

UN Special

A different kind of

General Assembly



UN INTERNAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Interview of Judge Downing

WHO P.30

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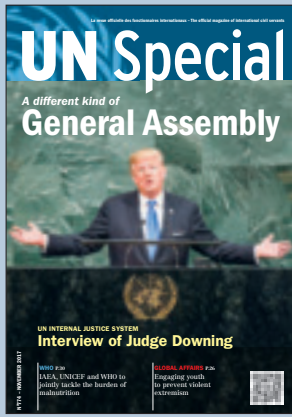
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We all know that our world is changing fast, and we bear witness to the influence of politics on the way we live. Governance matters, and multilateralism comes to life every time we read the news. And there is no better place to witness the pace of global change than at our General Assembly. That is why we are dedicating this edition to what happens in New York every September. This month, you may read why the 72nd GA was indeed different, and also learn more about one of its Commissions. In the centerfold, you are invited to check if one of your compatriots has already led what many call the “Parliament of Man”.

In these pages, you will also find special coverage on the UN's internal justice system. We invite you to read two interviews: one of Judge Downing, President of the UN Dispute Tribunal, and another of lawyer Sicault, who has represented the staff associations of 85 international organisations. You will also discover articles with information about legal assistance, and that outline the steps to resolve a dispute.

This month also features several pieces on nutrition: an article about a tri-agency approach within the UN Decade of Action for Nutrition, and another on the progress made in this initiative so far. We have an article about healthy eating, and another piece on the environmental challenges of food and how to improve the world through our eating habits.

Additionally, we welcome a contribution from the Geneva Centre for Security Policy about how to engage youth to prevent violent extremism. We also feature pieces on UNOG's interpreters and translators, on the Spanish Language week and on the United Nations Women's Guild. Lastly, we are pleased to present a portrait of Myanmar, by our regular travel writer, Claude Maillard. Happy reading! ■

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

Nous assistons aux changements dans le monde et constatons l'influence de la politique sur notre mode de vie. Et à chaque nouvelle, nous nous apercevons de l'importance de la gouvernance et du multilatéralisme. Le meilleur endroit pour assister au changement mondial étant notre Assemblée générale, nous dédions cette édition à ce qui se passe à New York chaque septembre. Ce mois-ci, vous pourrez lire pourquoi la 72^e AG est différente et en apprendre davantage sur l'une de ses commissions. Dans la page centrale, vous êtes invités à voir si l'un de vos compatriotes a déjà dirigé ce que beaucoup appellent le «Parlement de l'Homme».

Dans ces pages, vous trouverez une couverture spéciale du système de justice interne de l'ONU. Nous vous invitons à lire un entretien: un du juge Downing, président du Tribunal du contentieux des Nations Unies, et un autre de l'avocat Sicault, qui a représenté le personnel et syndicats auprès de 85 organisations internationales. Vous découvrirez également des articles sur l'aide juridique et qui décrivent les étapes à suivre pour résoudre un différend.

Ce mois-ci contient également plusieurs articles sur la nutrition: un article sur une approche tri-agence de la décennie d'action pour la nutrition de l'ONU, et un autre sur les progrès réalisés dans cette initiative. Nous avons un article sur l'alimentation saine et un autre sur comment changer le monde à travers l'alimentation.

Nous vous proposons aussi une contribution du Centre de politique de sécurité de Genève sur la façon d'engager les jeunes pour prévenir l'extrémisme violent. Nous vous proposons également des articles sur les interprètes et les traducteurs de l'ONUG, sur la semaine de l'espagnol et sur la corporation des femmes des Nations Unies. Enfin, nous présentons un portrait de la Birmanie à travers le regard de notre écrivain de voyage, Claude Maillard. Bonne lecture! ■

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A different kind of General Assembly

It has been called the “Parliament of Men”. It is known as the highest instance of the multilateral architecture.

ALEX A. MEJIA, UNITAR

Presidents and Prime Ministers consider a speech there as a highlight of their careers. Everyone who is someone important in diplomacy must participate in its deliberations. History is made there every year.

It is our General Assembly. And it has met consecutively, without interruption, one month each year during more than seven decades since the end of World War II. In 2017, and as expected, the seventy-second annual general debate met in September under the leadership of its first Slovak President, Miroslav Lajčák. We witnessed again calls for preventive diplomacy, promises to build a more equitable world order and heartbreaking speeches on war and refugees. Mr. Lajčák said at the closing session “we heard about people running

from gunshots or the exploding force of bombs, people living for a week on the same amount some of us spend on a cup of coffee. People around the world were being forced to choose between risking their lives to stay, or to flee. They wondered when the next hurricane would hit or if their village would be under water in the coming decades”. He added that more must be done to ensure that human rights, gender equality and the rule of law were the norm – not the exception – and underlined the importance of looking beyond labels such as “refugee” or “migrant” to see, simply, people.

Our press people issued a *communiqué* saying that during the six days of debate, speakers representing member states criticized both the United Nations and one another. Some expressed concern over allegations levied against their countries, including charges of human rights abuses and sponsoring terrorist groups. Meanwhile, several representatives focused on the global economic and political systems – including within the United Nations

– as unfair and unrepresentative, with many stressing that the Organization’s reform must include a reorientation of the Security Council’s membership. You may think that it was more of the usual stuff. However, some people would argue that this was a different kind of General Assembly. Why? Because it has been a long time since we saw a global leader being “politically incorrect” and “non-diplomatic”. We saw the U.S. President making a candid and impassionate speech on the global priorities of his administration. The respected newspaper New York Times had front coverage after his message was delivered to a room packed with global leaders. They summarized the takeaways focusing on North Korea and Iran. After all, President Trump threatened to “annihilate” North Korea if the country fails to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons, adding “It is time for North Korea to realize that denuclearization is its only future”. He also called its leader Kim Jong Un ‘Rocket man’, and accused him of being on a suicide mission. The message was ‘different’, to say the least.



Secretary-General António Guterres (front left) and United States President Donald Trump (front right) during the high-level meeting on reform of the United Nations convened by the United States.

On Iran, Mr. Trump referred to its government as an “authoritarian” regime and issued an undiplomatic warning saying he would eliminate the 2015 nuclear disarmament agreement between Iran and six world powers, including the U.S. He called it “one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States has ever entered into”. In contrast, he also issued a global call to action saying that the world faced “... both immense promise and great peril. Authority and authoritarian powers seek to collapse the values, the systems and alliances that prevented conflict and tilted the world toward freedom since World War II.” He said leaders must decide “whether we lift the world to new heights or let it fall into the valley of disrepair.” He showed there his statesmanship and resolve.

This speech was followed by almost immediate reactions. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned against “war-like hysteria” over North Korea, delivering a direct response to President Trump’s speech. The Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, said that the world needs “to make the right choice between war and peace, between isolation and cooperation” rebuking Mr. Trump on the crisis with North Korea, the imperatives of global diplomacy and the challenges of climate change. Mr. Wang also told the Assem-

bly that globalization was an unstoppable global trend and portrayed China as champion of multilateralism.

Our Secretary-General António Guterres had a more encompassing message. He said that “We Must Not Sleepwalk into War”, citing nuclear peril, terrorism and inequality among the most severe global threats. He expressed his appreciation to the General Assembly for approving one of his first reform initiatives: the establishment of the United Nations Office on Counter-Terrorism. He added “No one is winning today’s wars. From Syria to Yemen, from South Sudan to the Sahel, Afghanistan and elsewhere, only political solutions can bring peace. We should have no illusions. We will not be able to eradicate terrorism if we do not resolve the conflicts that are creating the disorder within which violent extremists flourish.” Later on, at a luncheon for Heads of State and Heads of Government, he emphasized that “History Depends on Individual Actions” urging them to positively shape the future.

However different this year’s General Assembly was, we have to remember that we have had several memorable occasions in the past; moments that left their mark on recorded history. One of them happened during the 1960 annual general

debate. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev unexpectedly waved and banged his shoe on his desk after taking offense to a statement by a member of the Philippines delegation. The delegate from the Philippines claimed that Eastern Europe had been “deprived of political and civil rights” and had effectively been “swallowed up by the Soviet Union.” Mr. Khrushchev, after banging a table with both his fists, took off his right shoe, waved it and then banged it on the table, louder and louder, until everyone in the hall was watching and buzzing. Afterwards, he was said to have remarked, “It was such fun!...” Even today, the most frequent question people ask when visiting the UN headquarters in New York is, “Where was Khrushchev sitting at the GA when he pounded his shoe?”.

The 1960 General Assembly saw Cuban President Fidel Castro giving the longest timed speech ever – 4 hours and 29 minutes – He was of course clad in his trademark green military fatigues. In 1974, Yasser Arafat, the former leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), addressed the General Assembly for the first time on Nov. 13, becoming the first representative of a non-member organization to speak to the world body. He appealed to the U.N. for the establishment of a Palestinian state that would welcome Muslim, Christians

and Jews. Toward the end of his speech, Arafat issued what some saw as a threat of increased guerrilla violence if such a state was not created: “I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter’s gun”. He repeated “Do not let the olive branch fall from my hands”. After the speech, the Palestinians were granted observer status at the United Nations and its right to self-determination was recognized.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez called U.S. President George W. Bush “the devil” in a fiery speech to the General Assembly on Sept. 20, 2006, making the sign of the cross in a dramatic gesture and complained of a lingering stench of sulfur in the assembly hall. He waved a Spanish-language edition of Noam Chomsky’s *Hegemony or Survival: America’s Quest for Global Dominance*, and lauded Chomsky as a great intellectual and the book as an “excellent work”. Sales of Chomsky’s book exploded following the speech. This instantly made the General Assembly a good ‘sales platform’ for ideas... and books!

Late Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi swept to the podium of the General Assembly for the first time in 40 years on Sept. 23, 2009, and delivered a rambling speech that lasted 1 hour and 36 minutes – and emptied much of the chamber. At one point, Gadhafi waved a copy of the U.N. Charter and appeared to tear it, saying he did not recognize the document’s authority.

Our General Assembly is indeed of a different kind. Every year. ■

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The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly

On September 12, 2017, the United Nations General Assembly in New York City began.

WALLESKA PAREJA DÍAZ¹

On May of this year, H. E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, was elected as Chairman of the General Assembly for its seventy-second session². As it is known, the main Committees of the General Assembly are as follows:

- First Committee (Disarmament & International Security)
- Second Committee (Economic & Financial)
- Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian & Cultural)
- Fourth Committee (Special Political & Decolonization)
- Fifth Committee (Administrative & Budgetary)
- Sixth Committee (Legal)

In this regard, the Third Committee, which is the focal point of this article, began its work with a tight agenda that

includes topics such as: social development³ advancement of women⁴; the report of the High Commissioner for Refugees, on matters related to refugees, returnees and displaced persons, and humanitarian issues; promotion and protection of children's rights⁵; the rights of indigenous peoples⁶; the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance⁷, the right of people to self-determination; promotion and protection of human rights in general⁸; crime prevention and criminal justice⁹; international drug control and revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

A permanent challenge?

Several questions may arise from the analysis of the mission, objective, programme of work and even the actual results of the debate in the

Third Committee. One of them relates to the question of how closely linked is the work of this committee and the UN Human Rights Council. On October 9, President Lajčák addressed the Third Committee and noted:

«Promoting respect for human rights is an overarching principle of our work. Human rights are the foundation on which our collective efforts to advance human development and create peace are built. Human rights violations are often at the root of conflicts. On the other hand, upholding them contributes to conflict prevention and sustaining peace. [...] Deliberations in this Committee may not always be easy but they are essential.»

(President Lajčák, 2017).¹⁰

In my opinion, the work being done in New York and Geneva seems distant, distanced. For this reason, they tend to touch on quite similar themes without “coming back and see” what is happening on the other side of the ocean.

It is clear that many Permanent Diplomatic Missions accredited to the UN make an effort to share the progress/setbacks that have arisen in both fora. In

addition, several delegates from these representations move from one city to another to participate in these mechanisms. Some of them, even adjust the timetables for resolutions in order to avoid that both bodies deal with the same subject in the same year. In addition, civil society, with great effort and despite the high costs, is moving so they can participate in the sessions of the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee to advocate for serious human rights violations. Despite this, ignorance still prevails and duplication of efforts may appear.

Finally, we still have a task to ask ourselves: beyond the efforts already undertaken by some actors is it possible to improve the coordination and communication between New York and Geneva? and why not, with other United Nations offices, most especially the ones working locally and close to the people?

Report of the Human Rights Council

On November 2, President Joaquín Maza Martelli, El Salvador's Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, will present the Human Rights Council's report. It contains the

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Secretary-General António Guterres (second from right) makes remarks at the high-level meeting on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

items, resolutions and decisions dealt with within the Council from December 2016 to June 2017, and the presidential statements. It also indicates those resolutions brought to the attention of the General Assembly for consideration and possible action. It is important to note that, in the past, the resolution submitted to the General Assembly for adoption of this

report has been contested and also voted on -another indicator of the dissonance that may exist between Geneva and New York on human rights issues.

Authorities

For this year, his Excellency Ambassador Einar Gunnarson (Iceland) was named as President for the Third Committee. Joining him are: Vice-Presi-

dents Mr. Nebil Idris (Eritrea) and Mrs. Alanoud Qassim M. A. Al-Temimi (Qatar) and Mrs. Dóra Kaszás (Hungary). The assigned rapporteur was Mr. Felipe García Landa (México). ■

1 Wallecka Pareja Díaz is a Human Rights lawyer who works at Legal Action Worldwide, in Geneva. For more information visit: <http://www.legalactionworldwide.org/>.

2 Provisional program of the seventy second session in the ordinary period for the General Assembly Sessions [A/72/150] available in: <https://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=A/72/150>.

3 (a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly; (b) Social development, including issues relating to the world social situation of youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and the family.

4 Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

5 (a) Promotion and protection of children's rights; (b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children.

6 (b) Follow-up to the outcome document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

7 (a) Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; (b) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

8 (a) Implementation of human rights instruments; (b) Human rights issues, including alternative approaches to improve the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms; (c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives; (d) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

9 Follow-up to conferences on the subject; the Mandela Rules, terrorism, human trafficking, among others.

10 Full speech and video of his speech: <http://www.un.org/pga/72/2017/10/09/third-committee/>

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Internal justice system

So what does Judge Downing think?

Interview with Judge Rowan Downing, President of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT).

GLORIA NWABUOGU¹, UNOG STAFF

You have been a judge with the United Nations Dispute Tribunal for almost three years now and you currently serve as its President. What general trends are you seeing in the internal justice system?

The United Nations internal system of the administration of justice provides for checks and balances on the administrative actions taken by management. It equally ensures predictability in the process of handling internal disputes and disciplinary matters, by clarifying the meaning of rules, regulations, administrative issuances and guidelines which can be ambiguous or not harmonious. The Tribunals provide for some harmony through their overarching view of the application of the United Nations system rules and regulations. As such, the Tribunal's important roles are dispute resolution and to point out areas of discord found in the internal administrative and regulatory systems.

