

UN Special

MAGAZINE DES FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX – THE MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS



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GARRY ASLANYAN

Rédacteur en chef / Editor-in-chief

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Because it’s 2016

Let me start with a confession. I have borrowed the title idea for this editorial from a retort made last year by the newly minted Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau – Because it’s 2015. It drew international attention when he gave this succinct explanation of his new, half-female cabinet. Trudeau’s gender-equal cabinet will now rank Canada at No. 4 in the world in terms of percentage of women in ministerial positions, tied with France and Liechtenstein. It was previously in 20th place, according to the UN Women report; Finland is No. 1. And Justin Trudeau has gone further. No tokenism. Women didn’t get just the junior ministerial portfolios; they got billion dollar key operations. So when there is a will there is a way. But we are still not there with women in leadership positions around the globe. We bring you some stories and examples to highlight experiences of those dealing with it from various angles.

At United Nations agencies, from grass-roots initiatives and rankings of how the inequality affects the global development, we brought you all to enjoy. And as always, we have lots of other interest grabbing articles for you to appreciate.

Parce que nous sommes en 2016

Je dois vous avouer quelque-chose. J’ai emprunté l’idée du titre de cet éditorial à une réplique du nouveau Premier Ministre du Canada, Justin Trudeau, l’an passé: «Parce que nous sommes en 2015.» Son explication succincte à propos de son nouveau cabinet composé pour moitié de femmes avait eu un écho international. Son cabinet promouvant l’égalité des sexes place le Canada au 4^e rang mondial du pourcentage de femmes occupant des postes ministériels, à égalité avec la France et le Lichtenstein. D’après le rapport de UN Women, le Canada occupait avant la 20^e place, et la Finlande est en première position. Justin Trudeau ne s’est pas contenté de prendre une mesure symbolique. Il est allé plus loin. Ces femmes n’ont pas seulement hérité de ministères de moindre importance mais se sont aussi vu confier des portefeuilles clés dont le budget se chiffre en milliards de dollars. Bref, quand on veut on peut. Au niveau mondial, nous n’en sommes, hélas, pas encore là en termes de femmes dirigeantes. Dans ce numéro, nous vous présentons et éclairons sous divers angles quelques-unes de ces expériences.

Vous pourrez lire et apprécier également comment l’inégalité affecte le développement global à travers des classements, des initiatives locales et au sein des agences des Nations Unies. Et comme toujours, nous vous proposons beaucoup d’autres articles très intéressants.

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Arancha Gonzalez

Directrice exécutive du Centre du Commerce International

L'ITC¹ est une organisation internationale hybride mise en place conjointement par l'ONU (CNUCED) et l'Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC). Il offre un partenariat et une expertise visant à permettre un développement économique et humain via le commerce et les exportations.



CHRISTIAN DAVID, UNOG

Cette édition du magazine est féminine. Vous aviez récemment évoqué un potentiel encore inexploité pour l'emploi des femmes, dans votre domaine d'activité.

La place de la femme dans l'économie est une conviction de l'ITC. L'argument le plus fort de notre plaidoyer est que ce potentiel inexploité constitue, preuves à l'appui, une perte énorme pour nos sociétés. Nous comptons plus de 90% des pays dans le monde qui ont au moins une restriction légale à la participation économique des femmes et 28 pays qui ont adopté au moins 10 lois discriminantes !

Nous essayons de convaincre les dirigeants qu'ils ont tout à gagner à développer l'emploi des femmes. Si on permettait aux femmes de travailler au même niveau que les hommes, le PIB augmenterait de 5% aux

Etats-Unis, de 9% au Japon. La diversité et l'inclusion des femmes est bonne pour la productivité, pour la croissance et encore davantage, pour la réduction de la pauvreté. Les femmes réinvestissent 90% de leurs revenus dans leurs familles et proches communautés contre seulement 40% pour les hommes. Une estimation fait état de 865 millions de femmes qui pourraient être actives dans le circuit économique dont 812 millions vivent dans les économies en voie de développement.

