The protracted refugee and migrant crisis. A challenge to multilateralism

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This issue of UN Special highlights the refugee crisis currently facing the world and, of course, our own United Nations Organization. On this subject, you will hear about the perspective of UN High Commissioner for Refugees Philippe Grandi, while speaking to his Executive Committee and to the Security Council; from UN Special Rapporteur Ambassador Idriss Jazairy; from the World Health Organization; and from more of the many international actors working on the front lines of this emergency. We invite you to turn to this month’s centerfold for graphic representations of where and in what numbers the world’s 65.6 million forcibly displaced people are currently hosted. We hope these pages will provide a taste of both the breadth and depth of the refugee crisis facing the globe today. The catastrophe is sweeping and multifaceted; but it is, first and foremost, human. And it begs for all the attention the world – especially the United Nations – can muster.

Local topics include an open letter from a group of staff to UNOG Director General Michael Møller, regarding the Strategic Heritage Project, in addition to a report from the UN Women’s Guild Bazaar, held last month. And, readers will discover a plethora of articles on linguistic matters, including tales of what it’s like to be a UNOG translator.

Finally, we hope our readers will enjoy the magazine’s second installment of travel stories from Myanmar, as well as a harrowing glimpse of the longest pedestrian suspension bridge in the world, which does indeed have “to be crossed to be believed.” UN Special wishes you an excellent end of the year and beginning to your holiday season, and looks forward to being back with you soon to usher in 2018!

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Ce numéro de UN Special met l’accent sur la crise des réfugiés qui frappe actuellement le monde et, bien entendu, notre propre Organisation des Nations Unies. À ce sujet, vous lirez le point de vue du Haut-Commissaire des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés, Mr. Philippe Grandi; celui du Rapporteur spécial des Nations Unies, Mr. l’ambassadeur Idriss Jazairy; celui de l’Organisation Mondiale de la Santé; ainsi que celui de ceux qui travaillent sur les lignes de front de cette situation d’urgence. Nous vous invitons à consulter notre page centrale de ce mois pour des représentations graphiques des 65,6 millions de personnes déplacées de force dans le monde. Nous espérons que ces pages vous donneront une idée de l’ampleur et la profondeur de la crise des réfugiés à laquelle le monde est confronté aujourd’hui. La catastrophe est globale et multiforme; mais elle est avant tout humaine. Et cela requiert toute l’attention du monde – en particulier celle des Nations Unies.

Les sujets locaux comprennent une lettre ouverte d’un groupe du personnel au directeur général de l’ONUG, Mr. Michael Moller, concernant le projet du plan stratégique patrimonial, en plus d’un article sur le bazar de la Guilde des femmes de l’ONU. Les lecteurs découvriront aussi un ensemble d’articles sur les questions linguistiques, entre autres, sur ce qu’être traducteur à l’ONU. Enfin, nous espérons que nos lecteurs apprécieront la deuxième partie des récits de voyage en Myanmar, ainsi qu’un aperçu du plus long pont suspendu pour piétons au monde, qu’il faut «avoir traversé pour le croire».

UN Special vous souhaite une excellente fin d’année et un très bon début de vacances, et attend avec impatience d’être de retour avec vous en 2018!
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Dealing with the Refugee Crisis

The vision of the High Commissioner for Refugees on our ability to solve it.

ALEX MEJIA, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
When someone asks for my opinion on the most critical function of the UN, I never hesitate to declare it “refugees”. The UN is tasked with many critical functions, but none have comparable priority to a human being fleeing war or disaster, or to the desperate eyes of a child asking for help from our colleagues at UNHCR. And certainly, no job can be more important than aiding those refugees who have ventured across cold seas or punishing deserts, hoping simply to arrive alive in a country where they may claim asylum.

With this sense of urgency, I attended a speech at the Palais des Nations several weeks ago, delivered by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi at the opening of the 68th session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme. I had read a little about Mr. Grandi, and was curious to hear from the man who has replaced our current Secretary-General at the helm of UNHCR: you would have to be good to fill those shoes. And I was not disappointed, as I found a leader who is passionate about his cause and also a man who says things as they are. Mr. Grandi presented a compelling picture of the worst refugee crisis of our times, taking his audience on an imaginary—and yet very real—trip from the violence amidst the Rohingyas in Myanmar to the situations in Syria, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and Iraq. He focused on the Central Mediterranean route to Europe, stretching from below the Sahara, to Libya and Italy. What an introduction. It captivated his audience and delivered one primary message: the urgency of creating a Global Compact for Refugees.

The prelude for such an agreement is the existing New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, a set of commitments to enhance the protection of refugees and migrants, adopted by the General Assembly in September 2016. The New York Declaration reaffirms the importance of the international refugee regime, and represents a commitment by Member States to strengthen and enhance mechanisms to protect people on the move. It paves the way for the adoption of two new global compacts in 2018: a global compact on refugees and a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. The processes leading up to the two global compacts are to be “separate, distinct and independent”.

The High Commissioner should propose the Global Compact for Refugees in his annual report to the General Assembly in 2018, to build upon the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. According to official
information from UNHCR, this Compact is a unique opportunity to strengthen the international response to large movements of refugees. It will have four key objectives: easing pressures on countries that welcome and host refugees; building the self-reliance of refugees; expanding access to resettlement in third countries and other complementary pathways; and, fostering conditions that enable refugees to return voluntarily to their home countries.

In his speech, Mr. Grandi told the world that “without the shared sense of purpose needed to prevent, stem and solve conflicts, the world will continue to face new refugee flows, and must reinforce its capacity to respond. Refugees and displaced people are the most visible symptom of fractured societies, in which a combination of root causes foster conditions for conflict and persecution. Underdevelopment and poverty, climate change and environmental degradation, inequality and exclusion, poor or absent governance, and weak rule of law allow anger, instability, violent extremism, transnational criminal networks and organized gangs to take hold.”

Mr. Grandi made a compelling appeal to focus on peacebuilding, human rights, capable government institutions, sustainable development and the virtuous actions that make societies stable and productive. The link with Agenda 2030 is rather obvious, as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will inevitably reduce the number of refugees.

The Global Compact’s programme of action will provide a blueprint to ensure that refugees have better access to health, education and livelihood opportunities, and that they are included in their host communities from the very beginning. It will also set out tangible ways that host governments may be supported when faced with large movements of refugees, as well as responsibility-sharing systems, so that these countries do not shoulder the burden alone. After all, we need a global agreement to make sure that every Member State is doing its part, and that there is a coordinated global response to the refugee crises. That day at the Palais, Mr. Grandi mentioned that “refugee flows are also the consequence of faltering international cooperation”, and I could not agree more with that candid observation.

We now know that the Global Compact on Refugees is being developed through three inter-related processes:

i. the enhanced application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, by drawing lessons from existing or past refugee situations;

ii. thematic discussions on the key aspects of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, involving Member States, NGOs, academics, experts, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders; and,

iii. a stock-taking of progress made and lessons learned, to happen in December 2017, including at the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges. With input from these processes, UNHCR will then produce and circulate a draft of the proposed global compact on refugees. Formal consultations will take place between February and July 2018, informing the final text to be proposed by the High Commissioner in his 2018 annual report. We are moving forward.

However, the refugee field also has a political dimension. Refugees have become a prominent issue in local and national politics, and indeed affect the relationship between States. Mr. Grandi went so far as to say that “protection is constantly being tested. And at times, it even seems that refugees have become a commodity, traded between States. Principled leadership has frequently given way to an erosion of refugee rights, driven by confused and sometimes frightened public opinions often stirred up by irresponsible politicians. International cooperation has been replaced by fragmented responses, resulting in restrictive immigration and asylum measures, even in countries with their own histories of exile and migration, and a proud tradition of welcome. Border closures; measures to limit admission or deflect responsibility; restrictive asylum procedures; indefinite detention in appalling conditions; offshore processing; pressure for premature returns—all have regrettably proliferated. And rising xenophobia has targeted refugees as well.”

He did not mention the resurgence of populism and nationalism, which the world is experiencing in many countries simultaneously; but I am sure he had many such cases in mind when alluding to this political dimension, which affects the ability of our world to deal with the current refugee crisis.

After this unique occasion in Geneva, I virtually followed Mr. Grandi to the UN Security Council in New York last month. He delivered another strategic message that deserves dissection and analysis, though there is not space to do so here. I will share only that Mr. Grandi mentioned the previous occasion on which the High Commissioner for Refugees briefed the Security Council. He noted that in 2009, when then-Commissioner Antonio Guterres delivered his message, he shared his concern that the world was entering a period of deepening and interlocking crises. Mr. Grandi declared that almost nine years on, this bleak prospect has now become a reality, with the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide now approaching 66 million-up from 42 million in 2009. The conflict in Syria alone has driven 11 million people from their homes. He noted that “new crises have developed in Libya, Mali, Ukraine, Yemen, and the Lake Chad Basin. Many have unfolded in ungoverned spaces, driven by varying combinations of poverty and underdevelopment, environmental degradation, inequality, and persecution. In northern Central America, gang violence has become a main cause of displacement.”

Mr. Grandi asked the members of the Security Council an existential question: have we become unable to broker peace?

In his words: “I ask this question here, in the Security Council – whose raisons d’être are peace and security – because I see the direct impact of these failures, every day, on the lives of tens of millions of people, forced to abandon their homes with grim prospects of being able to return for generations. When I meet refugees, their first question is not about food or shelter, but about peace and security – because it is security, and peace, that will convince them to return home.”

It was about time someone asked this question to those representatives tasked most of all with caring for global peace and security. Someone had to be brave enough. Bravo. ■

1. Key topics will include past and current regional approaches to large movements of refugees; measures to be taken on the reception and admission of refugees; support for the immediate and ongoing needs of refugees and host communities; and durable solutions for refugees.
International Winter, Spring and Summer Camps

Verbier
Switzerland
The protracted refugee and migrant crisis

A challenge to multilateralism

It is an incontrovertible fact that more people are on the move owing to globalization. Fifteen percent of the world’s population are on the move worldwide. In other words, of the world population of 7 billion, one billion are on the move.

AMBASSADOR IDRIS JAZAIRY

Seven hundred and forty million people are referred to as internal or as domestic migrants within their countries of origin. The number of internally displaced persons reaches about 60 million. On top of this, the world has more than 244 million international migrants who cross borders, often into the unknown. Lastly, there are 22.5 million refugees – encompassing the 5.3 million Palestinian refugees – registered by the United Nations High Commissioner for
Although we can conclude that human migration is an integral part of the Earth’s DNA, the unprecedented cohorts of people on the move has resulted in the emergence of new challenges that call for urgent attention and action. The inflow of displaced people to Europe has been exploited by a populist tidal-wave to fuel xenophobia and, in particular, Islamophobia. Walls and fences are being built in the North in flawed attempts to prevent displaced people from reaching their destination countries and to criminalize migrants and refugees. Although the arrival of displaced people to Europe only add up to 0.2% of Europe’s population, human solidarity and justice are being frayed by the fear of the Other.

On the eastern and southern side of the Mediterranean Sea, millions of people have sought refuge and protection. They have found shelter in countries of the Arab region as the right to free movement further to the North has been “postponed” and denied to displaced people. Lebanon—a country of approximately 4 million people—is providing protection and refuge to approximately 1 million displaced people. Jordan—neighbouring both Iraq and Syria—has accommodated around 1.2 million refugees. Although Iraq and Egypt face internal turmoil, Bagdad and Cairo are hosting about 240,000 and 120,000 people respectively. Turkey has likewise given refuge to roughly 3 million refugees, primarily Syrians. In summary, the majority of the burden in hosting and in providing assistance and protection to displaced people is being taken up by countries in the less developed parts of the world, despite the fact that they often lack adequate resources to respond to the influx of displaced people.

While rich countries in the North bicker about burden-sharing between them of inflows of migrants representing 0.2% of their global population, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries provide access without blinking to inflows that may add up to 25% of their own nationals!

How can the world move forward to respond in unison to address the resulting rise of populism and the lack of social justice that prevails in our modern societies?

