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ALEXANDER MEJIA
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Whether you stand out at work for the colour of your skin, or even if you don't but care about the present and future, this edition of UN Today is for you. We know that racism is everywhere, and also in Europe, in Switzerland and at our offices in Geneva. It's an elephant in the room that the vast majority of us tend to ignore, but we can't anymore. It's raised its trunk and is ready to charge. We need to acknowledge it, understand it and talk about it because we are all involved. Either through witnessing it, suffering it or tolerating it. No matter your skin colour, cultural background or what side of the spectrum you are, indeed, you can make a difference. Get involved. We all can.

In this edition, you will find an article on racism at the UN, an analysis of the resurgence of racism in the world and an interview with Lynn Nottage who won the Pulitzer Prize for drama twice, and writes about those left behind.

Local topics include an article from the UN Human Rights Office and their partnership with Microsoft to leverage support for human rights advocacy. You can also read about the importance of tobacco control to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic, and how tobacco affects much more than human health.

In this light, we wish you a healthy month ahead!

Vous vous distinguez, au bureau, par la couleur de votre peau? Vous n'avez au contraire aucune caractéristique distinctive, mais vous vous souciez du présent et de l'avenir? Dans tous les cas, ce numéro de UN Today est fait pour vous. Le racisme n'a pas de frontières. Il sévit aussi en Europe, en Suisse, et à l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève. Il est comme un éléphant que l'on tolère au beau milieu d'un magasin de porcelaine, mais dont personne n'ose parler. Pourtant il est bien là, et il commence à s'agiter. Il serait donc préférable de le regarder en face et d'essayer de le comprendre et de lui parler avant qu'il ne fasse des dégâts. Peu importe que nous en soyons témoin ou victime. Quels que soient la couleur de votre peau, vos origines culturelles ou votre situation, vous pouvez faire bouger les choses. Alors mobilisez-vous!

Dans ce numéro, vous trouverez un article sur le racisme à l'ONU, une analyse de la recrudescence du phénomène dans le monde et une interview de Lynn Nottage, lauréate à deux reprises du prix Pulitzer dans la catégorie théâtre, où il sera question des laissés pour compte.

Parmi les sujets locaux, vous trouverez un article sur le partenariat entre le Bureau des Nations Unies pour les droits de l'homme et Microsoft pour promouvoir la défense des droits de l'homme. Vous découvrirez également à quel point il est important de lutter contre le tabagisme pour atténuer la pandémie de COVID-19, et comment les effets négatifs du tabac vont bien au-delà de la santé humaine.

Et puisqu'il est question de santé, prenez bien soin de vous!



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Leadership Starts at Home

Fighting racism internationally starts with confronting racism internally

Dominique Day and E. Tendayi Achiume*

The world desperately needs UN leadership to combat systemic racism. That cannot happen without tackling the systemic racism within the organization.

Systemic racism normalized inside institutions normalizes inequality and violence

This summer's global protests over systemic racism reflected the understanding that systemic racism normalized inside institutions and organizations actually normalizes inequality and violence, setting the stage for human rights violations against people of African descent and others. In the United Nations, several different surveys conducted by staff themselves indicated that, although more than one-third of employees experience or witness workplace discrimination, largely on the basis of national origin, race, or skin color, most believe the organization will offer no recourse if they complain about the racism they experience. Perhaps that belief grows from the knowledge that those who do speak out are largely dissatisfied with the outcomes.

UN survey on racism

An official UN survey on racism, published in August 2020, was telling even in its design. Although signaled by staff and staff associations, the UN survey included "yellow" among the var-

ied racial self-identification options, an anti-Asian racial slur that unfortunately seemed to serve as an indicator of the UN's awareness of systemic racism within its ambit. A question arises as to the UN's ability to give space to the most credible voices who could shepherd change in this regard.

Instead, media attention triggered the removal of the survey altogether. Yet, the alacrity with which public attention achieved what internal reviews, advice, and advocacy could not – and the decision to eliminate key data to abort the news cycle, rather than preserving the ability to disaggregate survey data by race – suggest the persistence of systemic racism in the UN is closely related to which voices are seen as credible, urgent, and authoritative. This was borne out in the surveys developed by staff as well: employees who experienced or witnessed discrimination reported impact to their professional development

and advancement, as well as verbal abuse, false accusations of wrongdoing, exclusion from workplace decision-making, and more. Like it or not, the UN is actively shaped by the unacknowledged racism within its ranks.

This may reflect a vicious circle grounded in geopolitical power. Since its establishment, the UN has sidestepped demands of prominent African-Americans, including W.E.B. DuBois, Malcolm X, and the NAACP, seeking recourse for systemic racism. Ongoing failures of UN member states to prioritize human rights for people of African descent may seed disinterest and disregard by the UN Secretariat and agencies, further facilitating impunity. Globally, it is apparent how the historical legacies of colonialism and the trade in trafficking in enslaved Africans continue to drive systemic racism worldwide, even defining key aspects our modern global economy, expectations, and injustices. The UN is no exception.

Do Black lives matter at the UN?

An important question needs to be asked: do Black lives matter at the UN? It is time for an honest, and uncomfortable, conversation about racism within the UN. In the wake of the killing of George Floyd and others, UN senior leaders of African descent called for "an honest assessment of how we uphold the UN Charter within our institution" and asked the UN to "go beyond and do more". Audre Lorde famously taught that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house," noting that inequity and inequality are baked into the fabric of our institutions. In the context of the UN, new tools must frame anti-racism efforts.

The UN must recognize its influence on matters of race can only ever be as strong as its insight. Acknowledging racism within the UN, as the Secretary General did in June, is important. But the UN must recognize that turning a blind eye to systemic racism within fatally compromises its leadership in a time of dire need. The UN must confront its own internal biases and internal attitudes evidencing a deep misunderstanding of racism and attempting to divorce systemic racism from the historical exercise of power.

Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All

The real challenge for the UN will be ensuring its commitments extend beyond the cosmetic. The UN's newly-established task force on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All, cre-

"The UN must confront its own internal biases and internal attitudes evidencing a deep misunderstanding of racism and attempting to divorce systemic racism from the historical exercise of power."

ated to establish the extent and impact of structural racism on mandate delivery, and to produce a strategic action plan, is important. Yet, concern at public image can easily transform a strategic action plan into a tool for UN leadership to claim it has solved the problem of systemic racism. The UN should leverage internal expertise on racism to unpack and interrogate how its practices and policies may license racial inequity and inequality. Finally, the UN is in desperate need of an internal audit to flesh out the claims and concerns of systemic racism within the UN, and to afford concrete detail to inform solutions. The world deserves nothing less. And the inquiry is long overdue. ▶

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E. Tendayi Achiume

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Dominique Day


* The article was prepared by the authors in their personal capacity and the opinions expressed in this article are their own.

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Ms. Dominique Day is the Chair of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, a fact-finding body mandated by the UN Human Rights Council to investigate and report on the situation of people of African descent globally.

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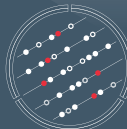


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How Racist Is the UN?

Ian Richards*

Back in June, Antonio Guterres told a staff townhall that “if racism exists anywhere, it also exists in the UN.” But how racist is the UN? And in an international organization, with staff from all quarters, what is racism?

Let's start back in 1945

The UN was founded on a wish to establish a stable world order, at the time dominated by people of European descent, some member states still empires. While the UN Charter championed self-determination, its early leadership reflected its founders' worldview.

Since then things have changed. The UN is more inclusive and international. Few colonies remain, the leadership has reflected a range of ethnicities, and departments such as UNCTAD and the regional commissions in Africa, Asia, West Asia and Latin America reflect an agenda driven more by the Global South.

Yet would you know this looking at our organization? The make-up of nationalities and ethnicities in each duty station is not unrelated to the region they are in, leading to something of a north-south divide. At the same time, many donor countries, not only developed, provide JPO schemes and financial assistance to unpaid interns, and lobby to have their nationals in key positions further up,

“Many donor countries provide JPO schemes and financial assistance to unpaid interns, lobby to have their nationals in key positions further up, thus structurally distorting the way nationalities are represented.”

thus structurally distorting the way nationalities are represented. To the extent that races and nationalities can still be linked, and we will come to this later, this could potentially benefit some races over others.

But what about UN staff themselves? Are they racist or are they victims of racism?

At this point it would have been useful to have the results of the global staff survey commissioned by the Office of Human Resources. Unfortunately, its first question was to ask staff to identify their race, with drop-down choices including yellow. The public backlash this created meant the survey was put on ice. However, a survey was carried out by the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council in Geneva. While it may well reflect prejudices more present in Europe, its results are still significant. Among the key findings reported by staff:

- More than one in three staff said they had personally experienced racial discrimination at work or seen others experience it.
- Among those who experienced or witnessed racism, a majority of staff indicated that racial discrimination affected opportunities for career advancement.
- Two-thirds of those who experienced racism did so on the basis of nationality.
- A large number who experienced or witnessed racial discrimination, harassment or abuse of authority indicated that they did not take any action, partly because of fear of retaliation.

So, racism is there, even if it is a relief that two-thirds of staff have been spared it.

The biggest challenge

The biggest challenge will be to fix it. Few staff set out to be racist or make life hard for those of different backgrounds. More often they do not realize that their actions offend or that they have misjudged a colleague who did not conform to their cultural standards.