Eight years into the new internal system of justice, the system is still immature. But we are just beginning to see a maturation of the *understanding* of the system. It is assumed that all managers make delegated decisions to the best of their ability, without bias or malice, and it is assumed that there is common sense in decision making.

When a decision is challenged by a staff member through an assertion of the right to seek a review, such a challenge will cover the processes involved in that particular decision as well as the legal matrix in which the decision was made. In a fully mature legal system, decision-makers welcome as informative any decision by a tribunal which either support their decision, or corrects it.

I see an increased view that the judgments of the Tribunal are seen as part of a learning experience which will inform amendments to administrative instruments and the development of new policies. There's

a maturing learning process in the settlement of disputes going on at the United Nations and this trend is a maturation of the approach towards accountability.

I also see a continued development of “global law”, which is partly inquisitorial and partly adversarial. It is based on both civil law and common law. It’s a search for “what is the truth?” The system allows staff members the right to test decisions which have been made by the Organization. Not every staff member is correct in their complaint; not every administrative decision is incorrect. Whether a party “wins” or “loses” - everyone in the system learns something and this leads to increased functionality of the system.

I would like to ask you a question on the broad issue of access to justice. Once before

the UNDT, do you perceive that self-represented claimants (staff members who are not lawyers and don’t have legal knowledge) are afforded the same level of access justice as those represented by OSLA or other external lawyers? What is your perspective?

Self-represented claimants have the opportunity to access justice; whether that opportunity is fully exploited is another matter. There is an increased understanding about the types of applications which can be brought forward. UNDT’s new online classification of caselaw is a way of providing applicants some direction. Once an application has been filed the judges are fairly directive as self-represented applicants are sometimes lacking in direction. In addition, through the case management discussion, judges will often explain the process to applicants and identify the

issues in order to focus the minds of the parties. The judges will also invite the possibility of mediation in order to resolve the case in a non-confrontational manner.

Judges, of course, do not act for a given party. Judges look for the truth of the matter, but are not there to make the case for the applicant. Through an inquisitorial process, they can be given direction such as a list of authorities, and can be informed by judges about the procedures. I think that this is vital for the functionality of the system and is part of access to justice. The system depends on the applicants (whose appearance before the UNDT is often their first experience with a legal system) not being afraid and sufficiently relaxed. Judges will sometimes encourage people to come in and watch another case beforehand, in order to relax and help prepare them.

While judges of the Tribunal have limited impact on the “equality of arms” in the process, we do ensure that there is no bullying of witnesses and we work to ensure as level a playing field as is possible.

In follow up to the preceding question, I would now like to ask you about the protracted nature of a large number of cases and whether this is resulting in justice denied before the UNDT? What is the role of case management here? How could things be improved?

The practice is that some protracted cases need to be fast-tracked, otherwise cases are dealt with on a chronological basis. If a case has been around too long before the UNDT, it is usually slotted straight away for a hearing. When applications are lodged but have not met the requirements of management evaluation and the period



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Rowan Downing (Australia)

Judge Downing is the current President of the UNDT. Prior to his appointment as an ad litem judge of the UNDT in Geneva effective January 2015, Judge Downing served as judge of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (UNAKRT) since 2006. Earlier in his career, he held a number of expert and legal advisory positions in private and public sector, including as Adviser to the Ombudsman of Vanuatu. In 1998, he was appointed Queen's Counsel, and in 1993

a judge of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Vanuatu. He was previously admitted to practice as barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria and the High Court of Australia in 1977, and of the Supreme Court of New South Wales and the Supreme Court of Tasmania in 1987. Judge Downing holds Bachelor of Arts (International Politics), Bachelor of Laws and Master of Laws degrees from the University of Melbourne.



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for this evaluation has not yet expired, the Registrar will immediately refer to the judge who will issue a decision stating that the case is irreceivable due to the lack of management evaluation and that time has not expired. In that way no one is disadvantaged. With respect to delays, when staff members represent themselves there is a tendency to include a very large number of documents, which makes the task of the Tribunal greater in terms of judicial analysis. In addition, the necessity to hold witness hearings in certain cases may also cause delays.

In essence, the UNDT is created as a hybrid court, which in principle, reflects both the civil law and common law traditions. What are your views on the Tribunal's emphasis on the primacy of the written law and also its emphasis on precedent? Is the UNDT truly a hybrid court?

In most matters before the Tribunal, there is no difference and the same result should be achieved. This is a matter which particularly engages me as the systemic differences are often exaggerated. The often excessive consideration of jurisprudence in the common law is a concern. Unfortunately, it would appear that the UNDT is more weighted in favour of common law jurisprudence which can

result in a more cumbersome legal process. The common law tradition may be less accessible to self-represented applicants, as they feel that they may have to contend with applicable case law. Civil law processes where rules and regulations are applied in a more direct manner to the case before the judge, may prove fairer and more reasonable to the applicant in person.

I think there needs to be a review of the processes of the UNDT to ensure that it does not develop in such a way as to be out of reach of applicants. We must ensure that we do not become too bound up with jurisprudence. Having said that, and as stated earlier there is a global law developing – a hybrid law – which the international tribunals and the UNDT are at the forefront of developing and applying in the international system.

In reading several of your judgments or orders, regardless of whether you have found in favour of the applicant or respondent on the legal question, one notices that you will make “necessary observations” about the integrity of the legal process or due process or what might be called commentaries “to do justice to the parties”. Would you like to comment on this?

These necessary observations pertain to difficulties encountered by staff members, not necessarily legal errors in the procedures or errors identified in administrative instruments., in a given case. The observations are made as part of a general review process by judges, who are obliged to inform of legal issues of concern, and they are made in the hope that they somehow may be taken into account. These observations may also be made in a situation where there is inappropriate conduct or where there is a failure to meet the necessary standards. Something that we call “systemic manipulation” which can be engaged in by both staff members and managers alike, is of concern to judges. These observations are really about due process and justice more generally and may hopefully be transposed into considerations by the General Assembly or the United Nations Secretariat.

You have been a lawyer for well over two decades. You were a judge of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal in Vanuatu, and also Solicitor General there, and you served as a judge of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (UNAKRT). You have had a breadth of professional experiences in the public and private sector,

and in many countries. What has most surprised you about the United Nations?

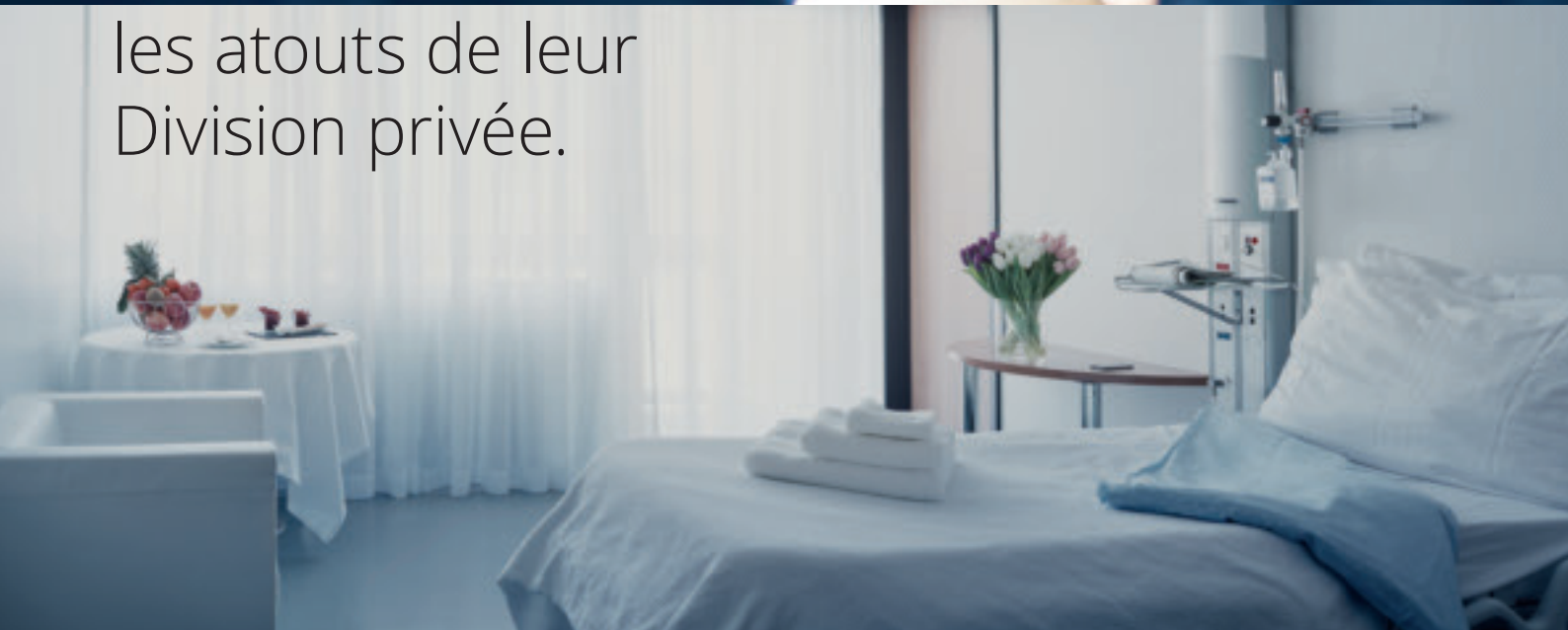
I am most surprised by the dichotomy of approach amongst staff of the United Nations. There are those who really believe in the mission of the United Nations and strive to do their best to advance that mission in the daily work life. On the other side, there are those whose primary consideration is their position within the Organization with, I suspect, little or no care to the mission. Perhaps once they did, and as time goes on that sense of mission is somehow lost as a central consideration. I personally believe in the mission of the United Nations and it is a fundamental driver for me in my role as an independent judge of the UNDT. I am disappointed by those who are concerned about their own positions and their own advancement within the Organization to the possible detriment of the mission of the United Nations. In these challenging times, there is a need for all those who work for the United Nations to be refreshed in their enthusiasm for the mission of the United Nations. ■

1 UNOG Staff representative and member of the Legal Committee



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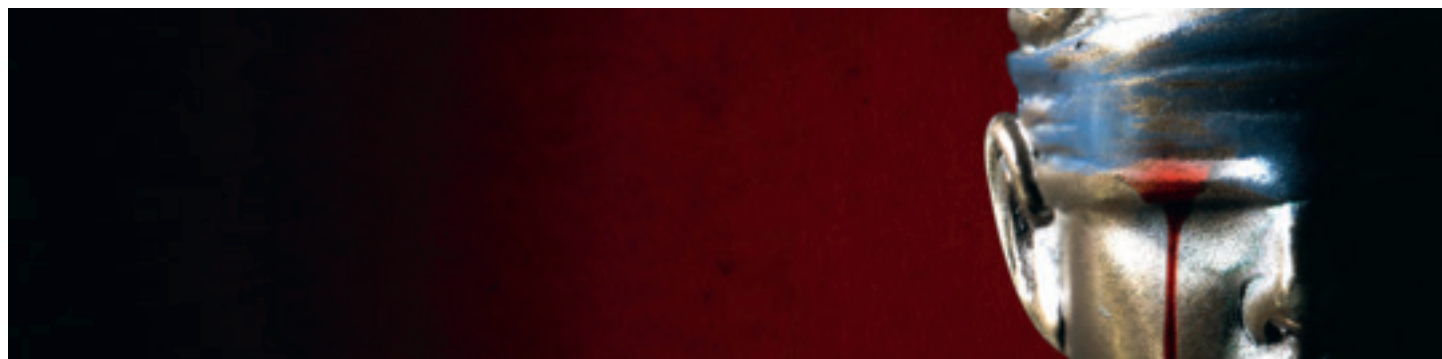
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L'ONU est-elle dotée d'un bon système de justice interne?

Comme tous les systèmes, le système de justice interne de notre Organisation est critiqué. Afin de voir si ces critiques sont méritées, nous avons rencontré Maître Jean-Didier Sicault.

PRISCA CHAOUI, ONUG

S'il y a un nom qui mérite d'être cité en matière de droit de la fonction publique internationale, il s'agit bel et bien de celui de Maître Jean-Didier Sicault. Avec plus de 30 ans d'expérience dans la représentation du personnel et des syndicats dans 85 organisations internationales, la renommée de cet avocat qui enseigne depuis 1983 ce droit mal connu à l'Université Paris 2, n'est plus à refaire. C'est en toute franchise et ouverture qu'il a accepté de répondre à nos questions, mettant en exergue les avantages et les inconvénients de notre système de justice interne.

Maître Sicault, vous avez une expérience de plus de 30 ans dans le contentieux administratif au sein des organisations internationales. Pensez-vous que l'accès à la justice est garanti par le Tribunal du contentieux administratif des Nations Unies (TCNU)?

Le système de justice interne des Nations Unies a été réformé sous ce nom en 2009. Les trois étapes d'un recours sous l'ancien système (demande de révision, Commission paritaire de recours (CPR) et Tribunal administratif) sont devenues la demande de contrôle hiérarchique, le TCNU et le Tribunal d'appel (TANU). Au fond et si on s'en tient à l'essentiel, le seul vrai changement a été constitué par la juridictionnalisation de la deuxième étape qui a beaucoup plu aux tenants du double degré de juridiction. Toutefois, cela a-t-il constitué un progrès? Autrefois, l'étape de la CPR servait à élucider les questions de fait et cela pouvait être extrêmement utile si les membres de la Commission accomplissaient un travail sérieux et faisaient preuve d'indépendance. Les questions juridiques étaient principalement laissées au Tribunal. À l'heure actuelle, la tâche du TCNU est redoutable car il doit à la fois faire la

lumière sur les faits et dire le droit, tout en sachant que ses jugements peuvent être infirmés par le Tribunal d'appel.

Je pense que l'accès à la justice est formellement garanti par le système actuel, mais certaines tendances jurisprudentielles du TCNU m'inquiètent beaucoup. En effet, le TCNU affirme que les décisions de l'Assemblée générale ne peuvent être contestées, même par voie d'exception, et que des décisions d'organes tels que la CFPI, qui n'a de comptes à rendre qu'à l'Assemblée générale, ne sont pas susceptibles de recours. Il y a là la voie ouverte à ce que des pans entiers de décisions échappent au contrôle juridictionnel du système de justice interne des Nations Unies. Ce déni de justice, dans de nombreux domaines, comme, par exemple, les questions liées à la rémunération, est à mon avis très grave.

À votre avis, que faut-il faire pour inverser cette tendance au déni de justice au sein du TCNU?

Il est très difficile d'inverser cette tendance d'un coup de baguette magique. Il faudrait que les juges du TCNU se persuadent de la gravité de laisser les fonctionnaires des Nations Unies sans protection judiciaire, à l'encontre de l'avis consultatif de la CIJ de 1954, de la jurisprudence de l'ancien TANU, de la Convention européenne de sauvegarde des droits de l'homme de 1950, et enfin du Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques adopté par l'Assemblée générale le 16 décembre 1966. Il faut ajouter que ce qui apparaissait déjà inacceptable à la CIJ en 1954 est absolument intolérable pour l'opinion publique d'aujourd'hui.