“No one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land,” said the British-Somali poet Warsan Shire in response to the growing number of people who perish on a daily basis on their hazardous journeys across the Mediterranean Sea. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the...
equal and inclusive citizenship must resort to the promotion of the power of diversity, they in upholding and harnessing countries with strong traditions the United States and of other want to repeat the successes of currently. If contemporary nations sity in earlier times, if not cur- fact that it championed diver- most successful owing to the became one of the world’s often refer to the example of embraced and celebrated. I rights for all peoples regardless of religious, cultural, ethnic, and/or national backgrounds. Societies that demonstrate respect for human dignity are the ones most likely to be win- ners in the long run.

Governments in the Middle East and in the West should address jointly the protracted refugee and migrant crisis in a multicultural context. The UN Global Compact for Refugees to be convened in 2018 will offer an opportunity to proceed along these lines. Enhancing international cooperation among coun- tries in Europe and in the Arab region is indeed key to identi- fying a more equitable burden – and responsibility-sharing system in response to the cur- rent situation in which dis- placed people are restricted in the exercise of their right to seek refuge and protection.

This goal can be achieved through inter alia the allocation of resources and development aid as well as through interna- tionally funded capacity-building programmes to raise the preparedness level for hosting large numbers of displaced peo- ple. In the words of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration, Mr. Peter Sutherland, in his 2015 report: “States must agree on how to address large crisis-related movements, not only to save people on the move from death or suffering, but also to avoid the corrosive effect that ad hoc responses have on our politi- cal institutions and the public’s trust in them.”

Identifying new approaches to promote equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing mechanisms would enable countries in Europe and in the Arab region to speak with one voice and to build coalitions on a variety of issues related to the safe and orderly movement of people in accordance with international law. The inter- national community needs to commit to sharing respon- sibility for hosting displaced people more fairly and propor- tionately, being guided by the principles of international solidarity and justice. This is an occasion for all to recommit themselves to the lofty aims of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Global problems require global solu- tions. Attempts to regionalize such issues – as witnessed in many societies – are doomed to failure.

In the long term the interna- tional community must act to eradicate the underlying causes leading to an excessive flow of destitute migrants. That means phasing out foreign military interventions, respecting sov- ereignty, supporting democracy and human rights through peaceful means only and join- ing forces to address the impov- erishment of the Global South as a result of climate change.

1 Note on author: Ambassador Idriss Jazairy, is the UN Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures and the Executive Director of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue. He is an experienced diplomat, international administrator and NGO leader. He was in particular a founding member of UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) and the Human Rights Council. He has been President of IFAD (International Fund for Agricul- tural Development), a UN specialized agency and later Chief Executive of ACORD, a consortium of international NGOs devoted to the empowerment of the poor in Africa. Ambassador Jazairy was also the President of the Conference on Disarmament in 2009 and the President of the Council of IOM (the International Organization for Migration) in 2010. He is the author of books and of a large number of articles in the international press on development, human rights and current affairs.

The food service area at the Imvepi settlement, which feeds approximately 10,000 people daily.

Scene from the Kara Tepe refugee camp on Lesbos Island, Greece. 18 June 2016.
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The Syrian population in Jordan now represents more than ten percent of the population. More than five million people have been forced to flee from their homes, with the majority still living in neighbouring countries including Jordan. The Syrian population in Jordan now exceeds more than one million, representing more than ten percent of the population, with more than 660,000 registered as refugees. The majority of these refugees live in host communities as opposed to refugee camps. This population displacement has resulted in significant economic and social consequences for Jordan, and has also impacted significantly on the health system.

Jordan remains at heightened risk of emerging and infectious diseases like polio, cholera, leishmaniasis and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) as a consequence of regional displacement and conflict. An outbreak of polio was reported in Syria in 2013 for the first time since 1999, with 35 cases subsequently confirmed. Jordan stopped polio transmission more than 20 years ago and this new outbreak triggered a series of campaigns to ensure all children living in high-risk areas were vaccinated. A major outbreak of cholera was reported in Iraq in 2015, on the border with Jordan, again exposing the country to an immediate disease threat. A significant increase in cases of leishmaniasis has been reported in Jordan since 2014, largely due to the influx of refugees from Syria and a measles outbreak in 2013 affected Syrian, Jordanian, and Iraqi children in both camp and host community settings.

As well as infectious disease threats, the health system is experiencing a changing population demographic, changing epidemiology of disease and increasing rates of determinants of poor health. Rising healthcare costs, of both services and supplies, also raise issues of sustainable financing mechanisms for this increased demand. Nearly half of adult refugees were reported to have at least one chronic non-communicable disease and more than one quarter have an physical, sensory or intellectual impairment in 2016. These health problems require long-term assistance and specialised services that are already overstretched, including convalescent care, nursing, and functional rehabilitation. An additional four million Jordanians are impacted by the refugee crisis in the country.

In the midst of this crisis, WHO Jordan began to look systematically at how to support the Ministry of Health in Jordan to keep people safe from communicable disease threats, how to ensure refugees can achieve equitable access to health care, as well as how to improve clinical care for non-communicable disease. WHO has supported the Ministry of Health in implementing a national public health surveillance system to monitor priority conditions and diseases in refugee and host communities. The system uses innovative mobile
and electronic tools to enable information to be reported in real-time and to ensure any disease alert can be responded to immediately. In addition, mobile tools provide clinical decision support inside the consultation, using standardised case definitions and clinical algorithms to improve the quality of clinical care provided, including for non-communicable disease and mental health.

WHO led the concept, design and implementation of the project with Ministry of Health in Jordan, seeing a pilot project in 50 clinics in 2014 expand to a national system in more than 600 facilities across the country in 2017 (every public hospital, comprehensive and primary care facility in the country). WHO Jordan has worked across private and public sectors, including UN and other NGO partners, to ensure an integrated approach to programming and to ensure a comprehensive, holistic approach to public health surveillance. The system is run and managed by the Ministry of Health to ensure long-term sustainability and ownership. The Ministry of Health have endorsed the system nationally and new modules are being included, for Mental Health as well as Maternal and Child Health. Perceptions of use among clinicians who use the system acknowledge at a rate of 90% improved quality in reporting and provision of clinical care.

“It is always rewarding to visit health clinics. There is no better reward than seeing the results of your work directly helping people, through early detection of disease and improving the quality of clinical care provided.”

–Dr. John Haskew, Epidemiologist, Jordan

The project originated through a WHO emergency response program in Jordan to respond to the regional refugee and polio emergency in 2014. Since then, the project has grown and transitioned to a sustainable, national system that is owned and managed by the Ministry of Health.

“The project provides an example of how WHO can play a key role in supporting leadership, innovation and change within the health sector. An emergency response program has transitioned to a national system that is responding not only to the refugee crisis but also priority public health problems within the national health system.”

–Dr. Maria Cristina Profili, WHO Representative, Jordan

UN Special – December 2017-January 2018 | 13
Refugee Cultural Festival

There’s a big world to discover within little Geneva – meet interactions

When was the last time you felt truly welcome somewhere? Where you could be your self without being judged? What does it mean to be truly welcome? Sometimes one is not welcome in their own family, let alone their own country.

Today the world is becoming more interconnected. More human beings are migrating, living in new cultures and countries for different reasons. Some people choose to move abroad for a career, a loved one, or just out of curiosity. Others flee their countries with little choice of where to go. Living abroad is a challenge with great and difficult moments.

People’s administrative and social status creates huge differences between people’s experiences. Asylum seekers often arrive carrying painful traumas and yet can be full of hope to start anew. However a system can erect many obstacles and marginalise people and their dreams. But at the end of the day, what everyone is looking for, is a place that feels like home, where they are welcome, can make friends, feel loved and be part of a community.

Even though Geneva is an affluent city, its diversity extends far beyond all the different nationalities living here. Many locals and long-term residents come from different backgrounds and social statuses, creating a richer tapestry than one recognises. Do you find many opportunities to meet, connect, and create relationships with people from different cultures and social positions? Do you identify and feel part of the community where you live?

Even though Geneva is a small city, many residents feel disconnected and lonely. Many never manage to move outside their own bubbles: expats, locals, French-speakers, non-French speakers, refugees, asylum seekers, and other marginalised people. Which group do you feel you belong to? What is clear, is all of Geneva’s diversity is an opportunity to expand our horizons and learn from each other.

This is where the Geneva based association Interactions comes into the picture. Interactions is an association of passionate residents who work on projects to create stronger connections between the different communities residing in Geneva, giving special attention to ensure our most vulnerable residents (asylum seekers, refugees, and socially marginalised) have a voice.

At the heart of our activities is creating a radically inclusive space that is safe and welcoming. We design and produce cultural activities and services with a bottom-up approach, making sure everyone can participate, share and shine their best selves. Our group’s mission of radical inclusion and connectivity begins with our organisational structure. Our core team members work in pairs, one well-established person and a newcomer. For instance, Samad Amiri, an asylum seeker from Afghanistan, is the co-president of the association with Sylvie Meynier a long time Genevan resident.

The goals of the association reflect our open and collective decision-making process, where everyone’s opinions and suggestions are valued. We then match the needs and expectations of the people it is meant to serve.

From our initial brainstorm sessions we discovered people’s needs to practice a language, understand and navigate Swiss society, and feel more connected to community. Through creating a place where people can freely express their ideas, support each other, and share their passions, skills and talents, we are building a stronger community one member at a time.
Interactions a été créé au Refuge Cultural Festival. Cuando Dan Stein, un américain, et Sylvie Meynier, une française, se sont rencontrés, ils étaient tous deux vivant à Genève depuis plusieurs années. Après avoir collaboré à de nombreux projets communautaires, sans jamais se croiser, ils se sont rencontrés en mars 2017 et ont réalisé qu'ils partageaient une vision similaire. Ils ont eu envie de défier l’isolement et la nationalisation par le biais de la rencontre et de l’élévation de la diversité. Un groupe de citoyens est bientôt devenu un association et l’idée était que les résidents aient l’opportunité d’échanger et de créer des activités amusantes et enrichissantes, rendant Genève une maison plus accueillante et plus conviviale pour tous.

Le festival rassemble des gens de toutes les âges, de toutes les origines, religions, statuts socio-administratifs. Beaucoup de partenariats ont été formés entre des associations locales, des institutions suisses et internationales. Les activités en art, culture, musique, sports et nourriture étaient organisées pour la communauté, en donnant aux personnes de nouvelles opportunités de s’exprimer dans un cadre amical et significatif. En apprenant et en se connaissant, les gens ont commencé à déconstruire les stéréotypes. De nouvelles amitiés se sont formées, les esprits ont été ouverts, et quelques uns ont même obtenu des opportunités d’emploi. Un exemple de l’activité spéciale était le flashmob de danse. Il a été créé au cours des semaines par bouche à l’oreille et grâce à un groupe WhatsApp simple. Ahmad de Gaza, Tana de Nouvelle-Zélande et Svet, qui est à la fois tchèque et indien, ont rassemblé environ 30 personnes de 20 nationalités. Ils ont créé un magnifique défilé, en mettant en place une playlist musicale éclectique avec des mouvements de danse simples. Le résultat était magnifique, avec des dizaines de personnes spontanément se joignant à la fête. Il y a maintenant un groupe flashmob de danse officiel qui fait des événements réguliers. De nombreux membres de l’équipe et participants voulaient que le festival garde le même esprit positif. C’est ainsi que la association Interactions est née en septembre. Aujourd’hui, Interactions est composée de environ 50 membres actifs venant de tous les horizons, des classes, des cultures, des sexes, des orientations sexuelles, des langues, des religions, des âges et des expériences. Elle représente la diversité réelle de Genève.

Pendant qu’il y a des problèmes qui nous sont cachés, et oui, même à Genève, il y a des personnes vivant dans des situations très difficiles. Interactions vous donne l’opportunité de vous engager et d’empower les autres. Quel que soit votre sentiment de solitude, ou si vous cherchez à rencontrer des personnes venues de différentes cultures, ou si vous voulez soutenir les réfugiés, demandeurs d’asile et autres personnes vulnérables, venez nous rejoindre à l’une de nos activités. Vous êtes également invité à partager vos compétences et vos passions. Chaque personne est bienvenue. On parle souvent de “famille”. Interactions est un endroit où vous pouvez venir en vous-même et ne pas être jugé. On l’a dit même: “Je sais que je pourrais même venir en pyjama et personne ne me jugerait”. Cela se passe réellement et oui, à Genève !