At the milder end this was exemplified by an Italian colleague who told me that not a week went by without her hearing a reference to the mafia. At the other end, an African colleague confided that there seemed to be an assumption among some that he was less capable. He spoke of not being invited to lunches with team members, not being called on in meetings for his opinions, nor being given

“Among those who experienced or witnessed racism, a majority of staff indicated that racial discrimination affected opportunities for career advancement.”

additional responsibilities, which had knock-on effects in the selection process. And floating above this, the treatment in certain duty stations of locally recruited staff.

Faced with these issues, staff have come forward with a number of proposals. These include encouraging greater

language knowledge to move away from an anglo-centric view of the world, having a broader mix of staff in each location, training staff not to make assumptions about staff of different nationalities (why are there so few African staff yet plenty of European staff hired to the Asian and Latin American regional commissions?), ensuring more diverse selection panels, publishing selection decisions internally to improve transparency, promoting an open dialogue at work on the issue and better training.

There have also been calls for stricter nationality quotas. However, with successive waves of migration since the second world war, others have argued that linking nationalities to race, particularly in Europe and the US could in itself be racist and would penalize ethnic minorities in developed or over-represented countries even while they might remain victims of racism themselves. Much of the current debate on racism was triggered by incidents against Maghrebians in France, those of African descent in the US or those of Pakistani descent in the UK. And completely absent from the discussion has been the treatment of indigenous people in the Americas, which quotas won't resolve either.

For these reasons, addressing racism in the UN will be far from easy. Perceptions of racism can go in both directions; racism manifests itself in many forms and each duty station has its own issues. Pointing fingers won't solve things. It needs expertise, tolerance, understanding, patience and all our support. ▀

* Ian Richards is an economist at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

“Addressing racism in the UN will be far from easy. Perceptions of racism can go in both directions; racism manifests itself in many forms and each duty station has its own issues.”



Racisme, retour au pire ?

Muriel Scibilia*

Historienne de la littérature du XIX^e siècle, Nicole Savy, a travaillé sur les stéréotypes racistes et antisémites. Elle a exercé des responsabilités nationales à la Ligue française des droits de l'Homme et du citoyen.

Les comportements racistes sont-ils récents ou étaient-ils courants dans les sociétés anciennes ?

Les pratiques racistes sont bien antérieures à l'apparition du terme « raciste » qui ne date que de XIX^e siècle. Elles sont attestées depuis l'Antiquité. Les Grecs se distinguaient des

« Barbares » qu'ils réduisaient en esclavage. Le Moyen-Age européen a été marqué par la haine des Juifs, déjà boucs émissaires des Egyptiens. Les colonisations ont réduit les Indiens d'Amérique latine en esclavage tout en les évangélisant, et exterminé les indiens d'Amérique du nord. Avec la traite triangulaire, les Européens ont déporté vers l'Amérique 11 millions d'Africains. L'Afrique en est sortie traumatisée, et l'Amérique, où le métissage est inévitable, s'est structurée autour d'une hiérarchie raciale selon la couleur de peau.

«Le racisme ressurgit par vagues plus ou moins violentes selon les aléas de l'histoire.»

A partir de quand constate-t-on une aggravation du racisme ?

Au XVIII^e siècle, les naturalistes classent les animaux et les plantes par espèces et par races; on finit par en faire autant pour les humains. Pour Voltaire «La race des nègres est une espèce d'hommes différente de la nôtre, comme la race des épagneuls l'est des lévriers.» Avec le déterminisme se développe l'idée d'un lien entre sol, climat, nourriture, anatomie humaine, mœurs et société. Les théories de Darwin sur l'évolution avec l'idée de sélection naturelle ont fait penser que certaines «races» sont «moins évoluées». Se développe alors la hantise que les races inférieures l'emportent, que leur sang soit empoisonné et qu'il provoque une dégénérescence raciale. Dans son Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines (1855), Arthur de Gobineau classe les races: blanche, intelligente, noire, sensible et bestiale, jaune, industrielle. La race blanche est évidemment supérieure. Sa postérité est retentissante, surtout en Allemagne avec Houston Stewart Chamberlain, futur maître à «penser» d'Hitler.

Les dénonciations de racisme se multiplient, relayées par les médias, s'agit-il d'une flambée du racisme ou est-ce l'antiracisme qui est plus audible ?

Le racisme ressurgit par vagues plus ou moins violentes selon les aléas de l'histoire. Aujourd'hui, nous assistons à une «émergence du pire»: l'antisémitisme qui perdure, le racisme anti-arabe dû notamment à un amalgame entre musulmans et terroristes, la chasse aux Roms. S'y ajoutent les tensions que suscite l'intensification des flux migratoires dus à la misère, à des conflits ou aux conséquences du changement climatique. Or personne ne pourra jamais empêcher un humain de partir de chez lui s'il est en danger de mort. Et la liberté de circuler est l'un des droits de l'homme fondamentaux. On peut s'attendre à un accroissement des comportements racistes. D'où la nécessité d'appliquer d'autres politiques, à l'image de l'Allemagne qui s'est montrée plus accueillante envers les réfugiés que la plupart des pays européens. On assiste aussi à un retour pernicieux du langage des racistes historiques: certains partis politiques osent parler de la France comme «pays de race blanche», d'autres fustigent l'«immigration bactérienne».



Nicole Savy, historienne de la littérature du XIX^e siècle.

Tout n'est pas non plus facile du côté de l'antiracisme, qui subit des attaques au nom justement de l'antiracisme... De nouveaux comportements se développent au nom de l'appropriation culturelle. Certains estiment qu'on ne peut pas monter une pièce de théâtre sur les noirs si on n'est pas soi-même noir. C'est insupportable. Il importe de différencier la mémoire de l'histoire. Nous sommes tous porteurs de mémoire, mais on ne peut pas faire l'impasse sur l'histoire. C'est l'une des dérives des réseaux sociaux. Dès lors que chacun s'exprime sur n'importe quoi, il devient difficile de faire entendre une parole raisonnée. Or, si le racisme s'appuie sur de l'irrationnel, l'antiracisme a des fondements scientifiques. On ne peut pas tout mettre sur le même plan.



«La différence fait peur. Elle est perçue comme une menace alors qu'elle pourrait être considérée comme une richesse.»

La peur de l'autre est-elle le principal ferment du racisme ?

Oui, la différence fait peur. Elle est perçue comme une menace alors qu'elle pourrait être considérée comme une richesse. L'histoire a montré que la peur et la haine de l'autre peuvent devenir des instruments de gouvernement et d'exploitation, ce qui a encouragé les dérives issues du colonialisme, des programmes politiques d'extrême-droite et la prise de pouvoir de Hitler. La peur de l'autre, c'est le contraire de l'ouverture et de la générosité. Or, pour relever les défis qu'implique de vivre dans un monde toujours plus complexe et interdépendant, il est essentiel de comprendre et d'apprivoiser nos différences. Aux Etats-Unis, une partie de la population blanche se sent menacée par le risque de se retrouver en minorité face à l'augmentation des populations noires et latinos. Elle a aussi été traumatisée par l'élection d'un président noir, ce qui a favorisé la réémergence de comportements racistes. Une société dont les moyens d'action reposent non sur l'éducation mais sur la répression et le déni des violences policières induit des comportements dangereux. C'est aussi la porte ouverte au complotisme et au négationnisme, même si les réseaux sociaux rendent plus difficile d'effacer les traces de ce qui s'est passé.

L'ONU condamne fermement le racisme, a légiféré et inspiré le droit international et national de plusieurs pays. Quelles initiatives devrait-elle prendre aujourd'hui ?

Depuis la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'Homme, qui invoque «la dignité inhérente à tous les membres de la famille humaine», puis proclame l'égalité des droits et l'interdiction des

discriminations raciales et de l'esclavage, les Nations-unies et l'UNESCO ont produit quantité de textes, conventions et outils contre les discriminations raciales: la Déclaration sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination raciale en 1963, la Déclaration sur la race et les préjugés raciaux en 1978, qui prônent des politiques pour combattre le racisme et les inégalités. La vraie question est l'application effective de ces lois. Comment faire face à un dictateur, à une guerre? Cela ne veut pas dire que les Nations Unies ne peuvent rien faire. Elles ont notamment un rôle capital à jouer pour alerter l'opinion publique et l'aider à progresser dans la compréhension du racisme. En tant que militante des droits humains, je suis partisane de politiques misant sur l'éducation et la prévention au sein de toutes les instances éducatives, dès la maternelle, et des associations de défense des droits.

Dans des sociétés multiculturelles, comment concilier la reconnaissance et la valorisation des différences et les différentes valeurs d'une société ou d'un groupe humain ?

Tout individu est porteur d'identités multiples. On ne se définit pas seulement par sa couleur de peau, sa religion ou sa nationalité. Chacun appartient à des groupes sociaux divers, en plus de ses attaches familiales. Lors de la polémique sur le port du voile, la Ligue française des droits de l'Homme avait défendu l'idée que priver les écolières du voile, auquel, en tant que féministes, nous n'étions pas favorables c'était ne pas leur permettre de le retirer un jour. Puis, nous nous sommes aperçus que la question était plus complexe: le port du voile était de plus en plus choisi, pas imposé. C'était le moyen pour les jeunes filles de revendiquer une identité, en réponse au racisme subi par leur communauté. C'est dire combien il est important d'analyser les contradictions entre les droits et de reconnaître la complexité des situations. ■

* Muriel Scibilia est auteure et ancienne fonctionnaire de la Conférence des Nations Unies sur le commerce et le développement (CNUCED).

