

UN Special

2016 IN REVIEW

Change Ahead

N°765 – DECEMBER 2016
JANUARY 2017

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ALEXANDER MEJIA

Rédacteur en chef / Editor-in-chief

After 67 years of existence, this is the first time that *UN Special* has attempted to publish a Year-in-Review edition. In so doing, we consider that its title, 'Change Ahead', says it all: 2016 is the year when a decade of 'business as usual' comes to an end. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is ending his term in office and his successor, Mr. António Guterres, will arrive in January 2017 at the same time as major changes in multilateral architecture loom on the horizon.

We offer you several perspectives on this changing-of-the-guard at the UN, and also a brief analysis of the possible relationship between Mr. Guterres and America's Mr. Trump. We have an article on transforming UNOG for the future and another on the expectations that we have of the new SG. The United Nations comprises more than buildings and high-ranking diplomats: the UN is also the thousands of staff members who turn into reality the aspirations that are captured in multilateral decisions for the betterment of the world. What we think should count for the new SG.

2016 is another failed year for the Peace Talks on Syria. It is very sad, but all the efforts the UN has invested since 2011 to end this war seem to be a failure. We hope that the new realignment between the US and Russia will be able to bring this long-awaited peace to fruition. On the Geneva front, the Staff Associations at WHO and UNOG continue to work for us, and we invite you to read what its two Presidents see as accomplishments and challenges. Also, the new Director-General of the World Health Organization will be chosen at the 70th World Health Assembly in May 2017. The six candidates agreed to answer three questions for *UN Special* readers. Indeed, we have a lot to share! ■

En 67 ans d'existence, c'est la première fois que *UN Special* publie une rétrospective de l'année en cours. Le titre de ce numéro, «Change Ahead», est parlant: en 2016 une décennie de «business as usual» prend fin. Le Secrétaire général Ban Ki-moon termine son mandat et M. António Guterres lui succédera en janvier 2017, alors que l'architecture multilatérale devrait connaître de grands changements.

Nous vous proposons divers points de vue sur la relève de la garde à l'ONU, ainsi qu'une brève analyse de la relation possible entre M. Guterres et M. Trump. Vous pourrez lire un article sur la transformation de l'ONUG et un autre sur les attentes que suscite le nouveau Secrétaire général. L'ONU ne se limite pas à des bâtiments et des diplomates de haut rang: les Nations Unies, ce sont les milliers de membres du personnel qui font une réalité des aspirations issues des décisions multilatérales pour un monde meilleur. Notre opinion doit compter pour le nouveau Secrétaire général.

2016 a aussi vu les pourparlers de paix sur la Syrie échouer. C'est très triste, mais tous les efforts de l'ONU depuis 2011 pour mettre fin à cette guerre semblent voués à l'échec. Espérons que le rapprochement entre les États-Unis et la Russie pourra ramener une paix tant attendue. Sur le front genevois, les Associations du personnel de l'OMS et de l'ONUG continuent d'œuvrer pour nous, et nous vous invitons à prendre connaissance de ce que leurs Présidents respectifs considèrent comme des accomplissements et des défis. Par ailleurs, le nouveau Directeur général de l'OMS sera choisi lors de la 70^e réunion de l'Assemblée mondiale de la Santé en mai 2017. Les six candidats ont accepté de répondre à trois questions pour les lecteurs de *UN Special*. Nous avons en effet beaucoup à partager! ■

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Change Ahead

Can UNSG 9th get along with POTUS 45th?

António Guterres is our new SG and he will have to work closely with the United States. Developing a positive relationship with President Trump is crucial but not necessarily easy.



Alex Meija, Editor-in-chief

Let's be honest. All of you reading this article were as surprised as I was to wake up on November 9 and find out that Donald Trump had been elected as the 45th President of the United States (POTUS). And why were we surprised? The answer would be too long and you already know it, so I will spare you. Let's simply say that even if you are not a US citizen, as is my case, you still recognize that he can have a disproportionate impact on the world we live in.

Now, our surprise slowly transformed into acceptance and perhaps into hope that Mr. Trump would indeed become a good president of that admirable nation. His acceptance speech was rather conciliatory and he has modulated his aggressive rhetoric now that he is no longer a campaigner, but a President-elect. Having said so, the jury is still out when it comes to his Cabinet appointments. And why do we care? We care because whoever is the next Secretary of State will be calling the shots (almost literally) on issues of war and peace. Guess who could that

be? By the time this magazine is printed and distributed we will know who will be the nominee, but so far a possibility is John R. Bolton, the honorable and less memorable US Permanent Representative in New York during the Bush administration in 2005 and 2006. He was what we call a "recess appointee" of POTUS 43rd, a less dignified way to enter public service that occurs when confirmation is unlikely by the US Congress.

Right before the US election, the United Nations had also elected its 9th Secretary General. As we all know, António Guterres is our new UNSG and he will have to work closely with the United States. Thus, the crucial question: can he get along with Mr. Trump and if so, can he create a positive environment to work with a Republican administration? Regardless of who is the next Secretary of State, POTUS 45th has nominated South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley as the next US Ambassador to the United Nations. Ms. Haley is a former State Legislator and the daughter of Indian immigrants. She lacks foreign policy experience but is considered a

moderate that could adapt well to the limitations of multilateral diplomacy and work closely with US allies, as well as with its adversaries. Her political skills and experience as a two-term Governor will serve her well when trying to get things done at the Security Council.

During my time in Washington DC, I learned a basic lesson that has stayed with me until this day: to be able to work with the US government you have to have 'insiders' and 'influencers' helping to advance your agenda. This applies, in my opinion, at all levels of government, from the White House and the State Department to USAID and other agencies, not to mention the need the UN has of a better standing at Capitol Hill. That basic premise I learned years ago also explains why K Street is so successful in DC: if you need to have access, you need to know how to 'lobby' the administration. Of course, the UN is not going to hire professional 'lobbyists', as we are supposed to have that access and the US has a vested interest in the success of the UN. But, will we have the access and influence we



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UN Secretariat building in New York

need if Mr. Bolton were to be our gatekeeper? Based on the previous experience with him, the prognosis is “reserved” and the outlook could be “negative”.

If Ambassador Bolton is indeed nominated and confirmed as the next US Secretary of State, we could expect a new period of turmoil, as well as undiplomatic and pushy positions not conducive to fruitful international negotiations and solutions for the world’s pressing problems. Failing to recognize that the UN cannot deliver on its mandate without its staff, he could focus again on UN reform and on voicing his opinion that we are “inefficient”. After all, Ambassador Bolton has stated in the past that “The Secretariat Building in New York has 38 stories. If you lost ten stories today, it wouldn’t make a bit of difference”. He did so at a public meeting of the Citizens for Global Solutions, right after saying that “(...) there is

no United Nations... there is an international community that occasionally can be led by the only real power left in the world, and that’s the United States, when it suits our interests, and when we can get others to go along”. We sincerely hope his opinions have changed.

Now, our new SG is a consummate diplomat who has the experience needed to deal with a strong personality like the one I just described. His tenure as Prime Minister of a European country, and especially his time as the head of the UN agency at the forefront of the world’s refugee crises, gives him a proven track-record that ensures a mature approach to diplomacy and realpolitik. Putting aside the necessary interaction with the Secretary of State in Washington and the US Ambassador in New York, at the end of the day the final word belongs to the President at the White House. Mr. Trump is perceived as a pragmatist that could understand the value of the UN when it comes to advance the US agenda in the world. And if that indeed help us to bring peace and development, agendas will align.

Lucia Mouat wrote in her acclaimed book *The United Nations’ Top Job* a good account of the reality that Mr. Guterres role entails: “Despite limited legal power, the job of the United Nations Secretary-General has evolved into

that of an often-effective global leader and mediator. When the Security Council is blocked - and sometimes even when it isn’t - the UN’s top official has played a key role in resolving international disputes”. This illustrates the limitations of the job and implies the need to work major global powers to be an effective mediator. It also confirms that the best asset the SG has is his ability to influence and lead with moral authority, as his legal authority is very limited.

Whatever happen, the new period that is about to start will be different from the decade that is coming to an end. The relationship between the UN and the US will change and the new ambassador in New York will affect it greatly. It may be a big departure from the present tenure of Samantha Power, a renowned diplomat highly appreciated for her substance, her measure and her negotiation skills. The United Nations is the utmost international organization when it comes to war and peace but the crude reality is that Security Council effectiveness is permanently affected by the agendas of its five permanent members. For many, Ms. Power has been an effective leader at the Council.

On top of the changing-of-the-guard and the temperaments involved, the new UN administration could see a tectonic shift in the multilateral architecture. It would be expected that a new

balance of power will set in as a result of a new partnership between the United States and Russia. The relationship between Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin is strangely close and will heavily influence the Security Council. This could be a positive change as Mr. Guterres will have a real chance to end the war in Syria, et al. It may be that UNSG 9th could get along with POTUS 45th ...as long as he gets along with Mr. Putin.

From the Peace of Westphalia to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the shaping of a new world order was always the work of unique statesmen. We are lucky to have a statesman and diplomat like Mr. Guterres. We welcome the change ahead! ■

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Peace efforts in Syria

SARAH BENCHERIF, UNITAR

MARIANO DE MIGUEL¹, EXTERNAL CONTRIBUTOR

The Intra-Syrian peace talks that took place in 2016 in Geneva to end the intensifying war in Syria have fallen on deaf ears and been a failure.

The third round of Intra-Syrian Talks were initiated under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura. It was co-chaired by the US and Russia to convene Syrian government and opposition representatives in formal negotiations along with Iranian and Turkish mediators. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), considered to be one of the greatest geopolitical threats, has been weakened by the airstrikes carried out by the Russian military since September 2015. The first meetings took place in January 2016.

The United Nations opted to start a round of regional consultations that faced difficulty from the beginning. The moderate

and political opposition called for a political transition in the country without president Bashar al-Assad in the picture. But the Syrian government informed the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, that this was not a possible option, nor was the option of a golden exile in Moscow, Tehran or Minsk. In the same way, they did not accept two of the spokespersons for the main political opposition. These were Riyad Farid Hijab, former Prime Minister of Syria (from June to August 2012 before his resignation and defection to Jordan) and Mohammad Alloush, the representative of the powerful Jaish al-Islam (Army of Islam) rebel faction in the Saudi-based High Negotiations Committee.

Speaking on behalf of the Russian negotiators, Sergei Lavrov, the Minister of Foreign



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Staffan de Mistura, United Nations Special Envoy for Syria (second from right), Maria Khodinskaya (right) Representative of Russian Federation to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Ambassador Ramzy Ezzeldin Ramzy (second from left) United Nations Deputy Special Envoy for Syria, Larry Silverman (left) Permanent Representative of United States of America to the United Nations Office at Geneva during meeting with International Syria Support Group (ISSG) on the Intra-Syrian Geneva Talks 2016. February 2016.

Affairs, supported Damascus by declaring that the US, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey ignored the Syrian government, and even protected terrorist groups (Al Nusra Front and ISIL/Da'esh) and smuggled oil across the Turkish and Kurdish borders. Mr de Mistura insisted that the most important thing was to maintain the current momentum, in order to be able to speak in the future about a national unity government, a constitutional reform and the holding of elections [foreseen in 2017]. He further informed the participants that he intended to map out their vision of political transition, in order to ascertain points of commonality with a view to establish a clear, concrete conception of political transition for Syria, in accordance with resolution 2254, the Vienna Statements and the Geneva Communiqué.

The Talks continued to be impacted by the urgent situation on the ground inside of Syria. Fights continued between government forces, rebels and ISIL, challenging the nationwide cessation of hostilities and the need to go beyond the modest but real progress on humanitarian access achieved to date. During the course of this round of Talks, the participants set out their political visions for the future in Syria in relation to governance, and many substantial differences were confirmed between the two negotiating parties on the interpretation of resolution 2254. Main contentious issues were related to how power is to be exercised in practice by a transitional government, and also regarding the presidency, executive powers and the control over governmental and security institutions. The participants could not reach an

agreement on a framework for a genuine political transition.

The failure of this initiative was also caused by several factors. It was partly due to the fact that Mr Assad's administration continue in place, with the support of Tehran, Moscow and the Lebanese Hezbollah (as a non-state actor), even though a condition of the Talks for the opposition was for the administration to end and president Assad to leave. It was also due to the capture of Palmyra and the elimination of various fundamentalist leaders, once considered to be legitimate interlocutors in the negotiations. Another factor was how Washington and Brussels clashed with Ankara, opting for a federation of Syria and Iraq, in order to have control from Kurdistan to Latakia. The global refusal of Baathist government allies was also a contributing factor. These challenges only exacerbated the conflict and further demoralized the displaced population, already exhausted from five years of war. Subsequent peace talks are likely to be led by Moscow with either Tehran or Ankara. Especially now that Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan buried the hatchet overcoming the crisis over Turkey's downing of a Russian jet in November 2015.

Future prospects for a negotiated peace agreement are not promising, especially after the arrival of a neoconservative administration in the United States, a consequence of Donald Trump's victory in the presidential election on 9 November. The realpolitik of isolationism, combined with probably a limited US presence in the Middle East after the series of failures following

the invasion of Iraq in 2003, might cause a status quo, sine die in the region. The alternative scenario is that the US and Russia hit the reset button and tackle this conflict with a common agenda that can lead to a military path to peace. It is too early to say, but we have all seen that president Trump and president Putin feel admiration for each other.



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Opening of the Intra-Syrian Talks with Bashar Ja'afari (second from left) representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the UN in NYC, Geneva, 2016.

Now, the fifth wartime winter begins in Syria and the humanitarian crisis might be the worst in this cruel war. Unless conditions improve to bring in aid and evacuate those in medical need, according to the *UN Special* Advisor Jan Egeland, the situation will degenerate even more. "Uninterrupted and full engagement is needed from the United States and Russia in Humanitarian

diplomacy for the civilian population in Syria. It is only when these two co-chairs have been leading we made progress. When they have not, we have been completely stalled." He added.

