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One year after the United Nations swore in António Guterres as its Secretary-General, this edition of UN Special will briefly explore what has happened so far and where we stand in January 2018. The magazine features an overview of the SG’s first year in office, as well as a few staff impressions on his tenure so far. Most importantly, you will find an interview with Mr. Guterres himself, discussing his accomplishments and aspirations for the beginning of his mandate. You may also read several articles related to health, including a piece on how WHO responds to humanitarian emergencies, and another on the WHO Global Working Group of the Joint Staff-Management Respectful Workplace Initiative, as well as some musings on the role of the medical profession in the contemporary world.

On the theme of education, we hear from the Director of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack on protecting schools caught in war zones. The Education Relief Foundation also discusses how to advance SDG 4.7. And, we hear from Dr. Colum Murphy, the Director of the Geneva School of Diplomacy. He shares his experience as both scholar and as former UN Deputy Head of Political Affairs in Bosnia, having served in Sarajevo while it was under bombardment in the mid-nineties.

Further offerings include a piece by the Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China on the Belt and Road Initiative, a topic also featured in this edition’s centerfold. Also included: a discussion on the headscarf in Christianity, Islam and Judaism, as well as several pieces on issues of peace and war. In staff matters, we have an update on the UN Federal Credit Union, which has achieved carbon neutrality, and also on the results of the UN Club Photo International annual competition.

We hope you enjoy this first edition of 2018!
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Our Secretary-General’s first year: What happened?

It has been a year, and we wonder if the “impossible job” has been indeed impossible, or if this affable man of iron determination has indeed achieved what he set out to accomplish – with us in tow. Let’s see.

ALEX MEJIA, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

One year ago this paper decided to dedicate its February edition to the newly elected Secretary-General, António Guterres. To summarize our optimism and the desires of the staff for our new leader, we wrote on the cover the word “Godspeed”, as we welcomed him with open arms and embraced the new priorities of his mandate.

In January 2017, SG Guterres was confronted with several priorities: ongoing wars and their resulting crises, growing terrorism and violent extremism, increasingly closed doors to millions of migrants, diminishing financial support for climate change agreements, harsher climate-related natural disasters, and, perhaps more internally, the realization that United Nations reform was again on the table, as we needed to be fit-for-purpose to deliver on our herculean mandate and to begin in earnest the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. From the very beginning he highlighted the link between peacemaking and development, between the ongoing violent conflicts and the threat to the UN’s mission to “leave no one behind” via the 2030 Agenda; in light of this connection, he called for prevention, or (as he put it on 10 January 2017, addressing the Security Council), “doing everything we can to help countries to avert the outbreak of crises that take a high toll in human lives and undermine the institutions and capacities needed to achieve peace and development.” Indeed, “prevention should permeate everything we do. It should cut across all pillars of the UN’s work, and unite us for more effective delivery.” As such, he called for the UN to mobilize on four strategic fronts: a surge in preventive diplomacy; bold efforts to bring forward the Agenda 2030; strengthened partnerships; and comprehensive reforms to overcome the tendency towards silos and fragmentation.

After a period of consultation, the Secretary-General’s main managerial initiatives were announced: cabinet-style weekly Executive Committee meetings to enhance decision-making and promote cross-pillar perspectives; a new Under-Secretary-General-led Office of Counter-Terrorism endorsed by the General Assembly; strengthened whistle-blower protection policy; the first report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations development system; the commitment to achieving gender parity at the senior leadership level by 2021; an agreement with the African Union Commission to enhance coordination of activities at all levels; a joint European Union-United Nations initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls; and, to initiate a strategy
on financing for development to facilitate investments in the Sustainable Development Goals.

What happened over the past year?

On reform: The SG first proposed restructuring the UN’s peace and security pillar, in order to consolidate the work of several existing entities into two new ones: a Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and a Department of Peace Operations. He has also expressed the goal of reforming and enhancing the role of UN regional offices, as well as the Resident Coordinator system. In that light and after almost a year of closed-door consultations and negotiations, he proposed sweeping management reform to the GA in December 2017, including moving from a biennial to an annual budget; granting the Secretariat more flexibility in resource allocation, enabling them to respond better to changing demands; eliminating duplicative functions across departments; and streamlining human resources rules and procedures.

On agenda 2030: While progress has been made over the past year, several member states believe the pace needs to accelerate and that progress is uneven. It seems that our boss agrees, as on 17 July (on the heels of the High Level Political Forum) he stated in reference to the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2017, “Implementation has begun, but the clock is ticking... this report shows that the rate of progress in many areas is far slower than needed to meet the targets by 2030.” Perhaps he was invoking the fact that developed nations have managed to mainstream the SDGs into their national planning and national budgeting processes, while developing nations – with few exceptions – are still struggling to finance programmes and projects that would show tangible implementation of Agenda 2030. However, the SG knows that the United Nations is not supposed to be solely responsible for the achievement of the SDGs. This agenda is primarily the responsibility of the national governments, with the UN in a supporting role. The appointment of Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed as head of the so-called “Development Pillar” at the UN shows that António Guterres wants this function overseen at the highest possible level within the Secretariat. And the fact that he has given her authority over the Resident Coordinator system shows that he means business. Still, the year 2030 seems to be far away, and the SDGs suffer from a malaise that we are used to seeing at the UN: the competing priorities between the urgent and the important. They are indeed important, but sometimes they are overshadowed by urgent crises.

On peace and conflict resolution: The SG has been rather unfortunate when it comes to peace negotiations so far, but to be fair, it is still early in his mandate. His Special Envoy’s continue their efforts to make a difference and bring peace - or at least cessation of hostilities – to several countries besieged by wars or protracted crises. To mention just a few examples, Syria continues to see bloodshed after six years of war and millions of IDPs and refugees; peace negotiations failed again last December in Geneva and are expected to resume in Vienna in a few weeks. Yemen continues to live a forgotten war, where our humanitarian efforts are also a constant challenge, with new peace talks announced after a visit by the Deputy Head of Mission of the Office of the Special Envoy to Yemen Sanaa at the beginning of January. We continue to see negative outlooks for the long-running conflict in Afghanistan, with an arguable resurgence of the Taliban, as well as for the war in Iraq, with ISIS diminished but still active. It seems that the geopolitical shift produced by policy change in the US has left the UN hindered and struggling to cope with a realignment of political actors and a reduction of its financial resources. As I write, the US administration has just announced it will reduce even more its annual contribution to UNRWA (last year they gave $350 million to the agency), as it will pay only $60 million of the $120 million it had pledged for Palestinian relief efforts in 2018. Our SG can only hope that the resources at our disposal are still there when needed, but he can also focus on Preventive Diplomacy.

On disarmament and preventive diplomacy: Some good news was received in April 2017, when after nearly two decades of inaction, the Disarmament Commission adopted recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. The Programme of Action to “Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons” became the leading instrument for facilitating cooperation between member states to prevent the diversion and proliferation of these weapons. With these encouraging achievements, the SG renewed his determination to focus on Preventive Diplomacy, with announcements in that regard as recent as during a visit to Colombia in January 2018, while observing the demobilization of FARC guerrillas and supporting the government efforts to resume peace talks with the...
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Interview with Secretary-General António Guterres

“I promised to make reform a priority. My objective of a UN focused more on people and less on process”

One year has passed since you were elected as UN Secretary-General. Can you give us a snapshot of the main changes you were able, along with your team, to introduce in the Secretariat in order to improve its efficiency?

In taking my oath of office, I committed to make reform a priority – to improve the efficiency and overall functioning of the United Nations Secretariat, to better serve people —people in need; people with hope; and people who look to us for help to improve not only their own lives, but our world at this time of challenges and change. I believe significant progress has been made. The Executive Committee, which I established in January, combines the expertise of senior managers and staff of many departments, field operations and duty stations, to provide strategic advice in a more holistic manner. The co-location of the regional desks of the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Political Affairs enables greater efficiency and coordination of our peace and security work. Also in January, we strengthened whistle-blower protection to boost openness, transparency and fairness. Enhanced safeguards are now available for individuals who report misconduct or cooperate with duly authorized audits or investigations. Following a review by an internal working group, we strengthened the policy further in three areas. The strengthened policy was issued in December.

In April, the General Assembly approved my proposals for creating a new office of counter-terrorism to be headed by an Under-Secretary-General, who would serve as the Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and Executive Director of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. We have developed a system-wide Gender Parity Strategy, which not only reflects our core values, but is essential to strengthening the work of the UN. I have put combating sexual abuse and exploitation at the top of my agenda, and appointed Jane Holl Lute as the Special Coordinator on improving the UN response. A new policy to combat SEA was adopted by the General Assembly in June, which puts victims at the centre of our response. And I appointed Jane Connors as the UN’s first-ever Victims’ Rights Advocate, supported by a small office in New York and victims’ rights advocates in several peacekeeping operations. I have also prioritized halting sexual harassment across the United Nations system and have launched a Task Force to address this issue, chaired by Under-Secretary-General for Management, Jan Beagle. A staff engagement survey has been conducted to find out more about the needs of staff and their views on how to improve our working culture.

The Secretariat also embarked on a process of comprehensive reforms. In the peace and security area, this effort is aimed at changing the existing structure...
One of the pillars of your reform initiative is the Global service delivery model (GSDM) which was put forward by your predecessor.

Staff in Geneva and many other duty stations are concerned about the impact of the GSDM on their posts. Can we expect from you guarantees that no staff will be losing their job as a result of the GSDM?

The goal of the Global Service Delivery model is to increase effectiveness and efficiency across the Secretariat. Clearly, this will affect staff to varying degrees. Some administrative capacity will become redundant after consolidation within and across duty stations, and in global service centres, while other administrative functions may change and thus require staff to learn new skills. A working group of the Staff-Management Committee established in 2017 is examining the possible impact on staff and will propose mitigation measures where required. Through various working groups, staff from across the Organization are actively sharing their expertise and experience to help identify the improvements that will realize the overall goals of the GSDM. A range of measures are being considered to mitigate the impact on staff who may be affected. These will be further discussed once the final locations are determined.

Since the beginning of your mandate, we have heard commitments to consult staff

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about issues that have an impact on their conditions of work and welfare. However, the staff unions have claimed that the gender strategy was adopted without any genuine consultation. Can you confirm that this was the exception and that all changes, including the management reform will be subject to consultations with staff?

I am committed to staff engagement on all issues relating to staff welfare and have met with staff representatives over the past year to discuss their concerns. On the Gender Parity Strategy, which was the outcome of a system-wide Task Force involving over 30 entities, my former Senior Policy Adviser, Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, met with the Staff Management Committee in May 2017 and took into consideration all input provided during the session as well as written proposals received from UNOG. The draft strategy was revised accordingly, including additional feedback from consultations with the Senior Management Group and other key stakeholders. This process contributed to a stronger, more inclusive product. To cite just one example, based on consultations with the Staff-Management Committee, temporary special measure policies were revised in order to have progressive implementation. My Senior Adviser on Policy, Ana Maria Menéndez, met with the staff representatives on 1 December during a special session of the Staff Management Committee and will continue to pursue these discussions.

The Gender Parity Strategy contains a number of recommendations which will need to be reflected in the Organization’s policy framework in order to take effect. I wish to reassure staff that any change to existing policies or development of new policies will involve the normal consultation process that is undertaken prior to the promulgation of any bulletin or administrative instruction. To make sustainable change and to transform our institutional culture, we need to work collaboratively. Staff voices are fundamental to the successful implementation of this strategy, and I look forward to meeting with all staff Unions in February on management reform. We will then continue to consult as the process unfolds.

There is a general sense among staff that there is not enough accountability in the system when managers carry out misconduct or make wrongful decisions. What are you doing to find a solution to this unfortunate situation?

As set out in General Assembly resolution 64/259, accountability is the obligation of the Secretariat and its staff members to be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken by them, and to be responsible for honouring their commitments without qualification or exception. In my report on Management Reform, I announced some of the measures that are being introduced to strengthen accountability in the Secretariat, such as: strengthening compacts with senior managers and developing a 360-degree evaluation mechanism; improving staff selection and assessment processes; publishing comprehensive, real-time and easily accessible information about United Nations operations to monitor progress in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals; reviewing the system of delegation of authority to reduce fragmentation and the misalignment between authorities and responsibilities; and, developing global management accountability guidance that clarifies for staff how the various mechanisms all fit together and contains the accountabilities for all functional levels in each job network. We are indeed focusing on accountability.