«De nouveaux comportements se développent au nom de l'appropriation culturelle.»

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Lynn Nottage,

Playwright and screenwriter

Federica Pietracci*

Lynn Nottage writes about those left behind and is the first and only female playwright and a screenwriter to have won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama... twice!

What do you see as the root causes of racism in today societies, in particular in the USA, and the reasons of its persistence?

That is a big complicated question that has kept many scholars busy over the decades. The roots of racism in the USA are vast and deep, and there is no way to answer this question without thoroughly examining the legacy of white supremacy, the Atlantic slave trade and colonialism on the world stage.

The persistence of racism in America lies in the fact that this culture has never fully acknowledged or reckoned with the stark reality that this country was built on the violent exploitation of Black and Indigenous People. In order for the USA to evolve, it must address how white supremacy has distorted our cultural narrative. However, there remains a willful resistance, evidenced in the current Presidential leadership, to give voice to the very real and unhealed wounds inflicted by centuries of racial discrimination, injustice and violence in America.

You are one of the promoters of and signatories to the "We See You, White American Theater" statement. Can you tell us what this is about and how has the statement prompted action thus far?

This past summer, in response to the murder of George Floyd, Breanna Taylor and too many others at the hands of the police, we witnessed Black Lives Matter activists take to the streets to push for an end to anti-Black violence in the criminal justice system and all aspects of American culture. By extension, many people saw this as an opportunity to interrogate how racism has shaped and defiled many of our cultural institutions. I was one of a number signatories who signed on to the We See You letter to



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“Until the UN truly recognizes and addresses how systematic racism impacts the day to day functioning of the organization, nothing will and can change.”

White American theater, to address the woeful inequities and anti-Blackness that permeates American theater from university training programs to Broadway commercial stages. The letter was written by a collective of multigenerational and multidisciplinary theatremakers, calling out and holding predominantly white institutions accountable for the way in which white supremacy has diminished and devalued BI-POC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) members of their community.

White theater often thinks of itself as being a great bastion of liberalism and diversity, and as such has been relatively myopic when it comes to examining racism within its own ranks. As a theater artist and Black woman, I've often felt isolated and unsafe in predominantly white institutions, and as a result suffered numerous indignities in silence. Theaters often treat BIPOC members of their community like visitors on a day pass that can be revoked at any minute, and we find ourselves working in environments where we don't feel heard or respected...and that exacts a terrible toll on the psyche.

The exciting thing about the We See You movement is that there is finally a critical mass of BIPOC theatermakers who are in the position to apply pressure on theaters to actually change their practices and invest in greater equity and inclusion.

What do you think UN staff members, as individuals and as a group, need to do to fight racism within and outside the organization more effectively?

Until the UN truly recognizes and addresses how systematic racism impacts the day to day functioning of the organization, nothing will and can change. It is incumbent upon all staff members to interrogate their own practices and acknowledge their complicity in perpetuating a status quo that privileges a few at the expense of others. Members of the UN must embrace a social contract that allows for a transparent, inclusive and compassionate environment that empowers and emboldens all to call out racism and inequity when this is witnessed or experienced. The UN is in the unique position to model best practices, and be a leader in reshaping how institutions throughout the world work to eliminate racism at all levels of society. ▶

* Federica Pietracchi is Senior Programme Management Officer at Secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, New York.



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Peer learning workshop on business and human rights, Kenya.

Empowering the UN Human Rights Office with a digital view

The new frontier of human rights

Laurent Sauveur and Jean-Yves Art*

In this November edition, the UN Human Rights Office and Microsoft share insights from their 5-year partnership and its concrete outcomes.

Promoting and protecting the human rights since 1993

Since its creation in 1993, the UN Human Rights Office has worked around the world to promote and protect the human rights guaranteed under international law and stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The organization – also known as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) – oversees a broad range of human rights themes, such as combatting discrimination, strengthening protection of human rights for all (including more fragile populations such as migrants, internally displaced people, and people with disabilities), protecting civic space, and strengthening the rule of law and accountability for human

rights violations. Given its global remit, the UN Human Rights Office must maintain an accurate, up-to-date, and richly detailed view of the human rights landscape around the world. What is needed to create such a precise view?

In February 2020, speaking about the “new frontiers of human rights”, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres noted that the digital age has opened new frontiers of human welfare, knowledge, and exploration. Yet, new technologies – he states – are too often used to violate rights and privacy through surveillance, repression, and online harassment and hate. They are also used by terrorists and human traffickers,

“The UN Human Rights Office is also leveraging Microsoft’s support for human rights advocacy and outreach campaigns through concrete support for its work in key areas like freedom of expression, data protection and privacy and inclusion.”

the Secretary-General noted. Seeking to reverse the tide of technology’s misuse, Guterres went on to issue a call to action, noting the United Nations would “advocate for the application of human rights online”.

Technology helps the UN advance the protection of human rights in new ways

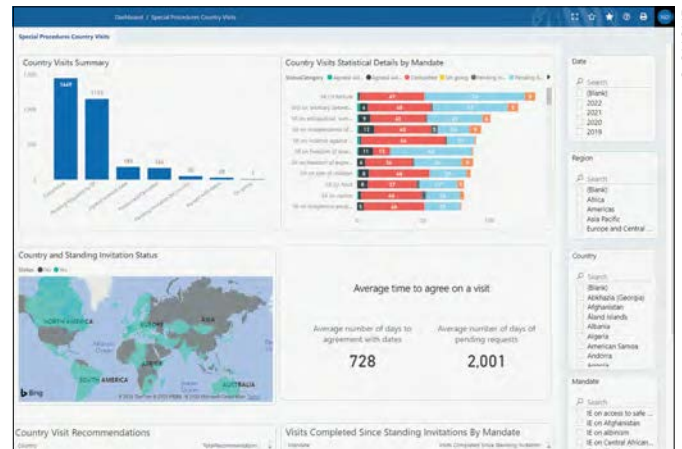
This is an area the UN Human Rights Office had been working on for some time. As far back as 16 May 2017, the Office announced a landmark five-year partnership with Microsoft. As part of the agreement, Microsoft committed to grant US\$5million to support the work of the UN Human Rights Office. One of the pillars of the partnership focuses on the development and use of technology designed specifically to better predict, analyze, and respond to critical human rights situations.

One example of the technology at the heart of the partnership is Rights View, an information dashboard that empowers the UN Human Rights Office with the ability to aggregate large sets of internal and external data on specific countries and types of human rights violations in real-time. This digital technology facilitates the analysis and early warning of emerging critical issues, and in terms of solutions, provides smart data to guide responses. This tool is just one example of the potential for technology to be a force for good.

Today, we have crossed over the halfway point in the five-year agreement. While the Office is able to engage Microsoft on issues which could affect itself or its industry, we have joined forces to raise awareness of the role that all companies can play in driving respect for human rights and promoting more responsible business conduct across the world. Microsoft is also collaborating with the Office to help promote broader adoption and implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The UN Guiding Principles provide a global standard for preventing and addressing the risk of adverse impacts on human rights linked to business activity. This collaboration takes various forms, including the organization of peer-learning workshops with the business community in various regions of the world.

The UN Human Rights Office is also leveraging Microsoft’s support for human rights advocacy and outreach campaigns through concrete support for the work of the UN Human Rights Office in key areas like freedom of expression, data protection and privacy, and inclusion. This includes direct support for the development and promotion of corporate principles for tackling LGBTI discrimination in the workplace in line with international human rights standards.

Early mockup of the Rightsview dashboard.



The UN Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation

In June 2020, during the Dialogue on the Implementation of the UN Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet highlighted that, “the Roadmap calls upon all of us – the UN, Member States, civil society, and the private sector – to work together in new and inclusive ways to make sure we seize the many opportunities digital technologies present to the common good, while avoiding potential threats.”

<https://news.microsoft.com/features/technology-helps-un-advance-protection-human-rights-new-ways/>

* Laurent Sauveur is the Chief of External Outreach at the UN Human Rights Office and Jean-Yves Art is Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships at Microsoft.

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© SECRETARIAT OF THE WHO FCTC

The team of the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Convention.

Why tobacco control is important during COVID-19 pandemic ?

Dr Adriana Blanco Marquizo*

Tobacco control is important to development and can help countries mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic and build sustainable communities.

Tobacco is a common risk factor for noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), such as cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes, and cancers. These pre-existing conditions, as well as smoking, leave those who contract COVID-19 at risk of developing more severe forms of the disease.

But tobacco affects much more than human health; it is also a threat to sustainable development. Tobacco cultivation and manufacturing impact the environment. Cigarette butts are among the top plastic polluters. There are also enormous economic consequences; tobacco use costs the global economy over US\$ 1 trillion annually in medical expenses and lost productivity.

How tobacco control may support development ?

During these difficult times, the global tobacco control community is working tirelessly. The Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC),¹ is an important member of this community.

The WHO FCTC was developed in response to the globalization of the tobacco epidemic and reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health. The Convention represents a milestone for public health. Currently, it has 182 Parties. Drawing on Article 15 of the Convention, which focuses on illicit trade in tobacco products, worldwide negotiations led to a new legally binding

international treaty – the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products. Sixty-two Parties to the WHO FCTC also have become Parties to the Protocol.