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1 Interactions team

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Using social media to highlight the positive side of migration

The world of social media has monopolized most of the inhabitants of planet earth. This means of communication has become an essential part of the life of many individuals in the world and is used by community members, businesses, organizations, government agencies, families and friends.

LORENZO MARTINEZ VALLEJOS

The amount of time we spend on social networks is increasing, which is why many questions are generated in this regard. What are social networks? And how did they take root in the lives of so many human beings?

Social networks are social structures that serve as a means of communication by facilitating the dissemination of messages. They shorten distances and the time spent on sending messages, fostering kinship relations, personal relationships and organizational relationships. They allow people who are in different countries, in different environments and who belong to different cultures to stay connected and informed. Likewise, the immediacy of the messages shortens diffusion times and results in a more direct form of communication.

"I am a migrant" is a platform launched by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to allow migrants to tell their own stories in order to counter negative stereotypes about migration. The aim of the initiative is to show "the human face of migration."

The platform has been "specifically designed to support volunteer groups, local authorities, companies, associations, groups, and anyone of goodwill who is concerned about the hostile public discourse against migrants". It allows the voices of individuals to shine through and provides an honest insight into the triumphs and tribulations of migrants of all backgrounds and at all phases of their migratory journeys. Anyone can post a story: migrants themselves, but also third parties who have gathered relevant testimony from migrants.

I was in charge of recruiting participants and creating personal profiles in Spanish for the "I am a migrant" campaign. I gathered the stories of more than 140 migrants. These stories cover a wide range of migrant journeys, including Spain-Chile, Peru-Argentina, Bolivia-Switzerland, Chile-New Zealand.

Many of the people who shared their stories with me were so happy with their experience and the story I edited that they shared them independently, for example through their Facebook pages. These stories were seen by a thousand people and ‘liked’ by hundreds, in some cases, contributing to the success of the campaign.

The use of social networks in the "I am a migrant" campaign demonstrates the power of social media to diffuse stories and capture imaginations. Using social media can transform the ways that international organizations communicate with the public, bringing them closer to everyday lives.

See for yourself!

1 For more information, please contact Lorenzo Martinez Vallejos, Information Management Consultant. Mobile, +41 789 12 71 20, Email: Lorenzo.martinez@ymail.com

Here is the link to the website http://iamamigrant.org.
Because he does not wish to turn again
He carries the war to the tides and hides
it carefully in the knot in the pit
of his stomach. Where is the blessing in
this gentle breeze?; this Arab Spring blows hot
and heavy. To tread lightly is to know
what it means, to feel the fire from
your home rest within your belly.

Because he does not hope to turn again
Anubis rears his head from the helm,
Points his snout starboard in the dark,
To the life-vests burgeoning by the hall,
And spitting sea-spray and foam,
at those this far from home,
Tells of a line of dictators that took over the world,
To feed their hunger for oil
(Fire burns faster with oil).

The biting cold, coating tongues
in sea-orange and brine.
Anubis still sings and sinks his teeth into every line.
He tightens his vest, to steady the boat,
Here, far from the shores of orange and rubber,
And still too close, still too close,
Everything floats, everything floats.

MIHIKA ACHARYA

My inspiration for this poem:
After the closure of the Western Balkan route and the EU-Turkey Statement in March 2016, increased border restriction caused migrants and refugees seeking sanctuary in Europe to undertake more dangerous journeys. The sea route is hazardous, the boats overcrowded and the death toll is high with more deaths at sea in the Mediterranean recorded in 2016 and 2017 than ever before. Photographs showed the shores of Lesbos burned orange with mountains of abandoned life jackets.

At the same time, it was reported that many refugees and migrants undertaking these journeys were also victims of the sale of fake life jackets. In 2016, police in Turkey confiscated more than 1,000 fake life jackets made for migrants wanting to cross the Aegean Sea to Greece. Officers raided a workshop in the port of Izmir, where they say they found life jackets stuffed with packaging rather than buoyancy aids.

For United Nations World Refugee Day this year on June 20, more than 3,500 of these life jackets salvaged from refugees who arrived at Lesbos, were used by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei in his installation “Soleil Levant”, barricading the windows of Kunsthal Charlottenborg in Copenhagen.

1 MihiKA AcharyA is Public Information Assistant at the United Nations Television & Radio

Items from Tunisian Migrant Boat Abandoned at Lampedusa Port.
Dear Mr. Møller,

Thank you for your message of October 20.

The General Assembly resolution of December 2017 “Notes that flexible workplace strategies in the United Nations should be aimed at improving the overall productivity and efficiency of the Organization, as well as the staff workplace environment,” (A/RES/71/272). Further the GA “Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the application of flexible workplace strategies at the Palais des Nations takes into account staff welfare and productivity, the physical characteristics and the specific heritage preservation needs, as well as ongoing business transformation initiatives, in a cost-effective manner;”

It is important that we can have continuous, open and transparent consultations, however the consultations we have had are neither open nor transparent. You will recall in March 2016 the ECE SHP Dialogue Forum asked you (see our email of February 29, 2016) for information on the SHP. We did not even receive the courtesy of a response. When staff members said the Focus Group conclusions this year did not reflect what was said or the concerns of participants, we were ignored. When staff members explain their concerns that their functional and human needs are not met in an open office and hotdesking environment these issues are not addressed.

We know the Staff Council has asked to be represented on the Steering Committee, the main body for having a dialogue on SHP. Mr. Cutts in January said the staff did not need to be on the Committee. How can you say you want a dialogue when our representatives cannot be present at these meetings? Where else can we involved in these decisions and consulted? We are now in year 8 of this project and staff are still not represented.

Mr. Adams in his message of February this year said that “Smart’ means ‘effective’”. Every single day that we struggle with our telephones or our leave requests or accessing Umoja or trying to work with gDocs we see exactly how ineffective these “smart” systems are. We have seen translators break down in frustration when discussing the software systems that are being forced on them. We are trying to do our jobs and find ourselves impeded at every turn by an increasingly inflexible and stifling system dictated to us by a central authority. We should not use the term “smart” as a description of what is planned and trying to call it that will not hide the deleterious effects of open space and hotdesking on staff productivity and morale.

Every study we see says productivity goes down and stress goes up in open offices, our
colleagues who have worked in open offices know this; our own calculations on how much time will be lost as we move from one work function to another show a 15% loss. Nobody has contradicted this information. Studies on empowered offices (where staff can decide how the office is designed) indicate 32% increased productivity over such offices. The current offices provide for flexibility of adding staff members or a chair or a bookshelf, room to discuss with a colleague or places to store needed equipment and information as well as enough space for personal items.

When, in December 2015, we asked the SHP team who was responsible for time efficiency in the new building they said not them. When we asked you in March 2016 you chose not to reply. You stressed the importance of accountability in your meeting of March 21 this year. Who is accountable for the anticipated decline in delivering outputs to our member states? Where are the benchmarks of how long it takes to do daily tasks? What are the benchmarks for staff stress and health? What do we expect will happen in the future and who will be held accountable for this? Who is measuring the expected costs in the SHP rather than just the benefits?

In a logical world the functional needs of the staff would dictate the office configuration, in this ideologically-driven plan we are faced with the reverse.

We have asked and requested and suggested and spoken up again and again. And yet we see nothing in the SHP that has changed from the initial plans that reflect our concerns, indeed it seems to be moving in the opposite direction. The latest report on the SHP does not reflect our concerns (and staff were permitted no input to it). Studies show that open offices and hotdesking will cause productivity to decline, health to decline, stress to increase – all costs that will swamp any putative space savings.

We are very pleased to see that after so many months of struggle our new Executive Secretary has addressed staff concerns and launched a survey on the future location of ECE. This gives us hope for the possibility to finally start a constructive dialogue on the work environment under the SHP.

Yours sincerely,

– A group of concerned ECE staff 1

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1 Prepared on the basis of outcomes of the meetings of the ECE SHP Forum and Focus Groups.
A clarion call for a new era

Between 18 and 24 October 2017, the Communist Party of China (CPC) held its 19th National Congress in Beijing, a quinquennial event with profound importance for the CPC and the country.

It was a time to look back with pride. In the past five years, the Chinese economy grew at an annual average of more than 7%. Our GDP, now the world’s second largest, increased from 8 to 11 trillion US dollars. We contributed more than 30% of global growth, becoming the top driving force of the world economy. Over 60 million Chinese have put poverty behind them. More than 13 million urban jobs were created each year. Most important of all, we were able to check off the list many tasks on which progress had been stalling.

It was more a time to look ahead with hope. The Congress inaugurated a new era for China. With years of development, putting food on the table is no longer a daily struggle for most Chinese families. Now, aspiring for a more decent life, the Chinese people have growing needs for democracy, the rule of law, fairness and social justice, security, and a better environment. The changed, and changing, conditions bring China to a new historical juncture and set the direction for the CPC in the new era: promoting well-rounded human development and all-rounded social progress.

This is a mammoth undertaking that can only be achieved with clear, visionary thinking. The Congress enshrined Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era in the CPC’s Constitution. The important thought comprises guiding principles in all areas of our undertaking, in political, economic, cultural, and social development; in ecological protection; in military and defense capabilities and national security; in practising the “One Country, Two Systems” principle and promoting national reunification; and in China’s relations with the world. Central to it are the CPC’s leadership over all work, a people-centered approach to development, and the commitment to comprehensively deepening reform. It’s the “what and how” to do in developing socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era.

The strategic vision was fleshed out by a detailed timetable and roadmap for China’s development in the coming decades. By 2020, the 100th anniversary of the CPC, we will complete the building of a moderately prosperous society; by 2035, we will realize socialist modernization; and by the middle of this century, when the People’s Republic celebrates its 100 year anniversary, China will be a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful.

Mencius, a great philosopher in ancient China, once said, “If you are struggling, take care of yourself first; if your conditions improve, help others.” Today, more than 2,000 years later, it is solemnly declared, “The Communist Party of China strives for both the well-being of the Chinese people and human progress. To make new and greater contributions for mankind is our Party’s abiding mission.”
In this new era, China is more determined and prepared than ever to make the world a better place for all. It is ready to share its experience for other developing countries to achieve modernization. It provides a new option for other countries and nations who want to speed up their development while preserving their independence. It gladly contributes its wisdom and solutions to help meet global challenges.

The Congress identified two main goals of Chinese foreign policy: promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind and forge a new form of international relations. CPC General Secretary Xi Jinping gave his word, “China will continue its efforts to safeguard world peace, contribute to global development, and uphold international order”

The community of shared future we envisage is an open, inclusive, clean, and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity. It is China’s answer to the biggest question of our time: which path will human society take? It is China’s solution to the many global challenges facing our world.

The new form of international relations we pursue is defined by mutual respect, fairness, justice, and win-win cooperation. They represent the fine traditions of Chinese diplomacy, the aspirations of the international community, and the trend of the times. It is a new approach to developing state-to-state relations.

Sounding the clarion call for action to shape a better world, the Congress laid out a long to-do list.

**Develop global partnerships**

We will build a framework of overall stability and balanced development with major countries in the world, deepen relations with our neighbors, strengthen solidarity and cooperation with other developing countries, and enhance exchanges and cooperation with the political parties and organizations of other countries.

**Follow the fundamental national policy of opening up**

China will pursue development with its doors open wide. We will stay committed to the Belt and Road Initiative, an effort by China to create a new platform to galvanize international cooperation. We will increase assistance to other developing countries, especially the least developed countries, support multilateral trade regimes, and build an open world economy. Our doors will never close. They will only open wider and wider.

**Engage in global governance through discussion and collaboration for shared growth**

China stands for democracy in international relations and equality of all countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor. China supports the United Nations in playing an active role in international affairs, and supports the efforts of other developing countries to increase their representation and strengthen their voice in international affairs. China will continue to play its part as a major and responsible country, take an active part in reforming and developing the global governance system, and keep contributing Chinese wisdom and strength to global governance. No matter what level of development it reaches, China will never seek hegemony or engage in expansion.

