives of International Organizations, yoga teachers and practitioners.

This year, WIPO hosted two events organized by the Indian Mission. They were attended by both Francis Gurry, WIPO Director-General, and Naresh Prasad, Assistant Director-General.

At the guided yoga session on June 18th, the diversity among the teachers and teaching assistants set the tone for an inclusive atmosphere, where all backgrounds, shapes and sizes were welcome. David Mishra-Newbery, who introduced the session, is proof that you can have the physique of a rugby player and still bend like a ballerina!

In yoga, physical flexibility is not the ultimate goal. Only when we soften the rigidity of our thoughts, emotions and energy can we truly begin to blossom. As well as physical movements and postures, the hour-long practice session included nada yoga (using sound), pranayam (using breath) and a meditation.

A second event was held on 21st June, Summer Solstice. The science of yoga was first transmitted many thousands of years ago by AdiYogi, the first yogi. It was on the day of the summer solstice that AdiYogi turned south and first set his eyes on the Saptarishis or Seven Sages, who were the first to carry the science of yoga out into the world.

One of these sages, Agastya Muni, travelled south of the Himalayas and made yoga a part of everyone’s life. Yoga was not something you did on the yoga mat for an hour in the morning. It was part of the fabric of life. The way people sat, the way they ate, the way they slept and how they got up in the morning – all these things were informed by the science of yoga.

The event held on 21st June was about taking yoga off the yoga mat and into daily life. The Master of Ceremonies was Ambassador Amandeep Gill, India’s Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament. A regular practitioner since 2001, he now addresses the Annual Conference of Heads of Mission in India, offering yoga as a tool to aid with self-management and other management.

This session was held in WIPO’s main conference hall, a room which many
would think unsuited to yoga. But the event was not about reinforcing preconceived notions of yoga. It was about overturning them.

I introduced the participants to the simplest form of yoga imaginable, the yoga of Namaskar (also called Namaste). A gesture many people make unconsciously, Namaskar actually has a scientific basis. As Sadhguru explains, bringing your hands together at the level of the heart, with focus and awareness, can level out the dualities within you, creating a certain oneness to who you are. As the 300+ participants went through this silent process, we could sense a tangible shift in the feel of the space; harmony and inclusiveness permeated the hall.

The practices taught that evening were short, simple, and can be done by anyone, anywhere. Discussing a conceived lack of time for yoga, Ambassador Gill quips: “Are you telling me you don’t have time to take the next breath?”

Many find that yoga and meditation, because they enhance efficiency, actually seem to create time. Kay Yamasaki who runs a wealth management company, shares: “Interpersonal conflicts almost completely disappeared because I am better able to hold a space of equanimity, even during difficult situations. I am able to make decisions better and faster because I trust my intuition more. My perception of life is totally different. Life is more vibrant.”

“Yoga promotes the principles of peace, rights and wellbeing that the community in international Geneva is working towards on a daily basis.”
Michael Møller, Director-General, UNOG.

Through practising yoga and meditation, Francesca Toso, Senior Advisor at WIPO, finds she is able to respond to potential causes of stress or discontent in a more mature way:

“The maturity comes from being more centred, from finding a sense of unity within myself – that unity between the physical, spiritual and mental dimensions of being that yoga helps you explore and experience. I’m aware that I won’t find my responses outside – they actually lie within myself. At the same time I can feel that I am getting a lot more satisfaction in what I am doing, with more creativity, finding solutions, where perhaps before I could only see a more problematic situation. So in general, a lighter way of being.”

Learn safe and simple yoga practices
http://isha.sadhguru.org/5-min-practices/ or app.sadhguru.org

Read
• Consult or borrow books from the World Health Organization Library’s Yoga collection
• Borrow books from WIPO’s Staff Welfare Officer

About the author
Michelle Mayes is an Isha Hatha Yoga Teacher, based in Geneva. This year, she led the International Day of Yoga Celebrations for the Indian Embassy in Bern, and taught at both celebrations organized by the Indian Mission in Geneva. She can be contacted on nanocontacts@gmail.com or via www.nanowellbeing.ch
Au fil du Canal du Midi (2e partie)

L’aventure le long du Canal du Midi peut commencer pour nous. Chargés comme des mules, nous quittons Sète pour un périple d’une douzaine de jours pour rallier Toulouse, 240 kilomètres plus loin.