Whatever happens in the next round of negotiations will undoubtedly be long, tedious and virulent for the implementation of

a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned political transition to end the conflict. The new UN Secretary-General has a difficult job indeed. ■

1. Historian, researcher on Contemporary history, specialized in Arab and Islamic world (from 1948)



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2016 in Review

What we accomplished for staff of the World Health Organization (WHO)

When I talk with colleagues about what they find most relevant at work, the importance of “respect” often comes up. Respect is so important to all of us because it shows that we value each other as individuals, and that we honour the personal rights and dignity of our colleagues.



**EVELYN KORTUM, PRESIDENT,
WHO STAFF ASSOCIATION**

This is why the specific theme of RESPECT, driving forward the Staff-Management *Respectful Workplace Initiative*, a WHO flagship initiative, has been central to the work of the Staff Association in 2016.

The results of the *Respectful Workplace Survey* were presented to Senior Management and to WHO staff. We are pleased that the results of the report were widely discussed and debated across the Organization. As a result of these discussions, the Director-General requested Assistant Director-Generals (ADGs) and directors to develop concrete action points for their clusters and departments to ensure that WHO provides a respectful work environment, where everyone has the opportunity to perform to their highest ability. In creating a truly Respectful Workplace at WHO, the Staff Association Committee members believe that change has to be initiated by WHO senior management, but that all levels of the Organization need to be actively involved. A Respectful Workplace is everyone's business and responsibility.

As a *united* staff body we should not underestimate our influence on the ways

in which our Organization operates. *United* is the magic word. When it comes to organizational change, staff are beginning to have a greater understanding of the importance of their involvement, which results in greater empowerment and commitment. While some departments have already taken good steps to making our work environment more respectful, others still lag behind. We will continue to encourage senior management to provide better training to managers in order to enhance their people-management skills and to work towards an environment that

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provides the necessary space to succeed in this endeavour. We will also continue to advocate for the need to involve staff in the process of actively shaping the work environment. To become more respectful, we must move from a culture of treatment to one of prevention that encourages collaboration and recognition.

Sometimes, when things get so bad at work that they result in an administrative process, the formal system of Internal Justice is applied. This year, some changes to our staff rules resulted in the conversion of the former **Headquarters** Board of Appeal (HBA) into a **Global** Board of Appeal (GBA), which is located in Budapest. The GBA staff aim to provide a comprehensive service to those wishing to challenge administrative decisions which affect their employment conditions. The Staff Association will be looking out for the regular review and 2-yearly evaluation of the GBA's work to ensure that this approach satisfactorily addresses organizational challenges in a fair and balanced manner.

In 2016, a standing item on our staff-management agenda has been the roll-out

of the geographical mobility policy. The Global Mobility Committee (GMC) comprising senior representatives from each Regional Office nominated by the respective Regional Director and Staff Representatives, met for the first time this year. Of the 44 posts initially advertised for rotation, twelve staff members from five Regions and Headquarters were successfully moved to new positions and locations in the second half of 2016. The GMC identified lessons learnt from this pilot process that have been conveyed to the WHO Evaluation Department, including the results of the Staff Pulse Survey and your input and experiences with mobility.

The Staff Association is proud to report the successful collaboration on the WHO maternity policy at the Global Staff-Management Council (GSMC) in 2015. While WHO and UNICEF recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life, WHO had not been offering its own staff an opportunity to follow this recommendation. With the new maternity policy, which entered into force on 1 October 2016, an agreement has been secured to provide six-months of fully paid maternity leave

instead of four months previously, and up to 20% time off work to breastfeed infants during their first two years. This is an achievement to be truly proud of in terms of positive staff-management relations and gains for our staff conditions and the future generations. This change has already made waves and provided a basis for discussion in other UN and international agencies.

Next year will bring us a new Director-General and a new layer of Senior Management. I sincerely hope for the continuation of good Staff-Management relations and a good common understanding. It will be crucial for us to come together in the beginning to continue implementing our vision of WHO as a Respectful Workplace, as this is the only foundation which allows us to collaborate, to learn from each other, and to be successful. Hence, it is the only way forward to fulfil the mission of our Organization at our highest capabilities **ALL TOGETHER!** ■

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Change Ahead

Monsieur le Secrétaire général, qu'attendent de vous les fonctionnaires de l'ONU?

*Avec l'arrivée d'António Guterres,
les attentes du personnel sont nombreuses.
Seul le temps montrera s'il est à la hauteur
de ces attentes, oh que légitimes...*

PRISCA CHAOUI, UNOG

Le 13 octobre 2016 a vu la nomination officielle d'António Guterres au poste de Secrétaire général de l'ONU pour un mandat de 5 ans. António Guterres, ancien premier ministre du Portugal et ex-Haut-Commissaire des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés (HCR) vient tourner la page d'un double mandat du Secrétaire général sortant Ban Ki-moon à un moment où l'Organisation semble affaiblie face aux crises politiques et sociales récurrentes qui frappent le monde.

Selon Shakespeare, «le passé est un prologue»; c'est pourquoi il est important de passer en revue les grands moments qui ont jalonné la carrière de Guterres. Ingénieur de formation et socialiste d'appartenance, il a occupé le poste de Premier ministre dans son pays d'origine le Portugal, de 1995 à 2002. Il a fait preuve dans ce poste d'une grande habileté diplomatique puisqu'il fut un des partisans de l'intervention de l'ONU au Timor Leste en 1999 à un moment où les milices pro-indonésiennes avaient le contrôle de cette ancienne colonie portugaise. Ce fut lui qui permit l'intégration de son pays à la zone euro en 1999.

En 2005, il mit fin à sa carrière politique et entama une carrière diplomatique lorsqu'il fut désigné Haut-commissaire pour les réfugiés. Il occupa ce poste jusqu'au 31 décembre 2015. Son mandat fut marqué par une réforme en profondeur de l'institution qui perdit un tiers de ses effectifs à Genève afin d'augmenter sa capacité d'intervention dans les situations d'urgence. Il a par ailleurs adopté une approche

budgétaire fondée sur l'évaluation des besoins et a réussi à gérer d'un coup de maître les pires crises de réfugiés qu'a connues l'histoire contemporaine, notamment la crise des réfugiés syriens.

D'un point de vue objectif, ce parcours fait de Guterres LE Secrétaire général tant attendu.

Toutefois, l'on est en droit de se demander si la politique de délocalisation à grande échelle qu'a connue le HCR lors de son mandat ne présage pas du pire pour notre Organisation à un moment où le projet de Dispositif de prestation de service centralisée (GSDM) est en train de faire progressivement son chemin. Il s'agit d'un projet qui vise à centraliser tous les services administratifs dans deux lieux d'affectation, l'un au nord et l'autre au sud, ce qui implique sur le moyen et long terme une perte colossale des effectifs. **Monsieur le Secrétaire général, nous nous attendons à ce que vous repensiez ce projet pour ne pas licencier des fonctionnaires dédiés et hautement qualifiés.**

En réponse à la question que lui a posée *UN Special* dans son numéro de juin 2016 sur sa vision des relations avec le personnel, António Guterres a mentionné que la consultation était essentielle dans la réforme de l'Organisation en vue de la rendre moins bureaucratique, plus efficace et plus orientée vers le terrain. S'il venait à tenir sa promesse, António Guterres sera l'opposé du Secrétaire général sortant qui a mis les représentants du personnel devant le fait accompli à plusieurs reprises

en faisant des propositions à l'Assemblée générale sans les consulter, violant ainsi l'accord conclu dans le cadre du Comité Personnel-Administration qui consiste à mener des consultations avec ces mêmes représentants avant de soumettre des propositions à l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies (AGNU) sur les questions les concernant. Le dernier incident en date est encore présent dans les esprits, puisque le rapport sur les ressources humaines (A/71/233 et Add.1) soumis à la 71ème session de l'AGNU contient des propositions dont l'impact sera fortement négatif pour l'ensemble du personnel: il suggère d'élever le plafond de revenus que peuvent percevoir les retraités qui sont recrutés temporairement, de 22000USD actuellement à l'équivalent de 125 jours de travail sur la base du dernier salaire perçu, augmentant ainsi le nombre et le coût des contrats temporaires. Ce rapport introduit aussi des changements majeurs à la politique de mobilité, réduisant le nombre de postes auxquels peuvent postuler les candidats internes ou externes. **Monsieur le Secrétaire général, nous nous attendons à ce que vous consultiez le personnel sur toutes les questions qui le concernent.**

Force est de constater que le nouveau Secrétaire général hérite d'une Organisation où les rouages internes sont à l'arrêt depuis bien longtemps pour ce qui est du système de recrutement et de sélection. Il s'agit d'un système, qui se veut objectif, mais qui en réalité est perçu comme étant fondé sur le favoritisme et les partis pris, un système où les qualifications

et les années de fonction sont reléguées à la dernière place au lieu d'être mises au premier plan. **Monsieur le Secrétaire général, nous nous attendons à ce que vous réformiez ce système pour le rendre juste et équitable pour tout le monde.**

Si les failles se limitaient au système de recrutement et de sélection, l'Organisation se porterait merveilleusement bien. Malheureusement, la structure pyramidale pour ne pas dire de castes dont elle est faite, crée plusieurs situations d'abus de pouvoir et de harcèlement. Eh oui, le harcèlement et l'abus de pouvoir existent dans l'Organisation bien que les tentatives soient diverses pour les dissimuler. **Monsieur le Secrétaire général, nous nous attendons à ce que vous cassiez ce système de castes et que vous ne laissiez pas l'impunité être le maître-mot dans des cas flagrants d'abus de pouvoir et de harcèlement.**

Les propositions de moderniser l'ONU ont été nombreuses les dernières années. Le projet le plus innovant en termes de coûts et d'efficacité et surtout de déshumanisation du système fut sans aucun doute UMOJA. La pilule UMOJA n'arrive toujours pas à être avalée et voilà qu'une deuxième encore plus douloureuse pour le bien-être et la performance est imposée au personnel de l'ONU, il s'agit de celle des bureaux paysagers (*open space*) et des bureaux partagés (*hot desking*). Cette forme d'aménagement de l'espace a été abandonnée dans le secteur privé et voilà que l'on force son entrée à l'ONU. Et pourquoi? parce que ces mêmes fonctionnaires qui «doivent faire plus avec moins» coûtent cher en termes d'occupation de l'espace. Par conséquent, Il faut les entasser tous dans des espaces qui seront joliment meublés, avec comme consolation des «*focus booth*», davantage de «*meeting space*» et un wifi même dans les espaces extérieurs... de quoi réjouir plus d'un. **Monsieur le Secrétaire général, nous nous attendons à ce que vous disiez non aux états membres qui veulent faire des économies aux dépens du bien-être et de la performance des fonctionnaires.**

Une chose est certaine, aucune amélioration ne sera possible si les mauvaises personnes sont placées au mauvais endroit. C'est pourquoi les positions les plus importantes doivent être occupées par des personnes choisies pour leur qualification et

non parce qu'elles sont imposées par les Etats membres afin que l'ONU ne reste plus le «machin», selon les dires de De Gaulle en 1960. **Monsieur le Secrétaire général, nous nous attendons à ce que vous preniez des mesures audacieuses afin que seuls ceux qui le méritent et qui peuvent insuffler un véritable changement occupent les positions clés.**

A chaque changement, un vent d'espoir souffle. Les fonctionnaires de l'ONU ont hâte de voir António Guterres s'armer de force pour ne pas les sacrifier sur l'autel des intérêts purement géopolitiques des états membres car sans ses fonctionnaires, l'ONU ne sera pas ce qu'elle est aujourd'hui. ■



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A female patient at the Anita Moreno psychiatric hospital in Panama. An explicit aim of the Sustainable Development Goals involves zeroing in on inequalities to reach the marginalized and most vulnerable.

2016 in Review

Human Rights Day

A new photo exhibition at the WHO library to mark Human Rights Day takes us on a journey to see some of the human faces and stories behind these health inequalities.

REBEKAH THOMAS AND CLAUDIA QUIROS, WHO

As anyone who works within or alongside the UN system will know by now, 2015 was a milestone year for international development. While rightly celebrating the achievements of the previous 15 years in tackling poverty and markedly reducing infectious disease and preventable maternal and child mortality, 2015 signalled an awakening of the global community to growing inequalities occurring between and across countries and population groups.

These inequalities – until now obscured by a focus on global averages and outcomes – cast a long shadow over the health and

wellbeing of millions of people who find themselves increasingly left behind by advances in development. These inequalities take multiple forms, and are shaped by social determinants that discriminate ruthlessly by age, sex, income, education, ethnicity, disability, migrant and other status, including sexual orientation or gender identity.

Social determinants have too often been a strong and arbitrary driver of poor health outcomes, and are frequently compounded by environmental factors and barriers such as punitive laws or societal stigma and discrimination, that undermine the ambition of the right to health for those already vulnerable to ill-health or poverty.

In a new photo exhibition launched in early December at the WHO library to mark *#HumanRightsDay*, the *Gender, Equity and Human Rights Team* takes us on a journey to see some of the human faces and stories behind these health inequalities.

Juxtaposing the perspectives of individuals within the same country, and sometimes even the same community, the photo exhibit tells the story of harmful, unfair and unjust differences that serve to isolate and discriminate, which undermine our efforts to make universal health coverage truly universal.

The exhibition comes in quick succession to a heart-wrenching photo essay display by Nick Danziger on *'The hidden face of drug use'*, supported by the Non-Communicable Diseases and Mental Health Cluster. Recognising the common theme of human rights that underpin good health outcomes, the exhibition seeks to demonstrate the harmful effect of ignoring fundamental human rights such as dignity, autonomy, and ensuring the underlying determinants of health such as adequate housing, food and nutrition, but also to tell a more positive story about the potential of human rights to improve health and wellbeing.