De surcroît, pareille tendance est de nature à jeter le doute sur l'indépendance des juges du TCNU par rapport à l'Assemblée générale.



Maître Jean-Didier Sicault

Peut-être le TCNU pourrait-il d'avantage réfléchir au jugement n°2420 du Tribunal administratif de l'OIT (TAOIT), relatif à la «marge», dans lequel celui-ci déclare: «Le Tribunal ne sous-estime pas les difficultés... que peut entraîner, pour les organisations internationales, le fait de s'écarter des barèmes arrêtés en fonction des recommandations de la CFPI, mais il se doit de faire respecter la légalité internationale dans les rapports que lesdites organisations entretiennent avec leurs agents,

quelle que soit l'autorité extérieure se trouvant à l'origine des décisions prises.»

Nous constatons dans beaucoup de cas que même lorsqu'un fonctionnaire obtient gain de cause au niveau du TCNU, le tribunal d'appel qui est censé être le garant ultime de la justice, rend un jugement qui infirme le jugement de première instance. Pour résumer, le tribunal d'appel est accusé d'être un organe politique plus qu'un organe judiciaire. Etes-vous d'accord avec cette affirmation?

L'accusation tient à deux facteurs: le mode de désignation des juges, et leur parcours professionnel.

Les juges du Tribunal d'appel sont nommés par l'Assemblée générale, ce qui ne garantit pas, en soi, leur indépendance à l'égard de cet organe, même

si la nomination est faite sur la recommandation du Conseil de justice interne.

L'exigence de 15 années d'expérience judiciaire en droit administratif ou l'équivalent, est certainement une très bonne chose, car elle exclut, par principe, la participation de membres qui ne sont pas magistrats, ou anciens magistrats de profession. De plus, la composition du TAOIT, dont les juges appartiennent à des cours suprêmes, pourrait peut-être constituer une utile piste de réflexion.

Quel message aimeriez-vous envoyer aux fonctionnaires en conflit avec leurs administrations?

D'abord, faire leur examen de conscience pour voir dans quelle mesure ils n'ont pas participé à la genèse de la situation ou de la décision qu'ils contestent.

Ensuite, négocier avec l'Administration en se faisant aider d'un organe représentatif du personnel (ORP) ou d'un juriste spécialisé, et accepter un arrangement, même s'il ne les satisfait qu'à moitié, plutôt que d'aller au contentieux.

Enfin, en cas d'échec d'une solution amiable, n'aller au contentieux que s'ils sont certains de pouvoir supporter le coût financier (sauf si leurs frais juridiques sont pris en charge par un ORP), et surtout psychologique, qu'entraîne un contentieux susceptible de durer plusieurs années. ■

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Help in hard times

The office of staff legal assistance

“When my colleagues and I were given notice of separation from service, we approached OSLA for legal advice and representation in challenging the decision, which we felt was unfair and ill-conceived. The legal counsel at OSLA patiently listened,” says one former client of the Office of Staff Legal Assistance.

KATYA MELLUISH, OFFICE OF STAFF LEGAL ASSISTANCE (OSLA)

The OSLA lawyer handled the matter *“with utmost professionalism and acted in our best interest throughout the duration of the case,”* including making *“sacrifices on his personal time to meet, negotiate and draft the necessary documents outside office hours in order to reach a speedy settlement. I am happy that a solution was reached and would recommend OSLA services to any staff seeking justice and fairness.”*

Thousands of staff have used OSLA's services since it was created in 2009. The office provides legal advice and representation to UN staff members concerning their

employment. With luck, you will never need us, but if you do, we are here to help.

We provide advice on a range of issues, including discrimination, abolition of post, entitlements and benefits; harassment and abuse of authority, investigations and disciplinary processes; assignment and recruitment; separation from service and pension matters. We also provide formal legal representation before the Management Evaluation Unit and the United Nations Dispute Tribunal and Appeals Tribunal. In many cases, though, we help negotiate informal resolution – in fact around 60% of our cases are resolved without recourse to management evaluation or the Tribunals.

Challenging decisions relating to your employment, particularly decisions taken by your supervisor, can be very daunting. The adverse decision itself may make you feel victimised, but what might happen if you go on to fight it through formal channels? You may feel that your whole career is at stake. Perhaps you have raised your concerns informally, but feel that they have fallen on deaf ears. Or perhaps your concerns have been rejected outright. This is where OSLA can help. Our legal knowledge and experience of the UN system allows us to provide you with high quality advice – not only on the chances of success in your particular case, but how to proceed, and on possible outcomes. If we cannot see a legal avenue of redress – if, for example, you are out of time for making a formal challenge – we will explore other possible solutions, and guide you through them.

Here's how another staff member, then based in Pakistan, described their experience with OSLA, which included proceedings before the Dispute Tribunal:

“Support from OSLA came at the time when my trust in the integrity of the UN system and management was totally diluted. My agency was not

responsive and my colleagues, fearful of their jobs, were reluctant to assist.

I first contacted OSLA for legal advice when my case was already scheduled for a hearing at the UNDT. The OSLA lawyer spent almost one and a half hours with me on the phone answering my questions, guiding me through different issues and procedures. His knowledge, understanding and objectivity made me think I should ask for formal OSLA support. I was prepared to trust.

My case was about dismissal, in these types of cases you are up against unlimited resources of a well-funded and non-justice minded giant bureaucracy. Justice should have no price tag attached, but I don't want to think how much I would have paid should I have involved an independent lawyer.

In retrospect, while preparing an initial submission on my own was not easy, but still possible, I find it difficult to imagine how I would have fought my case in the UNDT as a self-represented party. You are inevitable emotionally involved, and it does not help if you need to cross-examine your former managers, and even with legal training, the UNDT and UNAT have specialised rules.



Noël FURS
*I have the simplest tastes.
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Oscar Wilde

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While working, I have never given much thought to what role OSLA plays; how different employees' protection systems are balanced within the UN. Now I know, OSLA is worth every penny we pay in our monthly contributions. I learnt it the hard way.

I would not wish a situation like mine on anyone; in fact, when you listen to those horror stories occasionally shared by colleagues, you think it will never happen to me. Unfortunately, it does happen. It

doesn't matter how professional and dedicated you are, the system is sometimes flawed and marked by uneven power relationships. We won my case with OSLA's professional legal help and created a precedent for future similar cases."

Whilst OSLA cannot ever guarantee success, we fight very hard for our clients' interests. But we suffer from a shortage of Regular Budget funding. As a result, a voluntary funding scheme was established by the General Assembly, whereby

staff can opt to contribute a small amount per month to OSLA via payroll. You may have opted out of this, but you can still use our services – we do not discriminate! That said, the monthly contribution is less than a dollar in most cases, and yet it has enabled us to significantly enhance our team by the addition of three more senior lawyers and a legal assistant, meaning that we are much better able to help those of the 75,000 UN staff who need our services, when they need them. So, if you opted out of the scheme, please consider opting back in, and speak to your HR partner about how to do so. It's less than the price of a cup of coffee.

You can approach us at any stage of a dispute, or even in anticipation of a dispute. But please be mindful that formal challenges to the Management

Evaluation Unit must be made within 60 days of the contested decision. Therefore approaching us early is very much in your best interests, even if you don't know whether you want to 'go formal'.

OSLA has qualified lawyers based in Geneva, New York, Nairobi, Addis Ababa and Beirut, but we serve United Nations staff wherever you are. You can walk in to our offices, pick up the phone, or drop us an email. We will always try to respond within one working day. And remember, all consultations with OSLA are completely confidential – we will never discuss your visit with anyone without your permission. If in doubt, get in touch. We are here to help. You can email us at osla@un.org or call us on +1 212 963 3957 (New York) or +254 20 762 6734, depending on your time-zone. ■



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Solving disputes and grievances at work

How to resolve a dispute?

**MIRKA DREGER AND RENÉ VARGAS,
UNITED NATIONS DISPUTE TRIBUNAL**

The UN is a multicultural organization which benefits from the skills, talents and creativity of our staff from around the world. It is not unusual that conflicts will sometimes arise in a workplace with different personalities, different work styles and different ways of communicating. When conflicts arise they must be resolved in the most effective and efficient manner in order to promote a healthy and harmonious work environment. Healthy workplace relationships are essential to meaningful careers and the success of any organization. Resolving disputes saves time, money and stress for both the staff member and whoever made the decision which is being challenged. In order to provide a mechanism for staff to resolve workplace disputes, the General Assembly of the UN redesigned the existing system and put in a place a new and professionalized one. This new UN internal system for the administration of justice, which was established in 2009, contributes to upholding the rule of law and respect for due process in the Organization, helping to keep our workplace free of unresolved disputes, and even preventing them!

The system provides staff members with two options to resolve disputes: informal and formal. A staff member who has a workplace dispute can try to resolve that dispute in an informal manner by having a dialogue with the other party, reaching out to a supervisor, a peer or colleague, the office of human resources, the

Ethics Office or to the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services (UNOMS). This integrated office, includes colleagues working in the Secretariat, in the Funds and Programmes and at UNHCR. An Ombudsman is a neutral third party, who provides independent, impartial, and confidential support to help staff members and the administration to find informal solutions to workplace conflicts. Staff members are strongly encouraged to seek informal resolution of disputes as in many cases informal resolution provides better outcomes. Parties have greater control over the process as well as over the solutions.

Going “formal”

There are times when attempts at informal resolution do not work or the issues are so complex, they require a legal solution. Formal resolution allows staff members, including former staff members, or their beneficiaries, to seek judicial review of adverse administrative decisions. The first step in the formal process, whether you work at the Secretariat or at any of the UN Funds and Programmes, is to request management evaluation of the decision you want to challenge within 60 days of its notification. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the management evaluation, or do not receive a reply within a set deadline, and want to pursue the matter, you may file an application with the UN Dispute Tribunal (UNDT), through its web based filing system (also known as “CCMS”). The UNDT is the first tier in a two-tiered judicial system,

which has independent and professional judges based in New York, Geneva and Nairobi. Your application will be routed to the appropriate UNDT Registry, where it will be registered, acknowledged, and processed. The UNDT Geneva Registry is thus one element of the Organization’s formal internal justice system. More information about the UNDT is available at www.un.org/en/oaj/dispute.

What can you expect from the procedures before the UNDT? The judge assigned to your case will actively manage it; she/he may request additional documents and call witnesses relevant to a fully informed decision. If called by the Tribunal, witnesses who are staff members are compelled to appear. The Tribunal’s hearings are public, and can last from one day to a whole week or more. At all times, the Judge is assisted by one or two representatives of the Registry.

Judgment day

What happens in a judgment? The Tribunal can, for instance, order rescission of an unlawful decision and give financial compensation for material and moral damages. It can also reject part or the totality of an application. The Tribunal’s decisions are binding on the parties, meaning the applicant (staff member) and the respondent (the Secretary-General). If neither of them is satisfied with the UNDT judgment, they can appeal it, on certain grounds, before an independent “second-tier” tribunal, the United Nations Appeals Tribunal (UNAT).

Legal Assistance

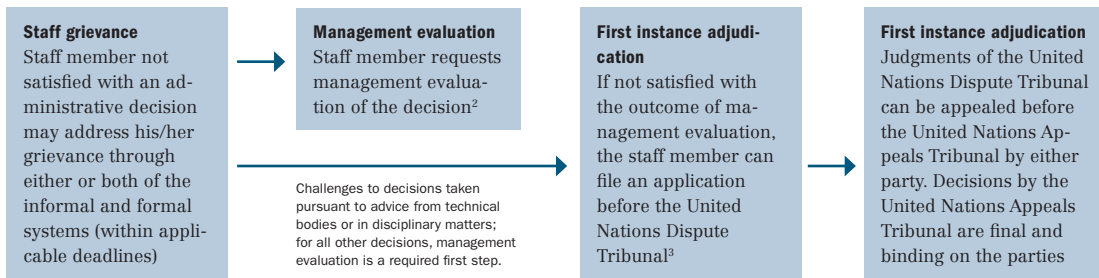
When trying to resolve a conflict, informally or formally, staff members can seek free advice from the Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA). OSLA is composed of experienced lawyers who are specialized in the internal laws of the Organization. If OSLA takes on a case, they may not only provide legal advice but also represent you before the tribunal and the added value of their services cannot be overstated. Staff members may also wish to consult a private counsel at their own expense.

Outlook

Despite the rather short existence of the internal justice system, UNDT and UNAT judgments have already clarified the meaning or application of internal law that was not clear before, thus improving decision-making within the Organization. “Lessons learned” guides are being developed by the Management Evaluation Unit on the basis of the UNDT and UNAT decisions. These guides are used to train managers/decision-makers to prevent conflicts from arising and, ultimately, litigation.

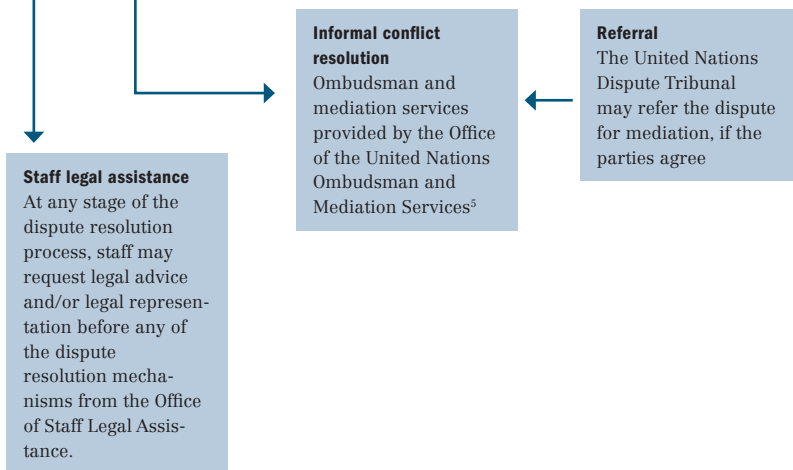
The interaction between the formal and informal parts of the UN internal justice system has clearly been of added value. Indeed, the number of cases referred to and resolved through mediation under the auspices of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services, after active case management by a UNDT Judge, is considerable. Regularly, after a UNDT Judge provides the parties with a pre-

Formal system¹



1. At any time during the formal resolution process, the staff member and decision maker can attempt to resolve the dispute informally, with or without the assistance of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services.
2. The evaluation entails an objective and reasoned assessment as to whether the contested decision was made in accordance with the rules. It is conducted by the Management Evaluation Unit for Secretariat entities; United Nations funds and programmes have a similar function. The purpose of this step is to give management a chance to correct itself or provide acceptable remedies in cases in which there has been flawed decision-making. The Management Evaluation Unit and the Office of Staff Legal Assistance can also suggest informal resolution of the dispute and refer to the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services.
3. The United Nations Dispute Tribunal hears and decides cases filed by or on behalf of current and former staff members appealing administrative decisions alleged to be in non-compliance with their terms of appointment or contract of employment.
4. Attempts to resolve a dispute informally do not preclude formal resolution (within deadline) if informal resolution is unsuccessful.
5. The Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services includes ombudsman and mediation services for the Secretariat and United Nations funds and programmes.