Au fil de notre marche nous allons pouvoir mesurer l’étendue des prouesses technologiques qui ont permis de rallier la Méditerranée à l’Atlantique (voir le numéro précédent du UN Special).

CLAUDE MAILLARD
Apprécié depuis l’antiquité, Sète a connu un essor dès 1666 lorsque Louis XIV, percevant l’endroit d’une importance stratégique, y ordonna la construction d’un port. Aujourd’hui, Sète déploie ses façades colorées le long de délicieux canaux qui confèrent à la ville l’allure d’un lointain Venise. Surplombée par le Mont Saint-Clair, la ville chère à Georges Brassens est le théâtre chaque année de tournois de joutes nautiques de renommée internationale.

La première étape va nous emmener à Agde après avoir longé l’étang de Thau, important lieu conchylicole, traversé de part en part par le Canal du Midi. Déjà épuisés par cette mise en jambe, les pieds surchauffés, nous savourons notre plaisir en apercevant la cathédrale Saint-Étienne qui domine Agde (fondée au VIe siècle avant J.-C.) surnommée « la perle noire de la Méditerranée » de par ses monuments construits en pierre basaltique. Provenant des différentes éruptions volcaniques survenues dans la région, cette précieuse matière première sera également largement utilisée pour la construction des édifices du Canal du Midi, dont l’écluse ronde d’Agde. Unique en son genre, elle a été imaginée par Pierre-Paul Riquet pour permettre aux embarcations de pouvoir choisir entre trois directions différentes, l’étang de Thau, la mer ou Béziers, notre prochaine étape.

D’écluses en écluses
Situé sur un promontoire dominant l’Orb qui se jette dans la Méditerranée 12 kilomètres plus au sud, Béziers a été construit par les Grecs au VIe siècle avant J.-C., ce qui en ferait la plus vieille ville de France, devant Marseille. Pendant de nombreuses années capitale française du rugby à XV, Béziers recèle de nombreux trésors architecturaux dont la majestueuse cathédrale Saint-Nazaire (XIVe siècle) visible de très loin. C’est aussi là que l’ingénieux concepteur du Canal du Midi Pierre-Paul Riquet a vu le jour le 29 juin 1609 et c’est également
à Béziers que trois ouvrages majeurs ont dû être construits pour permettre aux bateaux de naviguer dans de bonnes conditions. Le franchissement d’un dénivelé de 22 mètres a nécessité l’installation des neuf écluses de Fonserannes d’une longueur totale de 315 mètres. Puis, afin d’éviter d’avoir à faire un long détour, le tunnel de Malpas long de 173 mètres devra être creusé sous la colline d’Ensérune (connue pour son oppidum et les vestiges d’un village occupé dès l’âge du fer). Enfin, un pont-canal long de 240 mètres sera mis en service en 1858 (sous la direction de l’ingénieur Urbain Maguès) pour permettre au Canal du Midi de franchir l’Orb. Jusqu’alors emprunté par les bateaux, sa traversée était souvent aléatoire et dangereuse.

Quelques encablures plus loin, après une pause bien méritée à Capestang, gros bourg blotti autour de la massive collégiale Saint-Etienne, un pont qui enjambe le Canal de la Robine nous permet de continuer notre chemin. Cette construction entreprise en 1686 permet de rallier directement le Canal du Midi à Narbonne, puis à Port la Nouvelle sur la côte méditerranéenne, 32 kilomètres plus au sud.

La journée n’est pas terminée et nous avons encore à marcher. Deux kilomètres plus loin, le Somail est en vue. Encore fortement imprégné de l’atmosphère du XVIIe siècle, le village apparaît comme un petit coin de paradis et mérite de s’y attarder, si l’on veut. Ses ruelles étroites bordées de vieilles maisons traditionnelles convergent vers les hauteurs de la cité où s’élève un château datant du XVIIe siècle. Pierre-Paul Riquet habita dans ces lieux appartenant au baron Jouglà de Paraza durant six années pendant la construction du Canal. Louis XIV y séjourna également et pour remercier son hôte de son hospitalité, donna l’ordre de faire construire sept terrasses descendantes du château au Canal. Aujourd’hui, le Château de Paraza, domaine viticole, propose quelques chambres élégamment restaurées dont celle qui accueillit le Roi. Alors, si le cœur vous en dit, il n’est pas interdit de rêver ; ce n’est pas tous les jours que, juste le temps d’une nuit, on peut se laisser emporter par le miracle de cet endroit magique.