This is a new era for China. This a new era for China’s interactions with international organizations, many of which call Geneva their home. In this international hub for diplomacy, China will be more committed to multilateralism and global governance. From trade and investment issues to global health, from intellectual property to social security, from disaster prevention to humanitarian assistance, the Congress has introduced clear policies in every aspect of human wellbeing and opened up great potential for international cooperation. China will be the unfailing partner of the United Nations and other international organizations as they seek to improve the life of people around the world.

In his report to the Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping said, “Our world is full of both hope and challenges. We should not give up on our dreams because the reality around us is too complicated; we should not stop pursuing our ideals because they seem out of our reach.” Let these powerful words inspire us as we embark together on a new journey towards greater peace and prosperity on our planet.

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1 Mr. Ma Zhaoxu is the Permanent Representative of the People’s Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and Other International Organizations in Switzerland.
Interview with a global leader at UNOPS
Strategist, innovator, and sustainability champion

Ms. Patricia Moser has been Procurement Director for UNOPS for almost three years. In this interview, conducted by Mr. Alex Mejia, Ms. Moser talks about UNOPS’s new-found role in the United Nations, Sustainable Procurement, Women’s Empowerment, and provides insightful and inspiring advice for women trying to make it in the realm of the United Nations.

A. MEJIA Tell us a little about why UNOPS is not so well known UN-wide?
P. MOSER Well, I believe that for many years UNOPS was satisfied with being in the background supporting other entities and was satisfied with being the behind-the-scenes agency. At this juncture in our history, we are a leading agency in many different areas, so we feel that we should be beside our partners, not behind. UNOPS and our partners, we’re all supporting people in need and we need to acknowledge and do so together.

I was reading that last year you had an impact of more than 17 billion dollars. Yet, your actual budget is 1 billion. Could you please expand on that?
We helped deliver $1.4 billion worth of aid and development projects and close to a billion’s worth of procurement. The 17 billion number is the amount spent on procurement in the UN system. This number is front and centre in the 2016 Annual Statistical Report (ASR) on UN Procurement, which UNOPS reports on, on behalf of many of the UN agencies. The ASR provides information on how the UN agencies do procurement, what kind of procurement between agencies, sustainability, and also where and from whom the UN is buying. Many of these agencies are part of the HLCM Procurement Network, of which I am happy to say that I am now Vice-Chair.

So this is associated with the Chief Executives Board?
Yes. So, we meet twice a year with all the heads of agencies who belong to the procurement network, and we talk about how we could improve procurement, be more collaborative, harmonize our approaches, and share best practices. Of course, the meetings are only a small part of what is constantly ongoing exchanges amongst the agencies to improve procurement at the UN.

Excellent. That leads me to sustainable procurement. Tell us a little bit more about that.
Yes! That is one of my favourite topics. Throughout my career, sustainability has always been one of those things that has and is extremely important to me. At UNOPS, we consider sustainable procurement not just as focused on environmental, but also the social and economic side. One of my focus areas over the years has been supplier diversity, focused on supporting small and medium enterprises and with an emphasis on supporting women- and
youth-owned businesses, or what are traditionally considered disadvantaged businesses.

In line with that, last year we created what we call the UP Forum, which stands for UNOPS Possibilities. The UP Forum is a workshop that provides capacity building for these businesses – that is, what do they need to do to be a successful business. Whether for the public or private sector, the tenets of what it takes to be a success are the same, so we have developed a whole programme around that.

The UP Forum is only part of our evolving Possibilities Programme. We now have a portal called the Possibilities Portal, where we invite SMEs to provide us with a story surrounding their unique, innovative product or service and how it can result in a positive impact on the many projects that we are engaged in.

The reason we called it Possibilities is because it is not about the here and now, but what can be, and that is actually our tag line for the programme.

We have received really good feedback from the stakeholders, whether participants, the ministries or donors associated with the UP Forum. To date, we have held one in Amman, Addis Ababa and in November in Brasilia. Next year, we hope to do at least three, if not four.

We are also thrilled that the agencies at the HLGM-PN endorsed the UNGM (United Nations Global Marketplace), which is hosted at UNOPS, to enable a flag in the vendor data where the system ‘flags’ if a firm self-identifies as a women-owned business. At UNOPS, we are now also able to download that into our e-sourcing system, so when a business is woman-owned we can incorporate that into our thinking and measure it. This is how we support SDG 5, empowering women and girls.

I wanted to ask you to allow us to use all that you told us about UNOPS and to link it with the SDG Agenda 2030. How do you see UNOPS really having an impact on Agenda 2030?

I think that there are many areas that we end up having impact. If you look at the procurement impact, and the sustainable procurement impact, it is present in every SDG. People underestimate and often do not pay attention to the impact procurement can have across the board.

Another key area where UNOPS has tremendous expertise is in supporting goals focused on infrastructure. We are working with some organizations in regards to oceans, and small island developing states and other similar topics. I know there are some agencies that have carved out certain SDGs, but because we are an implementation entity of the UN, we can support everyone in their initiatives across the board.

And what about engagement with the private sector and Goal #17? I. Does UNOPS have relationships with private sector corporations?

Well, UNOPS is strategically considering social impact investment as a way to involve the private sector. The challenges that we face in achieving the SDGs cannot just be accomplished with ODA. I personally believe we are leading the charge in this, and expect to have some projects launched soon that will be in this vein.

One last question from my side related to your book ‘one piece of Advice’ and to women empowerment. What do you have to say to all these young women at the UN since they are still very underrepresented?

What is your advice for them – the one thing they need to do to make it?

If you look at all the women in one piece of Advice, there’s one common thread throughout all their stories: that is, they all faced obstacles. It becomes a question of whether you let the obstacle defeat you, or whether you find a way around that obstacle. Define what success means to you. Success means something different for every person. For me, it’s when you hit an obstacle – and trust me, if you think my career was just a straight path, it certainly wasn’t. But when you hit an obstacle, if you think of making a trip, and suddenly the road is blocked and you need to make a detour, sometimes you find the most amazing things on that detour – something that you never even would have known had you continued straight on that path. So enjoy the side-tracked path. And for all these young women they should remember that the only time you fail is when you stop trying.

1 Programme Director at UNITAR and Editor-in-Chief of UN Special magazine
Where the world’s displaced people are being hosted

- 17% Europe
- 26% Middle East and North Africa
- 30% Africa
- 11% Asia and Pacific
- 16% Americas

Mediterranean situation

Sea arrivals in 2017: 157,767
Dead in 2017: 2,992

Source: UNHCR / UN Special
*October 2017

28,300 PEOPLE a day forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution

10,966 STAFF UNHCR employs 10,966 staff (as of 30 June 2017)

130 COUNTRIES UNHCR works in 130 countries (as of 30 June 2017)
65.6 million forcibly displaced people worldwide

22.5 million Refugees
10 million Stateless people

189,300 Refugees resettled in 2016

20 new displacements every minute

55% of refugees worldwide came from three countries

Syria
1.4 m

Afghanistan
2.5 m

South Sudan
5.5 m

TOP HOSTING COUNTRIES

Turkey
Pakistan
Uganda
Ethiopia

552,200 asylum seekers returned
979,400 asylum seekers
2.9 million asylum seekers

940,800 asylum seekers
1.4 million asylum seekers

979,400 asylum seekers
1.0 million asylum seekers

Greece
2.9 million
26,499

Syria
1.0 million
979,400

Lebanon
1.4 million
940,800

Pakistan
1.4 million
979,400

Turkey
2.9 million
552,200

South Sudan
1.4 million
552,200

Afghanistan
2.5 million
452,200

Syria
5.5 million
552,200
Welcome to the 2017 UNWG Bazaar.

The Bazaar is primarily for children - all the family enjoyed this special day.

Director-General Michael Møller and the President of the Council of the Republic and Canton of Geneva François Longchamp cut the white ribbon, thus opening the 2017 UNWG Bazaar.

The Bazaar is primarily for children - all the family enjoyed this special day.
United Nations Women’s Guild (UNWG) Bazaar

A feast for the senses

SARAH JORDAN, DEPUTY EDITOR, UNOG

The 2017 UNWG was held on Tuesday 21 November and, once again, played its role of cheering us up mid-autumn whilst raising funds to help needy children worldwide.

The Bazaar is a feast for one’s eyes – the bright colours of national costumes and national flags decorating the stands; for one’s ears – with musical performances from all around the world; one’s senses of smell and taste – which delicious speciality will tempt me today? and even one’s sense of touch – with so many unusual souvenirs to pick up and look at…

The pictures on this page are a reminder of our diversity and our unity. The United Nations at its best!

“The annual bazaar is an event that provides an opportunity to all visitors to navigate through the different cultures of the participating countries. The objective of this philanthropic activity is first and foremost to use the revenues of the annual bazaar in order to help underprivileged children in different parts of the world, especially in developing countries. It also aims at improving the quality of their lives, particularly in areas such as health and education.”

–Nehad Sukayri,
UNWG President

“How wonderful it is to see on this day people from all over the world, from different lands, different cultures and backgrounds, different ages… all getting together to offer help in financing the projects through the simple gesture of discovering a different cuisine or buying a souvenir from one of the country stands or buying a lottery ticket… this wonderful day reminds us how true it is that ‘many small streams make one big river.’”

–Farida Al Busaidi,
Bazaar Chairwoman
A visão de um recém-chegado

Porque é hora de tornar o Português uma língua oficial da ONU

Dr. GARRY ASLANYAN,
DEPUTY EDITOR, WHO

Se você está lendo este artigo, presume-se que você consegue ler em português. Este não era o meu caso há mais ou menos um ano e meio. Você provavelmente deve ser mais fluente do que eu em português. Como um recém-chegado à língua portuguesa, fiz algumas observações sobre as razões pelas quais o português deveria tornar-se uma língua oficial das Nações Unidas (ONU). Desta forma, eu gostaria de propor e compartilhar uma discussão mais aprofundada do tema. Além disso, a revista UN Special raramente inclui artigos em Português, embora apoiamos e promovamos o multilinguismo.

Minha jornada para se tornar um quase-lusófono nasceu por necessidade. Quando ficou claro que meus laços familiares iriam ampliar-se para incluir a cultura lusófona, mais especificamente o português brasileiro. Foi claramente a razão para expandir meu conhecimento do idioma. As pessoas me disseram que provavelmente seria mais fácil para mim começar a aprender o português brasileiro, pois parece ser mais fácil de ser adquirida por falantes de outras línguas.

As pessoas me disseram que provavelmente seria mais fácil para mim começar a aprender o português brasileiro, pois parece ser mais fácil de ser adquirida por falantes de outras línguas.

Both Chinese and Russian score poorly on the number of countries where it is spoken (2 and 5 respectively). But things have changed recently, least because of the population boom of Brazil resulting in Portuguese native speakers. One additional aspect is that Portuguese has dissemination all around the globe – Europe, Americas, Africa and Asia. 9 countries, 4 continents, 220 million speakers over a large area of the global landmass with a significant economic footprint. Taking all the above into account, if there was one language to become the 7th working language of the UN that should be Portuguese.
pela exposição aos familiares e amigos recém-feitos.