Aucun gouvernement ne peut ignorer aujourd'hui ce vecteur économique essentiel sous peine de gaspiller son potentiel de croissance. Nous pensons qu'il faut agir à trois niveaux :

- L'égalité homme femme dans l'économie doit devenir une norme et non plus une exception.
- Changer les lois grâce aux actions des parlementaires.



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- Faciliter les opportunités économiques en faveur de l'entrepreneuriat des femmes.

Il est évident qu'il n'existe pas de recette universelle. Chaque pays doit être abordé selon ses spécificités, ses traditions et sa culture. Il est important de constater qu'il n'y a pas de clivage nord/sud ou est/ouest, la situation est beaucoup plus nuancée. Le Rwanda, par exemple, travaille depuis des années à promouvoir la condition féminine et est bien plus en pointe que nombre de pays occidentaux.

Il est surprenant d'apercevoir dans certains bureaux de l'ITC, des présentoirs d'habits ou même des produits locaux. L'ITC serait-il vraiment une organisation à part dans ce domaine ?

L'ITC est beaucoup plus proche du secteur privé et même d'une «start-up» que d'une

organisation classique des Nations Unies. Dans nos bureaux, vous voyez des échantillons qui présentent un intérêt en termes de commerce. Nous accompagnons la mise en place d'une stratégie commerciale pour que ces objets profitent à l'économie locale. On peut voir des textiles, des chaussures, des noix de cajou... A d'autres étages, ce sont des services d'intelligence commerciale et aussi un fort appui institutionnel aux pays. Notre organisation reste une entité à part dans le paysage international. Son caractère hybride dû à son rattachement aux Nations Unies et à l'OMC, lui permet de créer des passerelles entre les opportunités commerciales et le commerce sur le terrain. L'essentiel est de mettre en place des stratégies dynamiques et de s'affranchir

La femme, ce n'est pas seulement une question pour les femmes, c'est une question pour les sociétés.

de certaines pesanteurs. Nous sommes jugés tous les ans sur les résultats concrets et comptables du nombre de sociétés que nous avons réussi à aider.

Entre deux déplacements à l'étranger, vous recevez ou rencontrez de nombreux visiteurs. Quelle est la proportion entre institutionnels, société civile et organismes privés ?

Il s'agit d'équilibrer mes rencontres dans la proportion d'un tiers chacun. Les avis et contributions des trois sont indispensables pour permettre une action efficace et pérenne de nos projets sur le terrain. Notre agence travaille avec des

fonds publics avec pour finalité, la réduction de la pauvreté.

Avec les gouvernements, il faut créer un environnement des affaires grâce aux traités commerciaux, aux règles et aux politiques économiques qui relèvent du domaine régalien.

Le secteur privé est présent au travers des institutions de promotion au commerce et à l'investissement, des chambres de commerce, associations de producteurs, fédérations professionnelles et organisations de femmes entrepreneurs.

Enfin l'expertise du secteur privé et de la société civile grâce aux associations, fondations et aux ONG, favorise l'approche sur le terrain. Nous travaillons en ce moment pour aider les communautés de réfugiés et nous plaçons pour que cette problématique soit abordée sous l'angle économique permettant leur insertion dans la société.

Ayant commencé ma vie professionnelle dans le secteur privé, je reste convaincue que l'efficacité, le savoir-faire, l'agilité et même l'imagination peuvent se retrouver aussi bien dans le privé que dans le public.

De quels moyens de communication disposez-vous et quelle vulgarisation mettez-vous en place ?

L'information, la communication et la vulgarisation sont essentielles pour faire comprendre le message. Nous portons ce message en utilisant les médias; presse écrite, radio, télévision, web, réseaux

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sociaux, en organisant des conférences, des séminaires de formation mais aussi des cours en ligne au travers de notre Académie de e-learning.

Nous organisons aussi des événements publics, tels que des défilés de mode et même un souk! Ce marché a été installé au Palais des Nations et à l'ITC avec sa plateforme en ligne eCom-Souk. L'artisanat des femmes syriennes, représente un symbole d'espoir et de dignité pour des familles de réfugiés syriens.