Informal system⁴



liminary analysis of the case and of which argument each party could win or lose if the Tribunal were to issue a judgment, they consider mediation.

Furthermore, the system is fostering transparency and accountability in the Organization with the publicity of UNDT and UNAT judgments and a mechanism for accountability referrals as the cornerstone of this undertaking.

There is still work to be done to strengthen a relatively young UN judicial system that has to be given time to evolve and mature. There is an ongoing effort to define a comprehensive outreach strategy to provide better information to staff and decision-makers. This is supported and directed by the Executive Director of the Office of Administration of Justice in New York, who plays a coordinating role

within the UN internal justice system.

In conclusion, as staff members who have worked in both the former and the current UN internal justice system in a variety of functions, it is our firm belief that the redesigned UN internal justice system has many advantages: It provides a number of options for dispute resolution, it is professionalized, ensures access to

independent justice, increases accountability, transparency and compliance with the rule of law, and contributes overall to a better organizational culture. The effectiveness of the Courts, and the Organization's commitment to follow the lessons learned from the jurisprudence as well as to address accountability referrals will play a critical role in the success of the formal system of administration of justice. ■

United Nations ombudsman & mediation services (UNOMS)

The Internal Justice System: what are the first safe steps?

*The informal, independent,
confidential, neutral
and impartial approach.*



**DEBBI VARIDEL AND LOUIS GERMAIN,
UNOMS**

Navigating the Internal Justice System can be an intimidating and overwhelming experience for staff members faced with interpersonal or administrative conflict. Before entering the formal channels of Internal Justice, the informal approach of contacting an Ombudsman is always a safe first step.

The Office of the Ombudsman facilitates the resolution of a wide variety of workplace concerns. No issue is too small or too big. Staff are encouraged to contact the Office of the Ombudsman as early as possible, before the issue escalates and becomes more complicated. The Ombudsman can

help you explore your options and chart a course of action when you don't know who to talk to and need a sounding board; would like a confidential, off-the-record conversation; don't know how to address your concerns; have not yet decided on a course of action; are uncertain of possible consequences; or have started to pursue formal redress and want to explore alternatives.

Ombudsmen use a collaborative approach that emphasizes looking at disputes together from all perspectives. The objective is to identify ways of moving towards a resolution of the conflict by assessing options, clarifying positions

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About the united nations ombudsman & mediation services

Celebrating its 15th year of service to the Secretariat, the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services (UNOMS) is the informal arm of the United Nations Internal Justice System. Guided by the principles of Independence, Neutrality & Impartiality, Confidentiality and Informality, UNOMS was established in 2002 by then Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, with a central office and Ombudsman situated in New York. In 2009 and 2010, seven regional branches, each headed by a Regional Ombudsman were established allowing for more direct assistance to be provided to staff in the regions in the six languages of the Organization.

Today, regional branches exist in Bangkok, Entebbe, Geneva, Goma, Nairobi, Santiago and Vienna. Additionally, as a pilot project, a new regional office has been established in Beirut and the newly appointed Regional Ombudsman is expected to take office in the near future. The regional branch in Geneva, serving staff at the United Nations Office at Geneva and other Secretariat entities in Western Europe, is headed by the Regional Ombudsman, Mr. Louis Germain, a Haitian national, who has served the United Nations for nearly 35 years and has extensive experience in the field of dispute resolution and human

resources management. Mr. Germain speaks fluent English and French. He is assisted by Ms. Debbi Varidel who recently joined the office.

Mr. Germain and Ms. Varidel can be reached at:

Villa les Feuillantines, Room 13
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10,
Switzerland
Email: ombudsmediation@un.org
Tel: +41 22 917 3760 or
+41 22 917 3374

and understanding needs. From the moment a staff member contacts an ombudsman, he or she remains in control of the process, as no steps are taken without his or her consent. Concretely, this means that the parties involved can be confident that whatever solution is decided upon will be of their own making. Consultations are confidential and no records are kept, meaning one can safely seek guidance, confident in the knowledge that, unless otherwise desired, the content of discussion and even the fact that one sought advice, is privileged information that will not be shared. Moreover, ombudsmen cannot be called to testify in formal proceedings.

In some cases, be it regarding a conflict with a colleague, a manager, or the administration, it can be appropriate to try mediation, which can also be facilitated by the Ombudsman. For mediation to be an option, all those involved must agree to participate. Successfully mediated cases have the benefit of being acceptable to everyone involved because the parties have determined the outcome that best meets their needs (a win-win solution). Mediation also has the added advantage of being confidential and generally resulting in an outcome in much less time than it would take to solve matters in the formal justice stream.

Moreover, when considered in the context of the workplace

environment, where continued collaboration is essential, not only will the conflict itself between the parties need to be resolved, but the relationship will need to be healed going forward. With the informal approach in addressing issues placing emphasis on helping the parties explore solutions which the individuals will decide upon themselves, as opposed to having imposed upon them, the probability is greater that parties will find common ground and put the conflict behind them.

As a further pre-emptive tool in avoiding and mitigating conflict between individuals and within teams, the Ombudsman conducts presentations and offers

training on a variety of themes, such as Conflict Management. These sessions are conducted in the context of inductions and briefings, but also can take place upon demand as part of specialized training sessions and team retreats.

Finally, in addition to its services rendered directly to individual staff members and teams, the United Nations Ombudsman & Mediation Services also provides a valuable service to the overall United Nations system by seeking to track the root causes of difficulties, effectively serving as a bellwether for systemic issues, and proposing institutional changes which could contribute to minimizing issues in the future. ■



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Plan stratégique patrimonial = Plan surprise par excellence

Après deux ans de tentatives de mener de véritables consultations avec l'Administration de l'Office des Nations Unies (ONUG) sur le futur espace de travail qui résultera du projet de rénovation du Palais, le Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG finit par adopter une résolution de non-confiance dans le projet...

PRISCA CHAQUI, ONUG

Dans un monde idéal, la construction d'une bâtisse aurait voulu que l'on épargne aux futurs habitants les surprises, qu'elles soient bonnes ou mauvaises. Or, l'ONU étant loin d'être un monde idéal auquel tout un chacun aspire, les fonctionnaires de l'ONUG vont finir par être surpris de découvrir leur espace de travail. «Vous avez été consultés», scande notre administration. «Nous n'avons pas été consultés», rétorquent les membres du personnel. Je vous laisse lire cet article et juger si nous, les membres du personnel, avons été consultés ou pas.

À l'initiative des auteurs de ce projet de plus de 800 millions de dollars, un nouveau bâtiment, nommé bâtiment H (probablement H pour Horreur) verra le jour. Il s'agira d'un bâtiment du 21^e siècle qui respecte les normes en matière d'environnement offrant une vue à couper le souffle, des espaces de travail collaboratifs, des cabines silencieuses, et j'en passe et des meilleurs. En deux mots, de quoi nous faire oublier que certaines positions administratives seront délocalisées vers des lieux encore inconnus, que des postes seront abolis grâce aux bénéfices tirés de l'introduction d'UMOJA, que les salaires des fonctionnaires de la catégorie professionnelle et au-delà seront coupés, que le budget de l'Organisation risque d'être réduit avec pour conséquence une abolition de postes... On dirait que la seule consolation pour les fonctionnaires dans ce tableau fort

sombre que je viens de vous peindre est le Plan stratégique patrimonial (PSP) qui aura sur eux l'effet enivrant d'un verre de champagne bu à jeun.

De l'avis du personnel de l'ONUG, le plus important au-delà de ce bâtiment dernier cri qu'on nous vend pour 800 millions de dollars est d'avoir un espace de travail décent. Qu'entend-on par un espace de travail décent? L'on entend un espace où chacun aura une table et une chaise où s'installer lorsqu'il viendra travailler, ce n'est pas trop demander n'est-ce-pas? L'on entend un cadre de travail stable et non un cadre qui est plus adapté à une vie de nomade qu'à une vie d'employé. L'on entend un cadre où la concentration et la productivité pourront être optimales.

Or, les informations qui ont enfin été portées à la connaissance des représentants du personnel après deux ans de va-et-vient avec l'équipe en charge du projet indiquent en tout état de cause que nous en sommes loin. En effet, il est désormais certain que le *hot-desking* (je refuse toujours d'utiliser le terme *smart working* préconisé par l'équipe du PSP probablement pour atténuer l'effet explosif de ce nouvel aménagement de l'espace de travail) sera introduit dans le nouveau bâtiment et dans le Palais lui-même, là où la conservation du patrimoine le permet. Pour rappel, le *hot-desking* signifie que les fonctionnaires n'auront pas une table et une chaise attitrés,

mais qu'ils devront, à leur arrivée le matin, trouver un espace vacant, installer leur ordinateur et brancher leur téléphone. Un fonctionnaire du 21^e siècle n'aurait-il rien de mieux à faire?

Pourquoi ai-je affirmé au début de l'article que les fonctionnaires de l'ONUG n'ont pas été consultés? Le Conseil du personnel de l'ONUG a mené deux enquêtes à ce sujet, l'une en 2015 et l'autre en 2016. Cette dernière fut conduite par une entreprise suisse, Ergorama. Les deux enquêtes ont montré une vive inquiétude du personnel face à l'introduction de l'*open space* et du *hot-desking*. De plus, une pétition signée par environ 900 fonctionnaires s'opposant à l'introduction de ce type d'espace de travail a circulé dans le Palais et ses annexes en 2017. Plusieurs réunions ont été tenues entre les représentants du personnel

et l'équipe en charge du projet et à chaque fois, nous avons été abreuvés d'informations contradictoires mais qui se gardaient bien de dire précisément à quoi ressemblerait notre futur espace de travail.

Le paroxysme de l'ironie fut atteint lorsque l'entreprise Gensler fut recrutée afin de calculer le taux d'occupation du Palais et d'observer la manière de travailler des fonctionnaires. Cet exercice donna lieu à la création de *focus groups*. Des fonctionnaires de chaque Département y ont pris part et ont partagé leur manière de travailler et leur vision de leur espace de travail. Ils pensaient que cette fois-ci, il allaient être entendus. Or, ils se sont royalement trompés puisque Gensler a ignoré tout ce qui a été dit et est venue recommander ce qui avait déjà été décidé à savoir,

l'introduction de l'*open space* et pis encore du *hot-desking*. Comme si Gensler et l'équipe du PSP s'étaient donné pour ambition (voire pour mission) de changer notre manière de travailler en changeant notre espace de travail.

Face à cette situation rocambolesque, le Conseil de coordination a envoyé une lettre au Secrétaire général de l'ONU l'appelant à pousser l'Administration de l'ONUG à revenir à la table des consultations et à ne pas se contenter d'un simple partage d'informations. Il a par ailleurs adopté lors de sa 9^e réunion tenue le 10 octobre une résolution appelant à un audit complet du projet et surtout déclarant sa non confiance dans le projet tel qu'il est conçu à l'heure actuelle.

Certes, il s'agit d'une issue regrettable à ce qui aurait dû

être un beau projet. Mais, il n'est jamais trop tard pour revenir en arrière si la volonté et la détermination sont au rendez-vous. Voyons voir si notre administration en aura le courage et la décence. ■

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Engaging youth to prevent violent extremism

Young people represent one fourth of humanity. There are 1.8 billion youth between the ages of 10-24.

Among the many challenges they face is being targeted by violent extremists, who recruit them in refugee camps, religious institutions, universities, and via the internet. In order to protect them, we need to design strategies that include them.

Dr. CHRISTINA SCHORI LIANG,
GENEVA CENTRE FOR SECURITY POLICY (GCSP)

Currently, national counter-terrorism efforts focus mostly on hard power and kinetic force, not taking into account the importance of youth who are being strategically tricked, bought or poached by violent extremists. The United Kingdom's MI5 Chief Jonathan Evans stated that "extremists were methodically and intentionally targeting young people and children in the UK" and that "Al-Qaeda was targeting children as young as 15." The majority of Boko Haram fighters are teenagers. ISIS is targeting impressionable youth with online games, specially designed apps and popular social media sites.

In the MENA a new generation at risk

In Iraq, the new generation of ISIS terrorists came of age after the 2003 US-led invasion and the sectarian Shia government of Nouri al-Maliki that followed. Many of those who later joined ISIS harbored resentments stemming from their violent and lost childhoods.

Today, instability and war in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen have bred a new generation of youth who have little political power, negative development indices, no real job prospects and limited futures. Thousands of these disaffected youth are vulnerable. Extremist groups are thriving in this environment teeming with post-revolutionary hostilities, regional divi-

sions, ethnic and sectarian conflict, religious intolerance, conspiracy theories and economic, social and political marginalization.

7.6 million Syrian children are in need of humanitarian assistance and more than three million children are internally displaced. Another two million Syrian children live as refugees in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq. Most live in poverty and without access to an education. Refugees represent one of the most vulnerable groups worldwide. They are the perfect victims to be recruited by Salafi-jihadists who need only promise them a meal a day and salvation to win their devotion. If nothing is done now to save them, they will help proliferate terrorism for years to come, as has been evidenced by the Taliban and Northern Alliance soldiers in Afghanistan.

Europe's Muslims in danger

In Europe, growing ethnic enclaves have revealed that multiculturalism is still not a reality, many alienated youth are actively seeking a new identity. With the ongoing political rhetoric and negative news cycle, second- and third-generation young Muslim citizens no longer feel respected or wanted. ISIS is targeting youth who are searching for new identities. New studies on Islamophobia in Europe offer strong evidence of how the phenomenon is thriving, threatening ideals of diversity and democracy. Muslims are increasingly seen as the "enemy", legitimizing verbal and physical attacks against them.

As we can see with the latest America-first and Brexit moves, there is a growing anti-Muslim reaction to terrorism which is generating new resentment among Muslims. The older generations are reacting with fear and the younger ones with resentment; the result is a breeding ground for potential terrorists. This is a mutually self-reinforcing, reflexive process that must be stopped.

The best solution to deal with this ominous new threat is our own youth. Young people are naturally innovative and as former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Anan wisely declared "they represent the best messengers for change." More must be done to give youth the chance to turn the tide.

The ultimate goal is to create societies free from the appeal of violent extremist ideologies either based on racial, ethnic, sexual or religious discrimination. While still only a dream, it is not too late to start working. It will be a generational issue so it is best to start intervening as soon as a person becomes exposed to extremist messages both on and offline.

The best way for supporting youth from falling prey to extremists is to help them to develop strong critical consumption skills. While there are already classroom programmes designed for young adults to sensitize them to sexual health and drug addiction, there needs to be more counter-extremism programmes.

It is time to take prevention seriously. Some excellent online counter-extremism initiatives already exist such as those supported by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD). Their Extreme Dialogue programme offers short films and personal stories of former extremists and of mothers who have lost children to extremists. These videos are effective, while difficult to measure, story-telling has been proven to be an excellent way to communicate key messages for positive change.



© Reuters

Alia Tunisi (left) and Sharon Suval (2nd left), first grade school teachers, talk to their students during reading hour at the Hand in Hand Arab Jewish bilingual school in Jerusalem December 3, 2014. The Hand in Hand school in Jerusalem presents an almost too-perfect scene in a tense and divided city, where Jews and Arabs do daily business but rarely befriend one other.