Acknowledging the need to address these differences, the new Sustainable Development Agenda has adopted an explicitly rights-based and equity-based approach to health. In emphasizing the tailoring of the collective goal of public health to the realities of individual lives, the new agenda acknowledges the importance of understanding the single stories behind health inequalities, though more disaggregated data and a greater understanding of how gender, age and disability shape these realities.

The new Sustainable Development Agenda also draws on human rights to set clear standards for the goals we hope to achieve and defines the ways in which we must move towards these goals by involving those whose lives we seek to improve; by ensuring accountability for progress and non-regression; by adopting a holistic approach to the goals and the multiple rights that underpin them which require sectors to work together to achieve health and wellbeing; and by acknowledging that the obligation to ensure that no one is left behind is universal.

What this means in practice is that human rights become a buffer, making sure we are not blindsided by our efforts to do more, but rather carefully and purposefully re-orienting our focus towards those who need the greatest support.

The exhibition tells the story of Vicente, institutionalized 43 years ago because his family and community did not know how to how not support his epilepsy. Or 22-year-old Elizabeth Barria, 9 months pregnant, and who will have to travel more than five hours in order to receive the adequate care she needs to give birth safely. Or 19-year-old Corina Abrego, 9 months pregnant with her fourth child. Corina lost two children during homebirths, so now braves the four-hour walk through the mountain range to the nearest hospital. It also reveals the daily challenges faced by prison populations in accessing adequate health services.

These stories, and the millions of others like them, underscore why rights are so central to the Sustainable Development Agenda and set us on a path to the future for the World We Want. ■

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2016 in Review

What we accomplished for staff of the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG)

Our relationship with the outgoing Secretary-General has not been easy, but we have accomplished many things this year.



IAN RICHARDS, UNOG

As of 2018 staff can choose to work until 65. At the same time, staff in the General Service category received a significant increase in allowances, following a salary survey conducted by staff unions and management. In a further development, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was persuaded by us to abolish the G to P exam to allow all GS staff to apply to P positions based on their qualifications and experience - this needs to be approved by the General Assembly. The Secretary-General also agreed to review maternity policy to potentially allow parents more

time with their children, newly-born, surrogate or adopted.

Problems continued to beset the pension fund during 2016. Newly retiring staff forced to wait months without a penny, a secretive CEO, questions about the fund's investment direction and attempts to pull the fund out of the UN and damage the working conditions of its staff. We raised the alarm and the General Assembly is now aware of the problem. But what will it do about it? Meanwhile its staff worked around the clock to process payments and we thank them for it.

In Geneva plans emerged of attempts to impose hot-desking in the newly renovated Palais des Nations. Highly unpopular in New York, where it has been piloted, staff spoke out, signing a petition that at the time of writing was still making the rounds. This while staff unions are working to reverse the negative impact of changes to the education grant.

Finally, as the year comes to an end, preparations are underway for the massive staff party on Friday 9 December. This will be the last of the year and follows the children's party, the

summer garden party and UN staff day, as well as a record medal haul for UNOG at the inter-agency games. In challenging times, staff cohesion is more important than ever. ■



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Change Ahead WHO will it be?

The new Director-General of the World Health Organization will be chosen at the 70th World Health Assembly in May 2017 and will take office on 1 July 2017. The 6 candidates for the position of Director-General kindly agreed to answer 3 questions for UN Special readers.

SARAH JORDAN, DEPUTY EDITOR

**Dr. Tedros Adhanom
Ghebreyesus, Ethiopia**



What do you bring in terms of skills and experience that would make you a successful Director-General for WHO?

My career of over three decades has given me a unique mix of political leadership and hands-on public health experience – and a proven ability to address the root causes of pressing health challenges. As Ethiopia's Health Minister, I learnt first-hand what it takes to revitalise a weak health system with limited resources. We implemented system-wide reform: invested

in infrastructure, expanded the workforce, created new financing mechanisms, improved service delivery, strengthened pharmaceutical supply, integrated information management, and invested in outbreak preparedness. Through community-based ownership and intervention, we expanded health care access to tens of millions and achieved ambitious MDGs. Our innovative Health Extension Programme has been replicated in a dozen African countries. I have also championed health as Foreign Minister; notably, I diplomatically built consensus among 193 UN member states on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to finance and achieve the SDGs. I have demonstrated my governance and resource mobilization skills through my global leadership engagements with

impactful global health initiatives, including the Global Fund, Gavi, Roll Back Malaria, the Stop TB Partnership and UNAIDS.

What are the three biggest challenges facing WHO today and what changes (if any) would you make to the way the Organization currently operates?

1. Engaging and retaining the best talent: WHO's staff is its greatest asset and requires the utmost attention. I will create transparent mechanisms to foster a motivating environment and effectively mobilise and empower WHO staff.
2. Unpredictability and non-flexibility of funding: To maximise impact, WHO's funding must be more flexible and predictable. I will achieve this by positioning health at the centre of the global security, economic, and development agendas and pursuing innovative financing solutions.
3. Predicting and responding to health emergencies and threats: WHO must be able to mount rapid and appropriate responses to threats. I will champion the capacity

of national authorities and local communities to prevent, detect and manage health emergencies and implement International Health Regulations. I will also implement and independently monitor the new Health Emergency Programme.

Given the major reform process that the Organization has recently undertaken, what is your vision for WHO?

I envision a world in which everyone can lead healthy and productive lives, regardless of who they are or where they live. Achieving this vision will require political mobilization and financial investments for universal health coverage. It will require a strong, effective WHO that is able to meet emerging challenges and achieve the health objectives of the SDGs working effectively – from Geneva to regional offices and national capitals. I am committed to striking a balance between the reform and stability of WHO. I would create appropriate mechanisms to regularly hear from WHO staff at all levels. ■

continue on next page



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Dr. Flavia Bustreo, Italy



© Dr. Flavia Bustreo

What do you bring in terms of skills and experience that would make you a successful Director-General for WHO?

As the only internal candidate, I bring a set of skills which include dynamic leadership and strong vision, successful management experience, proven resource mobilization ability, in-depth knowledge of the organization, and a deep appreciation for WHO staff, our most important asset. As Assistant Director-General I lead one of WHO's largest and best-funded clusters. I hired real talents to lead my teams, drove successful management reforms and innovations, and coordinated mainstreaming of gender, equity and human rights across the entire organization. This contributed to significant achievements, including unprecedented progress for women's and children's health and the landmark climate change negotiations now explicitly acknowledging the right to health. I also developed an external perspective, through my experience in more than 30 countries, my six years at the World Bank, the collaborations with the highest level of governments, and my leadership of multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. I have published widely and have well-recognized advocacy and communications skills. This unique package of skills would enable me to be an effective Director General from my first day on the job.

What are the three biggest challenges facing WHO today and what changes (if any) would you make to the way the Organization

currently operates?

The most important challenges include: 1) epidemics and humanitarian emergencies, which compound poverty and the striking inequities in income and social status across the world; 2) the slowness of the international community, to date, in recognizing and addressing the strong links between ill-health and climate change; and 3) overlooking the demands and contributions of demographic changes in countries, most notably due to population ageing and migration. The key, my experiences showed, is to ensure WHO is using the best available scientific evidence and global health minds and the convening power of WHO to facilitate knowledge sharing across countries. When WHO adequately plays this facilitative role, States are able to build their own capacity to overcome even the most serious public health challenges that confront them.

Given the major reform process that the Organization has recently undertaken, what is your vision for WHO?

I will aggressively advance the reform to address outbreaks and emergencies, adjusting to the findings of evaluations and maintaining constant vigilance on the emergence of new threats and pathogens. WHO needs to get better at responding to health issues as they emerge and to the opinions and needs of the people it serves. It must become a more effective, transparent and accountable organization, with streamlined decision-making processes which produce results on the ground.

I can summarize my vision for WHO's work in five words: Equity, Rights, Responsiveness, Evidence, and Partnership. These words – charged with so much meaning and power for global health – will inform my agenda as Director-General. ■

Professor Philippe Douste-Blazy, France



© Philippe Douste-Blazy

What do you bring in terms of skills and experience that would make you a successful Director-General for WHO?

As a former minister of both Health and of Foreign Affairs, I will bring the strong political and diplomatic leadership skills that are essential to WHO at this key moment in its history and I will consistently make the political case for health as an investment in sustainable development, rather than an expense.

As a former mayor of Toulouse, I have managed an annual budget of USD 1.5 billion and 30,000 employees, comparable to the budget and exceeding the workforce of WHO. I will bring strong administrative and management experience to this role. As the Founder and Chair of UNITAID and the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy on Innovative Financing for Development, I have contributed to creating the first source of innovative finance for health, and I will bring a history and practice of innovation to the leadership of WHO.

What are the three biggest challenges facing WHO today and what changes (if any) would you make to the way the Organization currently operates?

1. A risk of decrease in funding by Member States. The WHO way of working should therefore be screened according to three words: reform, responsiveness and results. Their impact on the ground has to be demonstrated: it is the only way to convince the Heads of State and Government that health is not a cost but an investment. For

this reason, it is of utmost importance to implement an audit function.

2. The implementation of the Health Emergencies Programme in a determined and rigorous way to draw on the lessons of recent crises.
3. The unprecedented development of two phenomena which require new human behaviours:
 - a. The explosion of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) as a result of malnutrition and climate change.
 - b. Antimicrobial resistance.

Given the major reform process that the Organization has recently undertaken, what is your vision for WHO?

1. Policy coherence: A vision accepted by Member States in line with the principles laid out in the Alma Ata Declaration:
 - a. Promote public health (prevention, promotion, protection functions)
 - b. Strengthen primary health care systems to achieve better health outcomes and reduce inequalities.
2. Managerial coherence: Start the internal managerial and organizational rearrangements to ensure that Clusters and Departments in Geneva develop their work programmes in line with this vision (less silos).

None of this can be accomplished without opening communication inside the organization between all members of staff and at all levels. A culture of listening and respectful debate will be instilled in the organization, first and foremost by the Director-General and his senior team, who will exhibit high ethical standards and values. ■

Dr. David Nabarro, United Kingdom



Dr. David Nabarro, former Special Envoy on Ebola, at an Ebola treatment unit in Port Loko, Sierra Leone

What do you bring in terms of skills and experience that would make you a successful Director-General for WHO?

I am a strategist and an effective implementer. I have worked for people's health in communities, as a teacher, in government, as a director, in non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as an international leader and in donor agencies. At all times I ensure that health is given global priority and I support health action in countries. I have led and managed in WHO – as Assistant Director-General. I have led and inspired others in the UN – as Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on

sustainable development, and climate change. I have delivered successfully on big and complex responsibilities – malaria, avian and pandemic influenza, global food security, malnutrition, outbreak management, as well as women's and children's health.

What are the three biggest challenges facing WHO today and what changes (if any) would you make to the way the Organization currently operates?

1. Helping countries to respond to *any* health issue with limited finance and personnel.

Implications

- a. Making strategic choices, deciding when WHO leads and when it catalyzes action by others.
- b. Securing predictable finance to sustain a critical mass of staff with technical expertise and diplomatic skills.
- c. Effective working with national authorities.

Getting there

Build the case for increased income, broaden the funding base and ensure alignment and transparency of voluntary funding.

2. Engaging the many stakeholders working for people's health.

Implications

- a. Work with NGOs, professional associations, the media, think tanks, civil society advocates, national and transnational corporations, recognizing they all seek to influence health policies.
- b. Ensure that Member States play a primary role in decisions on policies.
- c. Prioritize WHO's standard setting work and protect it from interference.

Getting there

demonstrate integrity, constructively engage with stakeholders and ensure accountability.

3. Tackling unexpected global health threats.

Implications:

- a. Promote local, national and global health security
- b. Anticipate unexpected threats to health
- c. Help countries fulfil international health obligations

Getting there

continue with the reform of WHO's Work in Outbreaks and Emergencies.

Given the major reform process that the Organization has recently undertaken, what is your vision for WHO?

Vision: WHO is essential for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. WHO responds consistently to outbreaks and health emergencies. WHO engages well with Member States and earns their trust. WHO consistently advances people-centred health policies.

continue on next page



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Implementation: WHO works as a robust, reliable, resilient and responsive organization. WHO helps professionals and nations to make the best choices for all people's health. WHO deploys staff and resources in response to need in a confident and consistent manner. WHO partners with entities that respect its values and share its ambitions. WHO offers sound evidence and helps apply it in specific settings. ■

Dr. Sania Nishtar, Pakistan



What do you bring in terms of skills and experience that would make you a successful Director-General for WHO?

My experience is wide-ranging – strong civil society background, public sector ministerial level and high-level multi-lateral experience, hands-on know-how founding institutions from scratch and taking them to scale. I am also a physician with experience in research. My technical background is relevant to the SDGs – health systems, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), health reform, systems innovations and sectors outside of health such as social protection, governance, and public-private engagement. I bring a track record of partnership building, finding solutions, bridging divides; delivering value for money and results in resource-constrained environments and have demonstrated ironclad commitment to transparency. All these attributes matter deeply for leading WHO today.

What are the three biggest challenges facing WHO today and what changes (if any) would you make to the way the Organization currently operates?

First, WHO faces structural limitations and reputational damage and it is critical that it reclaims its primacy. In my 10 Pledges I commit to bring reforms to rapid fruition and institute others in an evidence-based manner, embrace meaningful and timely transparency, institutionalize true accountability, ensure value for money, and drive a culture based on results and concrete delivery. Secondly, WHO is undergoing reform in a context where Agenda 2030 has signaled major transformations. This entails an operational and knowledge challenge, but I view this as an opportunity to carve out a leadership role for WHO. Third, WHO must exercise leadership to respond to collective threats to the health of people world-wide (infectious outbreaks, antibiotic resistance and NCDs), which threaten to wipe out the development gains of the last century. Individual-centric threats to health, (widening inequities, poor coverage, quality and financial risk protection) compound these. Universal Health Coverage and multi-sectoral approaches have cross-cutting potential to address both. I also commit to strongly support the WHO Health Emergencies Program. Details about the other changes I envision bringing can be accessed at www.sanianishtar.info.