Strengthening implementation of the WHO FCTC has been included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as Target 3.a, as it contributes to the achievement of SDG 3 and more specifically to SDG 3.4, which calls for a reduction in premature mortality from NCDs. The inclusion of this specific target in the SDGs is further evidence of the importance of tobacco control for sustainable development.

A small group of committed people making a difference

The Convention Secretariat is a small but highly committed team of 28 staff members, representing over 25 nationalities, dedicated to serving Parties to implement both the WHO FCTC and the Protocol. The work of the Convention Secretariat is ruled by the decisions of their respective governing bodies: the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the WHO FCTC and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (MOP).

The Convention Secretariat is also an independent member of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases and chairs the Task Force's thematic group on tobacco control. In that group, the Convention Secretariat has led the development and promotion of a Model Policy on preventing tobacco industry interference among United Nations agencies, which was endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2017 and 2018.

There is much more work to do...

In order to fast-track the implementation of the Convention, in 2018, the COP adopted the Global Strategy to Accelerate Tobacco Control 2019-2025, which calls upon all relevant stakeholders to intensify efforts to work together to accelerate action and support implementation of the WHO FCTC.

Also, there are new challenges, chiefly novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products, aggressively marketed by the tobacco industry. The introduction of flavours and other attractive features make them attractive to young people. The diversity of these products is enormous, but they can be broadly divided in two groups: electronic nicotine (and non-nicotine) delivery systems that heat a liquid with or without nicotine; and tobacco heated products that consists of an electronic device that heats a tobacco stick. The COP defined heated tobacco products as a tobacco product, therefore subject to the provisions of the Convention. Also, it recommended to Parties “to regulate, including restrict, or prohibit, as appropriate, the manufacture, importation, distribution, presentation, sale and use of novel and emerging tobacco products, as appropriate to their national laws, considering a high level of protection for human health”.

...even during a pandemic

Tobacco control remains crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it will be after the pandemic subsides. In fact, tobacco

also should be considered a pandemic – a slow-motion pandemic – that adds its lethal features to the ongoing one. Therefore, sustaining and strengthening population-level interventions for tobacco control during the COVID-19 pandemic are vital.

Given the links between tobacco use and COVID-19, recovery plans for the pandemic should include the Convention as part of building-back-better strategies. Increasing tobacco taxes, for example, is a measure that can provide multiple wins: decrease tobacco consumption; increase government revenue; and save future costs to the health systems by preventing the onset of more NCDs. There has been never a better time than now to support tobacco users in their efforts to quit, since the COVID-19 pandemic has made people more aware of health in general.

The challenge ahead may, at times, seem insurmountable; however, the Convention Secretariat will keep working, in close partnership and collaboration with partners, especially the United Nations community, to help Parties “to protect the present and future generations from the devastating health, social, environmental and economic consequences of the tobacco epidemic”.¹

* D^r Adriana Blanco Marquizo is Head of the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC (Framework Convention on Tobacco Control). The Secretariat is an entity hosted by WHO and cooperates with relevant departments of WHO and other competent UN agencies.

¹ The Convention Secretariat is the global entity responsible for supporting Parties in the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (the Protocol), and intergovernmental organizations in the service of “We the Peoples”.

© SECRETARIAT OF THE WHO FCTC



D^r Adriana Blanco Marquizo in her office

“Tobacco also should be considered a pandemic – a slow-motion pandemic – that adds its lethal features to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak.”

United for our goals

Mayors & Ambassadors Scoring the Sustainable Development Goals

Let's get moving for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)! The Forum of Mayors 2020 brought together last October mayors and diplomats on a football field. City leaders and Geneva-based ambassadors teamed-up to get the ball rolling for the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs.

The match took place at the Palais des Nations – the grass field normally reserved for peacocks turned into a playing field for sporty policymakers and tactical diplomats.

The match was opened by the Referee: Olga Algayerova, UNECE Executive Secretary, the Captain of Ambassadors United: Walter Stevens, Head of EU Delegation to the UN in Geneva and the Captain of Mayors United: Sami Kanaan, Mayor of Geneva. The final score was 17 for the Ambassadors and 14 for the Mayors.





9.

12.

10.

11.

1. Olga Algayerova, UNECE Executive Secretary, referee of the game, discusses with UEFA referee.
2. Lucie Berger, First Secretary, delegation of the European Union to the UN and other International organizations, organizer and score keeper.
3. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary of UNECE, referee of the game shows the yellow and red cards to the captains of the teams, Sami Kanaan, Mayor of Geneva and Walter Stevens, Ambassador, European Union.
4. Alexander Alimov, DPR, of the Russian Federation aiming to the goal.
5. Ambassador Tine Mørch Smith, Permanent Representative, Norway.
6. The Ambassadors United team
7. The Mayors United team.
8. Ambassador Hans-Peter Jugel, DPR Germany.
9. Tomaso Rossini, Captain of the Castle, San Marino, goalkeeper for Mayors United.
10. Mark Cassayre, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S.A. goalkeeper for Ambassadors United.
11. Paola Deda, organizer & Director at UNECE, cheering the team & holding tight onto the medals and cup.
12. The winning team, Ambassadors United.

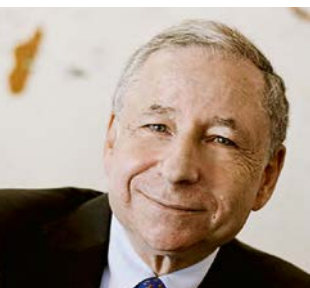
PHOTOS ARE A COURTESY PF CECILIA BATAÇ AND UNECE /PIERRE ALBOUY.



Remembering Victims on the Roads in the time of COVID-19

Jean Todt*

World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.



Jean Todt

The year 2020 has seen unprecedented events. The COVID-19 crisis has brought grief and financial difficulties to many, and tremendous changes to the daily lives of us all.

But it is during these times of great uncertainty that opportunities often arise. New challenges could be addressed, ambitious objectives could be strongly recalled such as a world where every citizen has access to safe, affordable and sustainable mobility, where every child can have a safe journey to and from school.



November is always a stark reminder of how far we must go to achieve this ultimate (and necessary) vision

On the third Sunday of this month, we gather in silence to remember the 1.4 million lives lost and the 50 million more injured with life-sustaining disabilities each year on the roads; we stand in solidarity with families who mourn the loss of their beloved; we support those who are now life-long caretakers of their injured loved ones.

It is tempting for me to compare the devastation of COVID-19 to that faced on the road every year. However, we saw something interesting happening for mobility during the pandemic. COVID-19 set an impetus on more active mobility: more walking and cycling in effort to enable social distancing measures.

The urgent need for these active modes of mobility has increased and quickened some governments' investments in their regard, in both developed and developing nations, including here in Geneva.

This is exactly what we need to achieve our ultimate vision of safe, affordable and sustainable mobility. Furthermore, during peak lock down periods, road traffic deaths halved in some countries, showcasing that when simple rules are followed and when traffic volumes are contained, we can save lives.

Two pandemics, COVID-19 and road traffic injuries converge to teach us a lesson. We could and we should take this brave chance to rebuild our cities, our communities and our transport systems for more resiliency: both in terms of the safety and environmental related Sustainable Development Goals, as well as in our preparedness for future outbreaks of the like.

In August 2020, even amid a global health crisis, Member States adopted, arguably, one of the strongest UN General Assembly Resolutions on improving global road safety. It puts sustainable mobility high on the agenda, while announcing a second Decade of Action for Road Safety with a new target to halve road deaths and injuries between 2021-2030. A big step forward and a tribute to all the lives affected by road crashes.

World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims falls on Sunday, 15 November 2020

I hope you will join me in remembering those who have suffered from the carnage on our roads and in committing to doing your part to make it safe. Join the movement: <https://worlddayofremembrance.org/>.

* Jean Todt is UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety.