Mercy Corps supports programmes in the field that work with youth. They believe “youth hold the passion to dream of a better world and have the drive to build it.” Mercy Corps supports programmes that use youth leaders to train youth to learn new life-skills – even after school. This type of education not only shields them from being poached by extremists but can nurture critical thinking skills, build confidence and increase emotional intelligence.

The Kofi Annan Institute launched “Extremely Together,” a programme that includes young leaders, all active in preventing and countering violent extremism in their communities and beyond. They produced the world’s first guide, “by young people for young people”, on how to counter violent extremism in their own communities.

This is a good start. There is also great potential for youth to get involved in scaling up counter narrative initiatives online. EdVenture Partners Peer-to-Peer Facebook Global Challenge engages University students to compete in designing campaigns to counter hate on social media in very credible ways.

There is growing recognition that effective preventing violent extremism (PVE) strategies require “whole of society” efforts that extend beyond governments. This approach is enshrined in the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action. The Global Solutions Exchange believes the key to prevention lies in the heart of the community, which is why it is active in nurturing youth, civil society leaders and NGOs.

Youth must be given opportunities where they can dream of a future and have something to live for. A good way to start is to give them the opportunity to help preserve the next generation from falling prey to extremism. The Geneva Centre for Security (GCSP), the Global Center for Cooperative Security, and Hedayah have created courses to design national action plans on preventing and countering violent extremism (NAPs). These highlight the importance of using both “whole of government” and “whole of society” approaches.

The 2015 White House CVE Summit helped launch a new global focus on youth. Milestones include: the Amman Youth Declaration; the OSCE’s Ministerial Council Declaration on Youth in Basel; and the OSCE conference on “Working with Youth for Youth: Protection against Radicalization.” UN Security Council Resolution 2250 emphasizes the importance of youth as agents of change in the promotion of peace and security. A Youth4Peace Global Knowledge Portal was developed in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), Search for Common Ground (SfCG) and the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY). It contains valuable resources including: “Transforming Violent Extremism: a Peacebuilder’s Guide.”

Youth must have a role in shaping a more positive future. They should be at the forefront in decision making, as former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated “Young people drive change, but they are not in the driver’s seat.” It is time to give them the keys. ■

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A whole decade of action for nutrition, where are we now?

The Decade of Action on Nutrition, a United Nations work program proclaimed in 2016, provides an amazing opportunity to work together, mobilize action and accelerate efforts towards ending all forms of malnutrition.

DIANA ESTEVEZ, CAROLINA BOLAÑOS PALMIERI, GABRIELA HONDURU¹

Malnutrition ranges from severe nutritional deficiencies to excessive intake of food and affects populations throughout the life-cycle. In 2012, the World Health Assembly endorsed six global nutrition targets to improve maternal, infant and young child nutrition. These targets are measured assessing the prevalence of indicators such as low birth weight, stunting, wasting and overweight in children under five years of age, anemia in pregnant women, and the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding up to six months of age.

Undernutrition on one hand

According to the latest estimates, 155 million children

under five years of age across the world suffer from stunted growth; this means that they are too short for their age. Stunting is the result of long-term nutritional deprivation and reflects the cumulative effects of nutrient deficiencies and infections since, and even, before birth.

In 2016, 58 million children under five years of age suffered from wasting worldwide. Wasting may result from acute infection processes, inadequate diet, and poor care practices, which lead to weight loss and/or poor weight gain resulting in children too thin for their height.

Another indicator of poor nutrition and poor health is anemia. The most recent estimates for

2016 indicate that 613 million women between 15 and 49 years of age suffer from anemia, which is a public health concern as this condition has adverse consequences for women, but also for their offspring.

Overweight and obesity on the other hand

Overweight and obesity have multifactorial causes. Many children today are growing up in obesogenic environments that encourage inadequate food choices and reduced physical activity.

In 2000, 30 million children under five years of age were overweight and, in 2016, the number increased to 41 million. Overweight in children may increase the risk of developing non-communicable diseases in adulthood.

In 2014, it was estimated that 600 million adults were obese worldwide.

Exclusive breastfeeding is also a vital nutrition indicator

It was estimated that around 60 million infants under six

months of age were exclusively breastfed in 2015, representing 43% of this population. Supporting mothers to exclusively breastfeed their children during the first six months reduces child mortality rates and contributes to ending hunger and child malnutrition. It is through breast milk that newborns are offered essential nutrients for optimal growth and intellectual development; while preventing diarrhea, acute respiratory infections and non-communicable diseases in later stages of life. This is why indicators related to improved breastfeeding practices are measured as one of the most powerful preventive tools to improve health outcomes.

Why is it important to take stock of these indicators now?

Globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are offering a clear vision and long-term goals that motivate many stakeholders to develop and implement actions towards the end of all types of malnutrition. The Decade of Action on Nutrition reinforces the concept that nutrition is an input



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Malnutrition indicator	Global number of affected (latest estimate)
Stunting (height for age) in children under 5 years of age	155 million (2016)
Wasting (weight for height) in children under 5 years of age	58 million (2016)
Anemia (haemoglobin concentration below cut-off point) women of reproductive age	613 million (2016)
Overweight in children under 5 years of age	41 million (2016)
Obesity in adults, men and women 18 years and older	600 million (2014)

and an outcome of sustainable development and that nutrition sensitive interventions can improve the health and economic situation of vulnerable populations. These interventions should follow Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) objectives, recommendations and frameworks.

The fact is that the world is still far from ending all forms of malnutrition, however every effort that is made now, ensures that the future panorama mirrors what commitments are effectively put into practice.

What will the picture of nutrition be 10 years from now? Learning what is the current situation today will influence the vision of where the world should be by 2025 and model an agenda that will end all forms of malnutrition.

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World²

This report, published by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO,

was released a few weeks ago and presents for the first time a global assessment of food security and nutrition, which are included in SDG 2. It highlights the need to adopt a long-term vision with a multi-sectoral approach to combine humanitarian assistance with the development of actions that target food insecurity and malnutrition together with their determinants.

It is estimated that in 2016, 815 million people were undernourished in the world. This is related to the proliferation of conflict, climate change repercussions and their linkage with food security. About 79% of the stunted children in the world and 60% of the people suffering from hunger live in countries affected by conflicts.

When conflict is not prevented or managed, the worst affected are the poorest and most vulnerable, increasing the concentration of hunger and undernutrition in countries in fragile situations. Conflict

tends to halt social progress and impacts economy, drives up inflation, brings recession, disrupts employment and erodes finances for social protection and health care, to the detriment of the availability and access to food, damaging health and nutrition.

Monitoring Food Security and Nutrition

Comprehending the interrelationships among these nutrition indicators (and many others) will foster a better understanding of the numbers presented in this article. Food systems are shaped by social, political and economic forces, which affect food security and nutrition with consequences on health and economic development.

The coexistence of food insecurity and obesity, even in the same household is paradoxical but real: as resources for food become scarce, people often choose to eat lower-cost, less-healthy, energy-dense foods, leading to overweight and obesity and micronutrient deficiencies.

In addition, poor nutrition during pregnancy and childhood is linked with metabolic adaptations that increase the risk of obesity and associated non-communicable diseases in adulthood.

No country is free from malnutrition and many have to face the double burden of childhood stunting and wasting together with adult obesity and anemia, therefore, tackling malnutrition in all its forms requires a country-specific combination of measures that leverage multiple sectors to address the underlying determinants of malnutrition. Progress can be made when initiatives from multiple levels and sectors converge to reinforce each other under a common goal. ■

1 Diana Estevez – consultant at the World Health Organization
Carolina Bolaños Palmieri – consultant at the InterAmerican Center for Global Health (CISG)
Gabriela Hondru – student at University of Copenhagen
2 <https://www.wfp.org/content/2017-state-food-security-and-nutrition-world-sofi-report>

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IAEA, UNICEF and WHO to jointly tackle the double burden of malnutrition

A tri-agency, integrated approach within the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition.



Participants at the IAEA-WHO-UNICEF joint workshop in Vienna

CORNELIA LOECHL (IAEA), FRANCESCO BRANCA (WHO), VICTOR M. AGUAYO (UNICEF), LISA MURPHY, ALESSANDRO DEMAIO (WHO) AND MAAIKE ARTS (UNICEF)

What do we mean by the “double burden”?

Framed by the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), global attention and efforts are shifting towards the integrated goal of ending all forms of malnutrition. This reflects a new nutrition reality, with no country or region being immune from the rising global double burden of malnutrition. In 2016 and 2014 respectively, an estimated 41 million children under the age of five years and 1.9 billion adults were overweight or obese. Concurrently, 155 million children under five years were stunted, while more than 815 million adults continued to go hungry.

The double burden of malnutrition is characterised by the coexistence of undernutrition along with overweight and obesity, or diet-related noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) including cancers, diabetes type two and cardiovascular diseases. This double burden can exist at the individual level, for example obesity with deficiency of one or various vitamins and minerals, or overweight in an adult who was stunted during childhood. It can occur at the household level, when a mother may be overweight or anaemic and a child or grandparent is underweight. But it can also manifest

itself at the population level, where there is a prevalence of both undernutrition and overweight in the same community, nation or region. It can occur simultaneously, or at separated points across the life course.

The result is that many countries, households and even individuals are facing simultaneous burdens at each extreme of the malnutrition continuum, with low and middle-income countries particularly vulnerable.

Given that optimal nutrition is critical to child survival, growth and development, the educational attainment of adults and the economic development of nations, the double burden of malnutrition also poses a serious barrier to sustainable and economic development. Undernutrition is well-known to have long-term economic consequences for households, while total costs from obesity are estimated to be 2.8% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually.

Double-duty solutions

The drivers of all forms of malnutrition, including diet-related NCDs, are complex and often interlinked. All have been associated with poor maternal, in-utero and early life nutrition, been linked to poverty and low socioeconomic status and are exacerbated by globalization. This overlap in environmental and biological origins of

malnutrition provides possible shared targets for action. These integrated solutions which target all forms of malnutrition are termed *double-duty actions*. The WHO “Double-duty Actions for Nutrition” policy brief, launched in 2017, outlined key potential candidates for achieving double-duty action, and highlighted the importance of bringing diverse actors together to promote collaborative working.

Double-duty actions may offer an efficient and cost effective approach to address malnutrition, by maximising financial, physical and human resources. They can take the form of evidence-based and implementation-focused dietary guidelines, including enhancing access to healthy foods and affordable and sustainable diets; of regulatory frameworks aimed at restricting the unethical marketing of breastmilk substitutes and the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children and using tax measures to dis-incentivise the use of unhealthy foods and beverages; of restructuring and financing health systems and ensuring universal health care can provide prevention and treatment actions for both undernutrition and overweight, obesity and diet-related NCDs; of supporting social protection safety nets that ensure access to healthy diets to the most vulnerable children and families; and of transformation of food systems, such as through urban

agriculture and direct farm-consumer marketing.

The double-duty approach can be achieved at three levels. First, by ensuring that existing nutrition interventions addressing one form of malnutrition do not have unintended consequences on other forms of malnutrition. Second, through adding interventions or actions to existing approaches that unlock positive impacts on additional forms of malnutrition not previously addressed. Finally, through the development of new interventions, programmes or policies that simultaneously address the double burden.

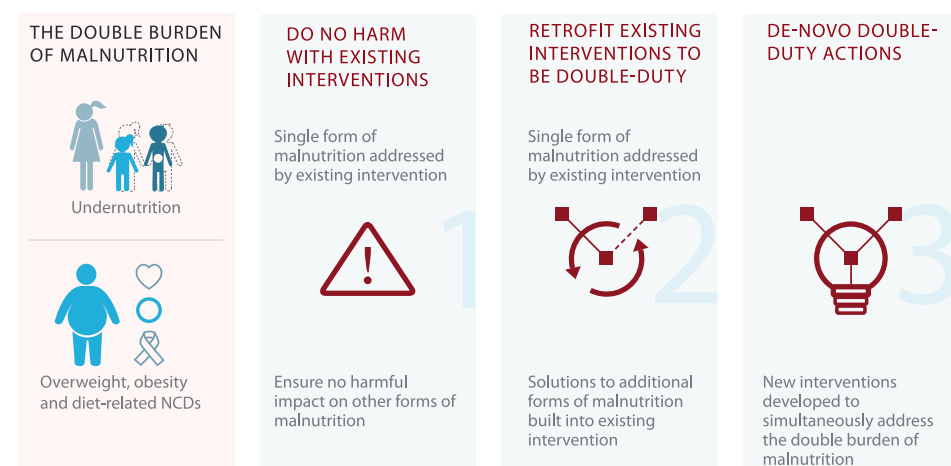
The potential candidates for double-duty actions go beyond food and nutrition policy to include policy and programmes for education, gender equality, social protection and urban planning. Strong social policies, such as for improving access to antenatal care and girls' and women's access to education, would not only improve health outcomes and economic inclusivity, but have extensive positive nutrition overflows.

Catalysing to address all forms of malnutrition

In April 2016, the UN General Assembly declared a Decade of Action on Nutrition, calling on Member States to undertake sustained and coherent action on malnutrition through cross-cutting and coherent policies, programmes and initiatives. Nutrition is also a core component of the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), of which 12 require good nutrition in order to be met. With the need for coherent nutrition implementation platforms spanning health, social and economic sectors, now is the time for developing de novo integrated methodologies.

The Interagency Task Force on NCDs recently established a dedicated Technical Working Group on Nutrition to enhance coordination and collaboration and the Scaling Up Nutrition movement is increasingly bringing the attention of national leaders to the double burden of undernutrition and overweight.

This month saw a pioneering meeting convened in Vienna at the headquarters of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); a collaboration between the IAEA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). It brought together around 50



Three levels of achieving double duty

researchers and public health professionals working in nutrition and NCDs from 28 countries. This three-day meeting provided an important platform to characterize and explore the magnitude of the double burden, the biology underlying the multiple forms of malnutrition and actions to address them. It also explored methods to measure malnutrition and the impact of nutrition interventions. It resulted in the identification of crucial research gaps.

“In order to effectively tackle the double burden of malnutrition, clear, evidence-based actions that address both undernutrition, and overweight and obesity – known as double-duty actions – are needed,” said Cornelia Loechl, head of the Nutritional and Health-Related Environmental Studies Section at the IAEA. The IAEA is supporting the use of nuclear and isotopic techniques to develop and evaluate double-duty actions.

A multi-agency approach

A further interdisciplinary and multilevel conference will be organized by the IAEA in collaboration with WHO and UNICEF in December 2018, bringing together over 300 participants that include leaders, scientists and experts in the field to design innovative and contextually-relevant double-duty actions.

The WHO Department of Nutrition for Health and Development is also working with The Lancet and other partners to develop a journal series due in 2018. This series will better define the new nutrition reality, and explore the feasibility and economic implications of key double-duty actions. It will provide an opportunity to align the nutrition community and better

equip policy makers and programme managers to meet nutrition goals.

In its new strategic plan 2018-2021, UNICEF includes for the first time the prevention of both undernutrition and overweight in children as a corporate priority, by influencing food systems to deliver healthy, affordable and sustainable diets for all children, leaving no-one behind.