You have lately taken some bold decisions that have been welcomed by certain member states. Do you think that this will affect the UN budget on the long run?

In taking my oath of office, I promised to make reform a priority – across peace and security, the development system and in terms of management. My objective of a UN focused more on people and less on process, more on delivery and less on bureaucracy has indeed been widely welcomed by Member States. These reforms, other than making the Organization more effective, will prove to all member states that the United Nations can be their reliable partner in delivering all mandates.

Are there any practices from UNHCR that you would like to introduce to the Secretariat?

I am mindful that UNHCR and the UN Secretariat are very different organizations with different mandates and governing systems. But as with UNHCR, I have realized that the centre of gravity of the UN’s work is in the field, often in remote locations. This reality is the basis of our management reform process. I would like to see some of the reform steps undertaken in UNHCR implemented in the UN where appropriate. These include: greater delegation of authority and aligning authority with responsibility to ensure greater accountability; decentralization, in particular by locating decision-making closer to the field to ensure that guidance is more closely related to operational realities; streamlining the management support structures, in order to direct our resources and energy to the field. We are also analyzing from this perspective the Global Services Delivery model and the simplification of Human Resources policies and procedures. On this last point, as I have said before, there are significant challenges, but change is taking place. In the last months, I have been encouraged to see the abolition of several outdated administrative measures, as well as the update and streamlining of others.

Geneva staff strongly opposed the decision of the International Civil Service Commission to decrease the salary of professional staff by 7.5% on the basis of calculations that the CEB, which you chair, called “statistically flawed” and that will also have an impact on staff elsewhere. As a result, staff no longer have confidence in the ICSC as a technical body. What are your views on this issue?

As I understand, the ICSC has informed that an independent consultant has been commissioned to review the post-adjustment methodology; the results of this study will be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the Advisory Committee on Post-Adjustment Questions in February, during which both management and staff representatives will have opportunities to discuss further improvements to the post adjustment system. I hope this will allow for a solution that fully respects the principles of fairness and equity. Rest assured that I am closely following this important matter.
I take my role as a Glion alumna very seriously and think it’s important to be a role model, showing recognition to the hotel school and how much we have learned. For this reason, I hire three lobby interns from Glion every six months.”

Anastasia Schneider
French and Vietnamese Bachelor's degree in Hospitality Management, Graduated in 2009
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Staff impressions on Secretary-General António Guterres

It has been exactly one year since Secretary-General António Guterres started his mandate as the head of the UN. It is a difficult mandate indeed, in the midst of demanding challenges and pending achievements. So what does the staff in Geneva think of this first year under his leadership? We asked some of them about their impressions.

«De la solidarité, de l’engagement, de la compassion, du respect, du dialogue; telles sont les armes de négociations de notre Secrétaire Général, M. António Guterres.»
LM, ONU-CEE

“In this world of incompetent, unpredictable and even ill-mannered leaders, what I appreciate in Mr Guterres are his humanity, intelligence and diplomacy. These are qualities that inspire and reassure and will ultimately make the world a better place.”
JS, UNOG

“He is serious, well-intentioned but can be very tough. He is a cautious but probably determined reformer. He is trying to instil a modern, efficient organizational culture (like starting a meeting on time!), which is all welcome.”
OS, UNCTAD

“It is time to move from words to action to advance the gender equality. The Secretary-General has a strategic opportunity to walk the talk.”

“It is time to move from words to action to advance the gender equality. The Secretary-General has a strategic opportunity to walk the talk.”
LM, ONU-CEE

“Breaking the silos between the humanitarian development, peace and security, maybe his biggest challenge, but worth the fight.”
QH, UN Women

“The world has become a chaotic place and the SG has stepped into a landmine of variety of issues. In my view the first year of SG has been on a low key side. The world public should start recognizing him and better understanding the role of UN in the world peace.”
AG, WHO

“The SG is highly aware of and supports the power of human rights to sustain peace and development.”
SM, OHCHR

“The Secretary-General has shown over the past year that he is willing to put human rights back where it belongs at the top of the UN’s agenda.”
VR, OHCHR

“I feel the arrival of the new Secretary-General has lifted the spirits of many staff. We now see a more approachable person at the head of the UN, someone who creates rapport with the staff. I feel that Mr Guterres’ replies to staff during townhall meetings are candid. I would say in general terms morale has improved since his arrival in office. I hope he continues to meet the expectations of his staff.”
SF, UNOG

“En momentos donde la insensatez es común en algunos líderes, la dirigencia prudente, coherente y experimentada de António Guterres en las Naciones Unidas es invaluable para alcanzar los objetivos de la paz y prosperidad a escala mundial.”
RJC, UNITAR

“Stable, steady and sensitive: that is how I would describe our Secretary-General’s first year in office.”
SH, UNHCR

“Antonio is a leader with integrity and passion. He has brought a new sense of purpose and direction to the organization.”
PR, UNHCR

“The world has become a chaotic place and the SG has stepped into a landmine of variety of issues. In my view the first year of SG has been on a low key side. The world public should start recognizing him and better understanding the role of UN in the world peace.”
AG, WHO

“Our new SG seems to be a man of faith and a committed Christian. I see him as a champion for Interfaith Dialogue and also a global leader that can reduce the religious tension that we face today. It would be good if he speaks more on the common ground that all religions have towards peace and human rights. He is the right person to do that.”
MA, UNITAR

“En momentos donde la insensatez es común en algunos líderes, la dirigencia prudente, coherente y experimentada de António Guterres en las Naciones Unidas es invaluable para alcanzar los objetivos de la paz y prosperidad a escala mundial.”
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WHO maximises its response to two very different humanitarian crises

New emergencies demand new responses

**The scale, complexity and frequency of humanitarian emergencies is increasing globally. What's more, growing humanitarian need and disease outbreaks now seem to follow in quick succession.**

In early October WHO upgraded its response to a Grade 3 emergency which included a pre-emptive Oral Cholera Vaccine (OCV) campaign, ultimately reaching around 700,000 people – local residents and refugees.

At that point the flow of refugees from Rakhine state had become the world’s fastest growing humanitarian emergency. More than half a million people crossed the Myanmar/Bangladesh border between 25 August and late October 2017.

“A major issue has been the weak underlying health of many arrivals,” said Dr. Navaratnasamy Paranietharan, WHO Representative in Bangladesh. “They have been subjected to forced displacement that has been very painful and traumatic. In addition, many did not have basic vaccinations, or adequate nutrition. Alongside the vaccination campaigns, we have also scaled up routine immunization to prevent further suffering.”

Overcrowding, poor water quality and unhygienic sanitary conditions in refugee camps and spontaneous settlements have made the situation complex.

The three main objectives for WHO’s operation in Cox’s Bazar are dealing with the risk of infectious diseases, improving access to essential health services, and improving coordination in the health sector.

“More than 40 health clinics and outposts are now reporting regularly to the health coordination mechanism. Our Early Warning and Response System, (EWARS) is active, which allows us to detect and investigate disease outbreak alerts quickly. We are publishing regular health bulletins. The response is also addressing reproductive health, trauma and injury care, child health, and mental health as priorities, while also expanding into chronic diseases, tuberculosis and HIV treatment,” Dr. Paranietharan.

Funding remains an issue. At the October 2017 donor pledging conference for the Rohingya refugee crisis only about 12 per cent of total funds, US$ 48 million, was allocated for health. Yet, in addition to being a refugee crisis, this is a public health emergency.

That combination of a public health emergency with a humanitarian crisis is something that WHO’s work in Bangladesh shares with the operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. “Millions continue to suffer, including from a major cholera outbreak in the Kasai and a longstanding conflict in the Kivu region. WHO is working closely with the Government and other partners to reduce this burden.”

The Grade 3 classification enables WHO to tap into emergency funds, bring in more teams, activate emergency standard operating procedures, and set up emergency management systems with clear lines of accountability and communication. WHO is one of the first humanitarian

SOPHY FISHER, WHO HEALTH EMERGENCIES PROGRAMME

Certainly, this is the case with two recent Grade 3 emergencies declared by the World Health Organization (WHO), in Bangladesh and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, although the reasons for their grading are very different.

A Grade 3 emergency – the highest of three WHO categories – indicates that a major/maximal operational response is required. It engages resources from across the entire organization – in the country and regional offices and at headquarters.

However, WHO’s emergency response does not wait for the internal procedure of grading. In Bangladesh, the most recent influx of refugees from Myanmar began in late August. Within three weeks, a measles, rubella and polio vaccination campaign was underway. On 22 September an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was opened in Cox’s Bazar, and just over a week later, WHO took over coordination for the health sector from the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

But the reasons behind the two WHO Grade 3 classifications are very different. While Bangladesh presents as an acute emergency, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has suffered for decades from a protracted humanitarian crisis which intensified in 2017, with 1.3 million people currently displaced in the Kasai region alone.

Armed conflict, food insecurity, repeated outbreaks of cholera, measles and polio have combined with the pressure of more than 400,000 refugees and 3.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) to make this one of the most complex and intractable emergencies in the world.

“A combination of factors has created a downward spiral resulting in severe underdevelopment and eroding the capacity for humanitarian response,” said Dr. Yokouidé Allarangar, WHO Representative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. “Millions continue to suffer, including from a major cholera outbreak in the Kasai and a longstanding conflict in the Kivu region. WHO is working closely with the Government and other partners to reduce this burden.”

The Grade 3 classification enables WHO to tap into emergency funds, bring in more teams, activate emergency standard operating procedures, and set up emergency management systems with clear lines of accountability and communication. WHO is one of the first humanitarian
organisations to adopt the Incident Management System (IMS) – a recognized best practice among many domestic emergency management agencies – as its approach for managing emergencies.

In response to the recent, rapid deterioration in health and security conditions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, WHO dispatched experts, medical supplies, including cholera and malaria kits, and Interagency Emergency Health Kits, and mobilized other internal resources to increase the impact of the response. Experts have been sent and field missions undertaken to assess the situation and unmet health needs.

Over the next few months, WHO has four main objectives. The first, stepping up coordination, is particularly important because significant health-related systems and facilities already exist and can be utilized. The second objective is to strengthen disease surveillance and the analysis of health data to ensure assistance is distributed effectively. The third is prevention, detection and control of disease outbreaks, with an emphasis on building rapid response, and the final one is improving access to essential health services.

WHO is now working to expand its operational presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and repurposing existing systems away from the established polio programme onto broader disease surveillance and rapid response.

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WHO worker in a Rohingya refugee settlement, in the Teknaf area of Cox Bazar, Bangladesh.

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How to protect students, teachers, and schools in war

Education is a frequent casualty of armed conflict that affects children, their families, and their communities. In wars around the world, both indiscriminate and targeted attacks on students, teachers, schools, and universities are carried out by state armed forces and non-state armed groups for a variety of reasons – political, ethnic, cultural, or religious.

Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, will update the Human Rights Council on the threats faced by children who are living through war.

These events present important opportunities for states and organizations in Geneva to raise awareness of the problem of attacks on schools and their military use.

And, third, the Human Rights Council will draft a resolution on the rights of children in humanitarian situations.

At the high-level panel and the Interactive Dialogue with SRSG Gamba, diplomats in Geneva should ensure that their governments issue strong
aimed at enhancing the protection of education during armed conflict.

Seventy-two countries have already endorsed this Declaration, and by doing so, committed to take a range of actions to safeguard learning during armed conflict, including by monitoring and reporting attacks, assisting victims, and supporting the continuation of safe education during war. By joining the Safe Schools Declaration, states also commit to limit the use of schools and universities for military purposes.

In May 2017, the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, urged all UN member states to endorse this Declaration. SRSG Gamba echoed his call, observing that the increasing support for the Declaration reflects a growing international consensus that reducing military use of educational buildings is essential to avoid the disruption of education.

The Safe Schools Declaration is already making a positive difference. Countries such as Denmark and New Zealand have updated their military manuals to include special protections for education and limit the military use of schools, and Switzerland is in the process of a similar update. Slovenia has incorporated new protections into its training materials for international operations. Ecuador is revising the training curriculum for members of its armed forces to incorporate stronger protections for educational infrastructure.