L’écluse d’Argens-Minervois se dessine devant nous. Depuis plus de 54 kilomètres, le niveau du Canal du Midi en évacuant les eaux excédentaires en cas de forts orages sont construits tout au long du parcours. Celui d’Argent-double est tout particulièrement magnifique. En pierres de taille, long de plus de 50 mètres, il se caractérise par une succession de onze arches soutenant un tablier permettant aux randoeurs son franchissement, lui conférant ainsi l’allure de l’arche. Carcassonne n’est plus très loin. Mais avant d’atteindre la cité médiévale, un détour par le village de Puichéric avec son église romane et son château du XIe siècle s’impose. Autrefois étape importante sur le Canal, Trèbes offre également une pause sympathique aux plaisanciers. À proximité, on peut admirer le très beau pont aqueduc franchissant l’Orbiel puis le célèbre pont en pierres de la Rode qui attire tant de peintres et de photographes. Carcassonne n’est plus qu’à 12 kilomètres.

**Sur le chemin de Carcassonne**

À quelques enjambées de l’aqueduc qui permet au Canal du Midi de passer au-dessus du torrent le Répudre, dont les crues aussi soudaines que violentes auraient mis à mal la navigation des péniches, se profile le village de Paraza. Ses ruelles étroites bordées de vieilles maisons traditionnelles convergent vers les hauteurs de la cité où s’élève un château datant du XVIIe siècle. Pierre-Paul Riquet habita dans ces lieux appartenant au baron Jouglà de Paraza durant six années pendant la construction du Canal. Louis XIV y séjourna également et pour remercier son hôte de son hospitalité, donna l’ordre de faire construire sept terrasses descendantes du château au Canal. Aujourd’hui, le Château de Paraza, domaine viticole, propose quelques chambres élégamment restaurées dont celle qui accueillit le Roi. Alors, si le cœur vous en dit, il n’est pas interdit de rêver ; ce n’est pas tous les jours que, juste le temps d’une nuit, l’on peut se prendre pour «Le Roi Soleil»!

L’écluse d’Argens-Minervois se dessine devant nous. Depuis plus de 54 kilomètres nous n’avions pas vu la moindre ombre de l’une d’elles. Depuis les neuf écluses de Fonserannes nous avons longé le Canal à une altitude constante de 31 mètres au-dessus du niveau de la mer. Nous venons de parcourir la «Grande Retenue», au milieu de territoires embaumés par les parfums de la Garrigue, avec de part et d’autre les vignobles du Minervois et des Corbières, qui rendent ce parcours particulièrement agréable à traverser.

Homps est en vue. Bourgade florissante et prospère, le fief passa au Moyen-Âge sous l’autorité des Hospitaliers de l’ordre de Saint-Jean-de-Jérusalem qui en firent le siège de l’une de leurs plus importantes commanderies. À l’achèvement du Canal du Midi, Homps en devint une plaque tournante pour la batellerie et pendant des décennies, un ballet incessant de bateaux venait y charger barriques et tonneaux à destination des grands ports de Bordeaux, Toulouse et Sète.

De nombreux épanchoirs servant à réguler le niveau du Canal du Midi en évacuant les eaux excédentaires en cas de forts orages sont construits tout au long du parcours. Celui d’Argent-double est tout particulièrement magnifique. En pierres de taille, long de plus de 50 mètres, il se caractérise par une succession de onze arches soutenant un tablier permettant aux randoeurs son franchissement, lui conférant ainsi l’allure de l’arche. Carcassonne n’est plus très loin. Mais avant d’atteindre la cité médiévale, un détour par le village de Puichéric avec son église romane et son château du XIe siècle s’impose. Autrefois étape importante sur le Canal, Trèbes offre également une pause sympathique aux plaisanciers. À proximité, on peut admirer le très beau pont aqueduc franchissant l’Orbiel puis le célèbre pont en pierres de la Rode qui attire tant de peintres et de photographes. Carcassonne n’est plus qu’à 12 kilomètres.