Tenho que admitir que cometi alguns equívocos sobre quem seriam meus colegas de classe. Quem na Terra precisa apreender português? Não é mesmo?... Especialmente no momento em que o Inglês se tornou a língua franca da maioria das ciências e da comunicação empresarial ao meu redor. Essas pressuposições foram rapidamente contrariadas quando conheci meus colegas de classe. Se você é um empresário colombiano tentando entrar no mercado brasileiro, ou uma freira vietnamita que deseja expandir sua leitura católica, ou uma americana casada com um brasileiro ou um refugiado sírio no Brasil, o objetivo é o mesmo – aprender o idioma para a comunicação. Embora anedótico, não é um segredo que a maioria dos brasileiros não fala uma segunda língua, tornando-se uma arma secreta que ninguém sen- 

Mas voltemos ao meu principal argumento. É hora de trazer de volta a ideia de que o português deve ser uma língua oficial da ONU? O inglês, o russo, o francês e o chinês se tornaram línguas oficiais porque eram as línguas dos poderes vencedores da Segunda Guerra Mundial, que também eram membros permanentes do Conselho de Segurança da ONU. O espanhol e o árabe se tornaram línguas de trabalho da ONU na década de 1970, devido ao fato de que ambos obtiveram pontuações altas nas métricas do número de falantes e do número de Estados onde são línguas oficiais. O árabe é língua oficial em 25 países e o espanhol em 20. Enquanto o francês não pode ser contestado em termos de número de países onde é falado ou o número total de falantes, tanto o chinês como o russo obtêm pontuação baixa no número de países onde são falados, com 2 e 5, respectivamente. Mas as coisas mudaram desde a década de 1980, pelo menos devido ao boom da população do Brasil, resultando em falantes nativos da Língua Portuguesa que atingiram 220 milhões em datas recentes. Um aspecto adicional aqui é que o português tem disseminação em todo o mundo – Europa, América, África e Ásia. Eu tive uma experiência em primeira mão com essa propagação geográfica no ano passado, enquanto partici- 

do Timor-Leste que participaram de uma reunião em Nova Deli, na Índia, ficaram entusias- 

mados a ouvir alguém falar português em uma reunião dominada por documentos em Inglês e pela linguagem técnica. Na África, uma colega de Moçambique presidiu uma reunião que aconteceu em Windhoek, Namíbia, e sentiu a necessidade de compartilhar algumas ideias sobre como a reunião estava indo ao me perguntar como poderia ajudá-la a alcançar os resultados propostos durante a reunião. Ela falou comigo em português, pois sentiu que podia expres- 

sar melhor as suas nuances em sua língua materna. De repente, senti-me como se eu possuísse sua língua materna. De repente, acomodado emergente na América do Sul e de 7 países em desenvolvimento principalmente na África, vale o custo. Se não for por isso, que seja um gesto simbólico de inclusão. Quanto a mim, espero sempre melhorar a minha fluência no idioma, enquanto espero novas ações relacionadas ao seu status dentro da ONU. 

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Malheureusement, cela est un grand mensonge. Peut-être devrais-je dire « heureusement »? À vous de décider.

SERGIO MORENO, ONUG

Très vite, j’ai compris que je devrais accepter quelques réalités, comme par exemple, de me contenter d’une compréhension globale d’un texte et de ne pas comprendre sa totalité ni d’essayer de traduire mot-à-mot, d’écouter les informations ou un podcast et de ne pas tout comprendre, d’être dépendant des sous-titrés ou surtitres et d’avoir un accent – même à l’écrit...! Bref, il ne s’agissait pas de seulement cinq minutes par jour mais, d’investir davantage en me plongeant dans la culture française et en ouvrant toutes les portes qui étaient à ma disposition pour réussir à comprendre chaque jour un petit peu plus.

Le programme de français des Nations unies à New York était en train de changer. J’ai eu la chance de suivre le programme pilote qui, au lieu de se fonder uniquement sur la grammaire et de se conclure par un examen de fin de trimestre, proposait des tâches spécifiques et des évaluations périodiques. Les cours étaient conçus pour nous, les employés de l’ONU.

Trimestre après trimestre, les sujets abordés en classe devenaient de plus en plus intéressants; au fur et à mesure que nous progressions, nous étions capables de discuter de sujets tels que la décroissance, l’écologie, les compétences pour décrocher un poste de travail, le télétravail, la mobilité, la sécurité alimentaire, enfin, on discutait de sujets liés à l’organisation et à la société. Mais, tout n’était pas si « sérieux ». Quelle a été ma surprise quand nous avons étudié le film “Persepolis” de Marjane Satrapi: en utilisant la BD et le film, on a appris le passé composé, les articulateurs pour les comparaisons, et à la fin de la tâche, nous avons même pu rédiger une critique. Nous avons aussi découvert une chanson extraordinaire de Jeanne Moreau à travers des courts métrages de “Paris je t’aime”.

D’un autre côté, nous découvrions que nous pouvions apprendre en lisant de la littérature. Certes, nous lisions des fragments d’œuvres comme “Le Mystère de la chambre jaune” de Gaston Leroux, et les comparions aussi avec le film – parenthèse: pour certains de mes camarades de cours, c’était la découverte: “Le Fantôme de l’opéra” n’était pas qu’un spectacle de Broadway – ou la nouvelle “La Boîte noire” de Tonino Benacquista et la comparer avec la BD. Je vous avoue que le subjonctif passe mieux avec ces tâches qu’avec un livre de grammaire pure...

Parallèlement, alors que je commençais à améliorer ma compréhension orale et écrite, mes choix de lecture commençaient à évoluer aussi. En effet, de “Ça m’intéresse”, ai-je suis passé à la revue “L’Histoire” et maintenant je me sens à l’aise avec “Science et vie”. Côté littérature aussi, j’ai laissé “Le Petit Nicolas” et toute la collection de Tintin pour lire Emile Zola, Amin Maalouf, Jean-Christophe Ruffin, J.-M. Gustave Le Clezio et George Sand, entre autres.

À New York, après le niveau neuf le dernier cours de français général, je me suis préparé pour l’examen d’aptitude linguistique, que j’ai réussi non sans effort. J’ai investi des heures de pratique et d’étude, et même des cours hors de l’Organisation, c’est pour cela je peux vous assurer avec certitude de la qualité de nos professeurs et de leur professionnalisme.
“My experience of learning French in the Department of language in New York Headquarters, more than 5 minutes a day for sure, but no regrets!”


J’ai été étonné d’avoir partagé ces cours avec des diplomates et des collègues spécialisés en affaires internationales et d’être capable de discuter avec eux. La façon dont ces cours étaient conçus et pensés nous permettait à tous, spécialistes ou non, de comprendre des situations très complexes comme celle de la Centrafrique ou du Sahel.

J’ai entendu dire que le programme de Genève était en train de se coordonner avec celui de New York alors, j’espère qu’un jour nous pourrons avoir l’opportunité de profiter de cours similaires dans lesquels nous pouvons améliorer nos compétences linguistiques tout en nous informant sur des thématiques liées à l’Organisation et en se familiarisant avec le monde francophone.

Enfin, je voudrais dédier cet article à tous mes professeurs de français, surtout à ceux du programme de New York: Claire, Emmanuelle, Florence, Jérôme, Kaïla, Katia, Naïma, Nicolas, Pauline et les deux Sébastien. Grâce à eux, j’ai pu passer des entretiens en français et j’ai obtenu un poste à Genève où je travaille depuis presque trois ans. Grâce à eux également, je peux partager cet article en français avec vous, les lecteurs de la revue. Dans mon travail, je dois utiliser le français, l’anglais, mais aussi l’espagnol, ma langue maternelle, mais j’avoue que, la vie est plus agréable dans l’Organisation comme dans ma vie sociale en utilisant le français.
L’arabe assouvrira votre curiosité

Venez nombreux assister à la célébration de la Journée de la langue arabe le 18 décembre au Palais des Nations.

CHERINE HAIDAR AHMAD


Pour la troisième année consécutive, le Club du Livre Arabe des Nations Unies à Genève en collaboration avec la division de la gestion des conférences, met en avant une langue arabe moins utilitaire que celle utilisée par les traducteurs et les interprètes onusiens dans les documents de travail et salles de conférences. Le laboureur de ces experts de la langue est souvent parsemé de mille questions quant à la meilleure façon de mettre cette langue sémitique plurimillénaire au goût du jour. Une fois mise à jour, la modernité des sujets traités a besoin de sa rare souplesse dans les documents de travail et salles de conférences. Le laboratoire de ces experts de la langue est souvent parsemé de mille questions quant à la meilleure façon de mettre cette langue sémitique plurimillénaire au goût du jour. Une fois mise à jour, la modernité des sujets traités a besoin de sa rare souplesse dans les documents de travail et salles de conférences. Le laboureur de ces experts de la langue est souvent parsemé de mille questions quant à la meilleure façon de mettre cette langue sémitique plurimillénaire au goût du jour. Une fois mise à jour, la modernité des sujets traités a besoin de sa rare souplesse dans les documents de travail et salles de conférences. Le laboureur de ces experts de la langue est souvent parsemé de mille questions quant à la meilleure façon de mettre cette langue sémitique plurimillénaire au goût du jour. Une fois mise à jour, la modernité des sujets traités a besoin de sa rare souplesse dans les documents de travail et salles de conférences. Le laboureur de ces experts de la langue est souvent parsemé de mille questions quant à la meilleure façon de mettre cette langue sémitique plurimillénaire au goût du jour. Une fois mise à jour, la modernité des sujets traités a besoin de sa rare souplesse dans les documents de travail et salles de conférences.

Cette langue savante et imbibe d’apports puisés dans les variantes dialectales, et enrichie par les peuples et civilisations qu’elle a rencontrés a maintenu sa place en tant que langue vernaculaire pour tous les arabophones en allant au-delà des frontières physiques, religieuses ou nationales.

Cette année c’est la langue de la littérature ancienne et moderne qui est à l’honneur. Seront récités des textes du Livre de Kalila et Dimna écrit au 8e siècle par Ibn al-Muqqafa’ où des fables animalières venues d’Inde à travers la Perse sont adaptées, insufflées de l’âme arabe et reprises par La Fontaine dans ses fables. Ces fables, destinées à l’origine à éduquer les princes, sauront brillamment, grâce à leur humour et leur sagesse intemporels, côtoyer des œuvres beaucoup plus modernes issues de cet immense monde arabe qui ne peut être réduit à un Maghreb et un Maghreb puisque ses auteurs et ses artistes ne cessent d’interagir avec les sociétés et les langues où ils baignent en raison des différentes vagues de migration. Un cercle de lecture sera donc dédié aux différentes expressions littéraires et poétiques de ce monde pour en exalter la beauté à travers le texte mais aussi par des sonorités enrichies par les inflexions régionales de chacun des lecteurs. Et quoi de mieux que les cordes d’un oud pour servir de caisse de résonance à une langue elle-même mélodique par nature.

Et puisque l’on ne peut célébrer le verbe sans célébrer la forme, la calligraphie aura certainement la place qu’elle mérite. Tous ceux qui connaissent ou méconnaissent la langue arabe seront invités à en savourer les formes : les 28 lettres de l’alphabet arabe seduiront le regard. Elles seront tantôt sinueuses, tantôt épurées pour que la langue se voile ou se dévoile au gré des écoles de calligraphie et pour qu’elle se libère de tout conformisme en épousant des formes nouvelles et débridées.

Et puisque la tradition arabe veut qu’on comble tous ses sens, des mets provenant des différentes cultures culinaires du monde arabe permettront d’humeur des épices venues d’ailleurs et de déguster des pitances exaltantes.

La langue du Dad, quinzième lettre de l’alphabet arabe, dont l’exclusivité revient aux arabophones, légèvre ou vérité peu importe, sera célébrée par ses adeptes et amateurs le 18 décembre à la salle 8 du Palais des nations de 13 heures à 15 heures.

1 Cherine Haidar Ahmad est présidente du Club du Livre Arabe de l’ONUG
The rule of law must evolve into the rule of justice

The rule of law is a pillar of stability, predictability and democratic ethos. Its object and purpose is to serve the human person and progressively achieve human dignity in larger freedom.

ALFRED-MAURICE DE ZAYAS

Because law reflects power imbalances, we must ensure that the ideal of the rule of law is not instrumentalized simply to enforce the status quo, maintain privilege, and the exploitation of one group over another. The rule of law must be a rule that allows flexibility and welcomes continuous democratic dialogue to devise and implement those reforms required by an evolving society. It must be a rule of conscience and of listening.

Throughout history law has been all too frequently manipulated by political power, becoming a kind of dictatorship through law, where people are robbed of their individual and collective rights, and the law itself becomes the main instrument of their disenfranchisement. Experience has taught us that law is not coterminous with justice and that laws can be adopted and enforced to perpetuate abuse and cement injustice. Accordingly, any appeal to the rule of law should be contextualized within a human-rights-based framework.