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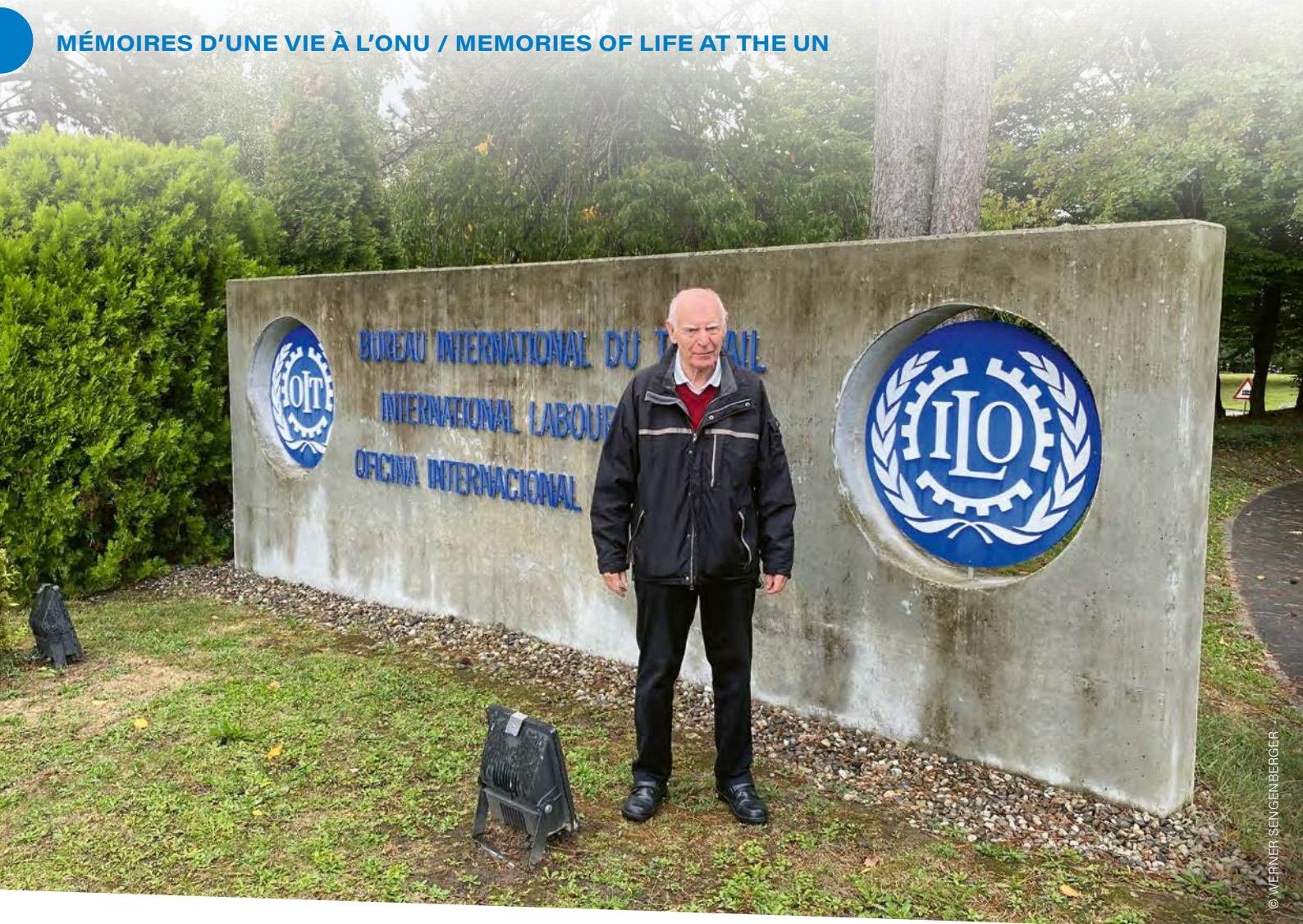


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My years in the ILO

Advocating labour standards in the neoliberal era

Werner Sengenberger*

I worked for the International Labour Organization (ILO) from 1986 to 2001. I started at the ILO's International Institute for Social Studies in charge of a research programme called "Labour Institutions and New Industrial Organization". A major focus of the work was the impact on labour caused by the emergence of global product and capital markets and increased economic integration, subsequently termed economic globalization.

1980's, divided views on international labour standards (ILS)

Our research was prompted by the debate in the 1980s on the role of international labour standards (ILS). At the time, both the academic community and the policymakers inside and outside the ILO were divided in their views as to whether ILS constitute a help or a hindrance to good economic performance and social stability. Neo-classical theory that had become mainstream in economics asserted that the standards were economically harmful, because they would insert rigidities in production, distort the market mechanism, and hamper competitiveness and growth, resulting in "sclerotic" economies with high unemployment. Neo-liberal policies had begun to dominate the earlier Keynesian policy prescriptions. They advocated the deregulation of markets, including labour markets, privatization, and measures of austerity and structural adjustment.

Conversely, from its inception in 1919, the ILO claimed that unregulated labour markets and employment would risk depressing labour conditions. The guide for a fair and stable globalization and the remedy against "social dumping" and a "race to the bottom" would be action for the achievement of universal minimum labour and social standards. While observing standards may increase labour costs, it will improve rather than hamper economic competitiveness, since better working conditions will allow to raise productivity and innovative capacity and entail other sources of competitive advantage, such as the peaceful mediation of social conflicts.

1990's, conflict over employment policy

My most challenging appointment in the Office was director of the Department of Employment Strategy. The task of the ILO in the employment policy field as well as in other areas of ILO competency, e.g. social security, was not eased, but instead often made more difficult in the presence of other, financially better equipped global players, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The two organizations played a crucial role in promoting and financing the neo-liberal reform package of the "Washington Consensus", not only in the de-

"Rather than being an ally, the World Bank turned out to be a rival of the ILO when it came to advise the countries in Central and Eastern Europe during the transition from centrally planned to market economies. Later on, the World Bank admitted that it had underestimated the beneficial role of labour institutions, active labour market policies and social dialogue."

veloping countries, but also in the former communist countries after the breakdown of the Soviet system.

I was directly confronted with the ideological conflict between the ILO and the international financial organisations in the mid-1990s, when I was head of an ILO Multidisciplinary Advisory Team located in Budapest. Rather than being an ally, the World Bank turned out to be a rival of the ILO when it came to advise the countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) during the transition from centrally planned to market economies. Its officials taught the policy makers in the region that in order to receive foreign direct investment, become internationally competitive and bring down unemployment,



Werner Sengenberger



© ILO

Three Director-Generals of the ILO, 29 May 2009. From left to right, Juan Somavia, 9th Director-General of the ILO, Francis Blanchard, 7th Director-General of the ILO, Michel Hansenne, 8th Director General of the ILO.



© WERNER SENGENBERGER

Werner Sengenberger (left) with Juan Somavia, former Director-General of the ILO.

they would have to stay clear of “excessive” labour regulation, such as contractual or statutory minimum wages, working time limitations, unemployment compensation and the protection from unfair dismissal.

The IMF practiced “conditionality” in its loan programmes under which countries with collective labour rights were disadvantaged in receiving financial support. Just like the Bank, the Fund advised to avoid centralized collective bargaining, pushing it down to the enterprise level, thus weakening trade unions.

In the 1990s, despite the adverse influence of counselling by the Bank and the Fund, the CEE countries created tripartite social dialogue and adopted policies recommended by the ILO. They ratified the ILO Convention No. 122 on employment policy (aimed at full, productive and freely chosen employment), launched national and regional programmes of employment promotion and public employment services, including job mediation, unemployment compensation, vocational training, public works and subsidized employment, all of which contributed to reducing unemployment in the region, in particular among vulnerable groups. Later on, the World Bank admitted that it had underestimated the beneficial role of labour institutions, active labour market policies and social dialogue.

1999, the adoption of the Decent Work Concept

My final assignment in the ILO related to the adoption of the Decent Work Concept in 1999 as an agenda for all ILO pro-

grammes and activities. I was put in charge of the ILO’s first Decent Work Country Review. Denmark was chosen deliberately in view of the country’s compliance with ILS and the concurrent dynamic enterprises, high growth rates, extensive participation of workers, high levels of income security, and social and gender equality.

International labour standards (ILS) as contested terrain: meeting the challenges

In retrospect, given that ILS, as well as employment policy, is a widely and strongly contested terrain among scholars of economics, among international organizations, and also among the tripartite constituents of the ILO, the professional staff of the ILO have to stand their ground in intellectual confrontations, be it in policy research or technical cooperation. I was fortunate to work at the ILO not at the beginning, but instead in the second half of my professional life. Before joining the International Labour Office, I had already gained substantial knowledge and experience through theoretical and empirical research on various aspects of labour and social policies, membership, and networking in international professional organisations, and consulting and teaching in several countries. The prior experience helped me in forming an independent position in the controversy between the free market paradigm versus the school of institutional economics that attributes an important role to the state and collective organisations and their interventions in the economy. While the controversies on policy created a nearly permanent challenge for our work at the Office, they also ensured that the work was never boring. I found it highly rewarding to collaborate with qualified and motivated colleagues inside and outside the Office, also benefiting from a level of social security unavailable for most of the world’s labour force. ■

“The task of the ILO in the employment policy field was not eased, but instead often made more difficult in the presence of other, financially better equipped global players, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.”

* Werner Sengenberger is a former Director of the Employment Strategy Department of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and is a member of Greycells – Association of former international civil servants for development.



A Unique Virtual Experience!

Calvin In America

Hanna Woodhead*

Temporary exhibition
at the International Museum
of the Reformation
until February 28th, 2021

In November 1620, the passengers and crew of the Mayflower reached the coast of Massachusetts and established a colony there. Among them were Puritan Reformists who had crossed the ocean to found a community in accordance with their aspirations, firmly rooted in Protestant and Calvinist values. This was a founding moment for what was to become the United States of America.

Experience first-hand this poignant event and the identity to which it gave rise through a multifaceted exhibition at the MIR.

Aboard the Mayflower: Embark on the emblematic boat that crossed the Atlantic in 1620, an unforgettable virtual reality experience, design by Artanim, in the company of the first Reformed community in America.

60 historical and current records: On loan from 17 American museums or libraries, private individuals or from the MIR's rich collection, explore 60 documents, memorabilia, statistics and objects that evoke the religious and Protestant identity of the USA from 1620 to today, through unique scenography designed by artist Séverin Guelpa.

The Four Freedoms: Norman Rockwell's famous World War II posters are presented in a sanctuary-like space to highlight the four founding freedoms of America: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

American religious music: Nine pieces of music inspired by religion in America, from 1773 to today, are on display in the Museum's small music room and include choir singing, ballads, blues and jazz.

Religion in the movies: A 20-minute loop of various excerpts from famous films produced in North America introduces visitors to how religion permeates culture and has inspired great directors. ▶



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www.mir.ch



* Hanna Woodhead is Research Associate at the International Museum of the Reformation. .