Countries that are directly affected by conflict have also been using the Safe Schools Declaration as a framework for improving protection of education. The Ministry of Education in Afghanistan has been taking steps to put an end to the military use of schools, using the Declaration to advocate for the removal of military checkpoints and bases from education centers. South Sudan and Niger are developing conflict-sensitive education policies to address and prevent potential causes of conflict. African Union forces have evacuated schools and universities they were using as bases in Somalia. UN peacekeepers in the Central African Republic have cleared schools occupied by non-state armed groups. And authorities in Nigeria and Palestine have been implementing a range of safety and security measures designed to make schools safer even in the most difficult of circumstances.

Since the Declaration was opened for endorsement in Oslo in May 2015, GCPEA has been collecting these and other examples of implementation, which are detailed in a recent publication called “The Safe Schools Declaration: A Framework for Action”. This tool provides governments with recommendations and advice on how to implement the Declaration.

With next month’s program of activities in Geneva offering many opportunities for states to demonstrate their commitment to improve protection for children in conflict, one concrete step that states can take is to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration and join the community of states already working to make schools safer during war.
ANUSH RAJAMANI,
THE EDUCATION RELIEF FOUNDATION

Organised by the Education Relief Foundation (ERF), in cooperation with Globethics.net, the Global Forum on Balanced and Inclusive Education (BIE), was held on Dec 8th. Edgar Morin, French philosopher, sociologist, UNESCO Chair of Complex Thought and largely considered the founder of Transdisciplinarity addressed the assembly as the guest of honour.

The ERF’s 2017 four regional stakeholder meetings, marked the final stage of consolidating the recommendations discussed at the meetings hosted, with ERF’s partners, in Thailand, Nigeria, Panama and Geneva. The objective was to produce a Global Guide for Code of Ethics on ERF’s BIE through an approach based primarily on international cooperation via academic research and policy uptake based on local initiatives, in advancing the humanistic vision of SDG4.7 globally.

The panel addressed the challenges and solutions for the implementation of BIE and directed the conversation to ensure that the new agenda presented by the SDGs are with high hopes and to be achieved this time round. The four pillars of BIE set by ERF: Intra-culturalism, Transdisciplinarity, Dialecticism and Contextuality will be used as the foundation for this Global Guide. The endorsements of ERF’s BIE presented at the meeting further supported ERF’s initiative to develop a global guide for ethics, principles, policies and practice for the delivery and uptake of BIE.

SDG 4.7 is of particular importance as it is the first time it has received global attention and universal agreement instead of a concern that was thought to be relevant only in developing countries. The President and founder of ERF, Shaikh Manssour Bin Mussallam emphasised that a combination of dynamic intergovernmental, cross sectoral structure, further strengthening south-south as well as north-south, multilateral collaborations are quintessential when discussing overhauling our global educational systems.

Mr. Ichiro Miyawaza from UNESCO Bangkok, urged to take action towards a sustainable reform as the discussion on education has spanned over a century, and with every unfulfilled goal and target, the number of out of school children is on the rise, with the current magnitude of 263 million children and youth stated by UNESCO. Although substantial improvements have been made in the past, these efforts require strengthening in order to respond to the needs of our societies for a more peaceful and sustainable
inclusive education from the perspective of cultural connectivity. That being said, much work is still required in order to ameliorate policies and practice of global citizenship education. BIE goes further than global citizenship. To firstly, connect the fragmented initiatives into a global platform for collaboration, and to adhere to the various needs and capabilities of students irrespective of their backgrounds. Lastly, to engage learners through transdisciplinarity and intra-cultural knowledge and dialogue. These are particularly important to remain relevant in our globalised world where curricula is often disconnected from current affairs.

SDG 4 represents a global responsibility that is reinforced by stakeholders to push forward this agenda in order to facilitate a long overdue discussion on the strengthening of the educational structure, as well as its content and discourse. Education is at the epicentre for socio-economic growth of societies and as a prerequisite, BIE needs to be comprehensively implemented.

The Global Forum On BIE at the UN in Geneva included recommendations presented from the four regional stakeholder meetings of ERF by Dr. Ethel Agnes Pascua-Valenzula, Deputy Director for Programme and Development from the Southeast Asia Ministries of Education Organisation (SEAMEO), Dr. Francois Vallaeys, President, Union of University Social Responsibility for Latin America (URSULA) constituted of 86 Latin American member universities, Dr. Victoria Kanobe Kisaakye, Programmes Coordinator, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, Uganda and Prof. Abdeljalil Akkari, Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education – Research Team in International and Comparative Education, University of Geneva (UNIGE).

The Education Relief Foundation is a non-profit NGO based in Geneva working on the forefront to develop, promote and embed BIE, globally adapting education to the 21st century. The ERF Secretariat, which serves as the implementing body of the organisation is headed by the Director Dr. Najia Musolino.

The rise of global citizenship education has aided in reducing issues revolving around world. Moreover, a sustainable paradigm shift is crucial as is the mode of communication and mobilisation when implementing BIE. Mr. Renato Opertti from the International Bureau of Education, UNESCO in Geneva, pointed that if the educational systems do nothing to provide everyone with equal opportunities, a void will be created in every classroom. The panelists made it imperative to acknowledge that inclusive education should be a right and not a privilege especially by those engaging in this conversation. Ms. Yetnebersche Nigussie, Laureate of the Right Livelihood Award stressed to bridge the gap for children with disabilities to be given more than just the access to education, but to one that is inclusive and tailored to support and empower people, irrespective of differences and capabilities. She added that the international community needs to follow a multi-stakeholder approach in the future implementation of BIE, as there is a clear disparity between policy aspirations and budgetary allocations for students with disabilities.

In the keynote address of the former French Minister of Culture and Education, and President of the Institut du monde arabe and ERF Fellow Mr. Jack Lang said, ‘In spite of our diversities, it is essential that a humanistic vision is integrated in our education systems’. He added that ‘The key for this lies in the training of trainers without which there is no hope for the reform of education systems’.

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Edgar Morin “The unity and diversity of human beings must be recognized in education.” United Nations Geneva, 8 December 2017
Pourquoi UMOJA ne me fera pas perdre mon emploi?

Il est temps de crever l’abcès et de dire non et non à ceux qui veulent utiliser UMOJA pour mettre à la porte les agents des services généraux employés par le Secrétariat de l’ONU...

SANDRINE VILCHES, CNUCED

Rappelons-nous... il y a de cela un peu plus de 2 ans nous fêtions en grande pompe l’arrivée d’une initiative de réforme administrative censée apporter une simplification radicale des processus opérationnels de l’ONU. Le choix s’est alors porté sur le logiciel (SAP) et le progiciel de gestion intégré (ERP).

Ce système rebaptisé au doux nom d’UMOJA (Unité en swahili) deviendrait le système central de l’ONU et permettrait à l’Organisation de se conformer aux normes internationales IPSAS et ainsi remplacer UNSAS et supprimer par là même les anciens systèmes trop nombreux et sans interface commune.

Cette méthode fut par conséquent adoptée pour soi-disant révolutionner la sphère onusiennne mondiale.

Magnifique...

Le Secrétariat a accueilli ce système avec joie, avec des petits accessoires portant le logo d’UMOJA, des journées portes ouvertes, des chansons dédiées à cette opportunité de réunification mondiale... UMOJA, nom symbolique censé améliorer notre quotidien pour un "making it happen".

Les débuts furent difficiles et laborieux, et nous nous sommes vite rendu compte que ce système ayant plusieurs interfaces, ajoutait une panoplie d’étapes et de procédures. Cela rend le processus de travail plus complexe et exige de l’expertise, du savoir-faire et un travail individualisé à adapter à chaque cas.

Dans le même temps, nous apprendrons que ce système permettrait aux Nations Unies de centraliser tout le travail administratif via deux centres de transaction et par déduction, supprimer tous les autres. Il s’agit du fameux Dispositif de prestation de services centralisée, plus connu sous l’appellation de GSDM.

Plus magnifique du tout...

L’idée sous-jacente serait une forte réduction du nombre d’agents des services généraux, réduction facilitée par ce système supposé simplifier les processus administratifs et diminuer le temps de travail des fonctionnaires. La logique qui sous-tend cette idée est qu’une réduction du temps de travail devrait absolument entraîner une diminution du nombre de fonctionnaires.

Il est vrai que sur papier, l’idée peut faire son chemin... Mais sur le papier uniquement!

En effet, ce progiciel de gestion-intégré (UMOJA) adopté pour appuyer l’application des normes IPSAS permet aujourd’hui une meilleure gestion des ressources des projets ainsi qu’une meilleure définition de la chaîne hiérarchique. Il est vrai aussi que grâce à UMOJA, les états membres sont mieux renseignés sur la situation financière des entités. A contrario, UMOJA nécessite une gestion constante des opérations journalières relatives aux domaines des finances, des achats, des voyages, des contrats, etc. Tout cela devrait être assumé par des fonctionnaires sur place et implique qu’il est hors de question d’envisager une réduction du nombre de fonctionnaires. Les problèmes rencontrés par les multiples interfaces d’UMOJA génèrent des opérations quotidiennes de dépannage et je vois mal comment 1 ou 2 centres excentrés pourraient venir en aide efficacement aux programmes d’exécution des projets...

Aujourd’hui plus qu’hier, le système actuel bien que performant nécessite un personnel de proximité s’adaptant aux défis journaliers générés par ce progiciel de gestion-intégré.

La complexité d’utilisation d’UMOJA demande une bonne gouvernance afin de gérer les opérations courantes journalières, gérer les projets, résoudre les problèmes et communiquer les informations aux parties intéressées. De toute évidence, il est primordial de garder le personnel intramuros et préserver son savoir-faire afin de faire face aux exigences d’UMOJA.

A bon entendeur...
Joint efforts for the Silk Road economic belt and the 21st century maritime road

Drawing on the spirit of the ancient silk road, China proposed 5 years ago the idea of building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Today over 100 countries and international organizations have taken part in this initiative. This vision is becoming a reality and bearing rich fruit.

AMBASSADOR FU CONG
Over 2,000 years ago, our ancestors, trekking across vast steppes and deserts, connected Asia, Europe and Africa with a transcontinental passage known today as the Silk Road. Navigating rough seas, they linked the East with the West with sea routes called the maritime Silk Road. Spanning centuries and thousands of miles, these ancient silk routes embody the spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit, a great heritage of human civilization.

Today, our world is fraught with challenges. Global growth awaits new drivers, inclusive and balanced development is elusive, and the gap between the rich and the poor threatens to grow rather than diminish.

Drawing on the spirit of the ancient silk road, in 2013, China proposed the idea of building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, i.e. the Belt and Road Initiative. Almost five years on, over 100 countries and international organizations have expressed support to and
taken part in this initiative. Important resolutions passed by the UN General Assembly and Security Council refer to it. This vision is becoming a reality and bearing rich fruit.

**Policy connectivity has been deepening.** Meant not to reinvent the wheel, but to leverage each partner country’s strength and complement their development strategies, the “Belt and Road” initiative has been enhancing the coordination of policy initiatives of relevant countries, such as the Eurasian Economic Union of Russia, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity, the Bright Road initiative of Kazakhstan, the Middle Corridor initiative of Turkey, the Development Road initiative of Mongolia, the Two Corridors, One Economic Circle initiative of Viet Nam, the Northern Powerhouse initiative of the UK and the Amber Road initiative of Poland.

There is also growing complementarity between China’s development plan and those of Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Hungary and many other countries. China has signed cooperation agreements with over 40 countries and international organizations and carried out cooperation on production capacity on a regular basis with more than 30 countries.

**Infrastructure connectivity has been strengthening.** Countries have been pulling together under the initiative to speed up the development of Jakarta-Bandung high-speed railway, China-Laos railway, Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway, and Hungary-Serbia railway, and upgraded Gwadar and Piraeus ports. An even larger number of connectivity projects are in the pipeline. Today, a multidimensional infrastructure network is taking shape, underpinned by economic corridors such as China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor, and the New Eurasian Continental Bridge. It is a network of land-sea-air transportation routes and information expressway, supported by major railway, port and pipeline projects.

**Trade connectivity has been increasing.** The Belt and Road Initiative is greatly facilitating trade and investment and improving business environment. For example, in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries, customs clearance time for agricultural produce exporting to China has been cut by 90%. Total trade between China and other Belt and Road countries in 2014-2016 exceeded US$3 trillion, and China’s investment in these countries has surpassed US$50 billion. Chinese companies have set up 56 economic cooperation zones in over 20 countries, generating some US$1.1 billion of tax revenue and 180,000 jobs for their host countries.