Given the major reform process that the Organization has recently undertaken, what is your vision for WHO?

My vision for WHO is one in which WHO reclaims its primacy and earns the world's trust as its leading health agency, and has the ability to foster and sustain partnerships to achieve the vision for health – universal attainment of the highest possible level of health and well-being. Achievement of this vision for health is a collaborative effort in which Member States and many national and international organizations play a critical role. WHO's leadership must be grounded in its core and exclusive mandates, and collaborative division of labour. It must exercise leadership by establishing a shared vision, effective coordination, forging partnerships, and building on comparative advantage and complementarity. ■

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Dr. Miklós Szócska, Hungary



© Dr. Miklós Szócska

What do you bring in terms of skills and experience that would make you a successful Director-General for WHO?

The first important experience was living and working in “change lab” Central Europe. Being exposed to system change, I have learnt the importance of mobilizing people and organizational resources for change. We shared experiences and later assisted others in their reform and change processes. These skills helped me to implement a demanding reform agenda during my mandate as Minister of State for Health in Hungary and also to manage the Hungarian health system during times of the world economic crisis and

European austerity. We put public health knowledge into action by introducing a public health product tax, prohibiting smoking, implementing HPV vaccination, and a trans-fat ban. Our health system reforms included the centralisation of care provision and reengineering patient pathways. Our innovative policy of pharmaceuticals yielded 30% savings in pharma expenditure keeping therapies accessible to crisis-ridden citizens. Organizational transitions and development projects during my mandate were reinforced by innovative management interventions: introducing big data and network analysis in supporting decisions and management control. I have learnt to implement reform in a sustainable way in dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders.

What are the three biggest challenges facing WHO today and

what changes (if any) would you make to the way the Organization currently operates?

One of the biggest challenge is the erosion of the – still unique and powerful WHO “brand”. New actors have emerged from and started to dominate the institutional environment. My campaign slogan ‘Better Health, Stronger WHO’ reflects the fact that WHO should foster global health leadership by performance. That is the core for stabilising funding as well. Antagonising industry interests are also challenging WHO, its member states and their health policies. We need agility in health advocacy and have to support member states. The third challenge is internal organizational inertia. Focusing on problem solving, results, teamwork, building on local ownership in accountability to member states will lead us to a more resilient WHO.

Given the major reform process that the Organization has recently undertaken what is your vision for WHO?

I envisage a strong WHO as the indisputable, impartial, independent leader and international change agent in global health. From the introspection of our internal professional wish-lists, the health community should aim to influence the agendas of political leaders and fiscal decision makers to encourage them to act towards positive health solutions. WHO should take the role of knowledge centre for the assistance of member states. Building on the achievements of the ongoing WHO reform and emergency initiatives introduced by Madame Chan, WHO needs to transform in alignment with the ongoing UN institutional transitions, to be able to use the opportunity that the Sustainable Development Goals offer to humanity. ■



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Interview with the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations in Geneva

UN Special Editor-in-chief Alex Mejia sat down with Ambassador Vaqif Sadiqov to discuss the United Nations, as well as the the recent economic innovations of Azerbaijan.



Mr. MEJIA: Excellency, can you share some thoughts on the work of the United Nations, as well as the legacy of outgoing Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon?

Ambassador SADIQOV: Mr. Ban has had a tough job. The challenging issues he has faced didn't originate with him, but have been the result of developments around the world. The disintegration of the bipolar world at the end of the 20th century took all nations, and of course the UN itself, off guard.

The UN is not a perfect structure, but it remains the best that mankind has been able to develop. It was born out of the ashes of the second world war, in the name of preventing such a war and its accompanying atrocities from ever occurring again. And in this endeavor, at least, we have succeeded. Many problems remain to be solved, of course, but by contrast, imagine where we would be today if there were no United Nations?

As for Mr. Ban, allow me to say that I have the honor of having known him since we were both diplomats in Vienna in the mid-90s. As Secretary-General, I believe Mr. Ban did great work in bringing the flag of the United Nations to many parts of the world, many of them remote areas never before reached by UN dignitaries. And I would like to acknowledge that the period in which Mr. Ban has governed has been marked by many conflicts.

It is notable that, with all these major problems in the world, the multilateral system has not collapsed and we still seek peace through diplomacy. To my mind, this fact alone may be deemed one of Mr. Ban's best achievements. Once we take into account

the magnitude and scope of the world's difficulties, one might easily expect that no Secretary-General would be able to hold it all together. And yet Mr. Ban has managed to do so. We shouldn't take that for granted. One might point to the current wars in Syria, Iraq, or Afghanistan as counter examples, and it is quite right not to gloss over these horrible conflicts. However, we might imagine how much more suffering would have occurred if the Security Council and the Secretary-General had not mobilized the UN machinery at all. In response to these ongoing traumas, all of the UN agencies that serve as first responders – UNHCR, IOM, OCHA, and OHCHR, among others – were all mobilized, and continue to do life-saving work, even in the context of a severe lack of funding. And of course these mobilizations of the international community would not have been possible without Secretary Ban's leadership. So I think we should appreciate his legacy, and that he was indeed the right person at the right time.

What do you expect should be the priorities of the incoming Secretary-General?

Let's be realistic: the new Secretary-General will have a difficult task.

On the one hand, he will focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as they have been adopted, and member states are now at a juncture where they must make a leap into implementation. That is good and there is unity. At the same time, the new Secretary-General, in cooperation with the international community, will also have to deal with problems from the past in the relations amongst member states and failures at the Security Council. At the

beginning, the challenge will be figuring out how to keep moving forward with one's head still turned backwards. It's like riding a bicycle: one is obligated to keep pedaling forward, because if you stop, you will fall; but at the same time, one must look backwards sometimes, to make sure that the problems you inherited don't sneak up and overcome you. It's not an easy task. Mr. Guterres, as former head of the UNHCR, has worked with very vulnerable populations all around the world. As a result, he knows what hardship and suffering mean, and what the stakes are – and he understands these realities not just in the abstract, but from his day-to-day work. I believe that Mr. Guterres, with his wisdom as a politician and statesman, is well-equipped to lead us forward amidst these challenges.

Changing topics, I understand there is a new campaign in your country called "Made in Azerbaijan." Can you tell us about this initiative and its relation with your oil sector?

Azerbaijan is a small country, but has always had an outsized relationship with oil. In the mid-19th century, we were the first place in the world to undertake the industrial production of oil, even before Oklahoma. The world's first ever oil pipeline, oil tanker, and offshore oil platform were all in Azerbaijan. In recent decades our industry had shifted to include both oil and gas.

The recent economic crisis, in particular the falling oil prices of the last 2 years, have of course also affected Azerbaijan, but not to the point of catastrophe. Economic reforms were underway in the country

before the crisis, and the effect of the recent situation has simply been to spur faster implementation of these reforms. So while Azerbaijan's investment in oil and gas remains important, the government has also made a dramatic shift into promoting non-energy sectors. Indeed, our leaders say that the country should work as if there were no oil or gas. The result of this shift in focus is a huge increase in the quality and diversity of Azerbaijani products for export. It is our official government policy to support – both politically and financially – any company wishing to export their products; hence the new movement, “Made in Azerbaijan.”

What else, in addition to diversifying its economy, is your government doing to cope with the decrease in oil income?

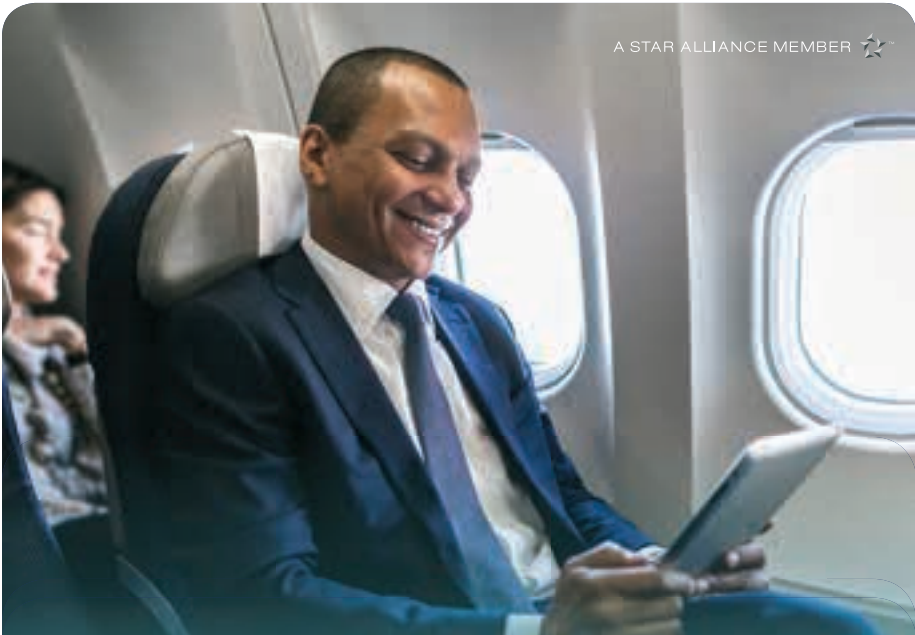
Although our country did feel the impact of the crisis, we have been able to cope well because of our State Oil Fund, established in 2001. Oil and gas revenues accumulated in the fund are used only for strategic projects. For example, money from the Fund built new homes and established new towns for Azerbaijan's internally-displaced population, about 1 million people. Another project supports education abroad for Azerbaijani students in key sectors for the country's economic and social development. Any student wishing to study abroad in one of these areas may obtain a full scholarship from the Ministry of Education; and then, after graduation, these students work for three years in government-provided employment. In this way, the Fund is helping to promote the development of the country in critical sectors.

And there are many other long-term, socially important projects financed from our oil and gas revenues. The State Oil Fund thus transforms income from oil and gas into vehicles for the nation's social good. And while the falling oil prices did necessitate certain cuts, the accumulated assets of the Fund served as a cushion for the economy. And none of the socially-oriented programs – in areas of education, healthcare, infrastructure, and others – suffered budget cuts. Even in the wake of the crisis, the government did not touch a single dollar of funding for the areas that I mentioned, and this financial sustainability is possible because of the Sovereign Oil Fund. Indeed, revenues are still accumulating, only at a slower rate than before.

Lastly, can you tell us your impression of living in Geneva?

I am struck by the coexistence, within a relatively small area, of the so-called “International Geneva” with the rest of “Swiss” Geneva. One might expect that this huge, dynamic machinery called “International Geneva” would possibly clash with the local population and its way of life; but that's simply not the case here. This fact speaks in favor the people of Geneva, and is a testament to the welcoming conditions that they provide for the international community. This coexistence also speaks to the history of Switzerland, a country nestled in the heart of Europe, and which remained peaceful even in the midst of two world

wars raging all around it. We are talking about almost 100 years of the international community's presence here, going back to the League of Nations in the 1920s. And even over the course of all the developments in Europe since then, the United Nations European headquarters has remained in Geneva. The UN, international organizations, and the dozens of international NGOs, might have easily found somewhere else to go, and yet they have chosen to remain here, near Lac Lemman. I think this fact speaks for itself, and that as diplomats and foreigners, we can only be grateful to the residents of Geneva and to the government of Switzerland for the peaceful home they provide to us. ■



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2016 in Review



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World Health Assembly



Mission in Haiti



New dog for UNOG K9 unit



*UN Special Envoy for Syria,
Mr. Staffan de Mistura*

Failure of the UN to provide whistle-blower protection

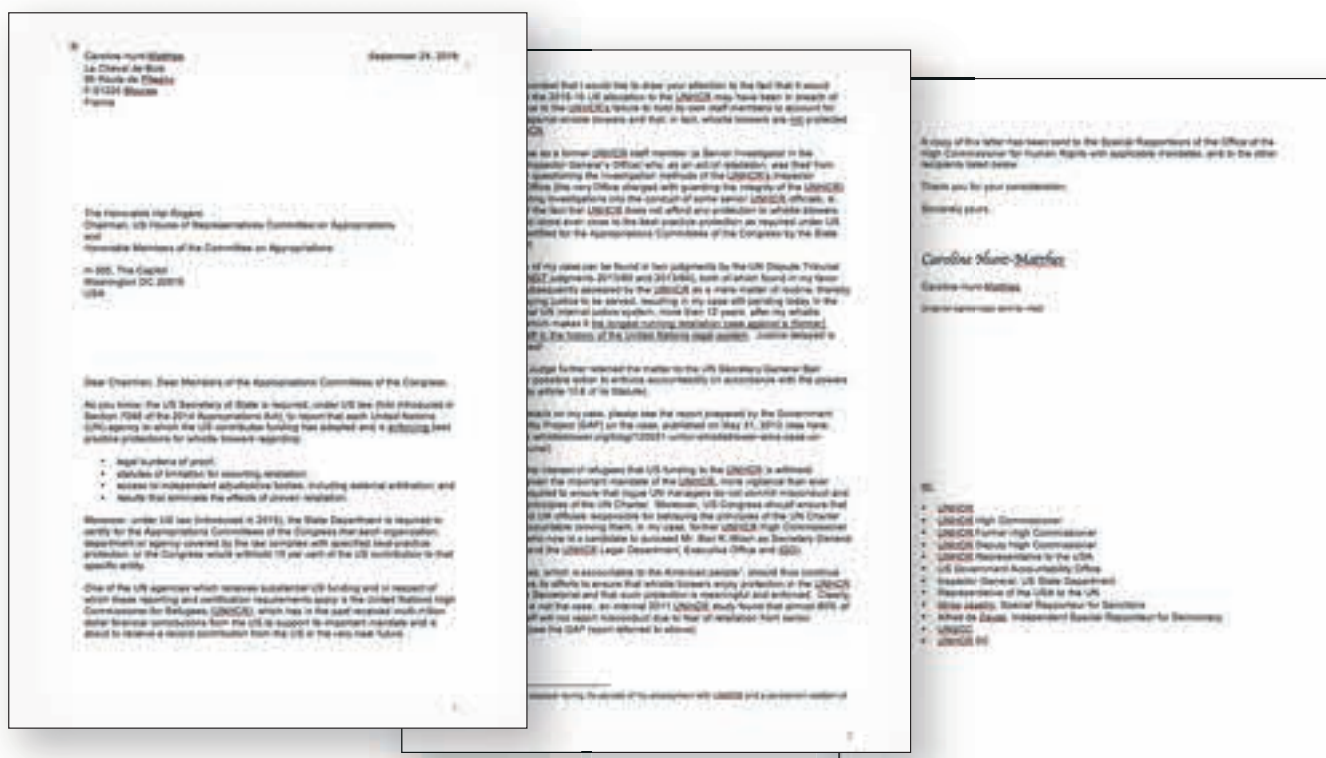
Whistle-blowing is increasingly precarious in the UN system, according to Caroline Hunt-Matthes, a former UNHCR staff member who reported irregularities in the UNHCR Inspector General's Office in 2003 including interference in a rape investigation of a refugee by a UNHCR staff member.