100 ans de multilatéralisme à Genève

Catherine Fiankan-Bokonga*

Pavoisement du pont du Mont-Blanc à l'occasion des 100 ans de multilatéralisme à Genève.

100 ans de multilatéralisme à Genève est un coffret indispensable. Il permettra aux lecteurs de trouver un ensemble d'informations à la hauteur de l'importance du sujet traité.

Tatiana Valovaya, directrice générale de l'Office européen des Nations Unies, rappelle dans la préface qu'elle a rédigée que «l'ouvrage voit le jour dans le cadre du centenaire de la Conférence de la paix de Paris, entérinant la fin de la Grande Guerre et la naissance du multilatéralisme moderne c'est celui qui a ouvert la voie au développement du système international tel que nous le connaissons aujourd'hui et constitua un véritable tournant dans l'Histoire».

Extrait: «Ce qui ressort de cet ouvrage, c'est la résilience du système multilatéral. Il a survécu à une guerre mondiale,

traverser la guerre froide, affronté d'innombrables conflits, crises et tensions. Davantage, il s'est étendu et installé comme le mode "normal" de la coopération internationale.» ... «Dans tous les cas, quel que soit leur besoin de réforme, les organisations internationales par leur

seule existence signalent à tous les acteurs qu'une paralysie, pour ne pas parler d'une disparition, aurait un coût majeur pour le monde. Genève est au centre de l'ouvrage et on le comprend bien.» ... ▶

«L'ouvrage comble une lacune criante»

Philippe Burrin, ancien Directeur de l'Institut de Hautes Etudes Internationales et du Développement (IHEID) à Genève

«La Genève internationale: un laboratoire de la gouvernance mondiale du futur.»

Valentin Zellweger, Ambassadeur de Suisse

Première session
de l'Assemblée,
Salle de la
Réformation,
15 Novembre 1920.



Questions à **Suzanne Hurter**, éditrice des deux tomes du coffret consacré au centième anniversaire du multilatéralisme

Comment a débuté l'aventure ?

Un groupe s'est constitué composé d'anciens magistrats genevois, d'universitaires, de responsables actuels où émérite d'organisations internationales avec une seule ambition rendre hommage. Le livre ne prétend pas à l'exhaustivité il souhaite d'abord retracer le contexte dans lequel est née la Société des Nations, ses objectifs et ses réalisations. Il revoit aussi les principales actions du siège européen des Nations Unies à Genève ainsi que des institutions spécialisées avec la contribution d'importants acteurs du système onusien.

Quel était votre objectif ?

Nous avons voulu porter un regard sur l'avenir du multilatéralisme avec la contribution d'importants acteurs du système des Nations Unies.

Les Nations Unies et les autres organisations internationales gouvernementales et non gouvernementales sont souvent critiquées. Qu'en pensez-vous ?

Elles sont pourtant uniques dans l'histoire et elles témoignent des efforts de l'humanité pour rechercher un avenir meilleur elles sont autant de signes d'espérance pour les hommes les femmes et les enfants les plus déshérités de notre planète. Grâce à elles, Genève est devenue une ville internationale où se rencontre tous les courants qui portent l'aventure humaine et où se discute les problèmes du monde.

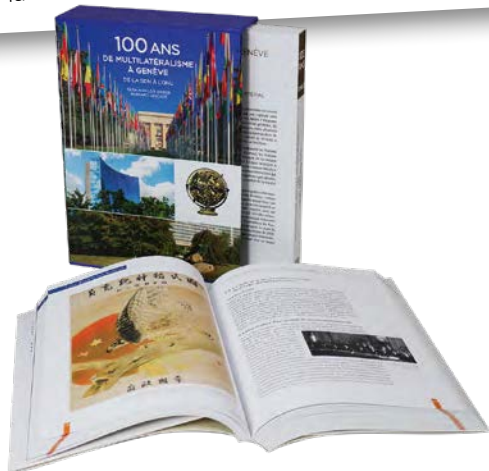
L'ouvrage rassemble des textes d'historiens, de spécialistes et de praticiens des organisations internationales. Il se découpe en trois parties distinctes.

Le premier tome fait revivre les forces profondes à l'origine de la Société des Nations (SdN) et de l'Organisation Internationale du Travail (OIT) en 1919. Ces organisations sont issues de la Première Guerre mondiale, mais ont néanmoins

vu le jour grâce à des milieux qui en ont favorisé l'éclosion depuis la fin du 19^{ème} siècle. Cette partie expose différentes activités menées par ces deux organisations pendant l'entre-deux-guerres dans le cadre des programmes visant à maintenir la paix, ainsi que celles menées dans un cadre humanitaire, économique ou social. Par exemple, la lutte contre la drogue ou contre l'esclavage de même que l'aide apportée aux réfugiés sont largement mises en évidence. La Seconde Guerre mondiale que la SdN n'a pu empêcher, sonne évidemment comme l'échec de son œuvre de paix, néanmoins plusieurs chapitres montrent comment les intentions et les idées persistent et sont présentes dans les projets de reconstruction bien avant que la guerre ne soit gagnée.

La seconde partie présente différentes actions du multilatéralisme après la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Dans le monde bipolaire d'alors, les anciennes grandes puissances doivent s'adapter aux modifications liées à la décolonisation qui a des effets sur le multilatéralisme. Les questions de paix et de sécurité sont traitées à New York nouveau siège des Nations Unies, néanmoins de nombreux sujets présentés dans cet ouvrage sont discutés à Genève grâce aux institutions spécialisées des Nations Unies qui ont établi leur siège dans cette ville. Les questions concernant le commerce international, l'environnement, le désarmement, le développement et les droits de l'homme sont ainsi débattus dans différents forums sur le sol helvétique.

La troisième partie, qui chronologiquement correspond au retour d'un monde multipolaire et de nouvelles incertitudes politiques et sécuritaires, expose les nouveaux défis qui attendent les Nations Unies et le multilatéralisme. Elle développe également le rôle que Genève et la Suisse peuvent jouer pour soutenir les grands axes du multilatéralisme.



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* Catherine Fiankan-Bokonga est Vice-Présidente du Club Suisse de la Presse..



Fire of joy in front
of the Protestant
Cathedral.

The history of the “Escalade”

The “Escalade” celebration, a symbolic tradition in Geneva

By CAGI*

The Escalade (scaling the defensive wall) is an annual celebration of the Protestant Genevan people's victory over the Catholic Duke of Savoy's surprise attack on the rich, independent and liberal Republic of Geneva during the darkest night of the year on 11-12 December 1602. According to the legend, the Savoyard troops were held up from entering the City by *Dame Royaume* who threw a pot of boiling vegetable soup – the famous “marmite” – on the invaders before raising the alarm.

Centuries later, the Escalade remains a symbol of religious and political freedom, which is celebrated every year on 12 December by the Genevan population of all ages: Around 11 December, schoolchildren dressed up in costumes, ring at doorbells in the hope of receiving coins or sweets. Locals invite their family and friends to gather around a chocolate “marmite”, which is traditionally smashed by the eldest and youngest person to the words *“Ainsi périssent les ennemis de la République”*. Commemorative chocolate “marmite” (cauldrons) filled with marzipan vegetables will soon adorn local shops.

Every year, the main attraction consists in a three-day programme of medieval animations organised by the historical *Compagnie de 1602*. The highlight is the extensive, colourful parade of over 800 persons, some on horseback, all in 17th century dresses, wind-

ing through the old town to the sound of fifes and drums, illuminated by handheld torches. A declamation is read out next to a huge fire of joy, concluding the event in front of the Protestant Cathedral.

The Escalade celebration at La Pastorale

The traditional Fête de l'Escalade is one of the most important events which is organised annually, in December, at the International Geneva Welcome Centre (CAGI) premises.

Held under the Patronage of the UN, the Federal, Cantonal and Communal Authorities, it enables Cagi to present one of Geneva's finest traditions to newly arrived International Geneva employees, their family members, as well as friends of International Geneva.

Each edition of the Fête de l'Escalade is an unforgettable event which owes its



success not only to the commitment of its various contributors, but also to its guests' active participation. In cooperation with the Newcomers Network Service and its dedicated group of Fondation pour Genève volunteers, CAGI is able to propose a truly unique experience, bringing the local and international communities together to celebrate this local tradition in a friendly atmosphere.

Nearly 670 guests gather at the venue each year to enjoy a wonderful blend of culture, folklore and history. Upon their arrival, guests are immersed in a magical atmosphere thanks to the faithful participation of *La Compagnie de 1602*, the *Fifres et Tambours* of the Popular Conservatory of Music, Dance and Theatre, Geneva and the *Sonneurs du Jet d'Ô*.

After a warm glass of mulled wine, all the guests are required to cooperate and make their own cheese fondue together. Specialists are on hand to assist when necessary, but despite the different cultures, nationalities and languages grouped around each Fondue "caquelon", the exemplary collaboration between the guests always results in a truly tasty Fondue. Guests are then offered to close the meal with a typical Swiss desert composed of meringues and thick Gruyère cream.

Smashing the "marmite", the highlight of the celebration

For the smashing ceremony of the "marmite", representatives of the 5 continents take place on the stage and are accompanied by the sound of the drums. The President of the Newcomers Network explains the traditional gestures by inviting the 5 elected



Left, a delegation of the *Compagnie de 1602*.

Right, Smashing the Marmite.

international newcomers to raise their swords and pronounce together and in front of the assembly, the traditional sentence: "Ainsi périssent les ennemis de la République".