Pour la première fois cette année nous inclurons dans notre rapport annuel un état de mesure de notre implication dans le débat public et les réseaux sociaux, notre marge de progression reste encore très importante.

Les Objectifs de développement durable (ODD) constituent désormais le point d'horizon à approcher par tout responsable de l'Organisation, quel est le point de repère que vous vous êtes fixé pour l'ITC ?

Nous avons identifié des objectifs tels que l'insertion des femmes dans l'économie, l'agriculture durable, le

Favoriser l'emploi des femmes, c'est augmenter le PIB d'un pays!

renforcement des institutions ou encore la création d'emploi. L'essentiel est de rester à l'écoute des pays. Je crois que les pays se sont approprié la dimension développement durable de cette «boîte à outils» dans laquelle ils peuvent puiser. Nous agissons toujours

à la demande des pays ou de leurs institutions. Une fois que la demande est reçue, nous procédons à un diagnostic. Cela nous permet de comprendre les forces et les faiblesses et d'établir une stratégie qui suppose une validation par le pays et, par la suite, la mise en place d'un programme. Notre savoir-faire est constitué par la gestion des chaînes de valeur, l'amélioration de la compétitivité des PME, l'intelligence et connexion aux marchés, le dialogue public-privé, ou encore l'amélioration de l'environnement des affaires. Tout ceci en vue d'utiliser le commerce comme levier pour la réduction de la pauvreté.

Quels conseils donneriez-vous aux jeunes femmes qui aspirent à occuper des fonctions internationales importantes ?

Soyez vous-mêmes, ne vous fixez pas de limites, faites sauter les barrières, soyez

passionnées par ce que vous faites. J'ai rencontré des centaines de femmes actives dans tous les domaines, elles sont portées par une énorme volonté de réussir, mais cette réussite nécessite un partenariat fort entre hommes et femmes.

Pour ma part, ce sont aussi des hommes qui ont cru en mes capacités et m'ont aidée à avancer dans ma carrière. ■

¹ (International Trade Centre – ITC)
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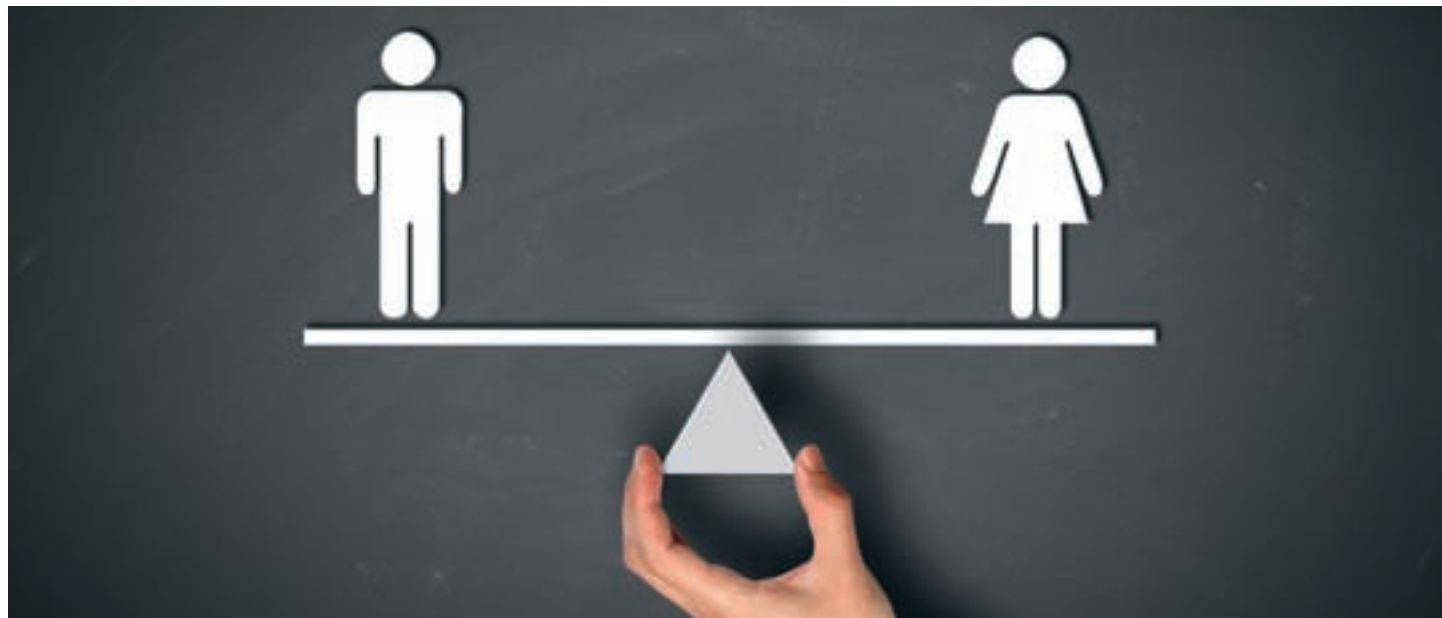
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How a “table” could change the world