CAROLINE HUNT-MATTHES, FORMERLY OF UNHCR

The UNDT judge verified in 2013 that all UN internal channels had failed to protect her from retaliation for doing her job as a Senior Investigation Officer. Despite winning her cases in 2013, she is still in litigation following a UN appeal against the judgements. It is the longest running case in UN legal history. She writes that protection

from retaliation is no longer guaranteed. This has led to a crisis that goes to the heart of the UN. As all UN staff members know, UN staff are duty bound to report or “blow the whistle” on misconduct, in accordance with the rules drawn from the 1946 Charter of the United Nations. Whistle-blowers constitute the prime source of critical information when it comes to identifying misconduct, fraud and abuse. Recent crime surveys (Price Waterhouse Coopers) found that, while auditors identify 19 per cent of fraud incidents, 43 per cent are actually flagged by whistleblowers.

To encourage UN staff to comply with their duty to step forward and report misconduct, the UN system has measures in place designed to protect whistle-blowers from retaliation. This is true at least on paper; in practice, those measures do not work. To date, the UN Ethics Office, operating since January 2006, has notched up a decade



Letter to Mr Hal Rogers, Chairman , US House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations and to the Honorable Members of the Committee on Appropriations.

of failure to protect UN staff reporting wrongdoing. According to the Government Accountability Project (GAP), a US-based whistle-blower protection organization, not a single UN whistle-blower has been *fully* protected from retaliation for reporting misconduct since the UN Ethics Office was established. An extraordinary 96 per cent of those requesting protection have received no protection whatsoever.

The absence in practice of genuine protection effectively sanctions retaliation against UN staff reporting misconduct. Protection exists in theory and on paper only: the reality for those who have reported misconduct is cover-ups, reinterpretation of events, the intimidation of witnesses, attacks on character and bad performance reports, non-extension of contracts and, ultimately, drawn-out litigation in an internal UN justice system that is broken.

There was hope that things would improve when, in 2011, this writer (herself at the receiving end of retaliation, after reporting unorthodox practices in the UNHCR Inspector Generals Office) successfully

challenged the UN Ethics Office's decision-making process. In a judicial review of her whistle-blowing case by the UN Dispute Tribunal (UNDT) in 2011, the UNDT judge ruled that decisions by the UN Ethics Office could indeed be reviewed by the UNDT, and that in her case, the UN Ethics Office protection process had failed and was negligent in its duty to protect a whistle-blower. This legal precedent opened the door for other UN staff to request judicial reviews of UN Ethics Office decisions. Unsurprisingly, between 2011 and 2014, the UNDT found that the UN Ethics Office had failed to protect UN staffers in all cases reviewed by it.

Regrettably, in 2014, the United Nations Administrative Tribunal (UNAT) reversed the 2011 UNDT decision and determined that UN Ethics Office decisions should be considered beyond the reach of the law and its review process. The UNAT decision is more than just deplorable: it's bad news for the UN system as a whole. It inhibits organizational learning and transparency; it further erodes trust by UN staff in effective protection for whistle-blowers and in

the functioning of the internal UN justice system as a whole; and it will no doubt further discourage staff from reporting wrongdoing.

In 2011, G20 Leaders concurred that improving whistle-blower protection legislation was a key requirement to fighting corruption. Not only did proper protection for whistle-blowers have to be implemented by an independent entity, but guarantees of whistle-blower protection also had to be seen to be implemented. In his first television interview broadcast by France 24, António Guterres, the UN's next Secretary-General, pledged to address the gap in whistle-blower protection for UN staff. UN staff can only hope that, this time, concrete action will indeed follow to abolish the current system and set up an independent mechanism. ■

Caroline Hunt-Matthes is a former staff member of the UNHCR. She is an Adjunct Professor at Grenoble Business School, France, and at Webster University, Geneva.



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Rencontre avec Jean Ziegler

*Rencontre avec M. Jean Ziegler
à l'occasion de la sortie
son dernier livre.*



MARIE-JOSÉ ASTRE-DÉMOULIN, UNOG
Savoir qu'on va rencontrer Jean Ziegler, c'est se sentir honoré, bien sûr mais nourrir aussi quelques craintes. Va-t-on avoir droit à une leçon de politique? Va-t-on être écrasé par ses titres: Vice-Président du Comité consultatif des droits de l'homme des Nations Unies, Professeur émérite de l'Université de Genève et Paris 1, Docteur honoris causa de 5 universités...? La liste impressionne.

Retrouver Jean Ziegler dans un café c'est constater qu'un couple âgé se lève pour le saluer avec émotion tandis que plusieurs personnes lui adressent des signes de tête respectueux.

Parler avec Jean Ziegler, c'est plonger dans un monde où les anecdotes du quotidien rencontrent la grande Histoire et où les valeurs personnelles forment un socle inébranlable.

On rit en apprenant que, alors qu'il s'apprêtait à publier son premier livre, Simone de Beauvoir lui avait dit «Hans, ce n'est pas un prénom ça!» et que c'est ainsi que le jeune Suisse allemand, très impressionné par ce commentaire avait susurré «c'est Jean en français». C'est ainsi que le jeune Hans Ziegler est devenu Jean. De Hans à Jean, à cause de Simone!

On réfléchit lorsqu'il dit que «un enfant qui meurt est un enfant assassiné» ou qu'il

parle des hasards de la naissance: «Ce qui nous sépare des victimes c'est le hasard de la naissance – je suis habité par la conscience de l'identité qui me constitue. Il n'y a pas d'impuissance en démocratie.»

On s'étonne quand il nous fait découvrir les «GONGO», acronyme ironique qui désigne de supposées ONG (organisations non gouvernementales) qui, en fait, œuvrent pour leurs gouvernements.

On pleure quand il mentionne le noma – une terrible gangrène du visage qui affectent de nombreux enfants en Afrique et qu'il serait facile de traiter avec des antibiotiques.



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On s'émerveille en découvrant qu'il croit dans l'ONU plus que dans toute autre institution sur terre: «Les Nations Unies sont au centre de tout! L'Organisation a pour but d'empêcher la guerre, de protéger les droits de l'homme et d'éliminer la misère, c'est un instrument essentiel.

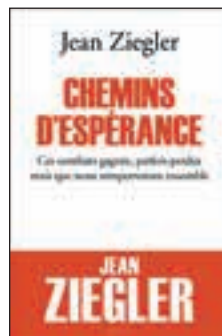
Au conseil des droits de l'homme j'ai toujours l'impression d'assister à quelque chose de merveilleux. Des cultures et des religions si différentes réunies dans une même salle, discutent d'un même texte et parviennent parfois à une décision. C'est MIRACULEUX.»

Et quand on lui demande quel serait son message pour le personnel de l'ONU, il commence par la phrase suivante: «Soyez conscient de la responsabilité incroyable que vous avez, et de votre mission».

Puis il marque un temps d'arrêt, vous regarde dans les yeux et s'enflamme: «Ce n'est pas un travail comme un autre que tu as parce que tu es investie de l'espoir de millions de personnes dans le monde qui n'ont que toi». On tremble devant sa fougue tandis qu'il conclut: «L'ONU c'est la voix des hommes sans voix».

Certes, dans son dernier livre, *Chemins d'espérance: Ces combats gagnés, parfois perdus mais que nous remporterons ensemble*, Jean Ziegler expose des opinions tranchées sur des situations auxquelles il a assisté au cours de sa vie politique, en général, et dans le cadre de l'ONU en particulier. Il décrit, attaque, critique et il ne s'agit certes pas pour nous de juger de la pertinence ou bien-fondé de ses idées. Cela ne relève ni de notre mandat ni de notre expertise.

En revanche, ce personnage iconoclaste nous offre l'opportunité de nous réjouir de vivre au sein d'un système qui permette cette liberté d'expression – et nous profitons de l'occasion pour nous incliner, au passage, devant l'humanisme et l'engagement de cet homme exceptionnel. ■



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The United Nations Women's Guild (UNWG) Bazaar* – “the united colours of the United Nations”

**Oxford English Dictionary definition: bazaar – a fancy fair in imitation of the Eastern bazaar; esp. a sale of useful and ornamental articles, on behalf of some charitable or religious object. Also used of a shop, or arcade of shops, displaying an assortment of fancy goods.*

SARAH JORDAN, DEPUTY EDITOR

At the UN Bazaar, held this year on 22 November, I posted a happy, smiling photo of myself with two equally happy, smiling colleagues on a social media site. It wasn't the most “liked” picture I have ever posted, but what was striking were the many comments I received from a certain category of friends – former interns and UN retirees – who all said things like “wish I was there”, “missing you, missing the UN”, and to quote my retired English teacher friend Chris de Castro, who now lives in Brazil, “Best day in the year at the UN!” This sums up the mood of this event, always held in November, when it's cold and grey outside. But inside, the Bazaar is warm in every sense of the word and full of colour. National stands, with those staffing them often dressed in national costumes, present an array of products for sale: handicrafts, jewellery, gifts and souvenirs. You can also find second hand books, bric-à-brac and clothing for

sale. Musicians and acrobatic displays allow you to take a pause from frenetic shopping. Upstairs is literally transformed into a food court with delicious culinary specialities from all over the world. You can have an Indian starter, a Sudanese main and a Thai dessert, if you so choose! To borrow the slogan of a famous Italian knitwear company, the UN Bazaar reflects “the united colours of the United Nations.”

History

The United Nations Women's Guild was founded in Geneva in 1970, taking its inspiration from its sister organization in New York. The Guild soon had 200 members and today, 46 years later, it boasts 500 members of 108 different nationalities. The first Bazaar was held in 1978, and as it has grown over the years, it has changed venues – at the International Labour Organization (ILO) to start with, then, in 1986, it moved to the Palais des Nations, first at door 15 and since 1994, at door 40.

The lottery

One of the first signs that the Bazaar is approaching is when, from late September onwards, polite but insistent ladies approach you at the entrance to the cafeteria to sell you the distinctive UN blue-coloured tickets “in support of



From left to right: Ms Elenora Lucangeli Serra, Bazaar President, Mr Michael Møller, Director-General UNOG and Ms Nehad Sukayri, UNWG President at the opening ceremony

underprivileged children in the world". And these ladies are very convincing indeed, selling 10,000 tickets to raise 100,000 CHF to help children in need. People buy tickets to support a worthy cause, of course, but also (go on, admit it!) with the secret hope of winning one of the fabulous prizes on offer; the star prize being a car. This year, it was the brand new Honda Jazz Trend, donated by Honda Automobiles Geneva, temptingly parked outside door 40 with a big bow on it for a few weeks before the event. Travel packages (this year to Oman, Thailand, Sweden, Mauritius, Monte Carlo, or luxury closer to home in Montreux or Geneva itself) and two Swiss watches top a total of 200 prizes donated by 130 corporations, missions and private donors. A lottery on this scale is taken seriously by the Swiss authorities, who monitor the process every step of the way with two official representatives present for the draw – the top 10 prizes are drawn in public, the others immediately after in their presence. The list of prizewinning numbers is published on the Guild's website: www.unwg.ch

UNWG Actions

In the words of Eleonora Lucangeli Serra, President of the Bazaar, "The mission of the Bazaar is...to help children in need, the most vulnerable of human beings." However, it was only on consulting the UNWG Bazaar brochure, the production costs of which are donated by the World Trade Organization (WTO), that I realised just how much the Guild really does do for children in the world. Catherine d'Arcangues, UNWG Vice-President for Projects, gives more details: "In 2015, the Guild was able to make a difference in the lives of 11,000 underprivileged children in 38 countries through its support of projects focusing on health, education and security." From the alphabetical list in the brochure, I have

selected the first and the last entries as examples of the type of projects funded by proceeds from the Bazaar:

Afghanistan: Mina Foundation – trains girls and young women in tailoring, literacy, English and computer skills. The computers, sewing machines, chairs and books funded will be used for vocational training.

Zimbabwe: Belwood Early Childhood Development Centre – seeks to ready disadvantaged children for school and provides full day care and hot meals. The project is to acquire new furniture, playground equipment, toys and books.

And no sooner is the Bazaar over than it's almost time to start over again for next year... Once the 200 prizes have been distributed and the thank you letters written, the UNWG team start seeking donors for the following year as of the month of May. And if, in the meantime, you would like to continue supporting the UNWG, pay a visit to their Kiosk, situated at door 39. Here, you can buy articles originating from various countries as well as some Swiss souvenirs. All the proceeds are used to finance scholarships. ■



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The vital breath – TO WRITE!

*Of course, you all know this face – this is our regular contributor to the UN Special, Solange Behoteguy. Solange is also a writer – she wrote two books, *Almas inquietas*, in 1999 and the novel *La lluvia de los martes*, in 2013.*



Jean Philippe Escard

EVELINA RIOUKHINA, UNECE

Today, at the Albatros library, and under the support of the Ville de Genève, International School of Geneva and School Florimont she is presenting the book *Lino Martinez y la espalda de Dios* (Plural, 2016), and we are so proud for Solange! While congratulating her on such a success, *UN Special* decided to describe to its readers “just one us” who IS and IS NOT like all others.