"Cé qu'è lainô", the traditional song of the Escalade

Accompanied by 4 trumpets, some members of the Company of 1602 with the whole assembly stand up to sing *Cé qu'è lainô*. This song is the official hymn of the Republic and canton of Geneva relating the Escalade story in Arpitan (an ancient regional dialect).

A special edition for the Escalade 2020 at CAGI

Facing the COVID-19 situation, CAGI will maintain this event again this year but adjust it to the current circumstances. On Wednesday, December 2, CAGI will invite newcomers from international Geneva to an online celebration of the *Fête de l'Escalade*.

The programme consists in short speeches by the UN and Host Country officials, followed by a presentation of the *Compagnie de 1602* costumes, a ceremonial breaking of the chocolate "marmite" accompanied by the official hymn of the Republic and canton of Geneva.

Invited guests will receive a voucher for a chocolate "marmite" for free (kindly offered by Migros) to be picked up at any Migros shop – the "marmite" will be smashed live on line with the organisers during this virtual event. Watch out for CAGI's invitation letter to make sure not to miss this year's special Escalade celebration. ▶

* CAGI (Centre d'Accueil de la Genève Internationale) is the International Geneva Welcome Centre.

The chocolate Marmite.

Nos suggestions de lecture sur le racisme

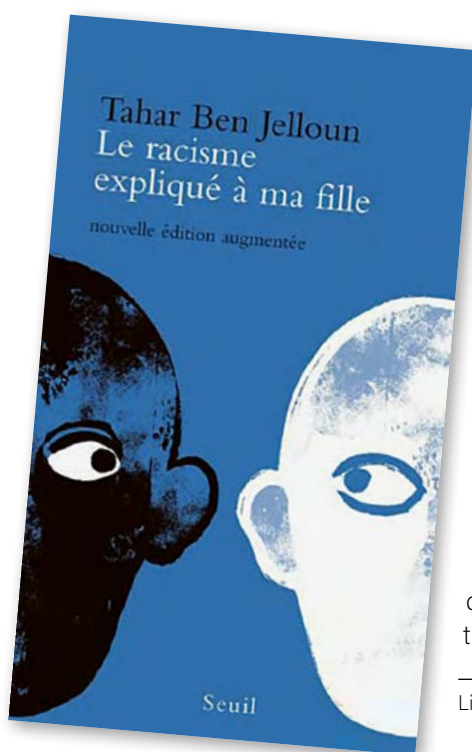
«Le chant des revenants»

par Jesmyn Ward

Pivot du roman, Jojo, 13 ans, vit dans une petite ville du Mississippi. Il est né d'un homme blanc, Michael, et d'une femme noire, Léonie. Accro à la cocaïne, sa mère ne se remet pas de l'assassinat de son frère, Given dont le spectre n'en finit pas de la hanter. En apprenant que Michael va sortir de prison, Léonie embarque Jojo et sa petite sœur dans un périlleux «road trip». Un roman sombre, puissant sur la cohabitation conflictuelle entre blancs et noirs, la ségrégation, la violence, la misère et l'amour. Un récit polyphonique porté par une langue luxuriante, déroutante, poétique.

Couronné par le National Book Award, ce roman est paru en anglais sous le titre *Sing, Unburied, Sing*.

Livre proposé par Muriel Scibilia, auteure.



«Le Racisme expliqué à ma fille»

par Tahar Ben Jelloun

Face à la montée de l'antisémitisme, de l'islamophobie, des discriminations dont sont victimes un nombre croissant de groupes sociaux, et de l'émergence des revendications autour de «l'identité nationale», l'auteur reprend le dialogue entamé il y a dix ans avec sa fille Mérième. A travers cet échange, enrichi de ses conversations avec des enfants du monde entier, l'écrivain franco-marocain propose la définition de termes comme discrimination, antisémitisme, bouc émissaire, colonialisme. Convaincu qu'on ne naît pas raciste mais qu'on le devient», Tahar Ben Jelloun table sur l'éducation pour changer la donne.

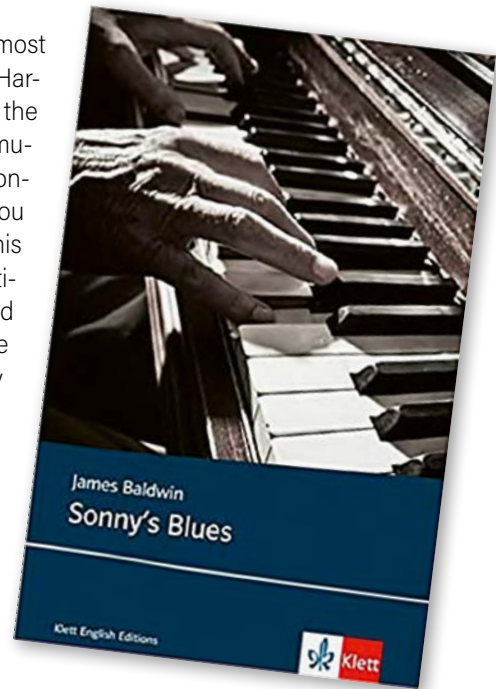
Livre proposé par Muriel Scibilia, auteure.

“Sonny’s Blues”

by James Baldwin

This short story from 1957 is Baldwin at his rawest, most lyrical, most devastating best. A tale of two brothers in Harlem, it packs the trauma of racism and drug addiction, the fierceness of family love and the awesome power of music into 31 tautly crafted pages. Its admirably unself-conscious first-person voice is colloquial, almost chatty; you feel like you are sitting down with Baldwin, watching his face as he watches yours. The story offers one beautiful, keenly observed phrase after another: “He hoped his eyes would tell me things he could never otherwise say”. Baldwin dredges up the smoky, smelly, noisy streets of New York; here’s how he evokes the magical electricity that flows between jazz musicians: “Sonny began to play. Something began to happen. And Creole let out the reins. The dry, low black man said something awful on the drums, Creole answered, and the drums talked back... And this tale, according to that face, that body, those strong hands on those strings, has another aspect in every country, and a new depth in every generation. Listen, Creole seemed to be saying, listen. Now these are Sonny’s blues. He made the little black man on the drums know it, and the bright brown man on the horn.” The story is surely drawn at least in part from Baldwin’s own life, and is a brilliant introduction to one of America’s most important writers.

Book suggested by Erica Meltzer, writer/editor.



«Un Juif pour l'exemple» ("A Jew Must Die")

by Jacques Chessex

This slim, grim and riveting novella is based on a true story, about a Swiss Jew who was brutally murdered by Nazi thugs in 1942. Written at times in the first-person plural, at times in a more neutral third person, it is a passionate condemnation of Swiss society both then and now in which the author makes a brief but memorable appearance. Graphic, grisly depictions and metaphors of butchery pervade the book, along with deft character sketches of the victim, a portly cattle merchant, and his obsessive, small-minded murderers. The writing is precise and economical, earthy and sinister – almost as clinically detailed as a police blotter. The fact that you know what is to come only deepens the suspense and horror.

Chessex, who was also a painter, was the first non-French citizen to win the prestigious Prix Goncourt, in 1973, and died in 2009. This book – the last to be published in his lifetime – was made into a film by his fellow countryman Jacob Berger.

Book suggested by Erica Meltzer, writer/editor.



Movember: a month dedicated to male health

Every year during the month of November, men are invited to grow a moustache. The objective of *movember* (contraction of “moustache” and “November”)? Raise awareness about male health among the general public and collect donations which will be used for research into human cancers. Dr Laurent Vaucher, FMH Specialist in Urology, answers our questions.

What is male health?

According to the constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO), health is “a state of complete physical, social and mental well-being, and does not consist solely of the absence of disease or infirmity. Male health is more precisely defined by all the ailments that only affect men: problems related to the urogenital system and the hormonal system.

Are there significant differences between men and women in managing their health?

Women are used to regularly going to see their gynaecologist from their teenage years onwards. The latter acts as a primary care physician, and is attentive to the well-being and good health of the patients. Men don't have this habit; they are often

afraid to consult a doctor and talk about their privacy “for nothing”. Between machismo and neglect, they are too often highly discreet about their health, even if it means minimizing real problems. Many still ignore screening for male cancers, namely prostate cancer and testicular cancer.

Why raise awareness about male health?

Detected early, these male cancers can be treated well. Movember is an annual event dreamt up in the 2000s in Australia. Every year in November, men from all over the world are invited to grow a moustache in order to raise public awareness and collect donations for research on male diseases, and in particular prostate cancer and testicular cancer.

When should a man consult a doctor?

In Switzerland, there are around 450 new cases of testicular cancer each year. This particular cancer often occurs in young

men between the ages of 20 and 35, and is frequently cured if diagnosed early. Its screening is done very simply, by self-palpation. Any abnormality or modification of his testicles should prompt a man to consult a doctor for further investigation.

Prostate cancer, on the other hand, remains the most common cancer in men, and mainly affects males over 50 years old. It is painless until late in its development, often by the time it has disseminated into the bones. Two examinations make it possible to detect a possible tumour: measurement of the PSA level (Prostate Specific Antigen) in the blood, and a rectal examination. The methods used to treat this cancer are increasingly effective, such that its mortality rate has decreased over the past thirty years.

The side effects of treatments for localized prostate cancer on sexuality and continence are fortunately less and less frequent and severe, thanks to improvements in surgical techniques and tools, as well as in radiotherapy devices.