With both US and Swiss nationalities, both having cities with UN Headquarters, Caitlin Kraft-Buchman is immersed in international environment.

In another life she was a Hollywood movie agent and she confesses being addicted to ideas because ideas can change the world.



© SP

**SOLANGE BEHOTEGUY, UNCTAD,
GARRY ASLANYAN, WHO**

Caitlin is a woman engaged with humanity. We met her to hear her voice from the table. Strong and warm voice.

Caitlin, you are the Founder and Executive Director of Women@TheTable how did this come to be and where did you find the inspiration for your engagement?

I've always been politically active person but when I

worked with the Women's delegation of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ms. Julienne Lusenge at the Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict a thought began to haunt me that only men with guns are invited to sit down at the negotiating tables. Women are rarely invited to sit and actively negotiate peace (even though we know that no peace is sustainable without the participation of women and civil society)... So I thought we needed a vehicle to propel more women to decision-making tables everywhere!

That could be a kitchen table for everyone from the lady selling at the market to the central banker. I think that sometimes we are forgetting that gender is a vertical issue. I also think that if there were more women at the peace making tables we would perhaps have a chance at making peace more sustainable.



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How is your “table”, can you describe it?

The table is round, inclusive, inventive, solid, with women and men engaged in a stimulating nourishing discussion and everyone’s voice is heard.

If you could put three things on the table that can change women’s situation in the world, what would that be?

I would choose education because education frees everyone to make great and interesting choices and allows them to know their rights. Unfortunately, I have to say that I would choose freedom from violence because we see that this is an issue that crosses all cultures, all regions, all social classes and all educational backgrounds. I will also choose more progressive humanist voices, including men voices.

Do you think that Geneva is a special place to create this kind of initiative due to its diversity?

Exactly. Geneva it’s an extraordinary place to create initiatives. There is kind of energy and ideas as well as passion from those at the top of organizations to those who are supporting them. This is truly the most international place that is perfect to start something like this.

Do you think that women and men are equal nowadays? How do you understand parity?

There is no parity and we need to work on that. It’s not only about numbers. We see now a lot of young women in the work force all over the world but they are still not at leadership positions. It’s still the exception rather than a rule for a woman to run a central bank, to be a head of state, a judge or a head of the army.

I’ll give you an example – at TEDx at the Palais the Nigerian Minister of Telecommunications in her talk reflected that while

Geneva Gender Champions

Launched in 2015, the International Geneva Gender Champions network of senior’s leaders involve Member States, international organizations and civil society. For the moment 41 diplomatic missions and 22 international organizations based in Geneva.

Members of this exceptional initiative commit to:

- Signing up to the Geneva Gender Parity Pledge that aims to strive for gender parity in all discussions in International Geneva;
- Undertaking two additional concrete, measurable, accountable institutional actions in the calendar year to advance gender equality, either in the executive management of the organization or in programmatic work. As the objective of the network is to engage senior leadership and elevate awareness, the actions may be drawn from strategy documents or work plans for the organization.