We, who have long life story with the magazine, remember the brown-eyed lady, who is very discreet and very shy, coming to the magazine. She introduced herself, and said – I came because I share the same passion as you all do – writing. She did not say anything about her successes, nor about her books, and incidentally, Solange also has publications in the world media. Born in Lima, Peru and with Bolivian nationality, she was in a way, a world recognised celebrity, when she came to our staff magazine, but she was so discreet... And then – her first steps in the magazine – articles, always rich in content, interesting, attracting readers. She immediately met all challenges that the most known “local” editors, as we are, without being competitive, she just did it – and whenever

there was a difficult topic to write “on request”, Solange was always ready to. Then she made her first steps actually doing the whole magazine – and definitely, all readers will remember the truly unforgettable issue on International Women’s Day, in 2012 (UN No. 715), with so interesting substance, and so brilliantly designed by Solange herself cover page¹.

After the presentation of her book, that took place on 5 November, I met with Solange, and was hesitant whether to ask her questions for an interview, or just to tell the story about her (especially, knowing how modest she is).

And she is indeed very reserved. Actually, Solange is also writing theatre in French. In 2015 the workshop for adults of La Compagnie Thalie in Ferney Voltaire played one of his pieces: *Les monologues d’une veuve* and recently, the theatre director Claudia Saldivia from the *Collectif Althernance théâtre* invited her to write for the tenth anniversary of the group. Solange immediately accepted the challenge and she wrote: *La femme échevelée* which will be played in 2017-2018 in Geneva and surroundings.

And still, only one question to Solange, just after the presentation of her book:

What is your last book about and how do you feel having such a book and having such a presentation of your book?

I feel strange; it’s time to decide the path that I will take to the next story! And I am grateful to be part of the UN special team as well as the support and friendship of Rodrigo, the owner of the Albatros library. The story of my last book is inspired by an event occurred in 1985 when a plane of Eastern Airlines crashed in the Illimani Mount. They never found the bodies. The snow covered everything with her mantle. Thirty years later, a flight attendant is killed mysteriously in a swimming pool in Asunción, Paraguay. Its time for the commissioner Lino Martinez to investigate the case.

We purposely interrupted Solange to keep the curiosity of the readers to read this book, as you do read all her articles (and Solange has many admirers among the readers). The book can be found at: Library Albatros, Rue de Charles Humbert 6, 1205, Genève.

It is not even necessary to ask about how it happened

that Solange came to the *UN Special*, it was so natural, and now it is clear – it could not have happened otherwise, because for Solange there is the only one word, the only one real deepest and the most significant passion, and the only one strong and vital desire, needed as the breath – TO WRITE! ■

¹ UN Special, No. 715, 2012
www.unspecial.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/UnSpecialMars2012.pdf



Aux portes du Palais

Entretien avec Daniel Vigoulette



MARIE-JOSÉ ASTRE-DÉMOULIN, UNOG

Daniel¹, parlez-nous de votre carrière professionnelle.

J'ai effectué la plus grande partie de ma carrière au sein d'unités d'investigations judiciaires de la Gendarmerie Nationale française. Et dans ce cadre, j'ai occupé des postes dans différents lieux de France métropolitaine et outremer: Guyane, Antilles, Nouvelle-Calédonie.

Depuis 2 ans, je suis garde de sécurité à l'ONU pour des missions spécifiques.

Et l'écriture, c'est arrivé comment?

D'aussi loin que je me souviens, j'ai toujours écrit. A 12-13 ans déjà, je me lançais dans l'écriture de petites histoires! Plus tard, très naturellement, les enquêtes que je menais ont nourri mon imagination. Je me suis mis à écrire des histoires policières profondément ancrées dans les terroirs. J'aime raconter la vie des hommes; elle est tellement foisonnante qu'il n'y a qu'à travers les romans qu'on peut en saisir la complexité.

Vos enquêtes de terrain vous ont donc inspiré?

Oui, mais de très loin... Vous savez, les affaires que nous traitions étaient extrêmement variées, souvent longues et difficiles à résoudre. Mais elles pouvaient être source d'inspiration, tant par les personnages que l'on était amené à rencontrer, que par des situations, qui parfois dépassaient les meilleures fictions.

Qu'est-ce qui vous a le plus particulièrement marqué?

Tout! Mais les lieux tout particulièrement. C'est à partir d'un lieu qui m'inspire que j'ancre des personnages. D'ailleurs, lorsque je reviens dans les régions où je leur ai donné le jour, j'ai presque envie de demander de leurs nouvelles...

C'est un travers d'écrivain, je crois! Les personnages que nous créons nous habitent pour toujours.

Et vous parvenez à trouver le temps de mener à bien votre vie professionnelle et l'écriture?

La Gendarmerie, mon premier corps de métier est un corps militaire: j'en ai gardé une certaine discipline. Si je me dis «à telle heure tu te mets à écrire», je le fais! De toute façon, l'écriture est en moi, tout le temps. Quand je prends une pause, je note toujours deux ou trois idées. Il faut dire que j'ai des carnets partout. Ce n'est pas juste un passe-temps. Ecrire est pour moi une nécessité absolue. Et je ne saurais faire autrement.

Vous n'avez pas l'angoisse de la page blanche?

Ah ça non! Jamais. L'ONU, le lieu où nous nous trouvons actuellement, représente un univers fascinant, par exemple. Et nombre d'auteurs célèbres s'en sont inspirés. Toutes les nations et tous les peuples du monde se retrouvent ici. En laissant libre cours à son imagination, cela ne peut qu'inspirer et nourrir des centaines de possibilités de romans. Des romans d'amour, politiques, thrillers, espionnage: c'est le creuset romanesque par excellence. Le site en lui seul, posé sur les rives du lac Léman est tout simplement un endroit extraordinaire.

Comment définiriez-vous le plaisir de l'écriture?

Ecrire, c'est vivre un temps donné, dans un univers que vous avez inventé de toutes pièces et dans lequel vous pouvez faire exactement ce que vous voulez. C'est un

fabuleux terrain et un espace extrêmement libérateur!

Cher Daniel, nous vous souhaitons de très nombreux nouveaux succès, pour notre plus grand plaisir de lecteurs! ■

1 Agent de sécurité à l'ONU le jour, écrivain la nuit

7 romans publiés – dont 6 chez Albin Michel

Bibliographie, principalement chez Albin Michel:

Le grand feu, Albin Michel, 2014

A l'ombre des bastides, Albin Michel, 2012

La petite Mer, Albin Michel, 2007

L'île aux peupliers, Albin Michel, 2005

Les ombres du Léman, Albin Michel, 2004

Vendanges écarlates, Albin Michel, 2002

Porta Verde, L'harmattan, 1999

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Sergio da Silva, Founder and President of the Club Photo International (CPI)

CPI celebrates its 10th anniversary with an exhibition on the theme of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a book, tracing an eventful decade.



SARAH JORDAN, DEPUTY EDITOR



Could you fill me in on the history and philosophy of the Club?

I founded the Club ten years ago in order to share my passion for photography with like-minded individuals in a convivial context. Ten years on, the CPI is a well-oiled machine and I can count on the highly professional contribution of each committee member in his or her specialist area – website, accounts, marketing, etc. The Club boasts thirty or so members and meets regularly every two weeks in a variety of contexts.

The Club is open to all UN staff members, specialised agencies, accredited NGOs and permanent mission staff – you just need to pay the annual subscription of 50CHF, to have a badge giving you access to the Palais and, of course, a certain interest in photography!

On your website, it says that all levels are welcome. Is this really the case?

Very much so. From the outset, our members have ranged from aficionados to experts, some of whom have exhibited their work or won prizes. Today, some of our members take photos with their smartphones. The tool used by a photographer is not the most important thing. What counts is the eye. Our goal is to improve our members' skills – both technically and aesthetically – whilst having fun.

And how do you get your members to progress?

Every two weeks, either at lunchtime or in the evening, we hold sessions on different aspects of photography. Professionals are invited to run workshops on technical skills such as lighting, composition and photo editing. Members also propose peer to peer sessions on their own areas of expertise. The themes are very varied and frequently chosen at the request of the members themselves. We recently ran a highly popular session on the editing tool "Adobe lightroom®", for example. In addition to these indoor sessions, we also go on outings where we put theory into practice and take photos. Recent venues include the banks of the river Rhône, Geneva airport and the alpine resort of Champex-Lac in the Valais. Our regularly up-dated website is also a treasure trove of information. We report on the CPI's past, present and future activities, but also on photography-related events in and around Geneva. There are selected photography-related links and some great photo galleries of members' photos – including those signed by the winners of our annual competition.

On the subject of your annual photo competition, what is planned for 2016?

The CPI committee decided to take inspiration from the 2015-2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development this year and we have received entries on the theme of the 17 goals from club members and non-members

from all the above-mentioned categories. We want to demonstrate the Club's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and raise awareness. The six prize-winners and a selection of highly-commended entries will be exhibited in the E building from 9-27 January 2017 and I encourage Geneva-based staff to come and see what their colleagues are capable of producing! You will be pleasantly surprised! The most important thing when taking a photo is the originality of the subject. Since the advent of smart phones millions of photos are shared daily. We aim to produce photos that stand out. Originality can be instinctive, enhanced or learnt. At the CPI, our members learn how to write with their cameras.

And on the subject of writing, could you tell me about the book the CPI has published to mark its 10th anniversary?

Our members over the past 10 years have come from a variety of backgrounds, both geographically and professionally, each with their own perception of our world. This book, "The world we live in", illustrates a 10-year journey through the many countries and situations that have moved or marked us. In it, you will find a selection of images of our world, how we have adapted to it and how it has been transformed by us. It is a book to inspire future generations to preserve and improve our natural heritage in order to ensure wellbeing and attain peace. ■

<http://clubphotointernational.com/>

Une ligne rouge contre le viol comme arme de guerre

Le Dr Denis Mukwege, connu comme «L'homme qui répare les femmes» était à Genève le 10 octobre pour une rencontre organisée par la «Dr Denis Mukwege Foundation»¹ et «Right Livelihood Award Foundation»² et j'ai eu le privilège de l'écouter.



© Cerni naly

SOLANGE BEHOTEGUY, UNCTAD

Il y a eu la projection d'une courte vidéo et à la fin, pas d'applaudissements, le silence était révélateur de la gravité des scènes. «Nous avons pu tracer une ligne rouge contre l'arme chimique, l'arme biologique, l'arme nucléaire. Aujourd'hui, nous devons aussi mettre une ligne rouge contre le viol comme arme de guerre» dit-il.

A huit ans il décide devenir un «Muganga», nom donné aux blouses blanches. Puis, devenu adulte et médecin un événement va marquer son avenir: le docteur se trouve face à une patiente violée et qui avait reçu une balle au vagin. Elle avait le périnée délabré, sa vie ne tenait plus qu'à un fil et il ne s'agissait pas d'un cas isolé.

Agée de 70 ans, raconte-t-il, une autre femme évoque le viol subi 50 ans auparavant. Son récit le consterne car elle parle du viol comme s'il avait été commis la veille.

Une femme violée, c'est toujours une de trop. Les chiffres sont effarants: d'après l'ONU il y eu plus de 60 000 cas durant la guerre civile en Sierra Leone (1991-2002), plus de 40 000 au Libéria (1989-2003), jusqu'à 60 000 dans l'ex-Yougoslavie (1992-1995) et 200 000 au moins en République Démocratique du Congo depuis 1998.

Lauréat 2013 du prix Nobel alternatif donné par la fondation du prix *Right Livelihood*, c'est au Congo que «le docteur qui répare les femmes» fait face à la terreur dans son hôpital de Panzi à Bukavu à partir de 1999. Là les habitants se réveillent un jour pour réaliser que la plupart de

leurs femmes, de tous âges, ont été violées. Comment agir face à des viols méthodiques, à des tirs au niveau de l'appareil génital, à l'introduction d'objets et d'armes? Il vit ce qu'il appelle «le tréfonds de l'horreur». «Dans les zones de conflit, les batailles passent par les corps des femmes», dit-il.

La journaliste Leila Delarive, fondatrice de BeCurious TV l'interroge sur son état d'âme. Comment pouvez-vous supporter tout cet enfer? La réponse est immédiate: «Ces femmes ont une force incroyable, lorsqu'elles se réveillent du coma, elles demandent comment vont mes enfants? Est-ce qu'ils ont mangé?» Il les soigne dans la partie la plus intime de leur corps, celle qui est prise par la force dans le but de les détruire, et à travers elles, leur famille, leur communauté. *Mais l'opération, ajoutez-il, sans prise en charge psychologique n'a pas d'impact. Le plus difficile c'est de*

leur faire accepter qu'elles sont toujours des femmes. Il ne faut pas les pénaliser une deuxième fois. Le traitement doit être physique, mental, socioéconomique, et il leur faut une reconnaissance. La société doit comprendre que c'est le violeur qui doit répondre devant la justice. On peut aller plus loin, la responsabilité peut aller jusqu'à l'Etat. ■

1 La Fondation Mukwege a pour objectif éliminer le viol comme arme de guerre. En outre, l'organisation utilise les bonnes pratiques de la République Démocratique de Congo (RDC) pour soutenir des projets communautaires dans d'autres zones de conflits. <http://www.mukwegefoundation.org>

2 «The Right Livelihood Award» a été établi en 1980 pour «honorer et soutenir des personnes et des organisations courageuses offrant des solutions visionnaires et exemplaires aux causes profondes des problèmes mondiaux». Il est devenu largement connu sous le nom «prix Nobel alternatif» et il y a maintenant 166 lauréats de 68 pays. <http://www.rightlivelihoodaward.org/>

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Una afro boliviana es parte del grupo asesor de ONU Mujeres

Cada dos años, ONU mujeres elige a 23 representantes de la sociedad civil para conformar el grupo de asesores que le servirá de brújula para implementar sus estrategias. Tenemos el honor de presentarles a una de ellas.