The intersection of contrasting and often confounding forms of malnutrition also presents a critical entry point for coordinated responses to, among others, infectious diseases, maternal and child illnesses and diseases associated with aging. A multi-agency approach to addressing the double burden of malnutrition will provide a catalyst for mitigating policy challenges beyond health, including economic, gender and life-course inequalities. ■

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The second edition of the Spanish Language Week took place in Geneva from 12 to 19 October 2017.

CLAUDIA FRESAN, MARÍA DEL MAR MOYA, ANA CASADES AND JAIME SÁNCHEZ-RATIA, MEMBERS OF PALABRAS+

This project was born in 2016 in order to honour the diversity of the Spanish language, spoken by more than 440 million people around the world. It is the result of a collaborative effort, an initiative jointly organised by the Department of Conference Management at UNOG, the Committee Palabras+ (a group of translators and interpreters from different organizations in Geneva), the AFIE (Association of Spanish International Civil Servants), UNOG Cultural Activities, the Spanish Book Club and some missions to the UN in Geneva.

Building on the success of last year, this edition was marked by a series of highly colourful activities, ranging from movie screenings to food tasting in different cafeterias of the international organizations in Geneva. Special mention should be made to a literary debate organised by Palabras+, in collaboration with DCM, during which renowned poet María Leach, fiction writer José María Conget and playwright Borja Ortiz de Gondra, who came from Spain to participate in the event, shared their experience on retelling memories as a source of inspiration. Later that same day, Spanish writer José María Conget presented his last novel, *Confesión General*, during an event sponsored by the bookshop Albatros. Another event that attracted a big audience was a workshop for children on the comic book “Asterix in Hispania”, lead by our colleague translator and

historian Fernán González-Alemán from WTO. Also, a group of translators, interpreters and writers cheered up the passengers of the “mouettes” on a bright Sunday morning by reading out some excerpts of masterpieces of Spanish and Latin American literature. Additionally, María Dolores García-Aznar, from the CABINET D’ARTS GRAPHIQUES, offered a guided tour of some engravings by Latin American and Spanish artists that are very rarely exposed in the Museum, specially selected for the occasion.

To commemorate officially the Spanish Language Day, on October 17 DCM sponsored a big event in the Human Rights and Alliance of Civilizations Room, under the ceiling sculpture designed by the prominent contemporary Spanish artist Miquel Barceló. The ceremony was attended by Mr. Michael Møller, Director-General of the Office of the United Nations at Geneva and Ms Corinne Momal, Director of DCM, both of whom addressed the audience in their impeccable Spanish. The artists Coralia Rodríguez, Amanda Cepero, Narciso Saúl, Gaëlle Poirier and Orland Oliva delighted the audience with a recital combining music and poetry from Latin America and Spain. After the performance, the public gathered outside the room to enjoy some food and refreshments, generously offered by the Permanent Missions of Bolivia, Guatemala, Spain, Cuba, Colombia, Peru, Uruguay and Dominican Republic, and also by AFIE and Palabras+.



Next to door 40 of the Palais des Nations, Argentinian artist Eugenia Susel displayed from 12 to 18 October a remarkable selection of her drawings entitled *A smile for human rights*. Some of us had the opportunity to discover her creative mind during a guided tour organized for the occasion.

And last but not least, on 18 October, AFIE and Palabras+, in collaboration with the Translation and Interpretation Faculty of Geneva, the International Association of Conference

Translators and the Spanish Book Club, presented the award for the best short story as part of the 4th edition of the literary contest *De la Traducción a la Creación*. During the ceremony, our colleague from the Spanish Translation section at UNOG, Luis Sarabia, enchanted the audience with his songs in a short but ravishing concert, accompanied by a pianist.

Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world and over the course of this week we witnessed once more its

diversity. Our heartfelt thanks to Cuban artist Mandy Nelson, whose beautiful design of the many names a safety pin is given in Spanish was the perfect logo for this occasion. By way of conclusion, we would like to say that the organization of the Spanish Language Week was extremely rewarding for all those involved as well as for the public. We have received very good feedback and, as organizers, we will keep up our efforts to make next year's edition a triumph. Our commitment to this amazing language won't

falter. But for that we need your support. We hope to see you all there next year. To be continued... ■

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Mens sana in corpore sano

Healthy eating... and do not forget to breathe!

Mens sana in corpore sano is a Latin phrase, usually translated as “a healthy mind in a healthy body”.

The phrase is widely used to express the theory that keeping good physical form is an important or essential part of mental and psychological well-being.

EVELINA RIOUKHINA, UNECE

I would like to propose a series of articles covering a wide range of factors and tips that can help all interested staff members to maintain a “corpore sano” and thus ensure a “mens sana”. There are thousands and thousands of recipes and diets that will guide you to healthy eating. It seems that all of them are good and just need to be adjusted to the individual. You may decide to follow the proverb “*Une pomme par jour – oublie les docteurs pour toujours*”. Or you may chose vegetarian, or – what is becoming more and more “in vogue” today – vegan food. Or simply eat sushi – as long as you feel healthy (meaning your body gets sufficient nutrition components) you will feel strong psychologically and your “mental” force will also be healthy and strong.

There is some interesting research conducted by Harvard University, representing the latest nutritional science, called the “Harvard Healthy Eating Pyramid”. A triangle, with the widest part at the bottom part, indicates –the most important food (and it consists of fats from healthy sources such as plants), narrowing down to refined carbohydrates (white bread and white rice) with red meat at the very top (preceded by fish, poultry and eggs, which are still healthier choices).

Whatever the new waves and tendencies in eating might be, you may wish to re-visit the ancient systems, and Ayurveda, an ancient medical system from India, is one of them. Ayurveda translates into “knowledge of life” and is a 4,000-year-old system of well-being. The philosophy of Ayurveda focuses on a person’s health in a preventative, long term way and on a special way of eating and diet that correspond to your mind-body type, not forgetting breathing (or meditation) for emotional balance. Ayurveda names seven basic tissues, which are plasma, blood, muscles, fat, bone, marrow and semen. Like the medicine of classical antiquity, Ayurveda has historically



divided bodily substances into five classical elements – earth, water, fire, air and ether. Ayurveda is a philosophy, that, in brief, can be described as the system developed for your unique body type (called doshas), and it names three elemental substances for each of them, stating that balanced doshas results in health, while imbalance results in disease. Each person should modulate their behaviour (eating, breathing, way of life) or environment to increase or decrease the doshas and maintain their natural state. The benefits that occur are not only felt in your body – they are also seen in your mental and emotional well-being. This holistic approach to health allows you to become a balanced, vital, happy person with the least

amount of effort. Ayurveda offers the fastest of paths to health: multiple actions – on body, mentality, energy and mind; finding one’s emotional balance through breathing and meditation and healthy eating and digestion according to your metabolism and temperament.

Ayurveda is an ancient solution to our modern-day problems that need quick, effective remedies, and that is why it is gaining ground in Europe and can be easily followed even here, in Geneva, elsewhere in Switzerland or even in Germany or Spain. Today it is accepted as a system of preventive medicine all over the world. But the real place for authentic Ayurveda is Kerala. And having tried Ayurveda in other parts of the Globe, and even in other parts of India, or its neighbouring countries, such as Sri Lanka and the Maldives, we can testify, without doubt – Kerala is the queen of queens of this ancient healing art.

If you decide to do or practise Ayurveda here, you can do so easily, and it is even covered by a complementary insurance, being recognized as an alternative or natural medicine. But if you want to have the best of it and to get the most from it, you should definitely go to Kerala for at least 14 days to be rejuvenated, or 21-28 days to have a full Panchakarma (full purification

of body of all toxins). From morning to evening you will totally emerge yourself in the atmosphere of Ayurveda, starting and finishing the day with Yoga, breathing and meditation amidst wild nature, to the sounds of mantras and the whispering of the waves (Yoga is a very important part of Ayurveda and we will not describe if here as much has been written about Yoga, and classes are even offered here at the Palais). You will follow a diet of Ayurvedic healing meals (meals that will be specifically prescribed for you by the Ayurvedic doctor for the whole period of your stay), and if indeed you would like to, you can follow some habits acquired for the rest of your life. In addition, throughout the day you will have to drink a lot of special herbal Ayurvedic tea, liquid and juices (according to your doshas), stay as close to nature as possible, and the most desirable – live (or sleep) in a round wooden house (special Kerala house). Living in a round space is a part of the Ayurveda philosophy – not to have angles (a more detailed article on a global philosophy of living in the round was described in a previous *UN Special* article). Before going into detail about Ayurvedic treatments (next month’s issue), let us provide you with some tips that you can use in your everyday (and stressful or busy life, no matter what your dosha is and whether you like Ayurveda or not):

10 tips for healthy eating based on the 10 most important Ayurvedic healing foods – WHAT to eat:

1. **Lemons** – purifying and nourishing and stimulate digestion. Try to drink unsweetened water with lemon as many times as you can, to eliminate toxins.
2. **Ghee** (clarified butter) – is among the best rejuvenating and longevity-promoting foods, aiding digestion, calming nerves and in addition, it “helps” in transporting the nutrients of other foods to the tissues.
3. **Dates and Figs** – both are prized as excellent sources of energy and help build tissues. Try to eat one or two every day.
4. **Almonds** – are nourishing and life-supporting. Eat several almonds daily to increase strength and energy.
5. **(Mung) Beans** – are among the best legumes for their supreme digestibility and health-giving qualities. They are beneficial when people are sick or otherwise in need of very light food. Mung beans are particularly nourishing when mixed with rice or other grains.

6. **Ginger** -is often referred to as “the universal medicine” and promotes good digestion. Sprinkle a thin slice of fresh ginger with lemon juice and salt, and eat half an hour before a meal.
7. **Cumin Seeds** – serve as a digestive aid and alma-reducer. To help remove toxins, start the day by drinking warm water mixed with a pinch of powdered cumin and ginger.
8. **Lassi** – a beverage prepared by mixing one part yogurt into two parts water. It is an excellent nutritive digestive aid, taken during or after a meal.
9. **Juicy Fruits** – are both highly nutritive and purifying (use completely ripe for maximum healing value).
10. **Green (leafy) vegetables** – nutritive and purifying, they stimulates the liver and help balance blood sugar.

9 rules for healthy eating and good digestion (Ayurvedic guidelines) – HOW to eat:

1. Eat only when you are hungry.
2. Eat in a calm and comfortable place.
3. Eat the right quantity.
4. Eat warm meals.
5. Eat quality food (avoid dry food).
6. Do not eat incompatible food items together.
7. Be present when you eat. Use all your five senses.
8. Don’t eat fast.
9. Eat at regular times.

And do not forget to drink – water, herbal tea, with lemon or ginger – just drinking 10 cups per day will assist virtually all healing. ■

Read me next month on Ayurveda treatments that will maintain your *corpore sano* for your *mens sana*!



Comment changer le monde avec une assiette

Du champ à l'assiette, les enjeux environnementaux s'invitent à la table des solutions pour penser une alimentation de qualité. Autrement dit, la révolution commence dans nos assiettes?

SOLANGE BEHOTEGUY, CNUCED

À l'initiative du chef cuisinier François Pasteau, du photographe Alain Fouray et de la journaliste Paule Masson, engagés pour le droit à une alimentation de qualité pour tous, l'exposition photo pédagogique «Changez le climat dans votre assiette» explore les relations entre alimentation et climat.

UN Spécial a contacté la journaliste Paule Masson, rédacteur en chef du journal *l'Humanité* et passionnée de cuisine et de photographie. On comprend vite que ce projet lui tient à cœur.

Quels liens établissez-vous entre climat et alimentation?

L'alimentation est à la fois cause et victime. De la terre à

l'assiette, elle est responsable d'environ 30% des émissions de gaz à effet de serre, cause de la montée des températures. Cette réalité est assez méconnue. L'agriculture intensive avec ses épandages d'engrais chimique et l'élevage, du fait du méthane que rejettent les ruminants, sont les principaux nœuds du problème. Mais la production vivrière est aussi directement affectée à la montée du thermomètre: sécheresses, inondations, perte de la biodiversité affectent les productions, provoquent des migrations de populations qui fuient la faim, déclenchent des conflits et interrogent la souveraineté alimentaire de nombreux pays.



En tant que citoyens, que peut-on faire pour agir?

Pour changer le climat dans nos assiettes, il faut d'abord interroger nos modèles agricoles, relocaliser les productions, trouver des alternatives aux pesticides, encourager le bio, la permaculture ou l'agroforesterie, remettre les vaches à l'herbe, développer l'agriculture en ville etc. Mais il faut aussi faire évoluer nos pratiques alimentaires: manger plus végétal (légumes, céréales, légumineuses), acheter des produits de saison, si possible issus de productions locales. L'exposition est construite en quatre parties, à



partir de 4 régions, au cœur de 4 saisons, avec 4 cuisiniers et leurs producteurs. Les photographies captent la beauté méconnue des fruits et des légumes.

Vous dites que « le meilleur moyen de ne pas gâcher reste encore de ne pas jeter » Pourquoi est-il devenu si important de contenir le gaspillage ?

Parce que le problème est immense et là encore il commence aux champs. 30% de la production agricole dans le monde part à la poubelle car les produits ne correspondent pas aux cahiers des charges des acheteurs (grande distribution, multinationales de l'agroalimentaire etc). Les fruits mal calibrés, cabossés, piqués etc. Le problème se pose aussi dans les océans puisque 40% des prises de pêche sont jugées non commercialisables. Ensuite, Le gaspillage est présent au moment de la transformation, dans le

suremballage des aliments, en cuisine, à la maison... Toute la chaîne alimentaire jette des denrées comestibles. Elle génère des montagnes de déchets qui souillent les sols, l'eau et les mers.

En fin de compte on jette tout le temps, souvent par esthétisme. Le marketing de la beauté vaut même pour la nourriture. Demandez à une courgette sa définition de beauté... les critères des mannequins, 90 60 90, sont du même tonneau. Il nous faut des tomates rouges comme la bouche de Maryline, et des carottes tordues nous font peur. Un navet, même déformé, est antioxydant! Quid des feuilles de Betterave qu'on jette par habitude? «jeunes, les feuilles de betteraves se cuisinent comme des épinards ou se mangent crues en salade.» Jeter c'est ignorer une grande partie de la population mondiale qui meurt de faim.



Pour finir, Paule Masson nous invite à découvrir une **recette anti gaspillage** de François Pasteau, chef du restaurant l'Épi Dupin, à Paris, extraite de son livre: *Manger et cuisiner éco-responsable* (Hachette Pratique). ■

Écoutez Le plat du jour, tous les matins à 5h45 avec François Pasteau sur RTL

Salade de fenouil

- Restes d'un canard (ailerons, cou, carcasse...)
- 12 abricots secs (coupés en dés)
- 8 noix fraîches
- 3 fenouils
- 2 oignons
- 3 branches de coriandre fraîche
- 2 feuilles de brick
- 10 cl d'huile d'olive
- 1 cuil. à café de vadouvan
- 1 cuil. à café de curcuma
- beurre fondu

Épluchez, émincez et faites suer les oignons à la poêle dans un peu d'huile d'olive. Ajoutez la viande récupérée effilochée, les épices et la coriandre ciselée. Mélangez. Débarrassez et laissez refroidir.