Already in Sophocles’ Antigone we saw the clash between the arbitrary law of King Creon and the unwritten law of humanity. Enforcing Creon’s unjust law brought misery to all. In Roman times the maxim dura lex sed lex (the law is hard, but it is the law) was mellowed by Cicero’s wise reminder that summum jus summa injuria (highest law is highest injustice, de Officiis 1, 10, 33), i.e. blind application of the law may cause great injustice. The argument that “the law must be obeyed” has been challenged by human rights heroes for thousands of years. Spartacus fought against the Roman slave laws and paid with his life. Slavery remained constitutional and legal until the mid-nineteenth century; colonialism was constitutional and legal until the decolonization processes of the 1950’s, 60’s and 70’s; the Nuremberg laws of 1935 were constitutional and legal; Apartheid was constitutional and legal; segregation in the US was constitutional and legal (see, for instance, the US Supreme Court judgment Plessy v. Ferguson). Civil disobedience by Henry David Thoreau, Zaghioul Pasha, Michael Collins, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Ken Saro Wiwa, Mohamed Bouozizi were legitimate and necessary to give example and initiate reforms – but they all suffered the consequences of opposing blind positivism, the fetishism of the rule of law.

Democracy in the 21st century requires that the rule of law cease being the rule of power, might makes right, geopolitics and economics. The rule of law must incorporate human dignity into the equation and enable people power, self-determination and referenda. The rule of law must evolve into the rule of social justice and peace.
Les traducteurs de l’ONU sont triés sur le volet et suivent une longue période de formation après leur entrée dans l’Organisation. À la fois spécialistes et généralistes, ils sont capables de s’adapter à toutes sortes de situations. Les plus motivés d’entre eux n’hésitent pas, pour le plaisir, à exercer leurs talents en dehors des sentiers battus.

MATHIAS ARMINJON, OLIVIER MEYER

Pour le plaisir de traduire: le concours Saint-Jérôme


Le concours est lancé chaque année à l’occasion de la Journée internationale de la traduction. Les participants ont cette année le choix entre la traduction d’un texte du français vers l’anglais ou celle d’un texte de l’anglais vers l’arabe, le chinois, l’espagnol, le français, le russe ou l’allemand. Pour chaque langue cible, les traductions sont évaluées par un jury composé de deux ou trois juges qui prend en considération l’exactitude de la traduction mais aussi la manière dont sont rendus le style et les nuances de l’original. Les textes sont communiqués anonymement aux jurys afin de garantir leur impartialité. Les noms des lauréats sont annoncés lors d’une cérémonie officielle, qui aura lieu cette année le 9 mai 2018 à l’Office des Nations Unies à Genève.

En 2017, l’Assemblée générale s’est félicitée de la tenue annuelle du concours dans sa résolution sur le rôle de la traduction professionnelle dans le rapprochement des nations et la promotion de la paix, de la compréhension et du développement (A/RES/71/288).

Une reconnaissance officielle compréhensible, puisque le concours Saint-Jérôme met en valeur le multilinguisme au sein du système de l’ONU.

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Pour le plaisir de traduire : le concours Saint-Jérôme

Mathias Arminjon et Olivier Meyer

Pour le plaisir de traduire: le concours Saint-Jérôme

Vous pouvez télécharger les textes à traduire et le formulaire d’inscription au concours à partir du site web du concours: https://languagecareers.un.org/dgacm/Langs.nsf/page.xsp?key=Outreach-StJerome-SJTC13 (ou taper « concours traduction St Jérôme » dans la fenêtre de recherche de votre navigateur). Les traductions accompagnées du formulaire d’inscription sont à envoyer à l’adresse suivante, au plus tard le 31 janvier 2018: SJTC@unog.ch
YURI BOICHUK¹ AND NICHOLAS BOICHUK²

Recently, a group of young translators from the Russian Translation Section (RTS) had the rare opportunity to translate a book of fairy tales. In the words of Michael Møller, Director-General of UNOG, “This book is about bringing traditional tales into one story under a new light. The tales come from different parts of the world and they are simultaneously intertwined with elements we have learned from other stories. In this eclectic mix, the predictable plots of the tales we know are transformed, the world and they are simultaneously, discussing particular creative challenges; therefore, it was tricky for the reviser to avoid damaging the nuance so skillfully placed there by the translators. Moreover, the book has an online element. There are QR codes throughout the text, which link to web pages where relevant Sustainable Development Goals are discussed in the light of the global challenges mentioned in the book, such as nutrition and air pollution.

What started as a unique translation assignment turned into a real adventure, requiring the use of new methods, such as a simultaneous translation-revision model based on state-of-the-art computer tools. There are encouraging signs that the book will be used in different learning environments as a tool to promote the Sustainable Development Goals in innovative ways. ■

1 Reviser, Russian Translation Section, UNOG
2 Editor, Et Cetera, International School of Geneva

The Fairy Tales for a Fairer World project was created by the Perception Change Project (PCP), and the goal was for the Russian translation to be ready in time for Expo 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan in July. The book and its Russian translation were made possible by Corinne Momal-Vanian, Director of the Division of Conference Management; Michelle Keating, Chief of the Languages Service; Elena Kilina, Yustiniya Khokhlova, Denis Komarov, Anastasia Kozhina, Ksenia Mursankova, Olga Novikova, Anna Ustinova and Yuri Boichuk, of RTS; and Aziyadé Poltier-Mual, Kirsten Deall, Carolina Rodriguez, Esther Cappelli and Jana Bauerova.

For further information: https://sdgstorybook.com
Female genital mutilation

The case for calling it torture and a crime against humanity

From 25 November to 10 December 2017, activists around the world will participate in 16 Days of Activism, the international campaign addressing gender-based violence.

ANTONIA MULVEY

For many years, the UN has campaigned, with some success, to have female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) recognised as gender-based violence. Globally it is now recognised by many states that FGM/C is harmful and it has been criminalised or banned in nearly every state where it is practised. It is also widely accepted that FGM/C can constitute a violation of the human rights of the girl or woman undergoing the procedure.

Whilst great progress has been made in addressing this complex issue, the number of women and girls still subjected to FGM/C is staggering. By the time the 2017 ‘16 Days of Activism’ ends, approximately 130,000 women and girls, mainly under the age of 10
In Burkina Faso, more than 75% of girls and women have been cut. But work to reverse this trend is proving successful – community meetings, peer education and a law banning the practice have helped to reduce the numbers of girls getting cut by 31%.© Jessica Lea/DFID

So, what more could and should be done to address this issue? Legal Action Worldwide (LAW) is now campaigning that FGM/C can amount to torture, and in some circumstances could constitute an international crime; namely a crime against humanity. According to the UN Convention Against Torture (CAT), for an act to constitute torture it must fulfil three main criteria:

1. The act of FGM/C must cause “severe pain and suffering.” FGM causes immediate and long term pain and both the pain and suffering are sufficiently severe to meet the threshold under CAT. In countries, such as Somalia, FGM/C involves the complete removal of the clitoris and labia minora. In some cases, the wound is sown together using thorns. The hole must be cut open for the woman to have sexual intercourse and again to give birth. Anaesthetics are not usually available or commonly used, and the act is generally carried out using knives, scissors, scalpels, razor blades or pieces of glass. In 2017, nearly 98% of women and girls have undergone some form of FGM/C in Somalia. The growing trend towards medicalisation of FGM/C has created a false impression that FGM/C performed by medically trained staff reduces the pain and suffering endured by the girls and women and thus make it more acceptable. This is incorrect, the pain and suffering caused by FGM/C can continue for a lifetime.

“Secondly, the suffering must have been intentionally inflicted for a prohibited purpose”. This is an objective test. In the context of FGM/C, the objective intent is to cut and remove part of a woman/girl’s body and therefore objectively it inflicts harm on the victim, even if the perpetrator did not mean to do so. Furthermore, FGM/C is perpetrated only against girls and is therefore discriminatory – this is expressly prohibited under CAT.

“Thirdly, the harm must have been instigated by, or with the consent or acquiescence of a State actor”. This is often thought to be an argument against FGM/C constituting torture. However, CAT recognises the role of non-state actors in torture where “the failure of the State to exercise due diligence to intervene to stop, sanction and provide remedies to victims of torture facilitates and enables non-State actors to commit acts impermissible under the Convention with impunity, the State’s indifference or inaction provides a form of encouragement and/or de facto permission.” International human rights jurisprudence clearly establishes state liability via the role of non-state actors in violence. Whether torture has been undertaken must be assessed on a case-by-case basis; however, it is clear that a great number of cases of FGM/C will meet the above-mentioned criteria. Perhaps many of those cases of FGM/C undertaken during the 16 days of activism.

In many countries, the practice remains widespread and with the underlying support of a de-facto state policy indicated through state inaction. For example, not undertaking investigations and prosecutions of cases of FGM/C. In brief, where the state has oversen widespread FGM/C, but undertaken little or no action to prevent it, it could be complicit in a crime against humanity. [This argument merits further consideration.]

Éducation / Enseignement

United International Accredited Certifications

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There is a counter-argument, that criminalisation will drive the practice underground. However, it should be noted that in many of the countries where FGM/C is most practised, it is already criminalised. Further, criminalisation is only one part of the State’s obligations – the State must take effective steps to address the torture. The classification of FGM as torture requires the State to do more than just criminalise the practice and enforce the law – it must take steps to ensure the deeper cultural and societal changes required to end FGM/C.

Framing FGM as torture and/or as a crime against humanity of torture could provide clear benefits to victims and their communities.

To date, there has been no legal case which has defined FGM/C as torture or as an international crime. A successful case or legal intervention can inspire victims and their community, demonstrating that justice can be obtained. Individuals or communities may receive much needed compensation from the state. A legal case can give a ‘face’ to the vast numbers of FGM/C survivors so that states, and the public in general, better understand the personal impact of FGM/C on individual women and girls. Legal remedies, particularly prosecutions, can also act as a deterrent to committing the crime. Even an unsuccessful legal case or complaint may be successful in the ‘Court of Public Opinion’ and can result in public pressure to change legislation, policy or behaviour.

Ultimately, defining FGM/C as torture and as an international crime provides a number of important tools towards the ultimate goal: the absolute protection of women and girls from FGM.

LAW hopes that the United Nations will support this new campaign so that next year on 10 December 2018 all women and girls can be provided with all the legal protections that they are entitled to.

1 Antonia Mulvey is the Executive Director of Legal Action Worldwide
Festival international du Film sur la migration
5-18 décembre 2017

Global Migration Film Festival
5-18 December 2017

L’Organisation Internationale pour les migrations (OIM) lance pour la 2e année consécutive le Festival international du Film sur la migration du 5 au 18 décembre 2017.

Ce festival sur la migration présente des films et des documentaires qui capturent la beauté et les défis de la migration vécus par ceux qui fuient leur domicile à la recherche d’une vie meilleure et les contributions uniques apportées par les migrants à leurs nouvelles communautés.

Il ouvre la voie à une plus grande discussion autour de l’un des plus grands phénomènes de notre temps. Le Global Migration Film Festival est un partenaire de Plural + et de la campagne de l’ONU, TOGETHER, qui vise à changer les perceptions négatives et les attitudes envers les réfugiés et les migrants.

Page Facebook : « Global Migration Film Festival »

HEAD Genève (Haute école d’art et de design)
Histoires d’un futur proche – Colloque international
14-15 décembre 2017

Geneva School of Art and Design
Narratives of a near future – International Conference
14-15 December 2017

À l’occasion de ses 10 ans, la HEAD – Genève présente le Colloque international «Histoire d’un futur proche» qui se tiendra dans les bâtiments du nouveau campus de l’école. Favorisant une approche transdisciplinaire, le colloque propose un ensemble de conférences, projections, performances et expositions, reflétant les champs d’enseignement de la HEAD – Genève. Il s’intéresse également aux mutations futures liées à la numérisation généralisée et propose d’explorer les représentations du corps et ses hybridations technologiques.


Black Movie
Festival International de Films Indépendants – Genève
19-28 janvier 2018

Geneva International Independent Film Festival
19-28 January 2018

Engagé depuis deux décennies dans la défense d’une cinéphilie indépendante et internationale, la manifestation genevoise est dédiée au meilleur du cinéma d’auteur mondial. Il propose pendant 10 jours une programmation novatrice, engagée, impertinente et libre : films de fiction, documentaires, projets expérimentaux, animation en provenance des quatre coins du monde. Les célèbres Nuits Blanches du festival, prendront cette année leurs quartiers au Cercle des Bains, en plein cœur de Genève. Ce Festival est devenu au fil des éditions un événement majeur dans le paysage cinématographique suisse, une référence dans le monde du cinéma d’auteur.