Existing work can be made more visible with

a view to strengthening ongoing efforts, or new initiatives can be launched specifically for the network;

- Highlighting the network on their respective home pages, and to reporting annual results and progress on the organization’s website;
- Participating in an annual meeting of the network to exchange experience and strategize on how to further advance and embed gender equality.

During the launching, the Director-General of the United Nations in Geneva, Michael Møller announced that he will no longer accept invitations to serve on panel without any women participants. He also announced that he will initiate the compilation of a Gender Policy for UNOG, and he will introduce a gender equality component as part of all induction programs at UNOG.

accomplishing the numbers of the millennium development goals set for girls education is wonderful but when these girls go home and take out their uniforms they are the ones getting the water, taking care of their younger brothers and sisters while their brothers are able to study or play. So we put the girls in school but we haven’t changed the culture of expectations. So she asked if we are measuring the right things. And how we want to change that?

Things are not moving as quickly as we expect. How do you feel? Are you tired?

Of course I’m disappointed but then I think that my sisters are working on the ground and they keep fighting, do I even have a right to be tired or disappointed? I’m essentially an eternal optimist.

We have legal instruments, laws, Conventions on the eliminations of all forms of discrimination against women, what is happening then?

The legal instruments are dynamic, even visionary, but

CEDAW and other treaties are only as powerful as their implementation. Robust implementation is the next great change that needs to happen.

Women@the table are a co-founder on “The International Geneva Gender Champions” initiative. Why is this initiative important?

Through the visionary support of Director-General Møller and U.S. Ambassador Hamamoto we have been able to gather an extraordinary cohort of leaders of International Organizations, Missions, and now Civil Society and academia based in Geneva. The collective power of influential men and women working in concert together, leading their organizations on the issue of gender equality is transformational and long overdue. This isn’t a women’s issue, it’s a human potential issue, and there is tremendous will in Geneva from the top to the bottom of organizations to create gender equality in the true spirit of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. This enthusiastic support of the hard-working

women and men of the International Organizations has made me think that this simple idea could become a movement as powerful as Henri Dunant’s idea originally conceived in Geneva.

What are your upcoming projects, your plans for the future?

We are working with a global group of women to bring their voices and stories to a mainstream media space. Two major conferences are planned where our strategy is to bring women and their extraordinary solutions to the table.

Then next year’s Davos! It can’t be that there are only 17% women who have something to add to the conversation about how the world is run. ■

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Markus Jerger

Keeper of the history in the Peace Castle

In one of our recent of the UN Special¹ we described about an extraordinary discovery of the Peace Column in the Château d'Allaman. Today Markus Jerger, the owner of the Château d'Allaman and the person who discovered this Column, is our guest:



© Elena Budnikova

EVELINA RIOUKHINA, UNOG

You are living in one of the most significant historical Castle (maybe in the whole of Europe, the heart of the Peace movement, initiated and inspired by Count JJ de Sellon. It is in “your Castle” that the first Congrès of Peace took place in 1932. So, you are, if I may say, and keeper of the Peace history. What does it represent for you to be the owner of the Peace Castle?

The honour, privilege and pleasure to own and live in a medieval estate are not comparable to any other form of 'home' or 'life' experience. You are inspired daily by a new historic discovery when surrounded by a rich past, like in Allaman Castle. This place emerges you into the evolution of the societies of the region in the 10th, 12th, 14th, 18th Century and the past owners life and contribution to our history. Sellon is such an exceptional example, but also Cavour or the Countess Margarite de Langallerie were outstanding contributors to the Castle's unique evolution.

Tell us about yourself; are you historian or architect, or both?

I grew up in the Black Forest, the southwest part of Germany, near the Swiss border. My parents are Swiss-German. My ancestors

produced Alarm clocks and for a long time the family was very successful in selling some of the finest clocks in the world. Around 1985 the business and competition put a lot of pressure on the family business and it became clear that new directions had to be taken. As a new strategy Real Estate became of interest and from 1990 it was clear that I would take care of land and real estate activities. I worked in the days of the fall of the East-German borders in Berlin and financed-bought-restored and traded many of the most important historic properties. A passion was born and I fell in relationship with old properties, estates and castles. For me these Masterpieces of History and Architecture and Treasures of past times are preserving memories... like fine paintings. Also they cannot be reproduced, rare, often unique and full of elegance, style, grace and grandeur. Building centuries ago and bringing these old Treasures to modern contemporary living standards, became my passion, obsession and profession.