Préchauffez le four à 180°C (TH.6). Coupez les feuilles de brick en deux, beurrez-les et disposez la farce au centre. Roulez pour obtenir 4 cônes.

Enfournez pour 10 min de cuisson.

Émincez les fenouils en gardant les tiges vertes et le cœur qui peuvent servir à confectionner un confit, délicieux avec des pommes au four. Mélangez avec l'huile d'olive, les dés d'abricots secs et les noix fraîches.

Disposez les pastillas chaudes sur le dessus et servez.



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Traduire à l'ONU 2^e partie

Le multilinguisme est un pilier du système des Nations Unies. La traduction, base de ce pilier, est aujourd'hui confrontée à de nouveaux outils technologiques et à des restrictions budgétaires. Peut-on, dans ce contexte, préserver l'excellence des services linguistiques? Ce dossier apporte de nouveaux éléments à la réflexion lancée le mois dernier par l'Assemblée de secteur du Service linguistique (LSSA).

**DAVID PÉLERINS, FRENCH
TRANSLATION SECTION**

Standing at a Crossroads

The work of translating for an international organization requires precision, humility, hard-earned knowledge and acumen if the translator – and the reader – is to make sense of complex, sensitive and sometimes highly technical messages rendered into text.

The current trend is to shift from quality services to doing more with less, and faster. Accordingly, businesses and organizations have set great store in machine translation. Yet, machines can only do so much. Translators are not

mere intermediaries. They are, contrary to machines, the only ones capable of grasping and interpreting semantic subtleties or intentional ambiguities, not to mention of producing proper grammar.

Increased reliance on automatic translation is bound to make all communications more uniform and uninspired, less precise and interesting. If you decide that legibility, reliability and consistency are secondary to volume and that you are not willing to pay for those, then it should come as no surprise when documents become diluted, flat and ineffective.

If the end game is to produce more words, translators will oblige, albeit reluctantly, but no human being can compete with a machine when it comes to sheer speed and cost. Therefore, the future is rather bleak for translators, who fear that they will soon be reduced to post-editors. How very ironic that, by trying to harness the gains of computer technology, they will end up cleaning up after machines, in an inefficient

effort to render a “robotic” text more legible.

This trend can hopefully be reversed by bringing a few facts back to the fore.

The United Nations is an international organization with values and ideals at its core. Its employees have no greater desire than to serve those values and ideals to the best of their ability. People who take a job with the UN are highly committed. They are here to assist the Member States and have a duty to strive for excellence. Their skills and commitment constitute an invaluable asset for the Organization and its Members States.

One of the arguments for machine translation v. human translation is cost, but the actual savings are hard to assess. It would be a mistake to merely compare software development and implementation costs with staff costs. Trust being at the very heart of UN efforts, it would be relevant to consider the Organization’s credibility, which stems in part from the quality of documentation. The erosion of UN quality standards by overemphasizing quantity produced would necessarily trigger a loss in the reliability of information and, hence, a loss of confidence on the part of the public. Surely that loss is inestimable.

How can the UN remain a centre of excellence when translators are put under increasing pressure to deliver more content with fewer resources and when their work is measured against unrealistic standards on the basis of machine translation? They cannot at the same time pour their hearts and souls into fulfilling their mission and keep an anxious eye constantly on the meter in order to deliver more content. A climate of anxiety and instability is never good news for morale and, ultimately, not for productivity or excellence either.

We should always strive for progress. But what do we mean

by progress? Not every newfangled tool equals progress. In the case of translation, machines, however efficient, they cannot yet rival the discernment of a human brain and professional translators will always have the upper hand in that regard. A decision needs to be made: should standards be lowered in order to produce more content of lesser quality for short-term gain? Or should they be defended to preserve the Organization’s credibility, which entails trusting qualified, dedicated professionals to communicate the Organization’s vision?

The clock is ticking. ■

Machines ou traducteurs?

Le «deep learning» permet à un programme informatique de reconnaître un schéma ou un agencement particulier qu’il interprétera comme une unité de sens pour former des connexions de type neuronal, à la manière d’un cerveau humain, puis d’adapter sa réponse en conséquence. Le programme peut ainsi comprendre, évoluer, et donc apprendre. Dans le cas de la traduction, où la compréhension du contexte est primordiale, cette nouvelle technologie devrait, à terme, permettre un rendu extrêmement proche d’une traduction faite par un être humain. Des géants comme Google et Microsoft sont parties prenantes de l’évolution de cette technologie, dont la mise en œuvre est largement engagée. ■

Pour en savoir plus

What is a neural network based translation?

<https://translator.microsoft.com/help/articles/neural/>

Scientists See Promise in Deep-Learning Programs

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/24/science/scientists-see-advances-in-deep-learning-a-part-of-artificial-intelligence.html>

The Great A.I. Awakening

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/14/magazine/the-great-ai-awakening.html>

Through the linguistic jungle to peace

We all come from different linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds. We left our home countries to join the UN first and foremost as staff members, inspired by the universal ideals of the UN Charter, and only secondarily as language professionals serving the Organization by disseminating its message in our respective mother tongues. UN translators do not just mechanically reproduce meaningless sentences from one language to another. Sometimes, we are the first to come into contact with a new concept worked out and agreed upon in the multinational arena and to coin a new term in our target languages. Given our time constraints, our translation may not turn out to be perfect, but we are the “first responders”, called upon to bridge the gap in understanding between different – if not outright divergent – ideas, positions and cultures, which is the very essence of the UN. Indeed, all subsequent translation databases and platforms are built upon the selfless dedication and professionalism of these courageous pioneers, who have to work in a linguistic jungle to open up the road to peace. The UN has functioned so smoothly in this multilingual environment for more than seven decades that we tend to forget the invisible hands tirelessly working behind the scenes to make all this possible. ■

Keqing Tang, Senior reviser, Chinese Translation Section

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© Margarete Tomassi

The United Nations Women's Guild (UNWG) – active on many fronts!

According to the statutes and by-laws of the United Nations Women's Guild, one of its main fields of action is that of organizing fund-raising activities to help needy children around the world.

GITA SUNDARARAMAN & HEMA SERVANSING

UNWG organizes two art exhibitions during the year, one at WIPO (January-February) and one at UNOG (April-May). Proceeds from the sale of any pieces of artwork donated by the participating artists contribute towards project funds.

These are followed by the two main fund raising activities, the Children's Walk (September-October) and the UNWG Annual Bazaar (November).

The 2017 edition of the CHILDREN'S WALK was held on Friday 29 September, organized by Hema Servansing and Diane Boustany and their team.

The Children's Walk has evolved into one of the highlights of UNWG's activities.

It first took place in 2002 at the initiative of Mrs. Gita Sundararaman. The Walk helps achieve one of the key goals of

the UNWG, that of helping children in need around the world through a scholarship scheme.

Its aim is to:

- bring awareness to the school children in and around Geneva participating in the Walk that there are children not so fortunate as them in receiving education.
- instill in children who have everything they want the value of sharing with others and giving to those who are not so fortunate.
- finance scholarships for groups of disadvantaged children entering secondary school.

The Children's Walk is also an educational opportunity for the children and the accompanying adults to get to know the United Nations, its aims and programmes, since the Walk takes place within the Palais grounds.

Since 2002, there have been 15 editions of the Children's Walk.

Friday 29 September 2017 was a very warm and sunny day, on which 950 children from different schools in and around Geneva participated in the latest edition of the Children's Walk.

The children, through their enthusiasm, made it a joyful event.

Catherine d'Arcangues, Vice-President/Projects, deals with all matters relating to the scholarships thus funded.

To date, 418 children in 20 countries have received scholarships enabling them to complete their secondary education.

A PowerPoint presentation prepared by our team members was shown to all the children in the Assembly Hall commented by Catherine, explaining the role of the Guild in processing and distributing the Children's Walk funds.

The Guild wishes to thank the following schools, their children and staff, for their participation this year:

- British School of Geneva
- Collège du Léman
- Geneva English School
- Institut Florimont
- International School Geneva/Pregny,
- International School Geneva/La Chataigneraie

- International School Geneva/Nations
- Deux Mille Feuilles
- Deutsche Schule Genf

Our very special thanks go to Director-General Michael Møller for inaugurating the Walk and we would also like to thank other UN staff for their wholehearted and timely support extended to UNWG year after year.

The Guild also wishes to thank the organizing team headed by Hema Servansing and Diane Boustany.

Thanks to all the donors too!

We thank Elaine Riesen for her precious help and all the Guild members who volunteered for the different tasks. ■

Save the date for our upcoming event

UNWG Annual Bazaar –
Tuesday 21 November 2017

Since early October, ladies from the UNWG have started selling tickets for the tombola at the United Nations and other UN agencies.

The first prize is a brand new Honda Car, donated by Honda Automobiles Geneva, which will be parked at Door 6.

There are 200 prizes in total. The draw takes place at around 3 p.m. on the day of the Bazaar, 21 November 2017.

The list of prize-winning numbers will be published on the Guild's website: www.unwg.ch

Noli me tangere

For thousands of years art and music have rendered mythologies, philosophies and religion more visible, audible – in short, more emotionally accessible.

ALFRED DE ZAYAS

One of my favourite stories – because of its implications and metaphors is “Noli me tangere”, that celebrated scene immediately following the Resurrection (John, chapter 20, verses 11 to 18, in particular verse 17), the moment when Mary of Magdala comes to the gravesite on the morning just after Passover and Golgotha, finds the grave empty and turns in her confusion to a person she mistakes for the gardener (remember that in John 19, verse 41 we learn that there was a garden where Christ was buried). At first she does not recognize him. Only when Jesus turns to her and calls out her name: “Mary”, does she realize it and responds flabbergasted “Rabbi”. What more human reaction than her desire to touch him, to hold on to him!

The gospel relates Christ’s famous and often misunderstood words “Noli me tangere” – which is frequently translated as “touch me not”. This scene has been frequently interpreted by great painters, including Giotto, Hans Memling, Martin Schongauer, Fra Angelico, Fra Bartolomeo, Antonio da Correggio, Hans Holbein, Tiziano, Alonso Cano and Anton Mengs, and Alexander Ivanov. Orthodox iconography has some of the best representations of the encounter (<https://orthodoxcityhermit.com/2016/11/12/noli-me-tangere-touch-me-not>).

Actually “Noli me tangere” means something else in the original Aramaic, as reflected in the oldest original Greek Gospel *Μή μου ἅπτου*, which has a broader sense: “do not try

to retain me”, “cease holding on to me”, or figuratively, cease trying to possess me, stand on your own feet, go out to the world, be my ambassador, my messenger, go to the disciples and tell them that you have seen and spoken to me.

Artists often see more in the Gospels than the common reader. They interpret scriptures in a visual way that goes beyond the words, using light, shadow, colour, body language and symbols to elucidate the content of the biblical story. We suddenly realize that Christ can be seen as Adam, and Mary Magdalen as Eva. They are the prototypes of humanity, of each and every one of us. Christ is the human being *par excellence*. He is also the gardener of Paradise. He tends the Garden of Eden and the tree of knowledge – which is also represented in the paintings by Schongauer, Fra Angelico, Coreggio, Tizian, Cano and Mengs. Schongauer even paints the fruits on the tree of knowledge, which Mary Magdalen wants to possess, as Eva did. Mary Magdalen implores Christ as in the “Song of Songs”, where we recognize

the exchange between the lover and the beloved: “I sought him whom my heart loves” (Song of Solomon: 3:1), and yet Mary, who has again encountered the beloved she thought dead, must endure the admonition to stop clinging on to him physically. Christ gives her a platonic task – to be a witness, to give testimony.

Next time you are in a museum, check out one of the many paintings of “Noli me tangere”. The canvas says more than the words. There is even written work called Noli me tangere by the Philippino novelist Jose Rizal, which was made into an impressive Opera – which, however, does not rely on the Biblical story (<http://www.onemusic.ph/news/noli-me-tangere-a-review-2552>). ■

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View of Zeitz MOCAA in Silo Square.



Atrium at night.

The new Museum of Contemporary Art Africa is proof that the future of Africa is bright!

Talk about being lucky! Who could have known when I planned to attend the Global Health Summit in Cape Town, South Africa and organize a few sessions and meetings that I would be able to sneak into this jewel? I had seen the Grain Silo along the waterfront of Cape Town, South Africa in the past. I had wondered, what would emerge from it.

**Dr. GARRY ASLANYAN,
DEPUTY EDITOR, WHO**

A close Capetonian friend told me once she thought there would be a museum there one day. I didn't make much of that comment, but I did wonder how a museum would fit into a bunch of grain silos. But it did – and it is called the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA).

The waterfronts in most coastal and harbour cities of Europe and North America have been experiencing unprecedented redevelopments in the last 15 years. But there was always something left from the past, when the harbours and ports served as engines of trade and transportation, which was not touched or transformed. When I visit my home town of Toronto, Canada, the waterfront redevelopment has become so impressive that I think in another 10 years it may become the most desirable place to live in the city. But there is always that one thing that hangs around

from the past. In the case of Toronto it is the Redpath Sugar building. It is for sugar storage and a refinery and actually even a museum. But it is by no means a tourist attraction or any kind of architectural wonder by the water. It's not what the Grain Silo on Cape Town's waterfront has been transformed into.

But back to me being lucky. I got invited to a 7 a.m. press conference and a tour of the museum to see and learn all about it and have time to make my 9 a.m. conference plenary. I learned that the establishment of the museum came about as a confluence of factors. The waterfront recognized the significance of its Grain Silo complex as a historic landmark and for years debated possible uses. An art museum was eventually decided upon, but a collection was needed. Then along came the German businessman and philanthropist, Jochen Zeitz, who supported curation of a world class collection of art



In the midst of chaos, there is opportunity by South African Mary Sibande.



The work of South African artist Kendell Geers.

with the vision to create the first major museum dedicated to contemporary art from Africa and its Diaspora on the Africa Continent. Jochen Zeitz made his fortune by orchestrating a radical turnaround of the nearly bankrupt Puma sportswear company in the 1990s, transforming it into a \$4-billion-a-year global success. The meeting of these two visions resulted in the creation of the not-for-profit public institution since named Zeitz MOCAA. The museum's home in the ambitiously reimaged historic Grain Silo allows to collect, preserve, and research, as well as exhibit, twenty-first century art from Africa and its Diaspora, host international exhibitions and support educational and enrichment programmes. I can appreciate why a pan-African and global approach to African art has been taken by the museum – African art has been shipped away for centuries. Colonialism and private collectors systematically exported African art from the continent. In those

two hours I walked around over 100 galleries, spread over nine floors. Jochen Zeitz's collection forms the founding collection of the museum, and is on long term loan. Pieces from the collection will be exhibited alongside the museum's permanent collection. The galleries and the cathedral-like atrium space at the centre of the museum have been literally carved from the silos' dense cellular structure of 42 tubes that pack the building. The development includes 6,000 square metres of exhibition space, a rooftop sculpture garden, state of the art storage and conservation areas, a bookshop, a restaurant and bar, and various reading rooms. The museum is topped with a luxury boutique hotel, The Silo, whose rooms cost from \$900 to \$10,000 a night. Definitely out of my range!