**Financial connectivity has been expanding.** China has engaged in multiple forms of financial cooperation with countries and organizations involved in the initiative. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has provided US$1.7 billion of loans for nine projects in Belt and Road participating countries. The Silk Road Fund has made US$4 billion of investment, and the 16+1 financial holding company between China and Central and Eastern European countries has been inaugurated. These new financial mechanisms, with their special focus, complement and join forces with traditional multilateral financial institutions, such as the World Bank, in a multi-tiered financial cooperation network to support the Belt and Road initiative.

**People-to-people connectivity has been growing.** To build stronger people-to-people ties, countries participating in the initiative have joined hands to develop an educational Silk Road and a health Silk Road, and worked for closer links in science, education, culture, health, and many other fields of people-to-people exchange. Every year, China provides 10,000 government scholarships to the relevant countries. Chinese governments at sub-national levels have also set up special Silk Road scholarships to encourage international cultural and educational exchanges.

As we often say in China, “The beginning is the most difficult part.” So far, a solid first step has been taken in pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative, drawing increasing attention from around the world. The good work will be kept up.

Domestically, China will pursue innovative, coordinated, green, open, and inclusive development. It will adapt to
the new normal of economic development and properly steer its direction. Supply-side structural reform will continue to unfold to realize sustainable development. There efforts will inject strong impetus into the Belt and Road Initiative.

Real actions will be taken to materialize the plans and projects envisioned in a host of agreements in infrastructure, energy, customs, e-commerce, and marine and green economy, to name only a few. Cooperation on China-Europe regular railway cargo service will go deeper. The idea is to produce benefits as many and as early as possible.

China will scale up financing support for the Belt and Road Initiative by contributing an additional RMB 100 billion to the Silk Road Fund and encouraging financial institutions to conduct overseas RMB fund business with an estimated amount of about RMB 300 billion. The China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China will set up special lending schemes respectively worth RMB 250 billion equivalent and RMB 130 billion equivalent to support Belt and Road cooperation on infrastructure, industrial capacity and financing. We will also work with the AIIB, the BRICS New Development Bank, the World Bank and other multilateral development institutions to support Belt and Road related projects. And the guidelines for financing will be worked out together with other parties concerned.

China will endeavor to build a win-win business partnership with other countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, enhance trade and investment facilitation with them, and build a Belt and Road free trade network. These efforts are designed to promote growth both in our respective regions and globally. At a high-level forum on the Belt and Road Initiative last year in Beijing, China signed business and trade cooperation agreements with over 30 countries and entered into consultation on free trade agreements with related countries. China will host the China International Import Expo starting from 2018.

China will enhance cooperation on innovation with other countries. We will launch the Belt and Road Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation Action Plan, which consists of the Science and Technology People-to-People Exchange Initiative, the Joint Laboratory Initiative, the Science Park Cooperation Initiative and the Technology Transfer Initiative. In the coming five years, we will offer 2,500 short-term research visits to China for young foreign scientists, train 5,000 foreign scientists, engineers and managers, and set up 50 joint laboratories. We will set up a big data service platform on ecological and environmental protection. We propose the establishment of an international coalition for green development on the Belt and Road, and we will provide support to related countries in adapting to climate change.

In the coming three years, China will provide assistance worth RMB 60 billion to developing countries and international organizations participating in the Belt and Road Initiative to launch more projects to improve people’s well-being. We will provide emergency food aid worth RMB 2 billion to developing countries along the Belt and Road and make an additional contribution of US$1 billion to the Assistance Fund for South-South Cooperation. China will launch 100 “happy home” projects, 100 poverty alleviation projects and 100 health care and rehabilitation projects in countries along the Belt and Road. China will provide relevant international organizations with US$1 billion to implement cooperation projects that will benefit the countries along the Belt and Road.

China will put in place the following mechanisms to boost Belt and Road cooperation: a liaison office for the Forum’s follow-up activities, the Research Center for the Belt and Road Financial and Economic Development, the Facilitating Center for Building the Belt and Road, the Multilateral Development Financial Cooperation Center in cooperation with multilateral development banks, and an IMF-China Capacity Building Center. We will also develop a network for cooperation among the NGOs in countries along the Belt and Road as well as new people-to-people exchange platforms such as a Belt and Road news alliance and a music education alliance.

The Belt and Road Initiative is rooted in the ancient Silk Road. It focuses on the Asian, European and African continents, but is also open to all other countries. It welcomes the ideas and efforts of partners from all corners of the world. Its benefits will be shared by us all.  

1 Chargé d’affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China
BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE
ITS IMPACT IN THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL TRADE

How Big is the Belt and Road?

More than 60% of the world’s population

65 countries across Asia, Europe and Africa

Possible opportunities in 5 key areas

Cultural exchange: Promoting people-to-people bonds and cooperation

Policy coordination: Planning and supporting large-scale infrastructural development projects

Financial integration: Enhancing monetary policy coordination and bilateral financial cooperation

Trade and investment: Facilitating cross-border investments and supply chain cooperation

Facilities connectivity: Building facilities to enable connectivity along the Belt and Road
Economic Significance of the Belt and Road Countries

- Global Land Area: 38.5%
- World Trade: 35%
- Global GDP: 30%
- Global Household Consumption: 24%
Preparing future leaders for the world stage

The SDGs are the roadmap for the future of the planet, and there is good news out there, side by side with extraordinarily dangerous news.

What do you think makes the GSD different from other universities?

We make it our mission to produce leaders who are both skilled and who care. We tell our students that it is possible to build a career that is both prestigious and lucrative, and which also gives something back. For example, if GSD were a medical institute, and I asked a student what sort of doctor they’d like to be, he or she might reply that they want to be the sort of doctor who drives a Porsche and plays lots of golf. Such a student would not get any condemnation from us; we’d say, yes, do that, but first, spend a few years in a developing country. That’s the part of your education that will most enrich your life, and that’s the part you will remember.

We teach our students that having a good career and giving something back are not mutually exclusive ends, but work in synergy together. Each one helps the other. We make humanitarian projects in the field a part of our school curriculum. While students are learning about high politics, high economics, and international law, we also want to remind them that they are doing real things for real people. It bears remembering that the word politics comes from the root polis, or the community. The whole idea is to do good for the community.

I know you also instill in your students a sense of urgency. What is your outlook for the future?

My own specialty is in the origins of war and conflict. It seems that at the moment, all the pieces seem to be in place for very dangerous and large-scale conflict to break out. I believe we can say that the 21st century will be a very dangerous one. On the other hand, I agree with Nicolas Kristof, writing in the New York Times this January, that 2017 has been the most successful year in history from a humanitarian point of view. So many more people are now getting access to clean water, so many of the classic diseases are being eliminated, and the number of millions of people lifted out of extreme poverty in the last years and decade is enormous. The good news is out there. However, the dangers of a cataclysmic 21st century are also very real. So We have all of this good news, but also this danger. We could well destroy our environment, and of course nuclear proliferation continues – we could very easily blow up the planet. So there’s a race going on, and this is where the sense of urgency must come in. I believe it was H.G. Wells who said that civilization is a race between education and catastrophe. I don’t think we are past the point of no return – but I think we have to pick up the pace.
Tell us about your time in the field and your book “Aza Beast”: Attacking the roots of war, a Bosnian war journal

It was my friend Sérgio Vieira de Mello who first asked me to be UN Deputy Head of Political Affairs inside Bosnia. I was posted in Sarajevo during the siege, in 1993 and 1994. The book is an attack on the roots of war in general, based on my experiences there. The nights were very long, especially in the winter without heating, and one would get through them by scribbling. So I scribbled a lot about what was happening. The city was taking an average of 3,000 shells a day, and one spent a lot of time in the basement, with the walls shaking and the plaster falling. I got to hear what people were talking about in those basements, and in my own mind, I divided them into two groups: the realists and the idealists. The idealists said, look, this war cannot continue. The UN or NATO will stop it, we just have to survive a few weeks before the international community puts an end to this. The realists said no, it won’t be that quick, because the Security Council has to lead, there is bureaucracy, there is power politics, and it could actually take a couple of months. And the reaction was: in a couple of months, we’ll all be dead. As you know, the siege went on for three and a half years before it was stopped forcibly. It is ironic that Sarajevo is a one-hour fight from Vienna, an hour and twenty minutes from Zurich, and about the same time to The Hague. You have all that education, all that learning, all that civilization, right there at hand. And yet the bombing and the siege and the suffering went on unabated. So I wanted to write a book that would reflect not only what I was experiencing, but also get across the idea of the absolute frailty of civilization: that we, humanity, can very easily blow ourselves up.

How can international experiences from the past, including the implementation of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), help us achieve the 2030 Agenda?

The MDGs were relatively new in their time, and new ideas like that can take a little while to stick; but I think that nowadays most people actually take as a given that these kinds of goals are the roadmap for the future of development. I return again to Nicolas Kristof’s recent article, proclaiming that 2017 was one of the greatest years for the advancement of humane causes. I might also reference the author Yuval Noah Harari. In his book, Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow, he notes that there was never a newspaper headline proclaiming “the Industrial Revolution started today”, even though it was one of the most planet-changing movements in history. In the same way, I believe our revolution is indeed underway, even if we cannot pinpoint the specific date on which it started. So now, we just need to do more of the same and look towards the year 2030. I think it’s already sunk in that the SDGs are the roadmap for the future of the planet, and that there is good news out there, side by side with extraordinarily dangerous news. Let me just add that I believe UNOG Director General Moeller is on the right track, and one can only praise the fact that he has pushed so hard for this roadmap. That’s the way to go.

Can you share with us a message for the Geneva International community?

I would like to add a couple of words about compassion. We might take as examples three gentlemen who changed the way we viewed the world: Marx, Freud, and Einstein. Einstein showed us how energy, light, and matter correlate, and drive the universe; Marx presented a similar work as regards the economy, and Freud with the psyche. I have this idea that apart from the forces analyzed and put forth by these great thinkers, there remains another that the world has yet to fully grasp: compassion. I would put forth that compassion is the great to-be-discovered force of the universe; and it could be our mission, if we don’t blow ourselves off the planet, to not only fill the solar system with compassion, but to fill all the galaxy and other millions of galaxies with compassion. I would like to proclaim that compassion is central to what we should all be doing.

I have seen some well-intentioned NGOs make proposals that could have led us down the wrong path, because they didn’t have the right professional skills, even though they wanted to contribute to the international community. And I’ve also heard condemnation of some military forces, who operate with great professionalism, but don’t care enough about the humanitarian side. In diplomacy, and in life, we must keep these two entities together. We must strive for professionalism, but always under the umbrella of compassion. If we can do that, I think we will all be on the right path.

1 Mr. Murphy is Founder and President, Geneva School of Diplomacy and International Relations
An exhibition to combat stereotypes by revealing the meaning of the headscarf

Veiling/Unveiling: the headscarf in Christianity, Islam and Judaism

Currently associated with constraints and submission, depicted in the media in sensationalist terms, the headscarf is often stereotypically presented as incompatible with secularity, feminism and women’s rights. However, little is being said about the women who freely choose to wear it.

The mainstream narrative, in the media and the political sphere alike, usually disregards the fact that, whilst one woman can liberate herself by taking off the headscarf, another one can do the same thing by choosing to wear it. The key issue is not to do away with the headscarf, but to uphold women’s personal freedom of choice.

The polemic around the Islamic headscarf has gained momentum in 2017, particularly, but not only, in Western countries. Over the past months, numerous countries have adopted legislation restricting the right to wear the headscarf. In September 2017, Austria adopted a law prohibiting facial coverings, including niqabs and burqas, in public. Previously, in March 2017, the European Court of Justice had ruled that employers could ban staff from wearing headscarves, in its first decision ever on this issue. In September 2017, Switzerland also moved closer to voting on a nationwide burqa ban, as a popular initiative succeeded in gathering the required 100,000 signatures to move towards a public vote. Quebec’s government voted, in October 2017, a law barring public workers from covering their faces and obliging citizens to unveil when receiving services from government departments, municipalities, school boards, public health services and transit authorities. The law was slammed as discriminatingly targeting the Muslim community and potentially causing the exclusion of Muslim women from everyday life activities. The ban itself was just a pretext to make prevailing forms of xenophobia appear politically correct. Indeed, apart from wealthy tourists from the Gulf, who are a boost to the tourist industry, the number of resident Muslim women donning the burqa or the niqab in Europe is so insignificant that it hardly warrants the adoption of a transatlantic barrier of legislation.