**Suite de notre périple au fil du Canal du Midi à découvrir dans le prochain numéro du UN Special**
Former UN chief publishes memoir

The former Director-General of WIPO (the World Intellectual Property Organization), Professor Kamil Idris, has published his life story “My Nile Odyssey”, fulfilling a promise to Nelson Mandela.

DAN BRADY – UK BOOK PUBLISHING
From growing up in Sudan as a child labourer, battling crocodiles and pirates, and surviving terrifying rooftop train journeys across the desert, to heading up a UN agency, Professor Kamil Idris’ life story is one of a remarkable journey and inspiring leadership.

Motivated by a promise made to Nelson Mandela, not long before the former South African President’s death, to tell his story as a “true son of Africa”, Professor Idris has written and published his memoir, My Nile Odyssey, chronicling his early life in Sudan, his studies in Khartoum, Cairo, Ohio and Geneva, and later his professional development with the United Nations.

In his diplomatic career, Kamil Idris met with many world leaders and statespersons, including Bill Clinton, Boutros Ghali, Fidel Castro, Jacques Chirac, King Abdullah and King Hussein of Jordan, King Felipe VI of Spain, Kofi Annan, Mary Robinson, Tony Blair and Yasser Arafat, working behind the scenes to help solve international crises.

However, much of the book focuses on Kamill’s childhood in Sudan, blighted by tragedy and hardship, but also encouraged by the many warm-hearted and humble figures and mentors in his life, who spurred him on to higher learning and achievements, all set against the reassuring presence and backdrop of the mighty River Nile.

“When I met Nelson Mandela, I think he knew that he was dying and wanted to share with me his vision for the future, for the whole world,” Kamil Idris explained. “He felt my optimistic faith in human nature echoed his own, and that a positive, uplifting message of brotherhood, reconciliation and compassion could be a powerful antidote to intolerance, racism and bloodshed. I was humbled by his confidence in me, and I hope this memoir honours his wishes.”

Professor Idris began working for WIPO in 1982, having been posted to Geneva a few years earlier as a diplomat in the permanent mission of Sudan to the UN. In 1997, he was elected Director-General of WIPO when the position became vacant following the retirement of Dr. Arpad Bogsch. He also served on the UN’s International Law Commission from 1991 to 2000.

Dr. Marino Porzio, Attorney-at-Law and formerly Deputy Director-General of WIPO, said, “I had been impressed by Kamil Idris, having observed him acting at several meetings as a young Sudanese diplomat attached to the Sudan Permanent Mission in Geneva. His instinctive diplomatic ability, accompanied by an in-depth knowledge of the most important topics being discussed at different UN organizations in Geneva, made his participation noticed and important, in particular for developing countries, whose interests Kamil Idris used to readily represent. And when he became Director-General of WIPO, he had the satisfaction of becoming the first DG to come from a developing country.”

In 2010, Professor Idris stood as a Presidential candidate in his native Sudan, but was later placed under house arrest and received death threats. The former Prime Minister of Sudan, Imam El-Sadiq El-Mahdi (1966-67 and 1986-89), has written the foreword to the memoir, citing the role it could play in the ongoing cultural enlightenment of Sudan and the wider world. El-Mahdi describes My Nile Odyssey as “a testimony to the achievement of the human spirit in overcoming adversity and a testament to the importance of self-discipline, the hunger for knowledge and the universal values of brotherhood that transcend nationality and religion.”

Kamil Idris is currently the President of the International Court of Arbitration and Mediation (ICAM), the former Director-General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), former Secretary-General of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), and a former member of the United Nations International Law Commission.

Scholar, international statesman and polymath, Kamil Idris has published an extensive range of books on intellectual property, political science, philosophy and international law and development, including “A better United Nations for the new millennium”. He lives with his family in Durham, north east England.

My Nile Odyssey is published as a hardback book by UK Book Publishing and is available on Amazon and other online retailers.
Message du rédacteur en chef

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:
Alex Mejia, rédacteur en chef – UN Special
Par courrier électronique: alex.mejia@unitar.org

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