I have to admit, when I planned to go to the press conference and see the museum, I had one thing nagging in my mind. Why Zeitz? Why does an African

museum still need a European name on it? The building with his name on it is believed to be the biggest museum to open in Africa in a century. Did somebody ask that question? Why couldn't he just let his name be mentioned in the collection and not in the name of the museum itself? Zeitz actually refused to speak at the museum's press launch; my potential questions were therefore left unanswered.

The first questions from South African journalists at the press conference raised awkward points about Cape Town's reputation as an unequal and inaccessible city, only for the wealthy. Having visited more than a dozen other African cities, Cape Town is probably one of the least African cities on the continent. I have visited Cape Town on many occasions. The fact that it has a state of the art convention centre means that many continental or global meetings take place here. I am no expert in Capetonian social dynamics, but over the years I have picked

up on a few things. An English and Afrikaans language divide between suburbs still exists. I am told it remains segregated by colour and people live wherever they were put during apartheid. Arguably, this makes people economically trapped in places. My hope is that the museum will help people and artists to break those barriers. The artistic themes of the museum already show how these barriers are being broken by including such genres as political photography and native African fashion, both playing into the museum's sense of African roots.

The MOCAA aims to be the Tate Modern of South Africa and Africa overall. Walking around the galleries and seeing art from all over the continent I was overwhelmed with emotion and reflected that art proves there is a bright future and place for African art on the global stage. I will leave you to judge the rest by looking at some of the photos, and if you ever happen to visit Cape Town, make sure to visit. ■



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Accueil chaleureux.

Birmanie partie 1/4

Au pays du sourire

Avec l'ouverture récente du pays, de nombreuses régions de Birmanie (République de l'Union du Myanmar) s'offrent au monde moderne, pour le plus grand plaisir du touriste à la recherche de véritables trésors cachés et avides d'Aventure teintées d'authenticité.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

Plus vaste que la Suisse, la France et le Benelux réunis, la Birmanie est le plus grand pays d'Asie du Sud-Est. Elle partage ses 6158 kilomètres de frontières avec la Chine, l'Inde, la Thaïlande, le Laos et le Bangladesh. Il faut ajouter à cela ses 2276 kilomètres de côtes baignées par le golfe de Bengale et la mer d'Andaman.

D'une richesse culturelle, naturelle et humaine inégalée, la Birmanie invite à la découverte. Située au carrefour des civilisations indienne et chinoise, elle a su conserver sa propre identité. On y retrouvera l'emprunte de son histoire millénaire, et les amateurs de nature apprécieront ses paysages diversifiés d'une rare beauté.

Meurtri par plus d'un demi-siècle de dictature militaire, le peuple birman est néanmoins souriant. Il est bienveillant, généreux

et accueille ses hôtes comme des princes à l'image de Soesoe (www.adorablemyanmar.com) qui sera notre guide pour un voyage fascinant.

Aung San Suu Kyi lauréate du Prix Nobel de la paix en 1991

Il est 5 heures, Rangoun s'éveille. La nuit n'a pas été de tout repos depuis Doha où nous avons fait escale après notre envol de Paris. Mais pas question de repos en arrivant dans la capitale économique birmane. Depuis 2005, Rangoun a en effet perdu son statut de capitale du pays, qu'elle détenait depuis 1886, au profit de Naypyidaw. L'aube est le moment le plus propice pour découvrir la ville peuplée de plus de 6 millions d'habitants. Il ne fait pas encore trop chaud et c'est par une mise en jambe sur les rives du lac Inya que va débiter notre visite. C'est le moment où l'on y croise les résidents qui font leur

footing matinal ou leur tai-chi. L'ambiance est bon enfant, il y règne une atmosphère très conviviale. Chargé de romantisme, le lac et le parc situé au sud sont un lieu de rendez-vous prisé des amoureux. À deux pas, rue de l'Université, se trouve la maison où Aung San Suu Kyi, figure de l'opposition non violente à la dictature militaire de son pays, a passé presque vingt ans de sa vie en résidence surveillée.

Bercée par un univers familial politique, la figure emblématique oeuvrant pour la démocratie dans son pays a débuté sa carrière professionnelle au sein des Nations Unies en 1967 après des études en Grande-Bretagne et aux États-Unis. De retour en Birmanie en 1988, elle s'inquiète de la situation catastrophique de son pays aux mains de la junte militaire. Aux côtés d'autres partisans elle fonde alors la Ligue nationale pour la démocratie (LND) qui fera rapidement de très nombreux adeptes. Elle sera alors arrêtée et assignée à résidence surveillée. Sous la pression du peuple, des élections législatives sont organisées en 1990 et remportées par la LND, mais la junte militaire invalide les résultats. En réaction, l'année suivante, la communauté internationale octroie le Prix Nobel de la paix à Aung San Suu Kyi. Subissant de nombreuses pressions, échappant même à une tentative d'assassinat, elle sera finalement libérée le 13 novembre 2010. Deux



© Claude Maillard

Par coquetterie et pour se protéger du soleil, les jeunes filles birmanes s'enduisent de thanaka.



© Claude Maillard

Marché haut en couleur sur les berges du fleuve Rangoun.



© Claude Maillard

À la nuit tombante, la pagode Shwedagon brille de mille feux.

années plus tard, elle est élue député lors d'élections partielles gagnées par son parti qui remporte en 2015 les élections présidentielles et législatives. En avril 2016, Aung San Suu Kyi, qui ne peut devenir chef de l'État en raison d'une disposition constitutionnelle, est nommée ministre des Affaires étrangères, conseillère spéciale de l'État et porte-parole de la Présidence, sa position étant en fait celle d'un chef de gouvernement. Très proche et fidèle compagnon de dissidence d'Aung San Suu Kyi, Htin Kyaw sera élu démocratiquement pour devenir le premier Président civil de Birmanie qui, bien qu'elle ait entamé une transition démocratique, doit cependant composer avec une armée toujours extrêmement puissante et présente.

Shwedagon, une pagode sacrée

Aujourd'hui encore, les pagodes, temples et monastères, animés en permanence, ainsi que les nombreuses fêtes et cérémonies religieuses, révèlent l'intense vie spirituelle dont tout Birman est imprégné dès sa naissance.

Édifiée sur une plate-forme pavée de marbre de 5,6 hectares au sommet de la colline de Singuttara, la pagode de Shwedagon domine la ville de Rangoun. Ce lieu saint bouddhiste est le site religieux le plus vénéré de Birmanie. Selon la légende, il renferme des reliques de quatre bouddhas, dont huit cheveux du Bouddha Gautama (VI^e siècle avant J.-C.), fondateur historique d'une communauté de moines errants qui donnera naissance au bouddhisme. La pagode principale se trouve au milieu d'un vaste complexe de 72 autres pagodes, pagodons, salles de prières et

autres édifices religieux, ainsi que de très nombreuses statues de bouddhas et de nats, esprits vénérés en Birmanie depuis la haute antiquité, en parallèle avec le bouddhisme. Recouverte de milliers de plaques d'or, la base du stupa central est entourée d'une forêt de pavillons qui forment une petite enceinte avec quatre temples plus grands situés aux points cardinaux. Sur la flèche, qui culmine à presque 100 mètres de haut, est installée une sorte d'ombrelle où sont accrochées 1065 clochettes d'or et 420 clochettes d'argent, ainsi qu'une girouette ornée de pierres précieuses. Elle se termine par une petite sphère d'or incrustée de milliers de diamants dont une émeraude de 76 carats.

De nombreuses légendes entourent l'origine de la pagode Shwedagon, dont certaines qui font remonter sa construction à plus de 2500 ans. Mais cela est contesté par les archéologues qui en placent la réalisation entre le VI^e et le X^e siècle de notre ère, par les Mòns, groupe ethnique vivant en Birmanie et en Thaïlande.

Avant d'affronter la ferveur de la foule des fidèles, locaux venus en famille ou simples visiteurs qui se pressent dans la pagode pour prier, faire des offrandes ou pique-niquer, nous poursuivrons notre périple à travers la première cité économique birmane sur les rives du fleuve Rangoun qui la traverse. Il y règne une activité débordante parmi les étals des commerçants venus vendre leur production de bananes, noix de coco, fruits et légumes, viande... tous les ingrédients indispensables pour mijoter un bon déjeuner. Devant tant de tentations, impossible de résister. Une

pause revigorante dans le cadre idyllique du lac Kandawgyi tout proche et au milieu duquel trône le Karaweik, réplique d'une barge royale, sera la bienvenue. Rassasiés, nous pourrions continuer les visites en commençant par le temple Kheng Hock Keong devant lequel se manifeste une forte animation. Rien de surprenant, le Nouvel An chinois bat son plein et ce temple est le plus ancien et l'un des plus beaux de Rangoun. À l'intérieur, parmi les senteurs d'encens, l'atmosphère est d'une sérénité envoûtante, calme et apaisement procurant un bien-être enivrant.

Fondée au premier millénaire, reconstruite à plusieurs reprises, notamment après un bombardement de la Royal Air Force en 1943, la pagode Botataung est également un lieu fascinant. Bâtie autour d'un bassin où vivent d'innombrables tortues, elle renferme une foule de statues de Bouddha ainsi que les effigies de différents nats.

Proche de Shwedagon, adjacent à un monastère qui abrite un demi-millier de moines dont un grand nombre a participé aux manifestations de 2007 (lorsque le gouvernement a brusquement augmenté le prix de plusieurs sources d'énergie, allant jusqu'à 500% pour le gaz), trône un majestueux bouddha. Long de 65 m et d'une hauteur de 17 m, il repose dans la pagode Chauk Htat Gyi et c'est l'un des plus grands bouddhas couchés au monde. Notre escapade à Rangoun se termine. Demain, envol pour Heho, petite ville située plus au nord, proche du lac Inlé.

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

Las salas de cine son como mi casa

*Encuentro con Vania Aillon,
directora del festival de cine
latinoamericano FILMAR.*



Vania Aillon, directora del festival de cine latinoamericano Filmar

PALOMA REDONDO, UNOG

Hija de exiliados chilenos nacida en Suiza, Vania Aillon se estrena este otoño como directora del festival de cine latinoamericano FILMAR, cuya 19.ª edición tendrá lugar del 17 de noviembre al 3 de diciembre en Ginebra y en varias localidades francesas cercanas. Una oportunidad única para viajar a América Latina sin moverse del sillón.

“Soy de papás separados y a mi papá lo veía mucho los fines de semana, íbamos al cine. Con diez años veía películas en las que no entendía nada, a veces me aburría o me quedaba dormida”, dice Vania Aillon, la nueva directora del festival de cine latinoamericano FILMAR. “En esas salas surgió seguramente mi curiosidad por el cine, cómo se hace, qué hay detrás”.

Aillon estudió cine en la Escuela Superior de Bellas-Artes de

Ginebra (ESBA), ha realizado varios cortometrajes y es autora de *La terre tremble* (2011) un documental sobre una región agrícola en Venezuela. También ha trabajado como ayudante en el Departamento de Cinematografía de la Escuela superior de Arte y Diseño de Ginebra (HEAD).

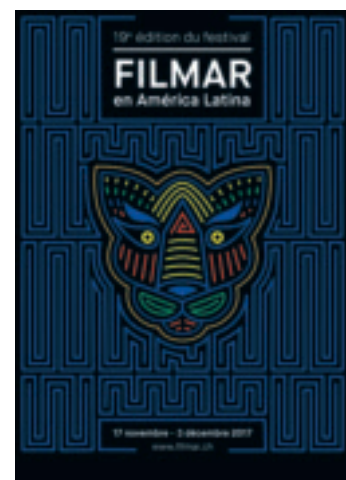
FILMAR se fundó en 1998 para traer a Ginebra películas latinoamericanas que estaban fuera de los circuitos comerciales suizos, privilegiando el cine independiente y las pequeñas producciones. Además el festival trata temas relacionados con la violación de los derechos humanos, la situación de los pueblos autóctonos y de las minorías, la condición de las mujeres, la injusticia social y la lucha por la preservación del Medio Ambiente. Con el paso de los años, FILMAR se ha convertido en el evento más importante dedicado al cine latinoamericano en Ginebra. Tomar las riendas del festival es para Aillon otra manera de sentirse en casa, ya que conoce los entresijos del festival como la palma de su mano. “Soy de esa gente que conoció las primeras ediciones de FILMAR a las que fui con mi familia. El festival me ha acompañado en mis años de estudios y de juventud”, dice la nueva directora.

La 19.ª edición presenta 82 películas y documentales de

17 países repartidos en varias secciones, entre las que destaca *Opera Prima* y *Coups de Coeur*. En la primera compiten 8 filmes de realizadores noveles. “Se trata de primeras películas de chicos muy jóvenes que hicieron cortometrajes, algunos de ellos premiados, o que tienen algo que contar. Las películas de *Opera Prima* siempre transmiten pasión. Para hacer cine hay que ser un guerrero, tienes que mover a mucha gente, encontrar muchos recursos, de otra manera no se logra ir hasta el final”, explica Aillon.

En *Coups de Coeur* compiten también 8 largometrajes con historias que pueden resultar conmovedoras. “Son películas emocionantes, que sientan bien. Eligiéndolas he pensado en mi familia, en mis amigos, en la gente que conozco de varias generaciones. Son casi como un regalo”.

Hablando de generaciones, el festival cuenta precisamente con una sección apta para todos los públicos llamada FILMARcito. No se trata de películas infantiles sino de historias para cualquiera que tenga más de 6 años. “A veces hablan de la infancia pero no siempre. Este año el tema es el agua en sus distintos aspectos y perspectivas. Un ejemplo es *El galón*, una película venezolana de Anabel Rodríguez Ríos



donde hay niños que reconstruyen barcos con galones de agua”, dice la directora.

Esta edición cuenta asimismo con una retrospectiva de la obra del director chileno Patricio Guzmán, con una larga trayectoria de filmes sobre la memoria. “Guzmán empezó haciendo películas comprometidas para terminar con un lenguaje más poético sobre como mantener la memoria viva”, concluye.

¿Logrará Vania Aillon que también nosotros nos sintamos como en casa en una sala de proyecciones? La única forma de averiguarlo es acudir a FILMAR. ■

www.filmaramlat.ch – Del 17 de noviembre al 3 de diciembre de 2017

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Now, put pen to paper!

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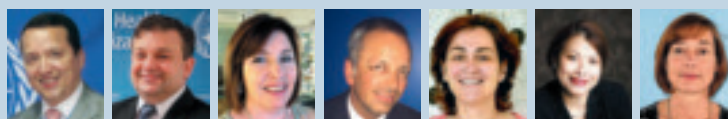
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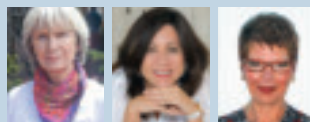
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