Plus d’information sur : http://www.blackmovie.ch
Religion and human rights

Human Rights, because they are the product of our essence as human beings, can never be limited or constrained, for they are based on our reason to exist. Therefore they cannot be static; they must be in “constant change” toward the path of absolute respect of all humans.

Ambassador Luis Gallegos

Universality of Human Rights as expounded today, should and is not meant to be the “end game” or mean the “end journey;” they are but steps in the consolidation of a principled structure that obligates entities, of whatever nature, to respect and antepose those rights over other considerations.

The norm making, application, interpretation and modification is an endless exercise of refinement in adaptation to constant changing circumstances. I have found in my experience, that those who do not accept change and promote the stagnant view that what has been achieved, should not progress are sometimes the activists in other human rights fields. I believe that these positions are based on political considerations of the moment that I understand, but do not respect.

We have a long road ahead for the achievement of respect for human rights by our societies. There is a misconception that human rights are a state or government responsibility. It is the responsibility of all the members of the society we live in and all should be responsible for them. We must look to change our societies to have the utmost respect for the human rights of all.

The international community took half a century to build the current human rights architecture after two devastating world wars and having witnessed the atrocities that human beings can impose on others. This structure has been in constant progression. We have ten human rights treaties with monitoring mechanisms, 48 special rapporteurs, a Universal Periodic Report negotiated in the Council of Human Rights; tens of special sessions, commissions of inquiries, hundreds of resolutions both by the HRC and the General Assembly (Third Committee), and thousands of recommendations are formulated every year for every state as a result of reviews under regional and international human rights monitoring mechanisms. More human rights treaties are in the pipe line, some of which I had personally chaired the diplomatic conferences (CRPD) and others in which I have played a key advocacy and negotiating role (Transnational Corporations and Business Enterprises).

Some people have asked me why I have been so engaged and why have I taken the initiative to promote and protect the rights of the vulnerable in our societies or challenged the status quo defended by the most powerful entities that we know in modern society. The answer is rather simple. When you have seen poverty, inequity, discrimination, dictatorships, the threat and use of violence, you have to respond with the instruments at hand, and as a carrier diplomat, they are the use of strategic negotiations to foster the respect for human rights. I have witnessed that a treaty like the CRPD can change the lives of billions, for you are either born with a disability, or acquire it during your life by accidents, sickness, war or for whatever other reason, but as you age, you will become disabled. One billion PwD plus 800 million aging, their families and communities represent three plus billion. Can you imagine the impact of our efforts in a short span of our lives? You do this with passion, conviction, persistence, patience and intelligence for you must convince 193 delegations to accept and not oppose. You do this as a team- for nothing in this world is done alone- that is willing to withstand retaliations, even of ones’ own government.

It is with concern that I have witnessed that the road forward to obtain the universal respect for human beings is not guaranteed, that there are regressions. The use of double standards, populism, fundamentalisms of all types, political interests, hypocrisy, the persecution of human rights defenders and the use of human rights for geopolitical objectives, all prove
that our state and world order need to be constantly persuaded and reminded that the road to our own respect as individuals comes from the respect for the human rights of the other.

Failures abound in our recent history. Every day we have challenges to these human rights that have cost us so dear. Why does humanity regress to the violations of the rights of others? Is it a pattern of instinctive conduct that we have as humans? Is this in our nature, or do we learn to, from the conducts of the leadership? There is a push back against human rights that we must be cautious to understand and detain, for they are justifying to our societies the repetition of the same errors and actions that have given way to more atrocities.

The division, like in all factors of life, is between values and interests. We must overcome our interests to have a society based on values. Is that so hard to understand and do? I still believe that it is not easy, but it can be done. Idealism over realism, you may say. Not so; we must look for the principled conduct to be able to reach the predominance of the values that will make our planet a better place to live for our children and grandchildren.

**FAITH FOR RIGHTS.**

The history of this recent initiative goes back to the Durban Review Conference of 2009. The OHCHR suggested defending religious freedom through the concept of prohibition of advocacy to hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, racism and hostility. The meeting of experts in Beirut in March 2017 allowed the expansion of the concept from prohibition of incitement to violence to the full width of human rights responsibilities by religious actors.

These last years have seen the manipulation of religions as an ideology to enhance the push back against human rights and as a tool for geopolitical rivalries. I am one of those firmly convinced that we must defend FAITH FOR RIGHTS, because of principal, not interest. Waves of terrorist attacks across the world have shown the limits of the doctrines of security focused counter-terrorism measures alone. Long term grass roots level approach is indispensable to address violent radicalism, at its roots and conceptual sources. Xenophobia we know flourishes in fear and fuels discrimination on religious grounds. It is impossible to conceive counter action in this area without the collaboration of enlightened and empowered religious actors.

The Beirut expert meeting of 2017 issued two documents, a) Declaration for the Rights to Faith, and b) 18 Commitments of Faith of Rights. Both documents can be found on the OHCHR website. They are the results of a tenacious work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and we must applaud the results and continue to foster the achievement of consensus to have a world based on FAITH FOR RIGHTS.

“There is nothing permanent except change,” as the Greek philosopher Heraclitus stated 500 years BC. To exemplify, he said that a man could not step twice in the same river. Neither he nor the river waters are the same. Thus change is the constant not immobilsim.

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1 Ambassador Luis Gallegos has been Vice President of the Human Rights Committee, Expert Member of the Committee of the Convention on Torture and other Degrading Treatments and Punishments, President of the Ad Hoc Working Group that developed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Member of the Advisory Group of the Special Envoy for Human Rights and Business and leader of the initiative to create a Working Group for a Rights based treaty on Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and other business enterprises. At present he is a Fellow at UNITAR, President of the Board of G3ICT, President of the Universal Design Commission, President of the Advisory Council of the Institute of Public Policy and Disability at American University, Senior Advisor to the Harvard Law School Project on Disability, Member of the Board of Special Olympics International. Ambassador Gallegos is a frequent speaker at international conferences and forums.
Eugenia Susel: un lápiz con alas

Vino al Palacio de las Naciones Unidas en el marco de la semana del español del 13 al 20 de octubre de 2017.

En tu trabajo, se nota que hay proposición política con un mundo feminista, habitado por mujeres despeinadas, desordenadas, fuertes. ¡Eres una profesional de la deconstrucción de estereotipos!

Si, la idea es: ya que tengo la posibilidad de expresar y crear nuevas realidades, ¿por qué no hacerlas como me gustarían que fueran? Sin prejuicios, seguras, mujeres que pisan fuerte, que pueden enfrentar todo tipo de situación y riesgo. Personajes humanos con fragilidades y fortalezas. Me gustan las personas auténticas. Estoy en contra de todos los estereotipos que nos impone la sociedad. Es importante que nos reconozcamos como seres valiosos por nuestras particularidades y que potenciamos todo aquello que nos hace diferentes. Estoy de acuerdo con aquella frase que asegura que «en la variedad está el gusto».

Por otra parte, la proposición política a la que haces mención surge de modo natural en mi trabajo. Inevitablemente en mis dibujos se cuela mi visión del mundo y como mujer y ciudadana mantengo una posición frente a la realidad que intento expresar y defender.

¿Qué quieres decir cuando te defines como artista independiente?
Trabajo como se dice habitualmente de «freelance», es decir, la gente contrata mis servicios e intento además del encargo, aportar un plus y una voz propia. Asimismo me defino como independiente porque para crear no me siento condicionada por ninguna línea de pensamiento impuesta.

Tu exposición en el Palacio de las Naciones Unidas estaba dividida en dos partes, una consagrada a ilustraciones de distintas problemáticas argentinas publicadas en Diario Los Andes y la otra, ilustraciones dedicadas a los Derechos Humanos, realizadas para una editorial alemana. ¿Hay un derecho humano que sea más difícil de ilustrar?
Bueno, en general fue un gran
Al principio pensé que sería muy difícil interpretar con imágenes conceptos tan abstractos. Sorpresivamente en cuanto me puse a trabajar, me di cuenta de la fuerte relación que había de cada derecho con situaciones de la realidad actual y eso permitió que los trazos fluyeran con facilidad. Los derechos humanos forman parte de nuestras vidas y lamentablemente al día de hoy muchos de ellos no se están cumpliendo. De alguna manera, me siento una comunicadora visual, por eso pienso que es importante trabajar sobre cada uno de los artículos, hacerlos más visibles y potentes a través de las imágenes y de este modo contribuir con la defensa de todos ellos.

Puedes estar en contra de los estereotipos establecidos, pero paradójicamente te sirven para vehiculizar ideas y también para manifestar desacuerdo. Exactamente, ya que están tan arraigados, los aprovecho a mi favor. Es decir, el hecho de que los estereotipos estén tan presentes, permite que la ruptura de todos ellos provoque un fuerte contraste y de esta manera lo que quiero comunicar tenga un mayor impacto.¿ Cuáles serían los estereotipos atribuidos a las mujeres que más te molestan? La imposición de que las mujeres deben estar siempre impecables, ser femeninas, eficientes, mantenerse jóvenes, armar una familia y además ser exitosas profesionalmente ¿ sabes? Considero que es demasiado pesado y genera un nivel de exigencia muy estresante si se pretende cumplir con todo aquello.

Y ya hablando en términos más generales, realmente lo que me molesta mucho es la imagen que se tiene actualmente del éxito. Es un tema en el que reflexiono muchísimo y que me gustaría trabajar a través de mis ilustraciones. Esta absurda idea de que para ser exitoso debes consumir cierto tipo de productos, pertenecer a cierto tipo de círculos sociales, o tener equis número de seguidores en redes. Una idea del éxito bastante inquietante de la cual no me siento parte.

¿Cómo sería una mujer en esta realidad que intentas crear? Una mujer real, que tiene derecho a equivocarse, que se levanta toda despeinada, que se rie como quiere, desprejuiciada, con humor y sobretodo libre de hacer y decir lo que piensa.

Hay en tus dibujos una recurrencia a lo mecánico, ¿ de dónde viene esto? Mira, por un lado proviene de mi fanatismo por la estética de los años 1920/1930, sus objetos y máquinas analógicas. Por otra parte creo que inconscientemente interviene mi faceta de constructora, donde disfruto de ensamblar objetos y realizar mecanismos, como si mis dibujos fuesen esculturas bidimensionales.

Es hora de despedirnos y por alguna razón siento que nos volveremos a ver. Actualmente Eugenia vive en Barcelona donde tiene su centro de operaciones. Desde allí envía sus dibujos y su arte hacia diversos lugares y continentes: Argentina, Guatemala, Colombia y recientemente Alemania. Eugenia es un lápiz con alas, y quizás esas alas la acerquen nuevamente a Ginebra.

Gracias a la presentación, me fue posible comprender cómo Eugenia pensó en cada elemento de sus dibujos para transmitir un mensaje fuerte y específico. Lo que hace que el trabajo de Eugenia sea aún más atractivo es la forma en que su personalidad abarca sus dibujos. Cuando el artista y sus dibujos se complementan, forman un conjunto integral con un impacto muy fuerte. Fue un gran encuentro fortuito de una fantástica colección de arte.

Muchísimas gracias a Eugenia por defender las causas ilustradas en sus maravillosos y meticulosos dibujos, que contienen un toque de humor y un fuerte significado, así como la atención al detalle.

Cuando un artista « siente » su trabajo y las causas que alimentan su inspiración, el impacto es mucho más visible. Los dibujos de Eugenia contienen mensajes fuertes sobre diversos elementos de los derechos humanos y de la democracia.

Fui un transeúnte en la exposición de Eugenia Susel el lunes 16 de octubre. Estaba interesado porque había aprendido español en el pasado. Al mirar el primer dibujo, quedé impresionado. Luego, después del segundo paseo, vi a Eugenia, que me invitó a una guía por la exposición a la 1 p.m. Gracias a la presentación, me fue posible comprender cómo Eugenia pensó en cada elemento de sus dibujos para transmitir un mensaje fuerte y específico. Lo que hace que el trabajo de Eugenia sea aún más atractivo es la forma en que su personalidad abarca sus dibujos. Cuando el artista y sus dibujos se complementan, forman un conjunto integral con un impacto muy fuerte. Fue un gran encuentro fortuito de una fantástica colección de arte.