SOLANGE BEHOTEGUY, UNCTAD

Desde octubre de 2016 la activista boliviana-afrodescendiente Paola Yañez Inofuentes forma parte de ese grupo. Su objetivo: visibilizar la problemática de las mujeres afrodescendientes en América Latina y el Caribe.

«Si las negras no estamos, nadie va a hablar por nosotras», dice Paola, convencida de que uno de los trabajos más difíciles es visibilizar a la población afrodescendiente. Existen cerca de 200 millones de personas que se identifican a sí mismos como descendientes de africanos que viven en las Américas. Según datos oficiales, en Bolivia hay alrededor de 25.000 afrodescendientes distribuidos en todo el país, aunque los principales enclaves siguen siendo el norte yungueño. ¿Por qué si son tantos es tan difícil ver que existen?

«Esta historia empieza en el siglo XVI con la trata transatlántica de esclavos que donde trabajaban como acuñadores de plata. Aquello terminó siendo un mal negocio porque los negros no resistían las

condiciones climáticas y se morían. Así que los vendieron a las haciendas yungueñas de La Paz donde se dedicaron al cultivo de cítricos, hoja de coca y café», cuenta Paola, la activista que ahora, desde plataformas propias a las Naciones Unidas planea hacer oír las voces de miles de mujeres negras víctimas de discriminación de género, de raza y de clase.

En Bolivia, además de constituir una numerosa población, cuentan con la presencia del último rey negro del continente, Julio Pinedo, nieto de Bonifacio Pinedo, el cuarto y último rey de una dinastía heredera del sistema monárquico de Congo. Julio Pinedo vive en Mururata, comunidad del norte yungueño boliviano, y fue oficialmente reconocido como rey por la prefectura de La Paz en 2007. Si bien la Constitución Política del Estado Plurinacional de 2009 reconoce la existencia de la población afrodescendiente y sus derechos, Paola tiene una lectura crítica del proceso: «luego de la aprobación del texto constitucional, el tema afro boliviano

existe mucho en lo simbólico; es como la prueba de la plurinacionalidad, pero no viene acompañado de medidas propias al pueblo afro boliviano. Incluso nosotros si queremos exigirle algo al Estado, tenemos que pasar por el tema indígena para conseguirlo».

La nominación de Paola Yañez Inofuentes como miembro integrante del grupo asesor de ONU Mujeres se da, en su opinión, en un momento clave para Latinoamérica. Por un lado, se inscribe en el contexto de proceso de paz en Colombia (el 70% de los desplazados por el conflicto armado son afrodescendientes colombianos) y por el otro, en el contexto de Decenio Internacional para los Afrodescendientes (2015 a 2024) proclamado por la resolución 68/237 de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas. Las expectativas son inmensas: se espera lograr un mayor compromiso de los Estados para que se impulsen medidas en favor de la población de mujeres afrodescendientes que siguen siendo uno de los grupos más pobres y marginados.



Por el trabajo de su madre, Celestina Inofuentes, oriunda de la comunidad de Tocaña, que trabajaba para la cooperación internacional con fondos de Naciones Unidas, Paola creció en medio de talleres, reuniones y reivindicaciones por los derechos humanos. A los 14 años empezó a acercarse al movimiento afro, pero fue en 2001 en el marco de África XXI cuando empezó a entender con mayor profundidad el problema racial y la discriminación hacia las personas afrodescendientes. «Por aquellos años la agenda política era muy clara, tenía que ver con el reconocimiento por parte del Estado como pueblo,

la inclusión de la variable afrodescendiente en los censos de población y vivienda, y una ley que penalice la discriminación. En esa época hasta bailar era un acto político. Paola se refiere a la Saya afro boliviana, danza tradicional que forma parte de su estrategia para visibilizar al movimiento afro boliviano.

Paola es parte de la red de mujeres afro latinoamericanas, afrocaribeñas y de la diáspora fundada en 1992. Empezó como enlace de la red para Bolivia en 2009 y desde entonces fue cobrando incidencia internacional en foros y conferencias de las Naciones

Unidas. En 2013 asume posición como coordinadora de la región andina de la red de mujeres afro latinoamericanas. El grupo de asesores de ONU Mujeres del que ahora forma parte se reúne una vez al año, pero comunica regularmente por Skype. Sin duda, una ventana que abre posibilidades para mujeres como Paola que buscan reescribir la historia y luchan por la igualdad de derechos y el reconocimiento de las diferencias. ■

<http://www.un.org/es/events/african-descentdecade/>

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MAISON DES LANGUES



Know your rights as a tenant in Geneva

Expats and international civil servants who move to Geneva are often under pressure to rapidly find a place and settle in.



Gemma Vestal¹, WHO
Lucas Sensius, External contributor
Damien Chervaz, External contributor

Moving to a new country is never simple, and with the stress to relocate and start the new job as quickly as possible, many expats and international civil servants struggle to find appropriate housing. This time crunch, often compounded by the shortage of housing, can lead an exasperated new arrival to sign a lease with unfair rental costs or conditions. This situation contributes to increasing rent prices and a more expensive market for everyone. Therefore, it is important that all tenants know their rights so that they can stand up for better treatment, as well as ensure that they are not overpaying for accommodation.

New rental

Everyone should be aware of their rights as a tenant, which apply even after the signing of a rental agreement. In any situation, the landlord should give the cantonal green form to the tenant at the beginning of the contract, which indicates the amount of rent paid by the previous tenant, and the basis on which rent has been calculated.

For instance, if a tenant finds that the stated rent is higher than that paid by the previous tenant without valid reason of increase, they can challenge the amount within thirty days from the day of reception of the keys. This challenge must be done at the cantonal conciliation authority, which helps to find amicable settlements in disputes between tenants and landlords. It is important to note that a tenant can also negotiate for a reduction, even if the rent was not increased but seems to be excessive in comparison with other apartments of the same type in the same area.

In addition to this provision, when moving into new accommodation, tenants should list all defects at the entry inventory (*état des lieux*) established with their landlord. This inventory provides proof of any pre-existing issues and prevents these defects and damages from being attributed to the tenant at the end of the lease. As some problems may not be detected immediately, the tenants may complete the inventory by writing a registered letter to the landlord in the first few weeks of contract.

If serious defects are noted, the

landlord should repair them within an agreed amount of time. For example, if tenants have a mold problem in their bathroom when they move in, they should request that the landlord repair this promptly. Additionally, a tenant could demand for a rent reduction until the problem is solved. This demand gives the landlord an extra incentive to fix the problem, and in a small way lessens the inconvenience of the tenant.

Changes in rent

In some cases, it is also possible for a tenant to negotiate a rent reduction at the renewal of contract. This negotiation must be done three months prior to the next contractual term and be based on a change in the criteria on which the rent is calculated. For instance, when rent is based off the mortgage interest rate, a significant decrease in rates would justify a request for reduction in rent, as is the case these days with very low mortgage interest rates.

Tenants should also know their rights in regards to challenging rent increases. Landlords must give notice (usually 3 months plus 10 days) via a form authorized by the canton and including justification for the

increase. These justifications must be clearly stated; they can result from an increase in mortgage interest rate or investment in the property itself, such as renovation or installation of new equipment. If a tenant does not feel that the increase is warranted by the justifications, tenants have 30 days from the day they receive the form to oppose the rent increase to the conciliation authority.

Resolution of complaints

A landlord who does not address major complaints or undertake necessary repairs is not honoring the contract. The issue can be resolved by sending the complaint to the landlord via registered mail. In this way, a tenant has a paper trail that they can produce as evidence. The Swiss postal service provides a legally binding proof of receipt of the letter, as well as time and date of delivery. Armed with the proof that the landlord was informed, a tenant can demand a reduction in rent if these problems are not corrected. If the problem is even more serious, and impedes the ability of a tenant for "quiet enjoyment of the property", a tenant may deposit the amount of the rent in a special Tribunal account. This procedure is somewhat

complicated and requires a formal process through the conciliation authority.

ASLOCA

In these cases especially, the Swiss Association of Tenants (ASLOCA), an independent and officially recognized representative organization of tenants that defends their collective and individual interests, can provide support and advice every step of the way. Members are able to consult with ASLOCA lawyers to assess their situation and better understand the next steps. This consultation can help to determine if tenants have a valid claim against their landlord to obtain some form of redress, like a rent reduction. ASLOCA can also assist in the wording of official correspondence and ensure that it adheres to the legal procedure. Tenants do not have to go through their headaches with their landlords alone. ASLOCA can also assist in drafting documents and represent tenants at the conciliation authority and in the Tribunal for a reasonable fee, depending on the complexity and the length of the case.

Membership is easy to acquire, and the fee is 70 CHF per year. ASLOCA offers free oral legal advice to members without

appointment on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, from 16:30hrs to 18:00hrs, and on Wednesdays and Fridays from 12:30hrs to 13:30hrs. Appointments can also be arranged outside of these schedules by simply calling ASLOCA (022,716.18.00).

Take away message

It is important to know your rights and obligations as a tenant, especially as a newcomer to Geneva. Consult ASLOCA to ensure that you have this solid understanding, so that you can comply with your lease terms while you protect your interests. Resist any overbearing actions by landlords and help keep the rents in Geneva at acceptable levels.

The idea for this paper germinated after a highly informative ASLOCA presentation at UNOG, courtesy of its Staff Coordinating Council. For further information: ■

<https://www.ch.ch/en/rent-tenant-rights-obligations/>

<http://www.asloca.ch/>

<http://www.homegate.ch/rent/advisor/tenancy-law>

1 Gemma Vestal is General Secretary of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA). Lucas Sensus is an intern at FICSA, from Kent State University. Damien Chervaz is a lawyer at ASLOCA and at ZLB law firm in Geneva.

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Christian Lienhardt, cellist in the UN Orchestra and Senior Advisor in Tuberculosis Research at WHO.

Your chance to make music – with the UN Orchestra

If you play an instrument and would like to play in an amazing orchestra combining music, fun and humanitarian action – join the UN Orchestra!

VERONICA RIEMER, WHO

This year the United Nations Orchestra has celebrated 5 years of music since its inaugural concert in March 2011 at the Théâtre du Léman. Over 30 concerts have been performed by a talented group of UN staff, and they have raised over CHF 170'000 for 10 charities. Most recently, the Orchestra performed a musical tribute at the Victoria Hall to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who leaves the UN this December after his second 5-year term. Accompanied by Maestro Vengerov, the first classical musician to be appointed UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador in 1997, the Orchestra played an all-Tchaikovsky programme to the delight of an international audience.

Born of the personal commitment of its two co-founders and

its musicians, all volunteers, the Orchestra has become a symbol of sharing and intercultural awareness, embodying the spirit of the United Nations and its values. The Orchestra has just returned from a tour in South Korea, where it celebrated the 25th anniversary of Korea's membership to the United Nations, and the Orchestra's first visit to the last divided country in the world. The series of concerts, entitled "Music for Peace", were held in Seoul, Gwangju, and Busan, from 23-27 October. This tour was organized in partnership to mark the UN Day 2016, the 70th anniversary of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) and the peace activities of Music for One (M4one). Bonian Golmohammadi, Secretary-General of WFUNA, commented that the event was "a meaningful

occasion where the UN and international organization affiliates came together to interact for the purpose of promoting peace and security".

The Orchestra contributes to Geneva's international reputation. It is comprised of approximately 70 talented non-professional musicians who work at the UN and other Geneva-based international organizations. Christian Lienhardt, pictured above, a member of the orchestra from France, learned to play the cello as a child and continued his love for music by playing in bands and orchestra as a medical student. He joined WHO in 2009 as Senior Advisor in Tuberculosis Research, and has been playing with the UN Orchestra for the past four years.

"It is great to play with people who are all professionals in their own area of expertise and who share the love of music. Contributing to humanitarian causes helps me to continue the work I started as a young medical doctor working



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UN Orchestra Conductor Antoine Margauié at the Musical Tribute of 2 October 2016 in the Victoria Hall, Geneva.

with NGOs in humanitarian emergencies, and my current work as a scientist working in global public health”.

Christian enthusiastically confirms that this experience with the UN Orchestra has enriched his personal and professional life in Geneva, despite the demands of his job, which require him to travel abroad. “Although sometimes the rehearsals and concert preparations are difficult to manage with the constraints of duty travel, the orchestra is an outlet for my passion, which enables me to better cope with the stress and pressure of my UN work”, he explained. “Playing with the UN Orchestra has allowed me the chance to play in concerts with world class soloists such as Katia Buniatishvili and Maxime Venguerov—an unforgettable experience!”

Christian also greatly appreciates the opportunity to play under the direction of renowned conductor Antoine Margauié, Artistic Director & Co-Founder, who brings 20 years’ experience as professional conductor to achieve highest standards of musical excellence. “He is the soul and engine of the Orchestra, without whom this whole venture would not exist”. Antoine has led such orchestras as

the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Orchestre philharmonique de Strasbourg, the Swiss Musical Youth Orchestra and the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, among others. Christian also acknowledged another key figure: Martine Coppens, Co-Founder and President of the UN Orchestra. “Martine is a solid pillar upon on which the Orchestra relies. Her enthusiastic contribution is much valued among the musicians and our partners across the globe”, said Christian.

Next year’s programme will soon be finalised and includes a celebration of the 15th anniversary of Switzerland’s adhesion to the United Nations. Between

March and May 2017, seven concerts will be performed in cities around Switzerland, opening with a concert at Victoria Hall, Geneva. In July, the Orchestra will perform a concert at the Dome, an arts centre in Brighton, United Kingdom.

Full details of the 2017 programme will be published shortly at www.unorchestra.ch, where you can also subscribe to the UN Orchestra newsletter. The website also provides further information about becoming a member of the orchestra and an application form. The orchestra is currently looking for musicians of the following instruments:

- 1 trumpet
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Forbidden di sporgersi – la Comédie

Culture at Christmas – theatre in Geneva

There are almost 40 theatres in Geneva, many of which reach out to International Geneva with shows in languages other than French, or if in French, with subtitles. Alternatively, if a lack of French is a problem, there are many shows based on music or dance for which language is no obstacle.