The negative attention given to Muslim women wearing headscarf contributes to the creation of a fertile ground for discriminatory practices and violence. It spreads wrongful depictions of Muslim women, and instils a fear of the Other. It expresses or causes divisions in society about diversity – which is in reality a cause for celebration. The effects of the propagation of racist biases are visible across Europe: according to a study led by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), in France, 79% of respondents stated that the headscarf was a problem for “vivre-ensemble” (“shared living”), and in Sweden, 64.4% of the Swedish population believed Muslim women were oppressed.

Muslim women are one of the main victims of intersecting forms of discrimination, and often the trigger is their choice to wear the headscarf. Most acts of Islamophobia today target women – predominantly women wearing a hijab or, on very rare occasions where that happens, a burqa. These women find themselves doubly discriminated in
disguised in the supposedly altruistic desire to save and unshackle these women from submission, or invoke a flawed interpretation of secularity that conflicts with article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as regards freedom to manifest in public one’s religious practice or observance. This attitude that transforms secularity into secularism, an exclusive ideology, only reinforces stereotypes, and further dictates to women what to do or to wear.

The politicization of the Islamic headscarf can be considered as part of the larger, worrying phenomenon of Islamophobia that has been gaining ground in non-Muslim societies. In order to combat Islamophobia and to deconstruct the false beliefs associated with the headscarf, the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue will organize a side-event to the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council, entitled “Veiling/Unveiling: The Headscarf in Christianity, Islam and Judaism”. The event, organized in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland, will consist of an exhibition and a panel discussion.

The exhibition traces the history of the headscarf in Christianity, Islam and Judaism, depicting it as a connecting thread and an element of convergence. The discussion marking its inauguration will take place on 23 February 2018, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, and will welcome remarks from the organizing parties, as well as statements from three special guests: Ms. Elisabeth Reichen-Amsler, (director of the section “Church and society” of the Evangelical Reformed Church of the Neuchâtel Canton), Dr. Malika Hamidi (expert and author of numerous publications on Islam and gender issues) and Dr. Valérie Rhein, (PhD in Judaism at the Institute of Jewish Studies at the University of Bern).

This event will hopefully represent a first step in breaking down barriers built on prejudice, and will provide the audience with an objective, truthful representation of the headscarf.

For further information on the exhibition and panel discussion, visit our website at http://www.gchragd.org/ or contact us at info@gchragd.org

1 Former 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 Agricultural 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. He was member of the Board of Directors of CARE USA, from 1995 to 1998. 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.
WHO staff want their organization to change its culture in order to become a Respectful Workplace that sees the benefits in building trust, good communication, recognizing the diversity and richness of the staff body, as well as their innovative ideas. Change needs to be to the better for all who are working at the three levels of the Organizations, headquarters, regional and country levels.

The journey so far
It all started in 2012 at a Global Staff Management Council (GSMC) in Washington D.C. where staff association representatives and the administration were gathered to discuss relevant issues. Representatives of both sides voiced a desire to talk about respect at work, better staff-management relations and better collaboration in general. Everyone liked the discussion, but no-one really thought it would be important enough to address it again. Isn’t it normal to have respect in an Organization? It should really be, but it was not, they seemed to be saying without actually saying so directly.

In a way, the challenge was that we could not count the legs of the big white elephant in the room. Was it an internal justice system issue, or was it about fairness and equality in its application? About the way we treat each other, or the need to train managers in people management? Lack of preventive mechanisms that avoid staff grievances? Or was it about all of these?

Despite or perhaps because of these unclarities, we decided it was important enough to keep searching for answers, and kept working on ways to improve WHO as a respectful workplace. We put together some concrete recommendations for the 2014 meeting of the GSMC. At that point the outgoing Director-General, Dr. Margaret Chan, lent us her ear, unblocked funds for a survey, and said she would fully support building respect in WHO. We even developed a supportive video with Dr. Chan and the Regional Directors.

Top management support is a number one requisite. We could tick that off. But was it really enough to make a change?

The definition
To put the topic of “respectful workplace” up for public debate, we first developed a definition: A respectful workplace is one that encourages trust, responsibility, accountability, mutual respect, open communication and embraces the dignity and diversity of individuals.

The survey
We then asked staff for their opinions. The “Respectful Workplace” survey administered in 2015 was revealing. It showed that a substantial number of staff lacked the skills to deal with observed negative behaviours, that accountability was perceived to be less at higher staff grades than lower ones, and that senior management setting an example was perceived to be the most influential action. Leadership took notice. The results pointed to many areas that needed work from
leadership in terms of organizational structural improvements. However, the survey results alone moved things a little bit further along the way. More recommendations were crafted after the survey and these also included open office hours of our leadership and managers to break down invisible barriers and increase trust.

We had also asked staff if they think respect at work is important and if they want to have one day dedicated to discussing openly about respect. The overwhelming majority said they thought respect was important and also wanted a dedicated day.

New top leadership in WHO since July 2017

Open Office Hours was one of the first actions our new Director-General, Dr. Tedros, implemented when he took office. We were delighted and on 7 December 2017 we celebrated our first Respectful Workplace Day (RWD) across the Organization at the three levels: headquarters, regional and country offices. Some country offices organized a week-long celebration, with team and office events that included everyone.

We opened the day connecting WHO staff around the world and heard success stories of good collaboration from Madagascar, Copenhagen and Cairo. The Regional Director for Europe, Dr. Zsuzsanna Jakab, spoke in person on behalf of all regional directors and stressed that this is a very special day for us in WHO. Dr. Jakab stressed that we have an honourable mission in WHO as we are committed to building a healthier future for peoples around the world. To accomplish this, Dr. Jakab quoted the words of Dr. Tedros, “unless we are internally healthy, we cannot really fulfill what we want to achieve.” She further said that making WHO a more respectful and healthy environment is still a long journey that we need to travel together and that each one of us needs to work on this.

Dr. Tedros spoke last wanting first to listen to the perspectives of staff. He outlined responsibilities at individual, workplace and organizational levels. He said that it is important to create bonding through eye contact so that we can see the other person is serious. He called on staff in managerial positions from top levels to the team leaders to assign a time and day of 1-2 hours per week to discuss issues openly with their staff. He said the benefits are that staff feel valued, the Organization can take advantage of good ideas, and problems can be quashed early. He said giving staff his time is already a sign of showing respect.

Transformation agenda

Respectful workplace day on the 7 of December was a good step forward. The dialogue is opened. This is the only way that we can solve problems early and fulfill the mission of our Organization. Dr. Tedros has outlined a modern, inclusive approach to management that counts on staff involvement. He understood that a conducive working environment is key to good performance, keeps staff healthy and committed, and ensures reaching the Organization’s mandate. The Organization’s new transformation agenda will include five work streams, one of which addresses the need for staff engagement and an improved organizational culture. This lines up well with the Respectful Workplace Initiative, and we are proud that we could be instrumental in opening the floor for dialogue across the whole of the Organization.

Next steps

This year will provide opportunities to contribute to the new transformation agenda of our Organization through developing a new operating model, fit-for-purpose tools and processes, and shaping the organizational culture we want to work in through clarifying expectations, increasing accessibility of staff at all levels, and staff involvement. We will also celebrate respect within WHO in various ways, with a few major events across the Organization and in our respective offices that will support shaping the new respectful WHO. We look forward to 7 December 2018 to take stock of where we are and what more needs to be done for a healthy and respectful WHO workplace.

1 The joint Staff-Management Respectful Workplace Initiative

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*A summer camp like no other*  

![JFK Swiss Outdoor Camp](https://www.swissoutdoorcamp.ch)
Le poème «double invention» de Julio Cortázar écrit pendant la CNUCED II!

Dans une lettre du 23 février 1968 à son ami, poète et peintre Eduardo Jonquières, Julio Cortázar lui offre «Double invention», un sonnet qu’il avoue avoir écrit au bureau, alors qu’il travaille comme réviseur-traducteur pour la CNUCED II, à New-Delhi (31 janvier-29 mars 1968).

La Conférence des Nations Unies pour le Commerce et le Développement (CNUCED), lors de sa deuxième conférence, au cours de laquelle sont discutées préférences tarifaires et stabilisation des cours des matières premières, loue les services d’un traducteur pas comme les autres: en 1968, l’écrivain argentin est déjà l’auteur d’une œuvre reconnue, caractérisée par une expérimentation formelle et inspirée du surréalisme, découvert dès 1932, à la lecture de «Opium» de Jean Cocteau.

Né à Bruxelles en 1914 d’un père diplomate, l’auteur de «Marelle» (1963) a grandi à Buenos Aires, fait des études de lettres et de philosophie, et enseigné, à partir de 1944, la littérature française à Cuyo, dans la province de Mendoza. Sa mère, d’origine française, lui a transmis son amour des grands auteurs européens, tout en lui ouvrant l’esprit sur un vaste monde.

Opposant au gouvernement de Perón, il quitte l’Argentine pour la France en 1951. À Paris, il gagne sa vie en traduisant Giono, Gide, Defoe, Yourencar, Poe, Jarry et Lautréamont, puis il est engagé par l’UNESCO comme traducteur.


Cortazar s’ennuie à Genève, donc il écrit. S’arrêtant à ses premières impressions, il ne prend pas le temps de découvrir vraiment la ville, préférant passer tout le temps dont il dispose après les heures de bureau à travailler, dans l’appartement qu’il loue au numéro 3 de la rue Versonnex, résidence Saint-James (Apt 32).

Encore méconnu, en 1955, c’est à Genève qu’il achève sa nouvelle intitulée «El Perseguidor». Deux décennies plus tard, c’est là encore qu’il écrit «Ciao Verona».
Le Palais des Nations lui-même lui inspire le passage de la « Marelle », chapitre 33, où il décrit un système géopolitique qui se réfère à la Société des Nations : « Les salaires ouvriers dans le monde : En accord avec la Société des Nations, il faut ou il faudra que, si par exemple un ouvrier français, mettons un ajusteur, gagne un salaire journalier calculé sur une base minimale de $ 8 à $ 10, un ajusteur italien gagne autant (…), mais si un ajusteur italien gagne cela, (…) alors un ajusteur espagnol devra lui aussi gagner de $ 8 à $ 10 par journée de travail, (…) etc. »

Ce souci d’égalité entre les travailleurs du monde entier correspond bien à ses convictions d’intellectuel de gauche, militant des droits de l’homme.

Au final, on peut être surpris du peu d’indulgence et d’esprit d’ouverture dont fait preuve pour Genève cet « international » et grand voyageur, curieux de toutes les villes qu’il a visitées de par le monde.

Peut-être n’a-t-il pas tant détesté Genève qu’il a aimé Paris?

Naturalisé français en 1981 par François Mitterrand, c’est dans sa ville d’adoption qu’il décède, en février 1984. Il n’aura jamais cessé de s’inventer.

Les choses sont toujours petites, toujours minüieuses et parfaites. Le Jardin botanique, par exemple, il se situe ici, à côté du Palais des Nations et après déjeuner à la cafétéria du personnel je vais faire une promenade pour herboriser, comme il se doit sur les terrasses de Rousseau. Il y a de charmantes rocailles, des plantes exotiques, des abeilles et de fleurs. La sixième symphonie en plein.

Mais c’est là qu’intervient l’efficacité suisse : à peine arrivé à la porte d’entrée tu te retrouves avec un panneau t’invitant à visiter la « plante de la semaine ». Si tu as le courage tu n’as qu’à suivre les jolies flèches rouges clouées au sol et qui t’emmènent sans erreur possible à l’endroit où la plante dont c’est le tour fleurit avec grand enthousiasme et se sent la vedette du moment. C’est alors qu’un autre panneau t’explique l’histoire de la plante ; tu te sens alors très cultivé et tu éprouves une secrète tendresse envers les Suisses.