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Immersion en territoire shan

En pleine métamorphose (voir le UN Special du mois passé), la Birmanie invite à explorer ses nouveaux territoires tout en prenant le temps de découvrir ses sites les plus incontournables comme le lac Inle, l’une des destinations les plus emblématiques du pays.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

Après 1h15 de vol depuis Rangoun le dépaysement est total en atterrissant à Heho, petite bourgade de l’État Shan sans intérêt à par celui d’être située près du lac Inle. Frontalier avec la Chine, le Laos et la Thaïlande, l’État Shan couvre le quart de la superficie de la Birmanie. Les Shan représentent environ deux tiers de la population de la région, le tiers restant étant composé d’autres ethnies telles que les Intha, les Pa-O, les Palaung et évidemment les Birmans.

À la rencontre des ethnies

Nous sommes passés du niveau de la mer à 1200 m d’altitude. Peu de voitures sur les routes bosselées et étroites. Ici, la majorité des gens sont des cultivateurs et l’on croise beaucoup de tracteurs et de charrettes tirées par des zébus. Sur les collines avoisinantes dominant les champs de terre rouge la végétation se fait dense, beaucoup de plantations d’arbres fruitiers. Pindaya est en vue. La ville est surtout connue pour la grotte Shwe Oo Min surplombant la pagode Nget Pyaw Taw et qui renferme plus de neuf mille représentations de Bouddha. Leur nombre ne cesse d’augmenter car les fidèles en offrent de nouveaux tous les jours. Le site est vraiment exceptionnel.

Au retour, sur la route qui mène à Kalaw, ancienne villégiature d’altitude du temps de la domination britannique, les moissons battent leur plein. Le visage couvert de thanaka, pâte d’origine végétale utilisée comme cosmétique mais aussi contre les brûlures du soleil, des femmes s’affairent à battre le blé à l’aide de tiges de bambou. D’autres séparent les graines de la balle en se servant de grands paniers en osier qu’elles agitent au vent. Plus loin, encore des jeunes filles au travail qui s’affairent, mains nues, au transport de pierres pour la réfection de la route. Et malgré la dureté de leur besogne, leur visage est toujours illuminé par un large sourire.

Terminé la route, c’est par un sentier tracé à flanc de montagne, parmi les plantations de thé, de bananiers et de mandariniers que notre périple va nous emmener à la rencontre des ethnies locales. Attirés par le chant des enfants palaungs venant du village de Hin Kha Gone, nous visiterons leur école. Puis nous poursuivrons notre trek vers Myin Dyke où nous passerons la nuit dans la maison du chef du village. Perdu au milieu d’une forêt de bambous, l’endroit est habité par les Taung Yo. Le copieux petit déjeuner avalé, avec crêpes au miel au menu, nous continuons notre chemin jusqu’à Myin Saing Gone où un marché est improvisé sur le quai de la gare pour faire patienter le voyageur. Tout près, des femmes cultivent leur rizière, récoltent du gingembre pendant que des hommes “dorlotent” leur zébu au bord de la rivière. Le soleil se couche au loin lorsque nous apercevons le monastère de Sha Pin où nous sommes conviés à dormir auprès des moines. Accueil convivial, dépaysement garanti et réveil très matinal orchestré par le coq du voisinage. Encore 4 km de
sentiers à parcourir au milieu des rizières avant d’atteindre la gare pour prendre le train pour rejoindre Nyaung Shwe, principale agglomération située au nord du lac Inle. D’une lenteur incroyable, nous ballottant de droite et de gauche, notre TGV (Train à Grandes Vibrations) nous fera même le coup de la panne au beau milieu du trajet. Mais il en faudra plus pour inquiéter le mécanicien qui, grâce à son ingéniosité et avec les moyens du bord, nous permettra d’arriver à bon port. Nous aurons même le temps de visiter le superbe monastère en bois Shwe Yan Pyay avant la tombée de la nuit.

**Lac Inle, joyau de la Birmanie**
Blotti dans le cadre idyllique d’une plaine encadrée de collines, au sud de l’État Shan, à près de 900 mètres d’altitude, le lac Inle est le deuxième plus grand lac du pays avec une superficie de 12 000 hectares. Nous sommes en saison sèche et sa profondeur moyenne n’excède pas 2 mètres. Le lac Inle est entouré d’un grand nombre de localités habitées par environ 100 000 habitants, dont une majorité d’Inthas (« fils du lac »). Beaucoup vivent dans des maisons sur pilotis et certains de leurs villages, pagodes et monastères ne peuvent être atteints que par bateau. Ce sont d’ailleurs le moyen de transport indispensable pour une visite touristique des lieux. Nyaung Shwe, relié au lac par un canal, sera notre « camp de base » pour partir à l’exploration de ce lieu hors du temps.

Les pentes des collines alentour sont cultivées par des ethnies de montagnards qui y récoltent fruits et légumes. Les Pa-O, deuxième ethnie de l’État Shan, produisent quant à eux le Cordia dichotoma, arbuste dont les feuilles servent à confectionner les Cheroot, cigares très populaires en Birmanie et dont la fabrication constitue une véritable industrie dans la région.

Les environs du lac Inlet permettent d’effectuer de nombreux treks ; les paysages sont variés avec leurs forêts, villages et champs cultivés. C’est l’occasion de découvrir la vie rurale en Birmanie, restée très traditionnelle avec ses chars tirés par des bœufs et des agriculteurs se servant d’outils ancestraux. Mais c’est essentiellement sur le lac que le dépaysement est total. Les touristes s’y promènent à bord de « long-tail boats », petite pirogue à moteur très bruyante dont l’hélice est placée en bout d’un arbre de transmission, deux mètres derrière l’embarcation.

La plupart des Intha sont pêcheurs et ils se caractérisent à leur façon acrobatique de naviguer sur leurs longues pirogues. Debout à l’arrière de celles-ci, en équilibre sur un pied, ils manient une rame avec l’autre jambe. Cela leur permet d’avoir les mains libres pour procéder à une pêche traditionnelle avec des filets ou avec des espèces de nasses en forme de cône faites de bambou. Auparavant, pour pousser les poissons vers leur piège, ils auront tapé violemment la surface de l’eau avec leur rame.

Les Intha sont aussi cultivateurs, employant une méthode de maraîchage tout à fait originale. Fruits et légumes sont cultivés sur des îlots flottants constitués de jacinthes d’eau et d’ autres plantes aquatiques. Ces structures qui peuvent atteindre un mètre d’épaisseur sont amarrées avec des perches en bambou dans les eaux peu profondes près des rivages. Chargées de terre et de boue, nourries en permanence par les eaux enrichies des nutriments du lac, elles constituent un terreau idéal pour la culture de choux, haricots, concombres et surtout tomates qui sont très appréciées et vendues sur tous les marchés de Birmanie. Ce lac est superbe, il dégage une immense poésie et ses alentours abritent également quelques sites historiques intéressants comme la pagode Shwe Inn Tain qui domine, du haut d’une colline couverte de 1054 stupas, le village d’Indein. À parcourir également la localité de Thaung Tho pour sa pagode et son marché, ainsi que celle d’Inpawkhon qui résonne au son des métiers à tisser la soie et le fil de lotus. Péjorativement surnommées «femmes-girafes », les femmes de l’ethnie padaung sont célèbres pour leurs fameux colliers de laiton qui peuvent peser jusqu’à 8 kg ; on en croise quelques-unes à Ywama. Pour les plus gourmands, le village de Khaung Daing mérite de s’y attarder. Ici l’atmosphère a des senteurs de sucre de canne et d’arachide grillée. Tous les villageois sont spécialisés dans la confection de pâtisseries qui seront ensuite vendues sur les marchés. Partout des galettes de soja et de riz sèchent au soleil et la dégustation est garantie dans chaque habitation…

(Suite de l’aventure à découvrir dans le prochain numéro du **UN Special**)

© Claude Maillard

© Daniel Maller

« Femmes-girafes » du village de Ywama.

Sur les bancs de l’école de Hin Kha Gone.
Don’t look down – look up!

Even if you are not a fan of heights, the recently completed and longest pedestrian suspension bridge in the world, has to be crossed to be believed.

VERONICA RIEMER, WHO

Built through private donations by the suspension-bridge and cableway experts at Swissrope, the Charles Kuonen Bridge opened on 29 July 2017, was immediately included in the International Ski Club’s summer hiking programme. A group of fearless members, led by the Federation of International Civil Servants’ (FICSA) General Secretary and high mountain trail enthusiast, Gemma Vestal, took a train to the village of Randa in the Valais to experience this record-breaking 494-metre construction, which connects the village of Grächen with the bustling Zermatt resort area, and serves as a crucial link along the Europaweg (Europe Way).

At its highest point this impressive skyway runs 86 metres above a ravine located at the foot of Switzerland’s highest peak, the Dom (4,545m). The alpine scenery from the bridge is nothing less than breath-taking with stunning views of the Matterhorn, Weisshorn and the Bernese Alps in the distance. “Scary but exciting, walking over the bridge can make your heart beat fast and your knees wobble, as the bridge sways slightly” said Teija Katajainen a seasoned hiker with the club from WHO. “There is absolutely no danger, but you must have a head for heights”. But with so much spectacular scenery above, in front of and all around you, there is no need to look down, even though the Zermatt tourism authority states that the grated floor of the bridge makes it “possible to look into the precipice below one’s feet.”

For Valentina Tsoneva from the UNHCR, crossing the bridge was an unforgettable experience. “I saw a family celebrating – raising a glass of champagne in the middle of the bridge and singing “Happy Birthday”. It was the dream of their lives! I sang with them and I thought that to realize a dream one has to be strong and dare to cross bridges”. With Valentina’s background in the UN Refugee Agency, she sees a connection with bridges of friendship and peace. “In this world you have to have courage and not fear precipices and vertiginous heights. Go up, forget your fears and cross the longest hanging bridge in the world! Do not look at the depth of the precipice, but the peaks of the mountain covered with snow, and smile!”.

The International Ski club members were taking part in a weekend adventure, starting from the village of Randa, and staying overnight at the Europahut located approximately half an hour above the walkway at 2,220 metres. The hut, which offers comfortable accommodation and hearty meals is situated on the Europaweg route, a challenging high-altitude hiking trail that takes two days to complete. Gemma’s proposed trail, although not following this route, offered its own challenges. Making use of metal rungs and safety cables for additional security, the group climbed through ice and snow from the Europahut to the Dom Hut, which as the starting point for ascents of seven 4,000-metre summits, including the Dom, has spectacular views of the Matterhorn on the horizon. After lunch, the hikers made their way down to Randa, once more taking in the majesty of the suspension bridge, before heading back to Geneva by train.

The bridge replaces a previous footbridge which was damaged by falling rocks in 2010. After the closure of the old bridge and before the construction of the new one (which only took an impressive 10 weeks to complete), hikers had to make a daunting, four hour-long detour down into the Matter Valley and then hike back up again to complete the journey from Grächen to Zermatt or vice versa.

Tourism officials hope this new short-cut will encourage more hikers to explore the Europaweg. The bridge is open all year-round and unlike many similar attractions in Switzerland, is absolutely free.

Warning however, the Zermatt Tourist Office does suggest that crossing the bridge should be avoided during thunder and lightning storms!

More information about summer and winter activities with the International Ski Club can be found here: www.scig.ch
Vous aimeriez partager votre opinion sur le magazine et son contenu ?

N’hésitez plus et écrivez-nous !

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

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

Et maintenant, à vos plumes !

Adressez vos commentaires à :
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Now, put pen to paper!

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In the October edition of UN Special, a picture was mistakenly published with the article entitled "Obasute: the golden rule of civilized society begins with each of us". We regret this involuntary mistake, occurred during the graphic design process of our publication, and present our apologies to the concerned person or persons in Japan. The picture was taken from the internet as a free image but it carried the wrong words in Japanese. Our sincere apologies for that.
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