SARAH JORDAN, DEPUTY EDITOR

As a regular theatre-goer, here is a small sample of some of my personal favourites.

The most intellectual – La Comédie de Genève

This is the oldest and probably the most prestigious theatre in Geneva. It has been based in the centre of town on the Boulevard des Philosophes since 1913. In 2019, it will move to new premises near the Gare des Eaux Vives in the new Cornavin – Eaux-Vives – Annemasse (CEVA) rail link complex. The Comédie presents classical and avant-garde theatre as well as musical concerts and thematic events including poetry readings and conferences. The Boulevard de la Comédie restaurant in the theatre foyer is a great place for a pre or post-show drink or meal. It is also open at lunch-time. Over the December/January period choose from works by Kafka and Marivaux or a creation “Forbidden di Sporgersi” based on a poem by the

autistic author Babouillec. This play premiered at the Avignon Festival in 2015, and the Cinémas du Grütli will hold a thematic week “Voyage en terres cérébrales” from 12 au 18 December, with a whole programme of events around this production on the subject of autism. A classical musical evening with the Lemanic Modern Ensemble is also on offer, and reflections on the migrant problem, with readings on “Lampedusa Beach” at venues in Vevey and Ferney-Voltaire. **More information:** <http://www.comedie.ch/>.

The most eclectic – Théâtre et Forum Meyrin (TFM)

A bit further out of town, but very easy to reach by public transport – tram number 14 from Cornavin – and with plenty of free parking if you go by car, the TFM offers a wide range of shows for all types of public, young and old. Its deals for families and young people are particularly advantageous and it also has



Vertical Influence – TFM



Deux petites dames vers le Nord – Théâtre le Crève Cœur

a welcoming bar/restaurant in the foyer. During the festive season, choose from “Run, Run, Run”, a musical homage to Lou Reed, “Vertical Influences”, contemporary dance on ice (at the Vergers ice-skating rink in Meyrin – don’t forget to wrap up warm), “La Femme rompue”, a stimulating and unexpected one-woman show with the French actor Josiane Balasko on a text by the French feminist and social theorist Simone de Beauvoir, and finally “Traviata”, a French/Italian musical reflection on Violetta Valéry, the woman immortalised as Verdi’s heroine. **More information:** <http://www.forum-meyrin.ch/>.

The most intimate – Théâtre le Crève Cœur

If you were to set sail in a straight line from the UN Beach to the other side of the lake, you would land just below this little jewel of a theatre, located in a former pressoir (fruit press) with splendid views of the lake and the UN in the summer time from the romantically named

esplanade du pré Byron. The theatre itself is small – only 60 seats – and this results in a special type of exchange between the audience and whoever is on stage. The theatre has been run for three generations by the same family since it was founded in 1959 and is now in the hands of the founder’s grand-daughter, the actor Aline Gampert. The theatre is a kind of “incubator” and launches many new productions “made in francophone Switzerland”. The shows on offer to close 2016 and inaugurate 2017 focus on duos with “Deux petites dames vers le Nord” – a humorous “road movie” in which two sisters cross France to announce the death of their mother to her ex, their father, and “Les Filles de Roi”, in which two sisters are reunited to discover their father’s last will and testament. The theatre has a cosy bar/restaurant that also puts local production in the limelight – but this time food and drink. The theatre’s focus on conviviality is also

apparent in the three brunches it organizes each season – the next one is on 5 February – at which an artist discusses his/her work with the public before stepping up on stage to perform. Throughout the year, there are also weekly amateur dramatics workshops for children and adults that culminate in an end-of-year performance. **More information:** www.theatreducevecoeur.ch ■

A good place to find information on what’s on is the City of Geneva’s official site:
<http://www.ville-geneve.ch/themes/culture/english/theatres>



Le paisible petit port de pêche de Bildudalur blotti au fond d'un fjord

Islande (1^{re} partie)

De glace et de feu

Distante d'à peine 300 km du Groenland, frôlant le cercle polaire, l'Islande a fait la une de la presse mondiale en 2010 lorsque l'éruption du volcan Eyjafjallajökull paralysa l'espace aérien international pendant de longues semaines.

TEXTE ET PHOTOS CLAUDE MAILLARD

Née il y a environ vingt millions d'années, l'Islande, mélange de lave, de feu et de glace, est la plus jeune des grandes îles de la planète. Elle est le seul endroit où les plaques continentales de l'Europe et de l'Amérique du Nord se séparent en certains endroits à ciel ouvert, hors des océans. Cette faille formée par la dérive des continents s'écarte de deux centimètres par an et laisse le magma remonter au grand jour. Trois cents volcans, dont pratiquement la moitié sont en activité, hantent la vie des Islandais qui sont habitués à subir une éruption importante tous les quatre ans en moyenne. Dans cette région ancestrale, terre des Vikings, où la langue n'a pas changé depuis mille ans et

où l'on croit toujours aux elfes, on s'imaginerait parfois parachuté sur une autre planète, tant les paysages peuvent être incroyablement extravagants.

Reykjavik, une capitale à taille humaine

Aéroport de Reykjavik, minuit: malgré un ciel nuageux, le soleil illumine toujours l'horizon. La capitale la plus septentrionale du monde et son agglomération concentrent plus de 60% des 320 000 habitants qui peuplent l'île. Reykjavik signifie «*La baie des fumées*» et c'est là que le premier colon, un Norvégien nommé Ingolfur Arnarson, installa sa ferme en 874. La tradition raconte qu'en approchant des côtes, ce chef de clan jeta les montants de son siège par-dessus bord pour laisser les

dieux lui désigner le meilleur endroit et qu'il s'installa là où les morceaux de bois échoués furent retrouvés. A l'époque, la baie était envahie de panaches de vapeur qui se dégageaient des sources chaudes désormais taries. Edifiée autour du lac Tjörninn, paisible lieu de promenade, Reykjavik se distingue par son originale église Hallgrímskirkja à l'architecture très particulière inspirée des glaciers et des orgues basaltiques caractéristiques du paysage islandais. Pleines de charme et très animées, bordées de cafés chaleureux et de boutiques accueillantes, les rues avoisinantes de Bankastræti et de Skólavörðustígur méritent que l'on s'y attarde, avant de s'attaquer à l'ascension de la colline Öskjuhlid qui offre un



Godafoss, la «chute des Dieux» sur la rivière Skjalfandafljót



Edifiée près de l'arche de basalte de Hvitserkur, cette petite église est perdue au milieu de nulle part

panorama à 360° sur la ville, la baie et toute la région.

D'une longueur de 1339 km, la route 1 (ou route circulaire) est le principal axe routier islandais qui fait le tour du pays en suivant succinctement le littoral. C'est également l'un des rares entièrement recouvert d'asphalte et très vite, lorsque l'on prend la direction de la péninsule de Snaefellsnes et des fjords du Nord-Ouest, la piste, plus ou moins roulante, fait son apparition.

Voyage au centre de la Terre

Passage obligé pour se rendre dans la péninsule de Snaefellsnes, le petit port de Borgarnes est aussi la porte d'accès à la vallée de la Hvíta où de toutes parts des nuages de vapeur montent de la terre. C'est ici que l'on découvre la source chaude de Deildartunguhver dont le débit (180 litres/seconde) est le plus important d'Europe et permet de chauffer les maisons de toute la région. L'Islande qui est depuis longtemps passée maître en matière d'énergie géothermique en fait profiter, grâce à un impressionnant réseau de canalisations, 85% de sa population.

Le ciel est gris, le vent se lève et une pluie glaciale se met à tomber. C'est ça l'été islandais! Heureusement une petite éclaircie perce les nuages à l'approche des chutes de Hraunfossar et Barnafoss où l'eau jaillit du haut d'une falaise sur 150 m de long avant de former un rapide tumultueux. Retour sur la côte, plus exactement à Alftanes, où le 16 septembre 1936, le «*Pourquoi-Pas*», navire du commandant Charcot fit naufrage en rentrant d'une mission polaire au Groenland. Sur un équipage de 41 personnes, seul le maître timonier survécut. De Grundarfjörður, port de pêche très actif blotti au fond d'une superbe baie au pied du mont Kirkjufell, la piste contourne le Snaefellsjökull. Ce majestueux volcan culminant à 1446 m a été choisi par Jules Verne comme point de départ de son fameux «*Voyage au centre de la Terre*», roman de science-fiction écrit en 1864. Avant d'atteindre Stykkisholmur, port d'attache du ferry qui permet de rejoindre les fjords du Nord-Ouest, la route côtière bordée de falaises de basalte côtoie également la plage d'Ytri Tunga, site d'observation de phoques, et de Djupalónssandur où gisent

les derniers vestiges rouillés du chalutier anglais «*Epine*» échoué en 1948.

La beauté sauvage à l'état pur

Trois heures de navigation entrecoupées d'une courte escale sur l'îlot de Flatey esseulé au milieu du golfe de Breidafjörður, et nous voilà à Brjanslaekur, petit port isolé au sud de l'immense région des fjords du Nord-Ouest, la moins habitée et la plus sauvage d'Islande. Côtes tout en dentelle, fjords profonds séparant autant de péninsules, parois rocheuses tombant dans la mer, petits villages de pêcheurs... L'endroit recèle des paysages à couper le souffle, à commencer par les falaises abruptes de Latrabjarg où nichent des milliers de macareux peu farouches. Dans les environs, avant d'atteindre le paisible port de pêche de Bildudalur, l'étonnante petite église de bois noir perdue au bord de la plage de sable rouge de Raudasandur vaut le détour, de même que le musée Egils Ólafssonar édifié à Hnjótur, non loin de la magnifique baie de Breidavík.

Haute de 100 m, la cascade de Dynjandi est l'une des plus spectaculaires d'Islande.

Dévalant une paroi rocheuse sur une soixantaine de mètres de large, elle se jette directement dans un fjord dans un bruit d'enfer. La route qui serpente le long de l'océan ne permet pas une moyenne horaire élevée et la péninsule de Vatnsnes, notre prochaine étape, ne sera atteinte qu'en début de soirée. Baigné par les eaux de la baie de Hunafloi, l'endroit abrite les plus importantes colonies de phoques du pays et dévoile l'étonnante arche de basalte de Hvitserkur que la légende assimile à un troll surpris par un lever de soleil! C'en est terminé des pistes (provisoirement) et des fjords du Nord-Ouest, retour sur la route 1 qui mène à Akureyri, 2^e ville du pays avec 18 000 habitants et considérée comme la capitale du Nord. Au fil des kilomètres, proche du village de Varmahlid, se planque dans un riant petit vallon l'église en bois de Vidimyrarkirkja. Recouverte de tourbe et datant de 1834, elle est l'une des rares qui assure encore les offices. A proximité, face à l'estuaire du Héradsvötn, zone de marais ponctuée de lacs où se mirent les montagnes enneigées, se dresse la célèbre ferme de Glaumbaer. Composée de plusieurs bâtiments en bois

bâties aux XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles, c'est l'un des plus beaux bijoux de l'architecture traditionnelle des fermes à toit de tourbe.

De l'eau, l'Islande en regorge. Comme son nom l'indique, le pays est une terre de glace. Plus d'un dixième de l'île est couvert de glaciers qui libèrent d'importantes masses d'eau qui, au gré du relief, forment d'impressionnantes chutes et magnifiques cascades. Avant de partir à la chasse (photographique) aux baleines dans l'océan Glacial Arctique du côté d'Husavik, une halte est recommandée sur les berges de la rivière Skjalfandafljot qui prend sa source au glacier Vatnajökull, le plus grand d'Europe. Dans un vacarme assourdissant, Godafoss, la «chute des Dieux», entrave la rivière de son puissant panache de toute splendeur.

Suite de l'expédition à découvrir dans le prochain numéro du *UN Special*. ■



Reykjavik dominée par l'imposante église Hallgrímskirkja



Nommé «Réttir», l'endroit où les moutons sont triés après avoir brouté tout l'été dans les hautes terres

Letter to the editor

MARY FRETZ*

The International Association of Conference Translators (AITC) was pleased to read ("In defence of Umoja", by Christian Saunders, June 2016) that the UN's new Enterprise Resource Planning system is paying dividends.

Judging by the reports we've received from our members, however, the system seems to be experiencing more than "teething problems": delays of 10 months and more in the payment of salaries to short-term staff translators and invoices from contractual translators; no information about what any payment eventually made actually corresponds to; conflicting information on the procedures involved, etc. Most distressing of all to our members is the lack of feedback from the officials they have contacted in the various UN offices, up to the highest level: their questions and messages have gone unacknowledged and unanswered, or have been passed from one official or office to

another without a clear response ever materializing. They have suffered financial hardship and wasted considerable amounts of time.

Other agencies in the UN common system also experienced "teething problems" when they introduced systems similar to Umoja. In order to deal with the ensuing chaos (and we use the word advisedly), they finally opted to appoint sector "focal points" authorized to handle all queries and procedures promptly and clearly. We in the AITC would have been pleased to learn from Mr. Saunders' article that the UN had decided on a similar course of action, and would be happy to contribute to finding the right solutions to whatever problems persist. ■

*President, International Association of Conference Translators (AITC)

Message du rédacteur en chef

Vous aimeriez partager votre opinion sur le magazine et son contenu?

N'hésitez plus et écrivez-nous !

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

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

Et maintenant, à vos plumes !

Adressez vos commentaires à:

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

Message from the editor-in-chief

Would you like to share your opinion about *UN Special* and its contents ?

Write to us!

We will be glad to hear from you. The most interesting, relevant, or even ingenious responses will be published in the magazine.

Should you wish to submit an article, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Now, put pen to paper!

Send your thoughts to:

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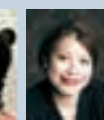
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