« Hier un hélicoptère s’est posé sur la cime du Mont Blanc, Oh tristesse, oh fuite des dieux ! tu te rends compte ? d’ailleurs, ici, si tu montes au superbe restaurant qu’il y a à la terrasse du Palais, tu as une vue prodigieuse sur les Alpes. »

« Toujours dans mon meilleur frangentin, pour ton particulier plaisir, bonjour insecte. Moi, ça va. Toi ? Ici, la bise. Et quelle bise, quelque chose d’ectoplasmique qui monte du lac et te fout en pleine figure une bave genre fines de claire à 540 fr. douzaine. Pas très froide, il faut le dire, mais glutiparchemineuse à souhait. Ajoute à ceci qu’il n’y a pas de cinéma (il y a toujours du Darry Cowl, mais ce n’est pas la même chose) et que la nourriture fait des épinards son plus beau fleuron. Tu vois ça, j’espère. »
Media, war and peace

The unfinished novel of our time

Can and should the media act as promoters of conflict-sensitivity and humanitarian action? UNITAR asked experts on how to realize this still largely dormant potential.

Right from the outset, the discussion unfolded in a rather non-trivial way not only exposing the realities that preclude journalists in difficult settings from efficiently fulfilling their duties, but also examining these duties from an angle that might not be obvious to media consumers. Although apparently, there is a broad and multi-tier array of factors that largely affect the journalist work in fragile environments, truth should always come first. To help peace is to report correct information. The common view is that the primary responsibility of a reporter is the absence of bias. However, it is usually neglected that bias does not always presuppose some bad intentions behind – indeed, a report content can depart from truth in both ways, negative and positive. From this standpoint, deliberate promotion of any kind of agenda, whether in favour of violent extremism or human rights, is not acceptable. A.M.: “International actors in the field need to understand that journalists do not work for them, they work for the public, and cannot promote any cause, however noble this cause might be.”

Does this mean that the responsible media have nothing to do with reconciliation efforts? The point is that peace does not require any kind of bias to be promoted – it just requires correct information. G.V.: “To help peace is to report the correct condition, which is necessary both for bringing actors together and for finding solutions.”

I only know that I know nothing

In conflict zones, information is a resource that has a huge potential to tip the scale in favour of the opponent, which makes the access to it extremely problematic and dangerous. To overcome countless barriers,
reporters employ different, at times very risky tactics to get into the epicentre of conflict, the most famous of which is embedded journalism. This practice of going in with the forces actually taking part in the conflict expectedly has a rather dubious ethical standing, but oftentimes constitutes the only way to obtain the information of any quality. G.V.: "You have to remember that, unlike you, those who helped you have an agenda. The key thing here is that you have to precise it in the article. And I have to admit that it is not always easy."

Still, even the most audacious measures do not guarantee the opportunity of grasping the whole picture. G.K.: "There are zones, where no one is allowed, and they often hide some key aspects of conflict. People should know that there is the unknown. We have to admit that we do not know everything."

**Conflict sensitivity and cultural sensitivity are inextricably linked**

On top of all these factors of distortion, there is the inherent uniqueness of one’s own cultural, ethnic and social background, which accounts for the infinite number of connotations that can characterize any single piece of information. Recognizing our differences and seeing people behind seemingly impersonal data fosters greater cognitive openness and motivation to comprehend divergent perspectives that need not necessarily be wrongful or falsified. Viewed in this way, truthful reporting is not so much about being objective, but more about being honest. G.K.: "Who I am affects what I see, where I direct my camera, whom I ask and what I ask. Being honest means being transparent about it and not claiming absolute objectivity."

Just as individuals, each conflict itself has its own historical background, which is why being sensitive to it also requires learning about and recognizing past historical injustices that the majority of the currently challenged regions have gone through. Seeing beyond your window view, perceiving refugees, for example, as human beings that could be your friends or neighbours is what should characterize our vision in the 21st century of global interdependence, and what precisely could and should be achieved with the help of the modern media.

**A culture of peace that comes from the bottom**

Reporting atrocities and abuses, which is usually in the focus of the international media, is important to raise awareness about the conflict and to attract international aid. Building a culture of peace, however, is more about making the parties speak to each other and trying to find an arrangement. Local media outlets are much better positioned to do so, for they share the goals and benefits of reconciliation and have a more in-depth understanding of the root causes of disagreement. Therefore, the local media have a great potential to act as promoters of peace, and facilitating this action is often the task of international organizations.

Apart from apparent material support, local media usually necessitate legal and diplomatic assistance, but, most importantly, they need to know more about their rights and freedoms, human rights in general, the ways of building and maintaining democratic institutions and their niche in these processes. A.M.: "What we, in international organizations, can do concretely is to participate in the training of journalists, and enable them to know more about the ways, through which our common goals can be achieved."

Through its recently launched project on improving the local journalists’ capacities in some African states, UNITAR demonstrates its readiness to pick up the torch on journalists training, along with some other organizations. However, scattered and unsynchronized progress is not enough on this way. Empowering local journalists is an essential element of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies worldwide, and international actors are welcome to join UNITAR in a broader partnership with a goal of helping the grassroots sprouts of a culture of peace to grow into a healthy and prolific tree.
Hiroshima’s green, timeless legacy

Hiroshima – At 8h15, on the morning of Monday 6 August 1945, the city of Hiroshima was destroyed by a single atomic bomb. Code-named ‘Little Boy’ the bomb exploded 600 meters above the city center, burning alive tens of thousands of people at first impact.

By the end of that apocalyptic year, more than a third of Hiroshima citizens – including most of its doctors, nurses and first aid helpers – had died. As catastrophic conditions continued, with survivors succumbing to radiation disease and starvation threatening the living, there was even talk to rebuild whatever could be rebuilt, but elsewhere.

Ultimately the bonds of survivors to the land of their ancestors prevailed, and in that burnished plain the citizens of Hiroshima set out to rebuild their lives, and their city. Today, in what had been pre-war Hiroshima’s center obliterated by the bomb, stands the iconic Peace Memorial Museum and Park, brainchild of a remarkable politician and Hiroshima’s first elected post-war mayor, Shinzo Hamai. Convinced that brick and mortar alone could not resuscitate his decimated hometown, Hamai and other visionary leaders called on the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in occupied Japan, pleading for special subsidies to transform Hiroshima from the military city it had been to a city symbol of peace – ‘the Geneva of Asia’. The American Occupation had been initially reluctant to treat either Hiroshima or Nagasaki any differently than the numerous Japanese cities and urban areas carpet-bombed in the war’s final months, but the plea was finally heeded, and in 1949 Japan’s National Diet passed a special law for preferential treatment of the two A-bombed cities.

It was a turning point. The winning design for the architectural competition to build Hiroshima’s Peace Memorial Museum and Park was that of a young, modernist architect and future Pritzker prize winner, Kenzo Tange (he later built the UN building in Tokyo). Tange proved to be a remarkable choice. From the start he envisioned not just one building but a living memorial, presciently aware of Hiroshima’s universal calling, writing that his ‘goal was making Hiroshima a city symbolic of the human longing for peace’. The current layout – including the Flame of Peace, the water pools, the arched Cenotaph for Victims and, further away, the A-Bomb Dome – is astonishingly close to Tange’s original vision, sketches and design. The Peace Park also remains, to this day, the nerve center of Hiroshima – spiritually, geographically, and, further away, the A-Bomb Dome – is astonishingly close to Tange’s original vision, sketches and design. The Peace Park also remains, to this day, the nerve center of Hiroshima – spiritually, geographically, even commercially and among the most visited sites in Japan by foreigners. It is the beholder of the city’s memory and identity, and the most sacred place for its Hibakusha – A-bomb survivors – and their descendants.

By 1949, some 161 trees identified with a special plaque and given extra care and treatment by authorities. Other than the feisty Aogiri, these survivor trees include a majestic 300-year-old Ginkgo biloba in Hiroshima’s oldest garden Shukkeien, a huge, twisted eucalyptus on the grounds of Hiroshima Castle, a few jujube, weeping willow, hackberry, holly, persimmon, camellia, cherry, peonies and many camphor, Hiroshima’s native tree. Some were identified in solitary conditions, others survived in groves. Most but not all still carry visible traces of their trauma. The three dozen or so that remain rooted in the exact location as at the moment of the atomic blast (others were moved or had new shoots sprout from burnt trunks) are slightly bent, inclined towards the hypocenter – the side of the tree directly exposed to the radioactive blast having been weaker in the early years. Marked as they are, however, these survivor trees are still astonishingly alive, vibrant, and bountiful: many still bear seeds and fruit.

I have been in love with trees since my youth. They are all the things we know them to be – noble and beautiful, incredibly essential to life, stunningly diverse, fragile but strong. I love too their overflowing generosity: shade and cool in the summer, cover and warmth in winter, roots that strengthen the soil and filter the water. Their very breath cleanses the air around us and every part of their being – root, trunk, branch, sap, leaf, fruit, nut – has some utility, many mysteries of which we still do not comprehend. Yet, despite all their giving, trees remain modest and frugal, asking only for clean water, soil, air and some sunshine.

Once I stepped down from active UN duty and had more time to learn of the work that Hiroshima citizens had been doing with the survivor trees, I wanted to contribute. I read of the tireless efforts of Suzuko Numata, a Hibakusha, for the Aogiri. A splendid book ‘Survivors’ – The A-bombed trees of Hiroshima’ came my way and helped further articulate the idea that the trees should be treated not just individually but together, as an ensemble, like an orchestra. I learned that when seeds and saplings were sent around the world, recipient institutions should make a long-term commitment to their care. UNITAR alumni worldwide, I thought, could become effective and devoted ambassadors for the trees’ message.
An idea not implemented however is merely wishful thinking, so I turned to a friend, Tomoko Watanabe – executive director of a small NGO called ANT-Hiroshima and famous for her practical and ‘can-do’ spirit. Tomoko-san was just the right person to champion the cause: characteristically she set out to mobilize not only her family but also her extensive networks at the grassroots level, including a marvelous tree doctor and Green Legacy’s Master Gardener, Chikara Horiguchi. Originally an economics major, Horiguchi-san had encountered the ancient trees of Yakushima Island, a UNESCO world heritage site in southern Japan, during a hiking trip, and decided there and then to change professional paths and dedicate his life to caring for trees. After marrying a Hiroshima native, he moved here in the 70s and started a greenery business, while in his own spare time he took to caring for the survivor trees. Another member, the architect Akio Nishikiori, with his encyclopedic knowledge of Hiroshima’s reconstruction history, became the precious urbanist-in-residence for our campaign.

Thus, in July 2011 Green Legacy Hiroshima Initiative was launched as a global, volunteer campaign. UNITAR accepted to host its website pro-bono, and ANT (now UNITAR) provided a small secretariat. A Working Group was composed to guide its work, bringing on board all concerned players in Hiroshima: the City, Prefecture, Peace Culture Foundation, Mayors for Peace secretariat, botanical garden and main university. A smaller committee of experts agreed to help us with operational aspects. It was a bare, streamlined structure but one which has proven itself surprisingly sustainable. As a concept, Green Legacy Hiroshima is full of contradictions. Its core message is deep yet broad, local yet supremely universal. It is a story set in the past but also fully turned to the future. Its impact is immediate yet long-term, and if the trees are well-cared for, it is sustainability itself (seeds cost almost nothing). It calls attention to the haunting, chilling effects and prospects of nuclear war, and yet, maybe because of the trees’ resilience and beauty, it is strangely full of hope. I sometimes feel that honoring these trees and their descendants can convey, as much as words, the dangers of arms of mass destruction but also the sacred character of nature and our planet Earth.

Today, thanks to our partners worldwide, seeds and saplings from A-bombed trees are growing in some 35 countries – from Afghanistan to Iran, from Singapore to New Zealand, in Chile, the United States, Lithuania, The Netherlands….. It is a slow, sustained, long-term effort, seeking not quantity but to create a certain gravity and resonance about our relation with nature and with one another in the nuclear age. We call it the 1000-year project.

In Geneva, too, we have planted descendants of Hiroshima’s survivor trees. On the grounds of the ICRC now grows a robust Ginkgo biloba, descendant of the mother tree in Shukkeien Garden. Since last year another ginkgo, this one planted by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, grows on the grounds of the Arianna Park. A native of China, the Ginkgo is one of the most ancient trees on the planet. The writer Ariel Dorfman, in an eloquent and poetic tribute to Hiroshima last August, wrote of the ginkgo as ‘an expert in survival, a species found in fossils 270 million years old’. It can grow 50-meters tall, and live for centuries. It is also particularly resistant to pollution, disease and fire, which may explain why it survived the nuclear blast.