Historic properties leave a trail over the centuries and I am very proud to add the preservation of monuments so that future generations can enjoy their existence. Today I am an investor in the preservation of historic properties. I am not an architect,

but as an Economist and I have trained my eyes over the past 30 years (beyond an architect's vision) to see, unveil and develop the hidden and intrinsic values of a property in the most efficient ways to strengthen the economic aspects of it's asset and ensure its autofinancing and self-preservation abilities.

Your life was linked with our organisation through UNESCO; please tell us about your experience.

My mother Dr. Ute Henriette Ohoven is a seriously dedicated humanitarian worker. She served UNESCO as Special Ambassador for the past 27 years and established foundations to support the education of children in need. From early on I have assisted my mother (like all my family) in bringing projects to reality and assisting underdeveloped regions and less privileged communities in learning and living in suitable housing communities. At present my mother and my sister are redeveloping an entire district in Dakar / Senegal (La Baraka²) with her YOU Foundation³.

To rebuild historical monuments – what does it represent for you – is it your passion, or do you want to preserve history, actually, to keep time?

Preserving the only still existing book, a script, a piece of art or historic architecture must be one of humanity's priorities. These past relicts become the inspiration for all we have today and what we leave to our children's children will tell them their story of the past. How would the world be without Venice, Rome, Athen's Acropolis or the historic districts of London, Paris or St Petersburg...? A world without churches, temples, mosques, castles and past architectural treasures and masterpieces of their time – how would this be?

I cannot imagine letting old building treasures die. A doctor has to rescue a patient with medicine and his skills. So, over the past 30 years I have dedicated a big part of my life to learn and to become a good doctor for 'buildings in pain'. My aim is to heal the structures and substance – often caused by the past owner's negligence or lack of funds, love or care. Once historic properties are adapted to today's safety, security, ecology and quality standards, these buildings become usable and valuable again. Many very valuable historic 'pearls' are still crumbling and rotten in prime locations of capitals of the world because of either lack of funding or complicated permitting

procedures. It is sad to see buildings 'slowly dying' or becoming a 'no-repair-possible' skeleton, because authorities cannot agree for decades on scope of works and budgets. A patient has to be saved, so does a historic masterpiece of architecture. They represent in stone the evolution of our cultures, they showcases our ancestor's skills and have preserved forever their innovations and ideas.

Old buildings are books in stone – with the architecture as the language. Like this and perhaps similar to Shakespeare or old paintings preserve the values and stories of the past for our future generations inspiration. So in some ways I see a finished restored and redeveloped property as a

now healed and healthy real estate that can survive now another 1000 years and continue to serve as a timestamp of our human evolution,... and one day allow a look back of 20 centuries or more... when studying e.g. the Chateau d'Allaman.

UNS: In this connection, what does time represent for you? You might be connected to keeping time somehow. What is the connection between you, time, time-keeping and history?

My ancestors business was Time. We invented the majority of the alarm clocks produced over the past 150 years. Time and precision was of highest importance for my family. My father never came late