Is an awareness-raising initiative scheduled at the Clinique de Genolier?

For the first time, the Clinique de Genolier is offering two days of free screening on **12 and 23 November**. Beneficiaries will be able to have a PSA level assay and a free consultation, in order to make them aware of these cancers, and of their health in general. To make an appointment for free screening, please call **+41 22 366 93 90**. ▶



D^r Laurent
Vaucher, FMH
Specialist
in Urology.



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Harnessing the power of Artificial Intelligence for Philanthropy: A call for action

Joost Mönks and Giuseppe Ugazio*

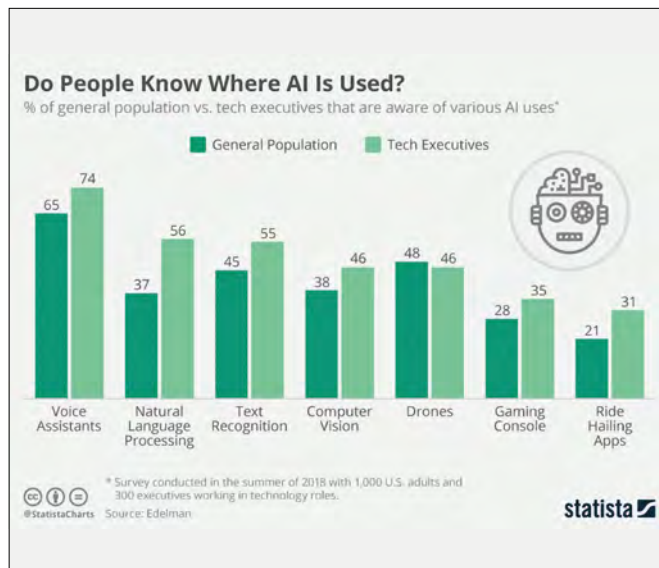
As AI is bound to transform the philanthropic sector what urgent issues need to be addressed to ensure its ethical and impactful use?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) broadly consists in making machines do things that would require intelligence if done by humans. AI is increasingly ubiquitous in our lives, we use it on a daily basis when searching Google, listening to music online or buying train tickets. Even if most of us are not really aware, AI's skills have reached sophisticated levels in a variety of domains including its ability to read, translate, recognise faces and objects, move autonomous vehicles or track a person's emotion.

Surprisingly this technological revolution has received only little attention from philanthropic organisations (PO) so far. AI will have a deep impact on philanthropy, from revolutionising online fundraising, redefining the way we measure impact, to predicting the results of climate action, to name a few. Along with these benefits, AI also raises fundamental questions around the ethical and inclusive use of AI and the way it influences society.

“AI will have a deep impact on philanthropy, from revolutionizing online fundraising, to redefining the way we measure impact, and to predicting the results of climate action.”

Importantly, it is not a matter of “if”, but of “when” and “how” PO will adopt AI as the sector will undoubtedly move towards its widespread use. To do so in an informed and conscientious way, Prof. G. Ugazio, holder of the Edmond de Rothschild Foundations Chair in Behavioural Philanthropy at the GFRI and Dr. J. Mönks, lecturer on emerging philanthropy at the University of Geneva, are convinced it requires urgently addressing a number of key issues including: Unveiling the nuts and bolts of AI most suitable to assist PO; Understanding the practical use AI in PO and grasping quickly-evolving behaviour in the digital age; and defining principles for the ethical, inclusive and human centred use of AI.



Understanding the nuts and bolts of AI

AI is frequently not well understood in terms of how it works and what it can offer to the sector, but also what limitations it faces beyond the hype around AI. To achieve this, the philanthropic sector needs to develop a practical and realistic understanding of the basic mechanics and relevance of AI, for instance, regarding its ability to analyse large volumes of data and the use of algorithms to develop new insights, identify patterns, make predictions and recommendation and the tools it offers to allow automatization of tasks in reporting and administration.

Defining practical use of AI and evolving behaviour

AI finds increasing use and application in the core processes of PO and in project interventions. This includes for instance to use of AI to analyse, inform, and predict donor behaviour such as in Donor Matching applications, personalized Online Fundraising Campaigns – including ‘precision philanthropy’, and applications using big data to uncover patterns. Another approach from which POs can learn and benefit is applying AI4Good to promote technological solutions to societal challenges, with a growing number of applications in the development and humanitarian sectors This more established field, with its annual “AI for Good Summit” hosted by ITU in Geneva, comprises, for instance, predictive AI for to enable efficient rapid response, or using AI to forecast the spread of COVID-19.

Ethical standards for the use AI

Finally, current advances in AI applications have yielded far-reaching concerns on the ethical limits for its use. Questions about human values, privacy, accountability, among others have been at the core of current ethics guidelines and recommendations released in recent years by organizations such as the OECD, UNESCO and the UN Secretary General’s High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation. However, despite an apparent agreement that AI should be “ethical”, there is debate about what constitutes ‘ethical AI’ and which requirements, technical standards and best practices are needed for its realization. Surprisingly the philanthropic sector has been largely absent from these debates despite its unique position to bring neutral yet informed opinions from the private sector to advance the definition and implementation of contextualized ethical guidelines.

Focusing on these priorities, Prof. Ugazio and Dr. Mönks propose to develop a research and educational agenda to prepare and engage PO to embrace AI and participate in shaping our digital futures. Concretely, this agenda will entail events focused on raising awareness and building capacity; the initiation of a “Geneva Dialogue on Philanthropy and AI” series to stimulate discussion and collaboration between academia, public entities and the private sector; and, lastly, it will develop case studies and interdisciplinary research uncovering key applications of AI for PO, for instance in impact assessment or analysis of donor behaviour.

Geneva with its leading research institutions and its international community offers a fertile ecosystem to launch the initiative and engage dialogue and collaboration between the various stakeholders to harness the power of AI for the philanthropic sector and contribute to the advancement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We invite you to contact us should you wish to collaborate and/or learn more. ▶



Prof. Giuseppe Ugazio



Dr. Joost Mönks

* Dr. Joost Mönks is Lecturer at the University of Geneva and Prof. Giuseppe Ugazio is the holder of the Edmond de Rothschild Chair in Behavioral Philanthropy at the same institution. They can be reached at joost.moenks@unige.ch and giuseppe.ugazio@unige.ch.

Quand une sculpture vaut mille mots

Muriel Scibilia*

S'il fallait choisir un mot pour parler de l'œuvre du sculpteur Sandrine Plante, « Cri » serait le terme le plus approprié.

Un cri, viscéral, puissant qui traverse les corps de terre, défigure les visages, interpelle les visiteurs. C'est le cri de millions d'humains réduits en esclavage à l'époque de la traite négrière. Un cri poussé aujourd'hui dans un silence retentissant par ces millions de victimes des formes contemporaines de l'esclavage.

Raconter l'histoire de ces êtres déracinés, vendus, maltraités, jetés par-dessus bord, privés de tout même de leur nom, de ces vies volées, telle est la mission que s'est donnée Sandrine Plante, elle-même descendante d'esclaves.

Ses statues puissantes, d'un réalisme troublant, interpellent, entrent en résonance avec notre part d'humanité, dérangeant parce qu'il reste difficile de restituer la mémoire de l'esclavage tant cette page peu glorieuse suscite de réticences, voire la revendication d'un droit à l'oubli.

C'est en découvrant la terre de ses ancêtres, à la Réunion, que l'artiste réalise qu'il est toujours honteux de descendre d'esclaves. La persistance d'un tel tabou la conforte dans sa volonté de ne pas se taire, de se faire l'écho de ces souffrances, de sortir de l'ombre ces vies fracassées, de leur redonner une place, notamment dans les villes de mémoire comme Gorée au Sénégal qui servait de centre de tri ou Bordeaux, deuxième port négrier.

Une histoire qui imprègne nos imaginaires et alimente certaines théories racistes. Restaurer la dignité de millions d'anonymes, rendre hommage aux ancêtres, c'est ce qui anime cette pétillante jeune femme pour qui l'art sert à porter un combat. Une conviction si ancrée qu'elle n'a pas besoin de modèles pour créer ses bouleversantes statues. C'est l'étoffe de ses rêves enrichie de multiples lectures qui lui sert de matière première. Des rêves étonnants au cours desquels il lui arrive de retrouver un



Sandrine Plante prépare une exposition itinérante qui la mènera de Dakar à Ouidah au Bénin, un des principaux points de vente d'esclave.



© GRIGOR KHACHATRYAN

personnage, de suivre son parcours ou de le croiser aux différentes étapes de sa vie.

Il lui suffit de plonger ses mains dans la terre pour que naissent ces statues techniquement parfaites et furieusement expressives dont les souffrances ou la tristesse sont palpables. « Dès que j'ai touché la terre, à huit ans, j'ai eu l'impression qu'on se comprenait, et que je pouvais aller plus loin », se souvient l'artiste. Un dialogue constant qui lui permet de retracer les étapes significatives du parcours des esclaves : capture, séparation, vente, arrivée en terre hostile.

Les statues, de taille humaine, sont porteuses d'un message de dignité gravé dans la terre afin de remettre les choses à leur place, d'inscrire cette histoire, d'opérer des guérisons symboliques. ▶

* Muriel Scibilia est auteure et ancienne fonctionnaire de la Conférence des Nations Unies sur le commerce et le développement (CNUCED).

« Sortir de l'ombre ces vies volées, leur redonner une place... opérer des guérisons symboliques. »



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