But even the mighty ginkgo cannot survive today’s atomic bombs. The mind can hardly wrap itself around the fact that the world’s current combined nuclear weapon capability is infinitely greater than that which destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As the Hibakusha remind us, there is no option left for humanity, but to embrace, fully and unconditionally, the call for ‘No more Hiroshima, No more Nagasaki’. Those who worked so hard for the historical Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, signed at UN Headquarters on July 7, 2017 understood the compelling urgency of this call. The human experiment with nuclear weapons simply cannot be repeated. Hiroshima first, Nagasaki last.

It is also the message of Hiroshima’s noble trees.

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1 Nassrine Azimi is currently a professor of international organizations at Hiroshima Shudo University and a visiting scholar at the Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies, University of California, in Los Angeles (UCLA). She joined the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in 1986, serving successively as the coordinator of the Institute’s environmental programs, chief of its New York office, and founding director of the Institute’s Hiroshima Office.
The Club Photo International started the New Year in style on January 10th with the inauguration of its annual photo exhibition and prize-giving ceremony followed by a cocktail.

This year’s photos were a particularly good batch with some very imaginative interpretations of the word “movement”. Prize-winners were a mixture of experienced Club members and complete newcomers. The same can be said of the equipment they used – from top-of-the-range to the simple smart phone.

Such is the vocation of the CPI – it’s a club for anyone who enjoys photography and wants to share and/or learn on the subject.

For 2018, the CPI has a new President: Fabien Dumesnil and the first session of the year and its theme (one per month) will shortly be announced on the Club website.

January is always a good moment for new resolutions/directions and with an annual subscription of just 50 CHF you can both improve your photographic skills and meet people who share your interest.

Further details:
http://clubphotointernational.com
1st prize – Desislava Panteva, Fantasia Fest in Morocco

4th prize – Mariangela Linoci, Upstream

5th prize – Silvia Schwarte, Chestnut Flow

6th prize – Eric Duchateau, All together

Special Jury prize – Véronique Magnin, Cheveux au vent
A balanced view of the medical profession

PROFESSOR MIKE SAKS

What is the place of the medical profession in the contemporary world? In the period up to the mid-twentieth century its therapeutic powers were not extensive. However, it was particularly feted for its achievements in the period after the Second World War up to the 1960s. Many populations in the developed and developing world placed their faith in its biomedical powers with the promise of magic bullets like penicillin and organ transplantation. There is no doubt, moreover, that such biomedical innovations were revolutionary and have subsequently significantly impacted human health – creating the image of medicine as the global savior of humankind. However, as this article will indicate, this golden era of the profession has come under scrutiny in recent years in terms of growing awareness of the limits to medicine, serious regulatory issues, and the acknowledgement of the important contribution of other actors and activities to health and wellbeing.

Arguably, scepticism about the medical profession initially came into focus with the rise of the counter culture in the 1960s and 1970s, which created a rather different image for some – as a public foe. The counter culture punctured visions of scientific progress in medicine, accentuated the hazards of medical depersonalization and disempowerment, highlighted the benefits of alternative ways of living, extolled the virtues of a suitably balanced diet and exercise regime, and encouraged people to take more direct control of their own lives. This can be exemplified by the work of Ivan Illich who viewed the rise of modern medicine as counterproductive, amongst other things, because of iatrogenic clinical damage, the abrogation of the rights of people to care for themselves, the extension of sick, low quality life, and the transformation of the population from autonomous producers into passive consumers in terms of health care.

This led to an image of human populations labouring under the yoke of ‘medical nemesis’, a concept taken from ancient Greek mythology, in which we suffer retribution for trying to be god-like. Such negative images of medicine have been further amplified by more recent critics who have drawn attention to the growing medicalization of society in which previously normal events like ageing and the menopause are now interpreted in terms of pathology. But they have been most accentuated by a series of medical scandals that have rippled round the globe in which doctors seem to have ever more frequently been accused of not acting with the integrity that we might expect from their codes of ethics – ranging from the removal of body parts without consent and sexual misdemeanours with vulnerable clients to the serial killing of patients, in a world in which medical litigation is spiralling.

These cases have raised much wider questions about how well the medical profession regulates its own practitioners. They have also very importantly pointed towards the ways in which the medical profession may have abused the monopolistic powers it has gained in many societies for self-protection or to advance its own interests, rather than the public interest. This has been highlighted by its own skepticism towards other systems of medicine, from acupuncture to herbalism. The World Health Organization supports many of these practices globally in their indigenous settings through its policy on traditional medicine, yet their popularity challenges the income, status and power of the profession as their often competing underpinning philosophies conflict with the biomedical roots of orthodox medicine. Although there are outstanding questions about the safety and efficacy of such therapies, the result has been to create geographical and financial inequalities in access to them for the wider public.

The upshot of all this has been for many modern governments to seek to rein back the self-regulating powers of medicine, not least by increasing the number of lay representatives on its governing council, ensuring regular recreditation, and introducing independent adjudication of disciplinary cases. The squeeze on the medical profession has been paralleled by its increasing corporatization – especially with the rise of multinational insurance firms – that has considerably pegged back its power, status and financial rewards. At the same time, the fortunes of other professions such as nursing, pharmacy and the allied health professions have improved as they progressively enhance their own qualifications, practise more independently and move out of the shade of the medical umbrella – in societies that also increasingly recognize the role of self-care, carers, volunteers and a fast-expanding legion of non-professionalized health support workers, as well as the value of agricultural reform, pure water supplies, sanitation and working out for health.
Having said this, it is very important that the baby is not thrown out with the bathwater in framing health policy in a globalizing world. The strong educational base of the medical profession, alongside its ethical codes and registers of qualified practitioners, still provides substantial protection for both its clients and the wider public. The most substantial attacks on medical practice, moreover, are directed at professional bodies in medicine, rather than individual doctors – the altruistic commitment of the vast majority of whom is not contested. There have also been many occasions where the medical profession has acted as a lobby for health enhancement, from combating international corruption in health care to climate change. In addition, the effective knowledge base of the profession has recently been developed with innovations in such areas as gene therapy and stem cell science. All the above argues for a more balanced view of the role of the medical profession in health care in countries at varying stages of development, seeing it neither as world saviour nor public enemy. Moving forward, future policy – including that of the United Nations in responding to global health crises – needs to draw on the virtues of medical professionalization. At the same time, it needs to be accepted that there are pitfalls to be avoided, reforms to be made and other sometimes more productive health opportunities to be taken. While very important, the medical profession is not the only act in town in enhancing human health and wellbeing.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS / AFFAIRES GLOBALES

UNFCU achieves carbon neutrality

First sustainability report issued.

The United Nations Federal Credit Union, (UNFCU) marked its 70th anniversary last year and, in doing so, also underlined a longstanding commitment to social responsibility. In July, UNFCU announced that it had become a carbon neutral organization. Only one other credit union in the US with assets of more than $4 billion had achieved this status at the time. Carbon neutrality – which mitigates impact on global climate change by reducing net organizational greenhouse gas emissions to zero – is one of eight goals that UNFCU outlines in its first sustainability report covering its strategy, initiatives, and progress in 2016.1 Going forward, UNFCU will focus on the 5 year sustainability plan it has developed to guide its environmental performance improvements through 2020.

“We are proud of UNFCU for demonstrating active engagement in sustainability and transparency,” said Shoa Ehsani, Sustainability & Climate Neutral Strategy Officer, United Nations Environment Program, UNEP-Nairobi, and a focal point for the Sustainable UN (SUN) Team at Greening the Blue, an international movement of UN entities focused on the organization’s climate neutrality.

UNFCU’s efforts reinforce its commitment to its members to operate as a good corporate citizen of the world and are aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report draws from best practices in the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G4 Guidelines. It includes among other data, environmental sustainability performance metrics that have been independently reviewed by sustainability experts from Envision Realty Services and Kosmenko & Co.

“We hold ourselves to a high standard for measuring and mitigating carbon emissions,” said Pamela Agnone, executive sponsor of the UNFCU Global Sustainability Program, who added that UNFCU’s report was the culmination of extensive analysis, benchmarking and the making of sound business decisions. “Inspired by our Board of Directors’ vision and our members’ humanitarian purpose, we are pleased to become a leader within the credit union industry on sustainability and look forward to sharing ideas and strategy with credit unions in the US and abroad to expand our positive impact.”

Accomplishments highlighted in the report
• Carbon neutrality
• 78% Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design-certified office space; LEED Gold for existing buildings, Long Island City, NY headquarters; LEED Silver for Washington, DC branch
• 19% reduction in paper use globally; 9.25% reduction in electricity use per member for operationally-controlled facilities
• EPA Green Power Partner Program recognition for supporting clean, renewable energy

About UNFCU
UNFCU offers a full suite of banking products and services designed for the mobile lifestyle of the global UN community. Headquartered in New York, UNFCU was founded in 1947 by 13 UN staff members. Today, UNFCU has more than 127,000 members worldwide and is one of the 35 largest credit unions in the US with representative offices in Austria, Italy, Kenya, and Switzerland. UNFCU launched its Global Sustainability Program in 2015 with nearly 40 staff volunteers.

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1 To view the complete UNFCU Sustainability Report visit: www.unfcu.org/global-sustainability-program/
Mens sana in corpore sano

Ayurveda – A philosophy? A therapy? A panacea? or en vogue?

Around 20 years ago I wrote an article about Ayurveda, which caused a lot of interest among our readers, as at that time Ayurveda was little known here. Now that Ayurveda is at its peak, everybody is speaking about it as “the panacea for all diseases”.

EVELINA RIOUKHINA

Indeed, in two decades, it has gone from being an “exotic from afar” therapy in Europe, to something that is more and more popular. Numerous clinics and Ayurvedic centres have been opened all over the world, and one can take Ayurvedic treatments in Germany, Spain, Portugal, and or even in clinics of Switzerland, or recently opened centres in Geneva (Aaanandha Ayurveda). Moreover, most of the treatments in the accredited centres, if prescribed by physicians, are reimbursed by the medical insurance, and even without prescription, most of the treatments are recognised by supplementary insurance as natural (or alternative) medicine. Thus, over the years Ayurveda has literally “conquered” both the medical sector and minds with the result that more and more people are taking cures in the firm belief that Ayurveda is a panacea or miracle remedy in today’s world. But what is it in reality?

In fact, it is a healing art, and dates back almost 5 millennia, being one of the oldest (if not the oldest) healing art. It is to help people live long, healthy, balanced lives. The term Ayurveda is taken from the Sanskrit words ayus, meaning life or lifespan, and veda, meaning knowledge. The basic principle of Ayurveda is to prevent and treat illness by maintaining balance in the body, mind, and consciousness, through proper drinking, diet, and lifestyle, as well as herbal remedies.

According to traditional Ayurveda philosophy and Ayurvedic beliefs, just as everyone has a unique fingerprint, each person has distinct pattern of energy, a specific combination of physical, mental, and emotional characteristics. Ayurvedic
practitioners also believe there are three basic energy types called doshas, present in every person:

- **Vata.** Energy that controls bodily functions associated with motion, including blood circulation, breathing, blinking, and heartbeat. When vata energy is balanced, there is creativity and vitality. When off balance, vata produces fear and anxiety.

- **Pitta.** Energy that controls the body’s metabolic systems, including digestion, absorption, nutrition, and temperature. On balance, pitta leads to contentment and intelligence. Off balance, pitta can cause ulcers and arouse anger.

- **Kapha.** Energy that controls growth in the body. It supplies water to all body parts, moisturizes the skin, and maintains the immune system. On balance, kapha is expressed as love and forgiveness. Off balance, kapha leads to insecurity and envy.

Everyone has vata, pitta, and kapha. But usually one or two are dominant in a particular person. Many things can disturb the energy balance, such as stress, an unhealthy diet, the weather, and strained family relationships. The disturbance shows up as disease. Ayurvedic practitioners prescribe treatments to bring the doshas back into balance.

What kind of treatments are usually prescribed? The most common are:

- **Abhyanga** – is a typical and the most well-known Ayurvedic massage, done along the “meridians” of the body, usually in a synchronized way by two therapists. Having it done in a synchronized way increases the efficiency of this massage working on the “meridians” of both parts of the body simultaneously. It fully relaxes the whole body and is very beneficial for general well-being as well as for moral well-being (synchronised Abhyanga is a usual practice in Kerala (you can also find this type of massage in Europe, including Geneva).

- **Shiro Dhara (Shiro-head, Dhara-poring)** – this treatment involves lukewarm herbal oil being poured in a continuous stream onto the forehead like a pendulum. It helps to relieve stress, improves memory and concentration, has healing effects on insomnia, depression, anxiety, hypertension and other neurological malfunctions. It bestows better vision, hearing, clears nasal problems, relaxes the body and mind, and ultimately strengthens the physical constitution.

- **Kizhi** – is a procedure in which small cotton cloth boluses are used for massage. Those boluses are filled either by rice balls cooked with herbs in milk, or by special medical leaves, also cooked in milk. The boluses are applied very hot (right after being cooked) following extensive oiling of the body (oil massage, or sometimes oil and milk massage). This treatment is highly rejuvenating, relieves stress, back pain, muscle pain, heals arthritis and spondylosis. It also strengthens the nervous system. Ideally (but rarely) this treatment is performed by three persons, with one person working on the neck-shoulder area, and two other persons working in a synchronized way over the lower part of the body. Variations of Kizhi are called Njavarakizhi, or Elakizhi or Podikizhi (depending on the filling of the boluses, and slightly different ways of application).

There are at least a hundred other treatments or variations of the above treatments and massages mainly based on the application of oil, for the head, eyes, nose, ears, and all
affected areas of the body. The most well-known are Nasyam (oil for the nose), Upanam (hot herbal powder massage), Lepanam (hot herbal paste body massage). They can represent a single treatment or in combination in cures all over the world.

Three treatments deserve special attention, however, as they come from the heart of Ayurveda and its real home – Kerala in India. They bear the signature of authentic Kerala Ayurveda. These three are:

Pizichil – often called the “king” among the traditional therapies and typical of Kerala only.

During this treatment, the whole body is subjected to streams of lukewarm medicated oil with simultaneous soft massage in seven postures (ideally, four persons needed to perform this treatment). An enormous amount of medicated oil is used during the treatment, which lasts from 60 to 90 minutes. This treatment is the most effective to build up immunity and it is also useful for rheumatic diseases, arthritis, paralysis, neurological disorders, blood pressure, anxiety, stress and burnout. It also has anti-ageing properties.

Marma massage – the word marma, meaning vital areas of the body, comes from the Sanskrit mru or marr. The Sanskrit phrase, Maragate Iiti Marmani, actually means there is a likelihood of death or serious damage to health if marma areas are put at risk. The idea behind massaging the marma points is to cleanse blocked energy. They are found at the key junctions of muscles, veins, arteries, tendons and bones throughout the body. They can be activated, stimulated and accelerated to enhance the various essential physiological and emotional functions of the body. They are massaged with the thumb moving in a circular motion. This stimulates the free flow of energy in the body. There are a total of 107 marmas in the body. Major marma points correspond to the seven chakras, or energy centres in the body. (The mind is considered to be the 108th marma.) This massage is very important to help improve or maintain a healthy balance in the body, it fortifies the immune system, and is strong preventative therapy.

Chavutti Thirunal – an exceptional experience, a massage originating from and performed in Kerala only, and it is based on Kalari Martial arts. The therapist holds a rope and gives the massage with his feet, moving in several patterns all over the body. Chavutti Thirunal literally means foot pressure, and this massage allows much heavier pressure on the whole body. The basic philosophy of this treatment (as with all Ayurveda) is "Prevention is better than cure", and it is indeed one of the most efficient rejuvenation massages (as the pressure of such massages can only be achieved by feet). Historically, it was administered to Kalari fighters (physically very strong), to help them to recover from injuries and to strengthen muscles, relieve pain and increase the resistance of the body. The techniques for this massage is pretty complex, and even in Kerala the real Chavutti Thurimal is not done everywhere. This massage is not done in Europe, nor elsewhere, and it is the authentic signature of Kerala.

If indeed you decide to follow an Ayurvedic cure (or treatment), no matter how appealing the invitations for Ayurveda are here or in nearby Europe, try at least once in your lifetime to visit the home of Ayurveda – Kerala. It is a long journey, but worth it – particularly if you can combine it with a two or three-week holiday. This type of holiday cannot compete with an round-the-world trip, but it can be much more useful than an all-day-long-on-the-beach-under-the-sun way of spending leave. No matter what cure programme you choose (anti-stress, detox, rejuvenation, burnout, back-pain, or the must of Ayurveda called Panchakarma2, or purification), you will get huge pleasure not only from the treatments, but also touch on philosophy and science, and experience a new way of life, that includes yoga, meditation, concentration. Following a two-week Ayurveda cure will perform miracles on your well-being for the whole year ahead! It will definitely strengthen mental (moral) and physical resilience, fortify immunity, purify your mind and body and prepare you for new challenges at work in an ever more stressful working environment.

Is Ayurveda a panacea in today’s stressful world? Now it is definitely en vogue. Not only in India do people believe in it. Europeans, Americans and Australians make the long journey to Kerala for its cures. And although it performed perfectly in many places in the world (and I have tried it all over the globe), I can assure you that nothing can be compared to Kerala! Panacea or not, “il vaut mieux prévenir que guérir”, and Ayurveda is undoubtedly the best preventive cure. In all cases, it will help for your own well-being and contribute to your mens sana in your corpore sano!  

1 For further information, please visit the Aaanandha Ayurveda in Geneva website: https://www.aaanandha.com/treatments
2 Panchakarma is a full purification of body and mind and is a philosophy in itself. Usually, it has several stages, and full Panchakarma requires long psychological preparation, and should be taken over no less than 51 days, in stages, however, it can be taken in an “express” format in three weeks (or a minimum of two weeks). If you are interested in receiving more details about the philosophy of Panchakarma and its programme, please let me know and I will be happy to write about it in a separate article, as it deserves special attention, being the most beneficial for a personal well-being.
9 February 2018

Geneva to host 3rd annual dialogue in commemoration of World Interfaith Harmony Week

UNITAR and the Mission of Jordan extend a warm invitation to all UN Special readers: join us in the Kazakh Room (Cinema XIV) at 10:30 on 9 February, to explore the crucial role of interfaith harmony in advancing peace.

JESSICA HANEY, UNITAR

A little-known General Assembly resolution comes back around every year, in the first week of February, to remind the international community and the world about the potency of religion. Faith is a subject not too often acknowledged in the halls of power and politics, except perhaps in the narrow context of radical terrorism.

In 2010, on the initiative of His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan, the United Nations made a very different sort of acknowledgement: a proclamation, in fact, of an annual World Interfaith Harmony Week. At this time each year, the UN officially charges “all States to support, on a voluntary basis, the spread of the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in the world’s churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship… based on love of God and love of one’s neighbour or on love of the good and love of one’s neighbour, each according to their own religious traditions or convictions.”

It may sound like pretty language alone, but the power of faith in human life is undeniable, and such an acknowledgement at the General Assembly bodes well for us all. It is said that everyone must have faith in something; that even those who profess no religion necessarily demonstrate a faith of some sort, through the words they speak and the actions they take every day. Each human being is forced to set moral priorities, day-in, day-out, whether he or she chooses to do so explicitly or tacitly. And in this sense faith, broadly construed, drives everything we do, from how we raise our children to how we wage war (or don’t). When faith becomes institutionalized and transformed into religion, it mutates from micro to macro, ballooning into a force even greater than the sum of its parts: a force that can wreak both untold destruction and surprising peace. Faith and religion, clearly, are not going anywhere, and so we must heed their role in the geopolitical landscape: not simply in order to counteract their most egregious and violent excesses, but also to harness their rare power to transform the world for good.

On 20 October 2010, the UN GA called upon all Member States to find and nourish the light at the heart of the world’s varied faiths, and to harness it for the good of all Nations. And since 2010, the UN in Geneva has heeded this call with the celebration of an annual Interfaith Dialogue in the Palais des Nations. Upon the initiative of the United Nations Christian Association (UNCA), the event was co-created by the Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and serves as the official commemoration of World Interfaith Harmony Week in the UN’s second city. Since its inception, the Dialogue has expanded to include support from a diverse group of diplomatic missions: Sri Lanka, the Bahamas, Ecuador, the Holy See, the Order of Malta, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), among others. Participants of all faiths are warmly invited, not to water-down or undermine the firmness of their convictions, but to acknowledge and reaffirm the truth that no religion promotes violence, and that no religion ignores the value of peace. We are, indeed, all in this together.

Each year’s Dialogue presents new variations on the Resolution’s theme. In 2016, the statements coalesced around the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (24 December 2015), and the role of faith and interfaith dialogue in putting a halt to religiously-motivated terrorism. The second Dialogue explored the myriad ways in which faith-based organizations are helping to drive international development, peacebuilding, and the 2030 Agenda. The discussion this year will address these subjects and new ones, continuing to revolve around the overall theme of how faith and faith-based organizations remain critical players in the quest for international peace, harmony, and sustainable development.

UNITAR and the Mission of Jordan extend a warm invitation to any and all UN Special readers to join in this Dialogue on 9 February. Meet us in Room XIV of the Palais des Nations, beginning at 10:30, to hear from Ambassadors and other expert panelists, and, if desired, to engage in the discussion yourself. The ideals and aspirations of the Charter of the United Nations rely upon dialogues such as this one, which are not afraid to plumb the depths of our convictions, both diverse and common, and to ask the tough questions. We hope you will join us.

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ALFRED DE ZAYAS

Human rights condottieri abound, filling the ranks of national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations, universities, think tanks, ministries, United Nations, European, American, African human rights commissions and committees. A vast human rights industry has emerged and expanded, attracting not only those persons genuinely committed to the promotion of human dignity, equity, justice, social peace, solidarity – but also some who are interested in well-paying jobs and the non-monetary remuneration of club-membership in a synergy of operatives who nurture the illusion of belonging to the avant-garde, the club of “progressives”, the “enlightened”, the “good guys”. Over my 45 years experience in human rights ngo’s, universities and United Nations institutions, I have met too many mercenaries who do not practice what they preach, who behave like intolerant ideologues and actually mob their peers, intimidate, humiliate and show contempt for those who do aim at the practical application of human rights. As in any business, there is considerable pressure toward conformism, to go along with what donors demand, to bow to the wishes of lobbies, join “band wagons” and “the flavor of the month”. Those who disagree or simply are reluctant to “pull the rope” must pay a price, choose between self-censorship, ostracism, or perseverance in a Quixotic drive to truth. Hypocrisy is not a 21st century invention – it has been part of the human condition since time immemorial. Notwithstanding the above, there are genuine human rights advocates – in national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations, universities, think tanks, ministries and expert commissions. These unsung heroes for humanity deserve our solidarity and respect. I remember fondly my UN chiefs Jakob Möller, Theo van Boven, Kurt Herndl, Jan Martenson, Jose Ayala Lasso, Bertie Ramcharan – I learned much from them, especially that human rights must never be instrumentalized as weapons against others. The moment that human rights cease to be seen as positive entitlements and constructive impulses but become instead tools to dismantle political enemies, the whole philosophy of human dignity and solidarity is undermined. Our resolution for 2018: demonstrate on a daily basis the 3 p’s for human rights: patience, perseverance and passion.

Secretary-General’s priorities

United for gender parity. A system-wide approach that includes setting targets and monitoring in the following areas: leadership and accountability; senior management; recruitment and retention; creating an enabling environment and Mission settings.

UN Staff Engagement Survey. A survey that will measure the current engagement levels of staff and will serve to identify best practices and areas where there is room for development.

Management reforms. A new management paradigm for the Secretariat and a United Nations that empowers managers and staff, simplifies processes, increases transparency and improves on the delivery of our mandates.

UN response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Four main areas of action to address this crime: putting victims first; ending impunity; engaging civil society and external partners; and improving strategic communications for education and transparency.

The article was taken from iseek-geneva.un.org

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Secretary-General’s priorities
Gender parity
Staff engagement
Management reform
Sexual exploitation and abuse
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 !

Adresses vos commentaires à :
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Should you wish to submit an article, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Now, put pen to paper!

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