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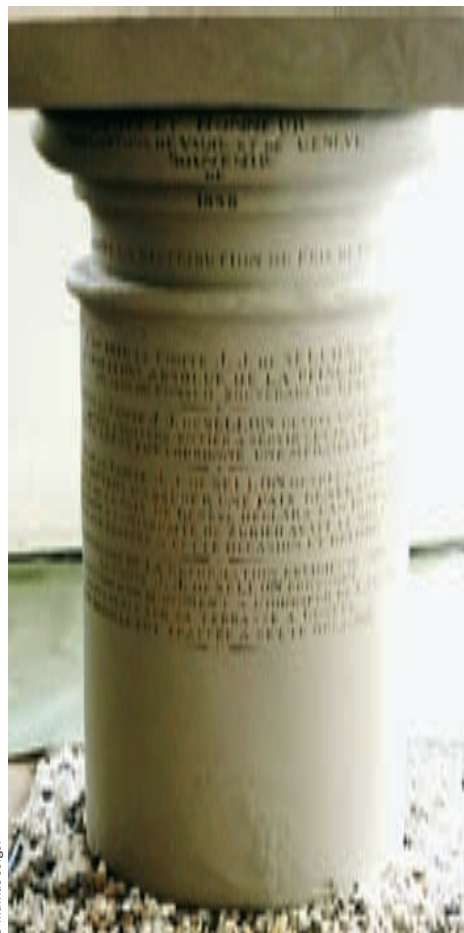
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the world markets. For me, the family's traditions and rituals have evolved into applying the same to buildings. Over the past 30 years I have re-developed historic properties and with every property I have learned something new that served me in the next projects. This allows me today to re-fit very complicated properties with construction waves spanning over multiple centuries, with paint-repairs after wars and severe structural problems... Most of the problems can be resolved today if the TIME and WILL is there, if authorities assist investors and developers, if we shorten procedures and ensure the survival of historic buildings NOW that later cannot be saved anymore... (My grandfather used to say, our alarm clocks are only efficient if 2 things are ensured: that the clock is in TIME and that the person has the WILL to get out of bed when the clock's bell rings.)

The Peace Column you discovered in your Peace Castle is one of the three important monuments, erected by Count de Sellon, with whom we, United Nations Office in Geneva, are also connected. Being in a way your "Peace" cousins, what do you know about Peace Temple and could it be one of your project?

to a meeting – ever and his father was of the same standard. I could go backwards for 5 generations. My ancestors improved with every step and every new series of clocks the mechanical movements, durability, precision and power reserve as well as sound quality of the ringing bells. The previous products always served as the basis for the next innovation and in the 20th Century Jerger Clocks⁴ were a benchmark in mechanical alarm clock precision and my family's factories produced for

Yes of course, in honour of Jean Jacques de Sellon, a great man who gave the Castle of Allaman the true meaning of a peaceful castle, I will support all efforts around the peace temple. The selection of a perfect position for its erection is of essence as only then it is ensured that as many people can see and embrace the message the temple should proclaim: PEACE, as it will resolve all our current problems in the world. I am open to welcome the Temple in the Park of the Castle of Allaman and it would be a very

suitable place and here JJ de Sellon refuelled energy and collected and manifested many of his ideas. Allaman has the right access with public infrastructure and could be very suitable as also the rest of the castle could reflect the scenery well. Perhaps a project to further explore and evaluate. Also Geneva and the center of town could offer ideal effects. I would become a photo opportunity for all visitors and the message of JJ de Sellon could spread the world, similar to the flower watch. I would think of a few locations the temple could be very well placed.

Thank you for this interview! ■

¹ https://www.unspecial.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/UNSpecial_Avril2015.pdf (UNS 748).

² <http://you-stiftung.de/category/projekte/afrika/senegal/>

³ <http://you-stiftung.de/category/aktuelles/>

⁴ <http://chateauprivateoffi.wix.com/markusjerger#!a-history-of-time/jjqbt>

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A L'OCCASION DU FESTIVAL, REPRISE DE LA PERFORMANCE «TRAGEDY RELOADED, PRÉLUDE II» DE MAYA BÖSCH/CIE STURMFREI

LE JEUDI 10 MARS 2016 À 18H À LA SALLE COMMUNALE DE PLAINPALAIS (PREMIÈRE PARTIE, «LES EXYLÉES D'ESCHYLE») PUIS À 19H30 AU FLUX LABORATORY CAROUGE (DEUXIÈME PARTIE, «LES ANIMAUX DE JELINEK»)

LE VENDREDI 11 MARS 2016 À 23H À LA SALLE COMMUNALE DE PLAINPALAIS («LES EXYLÉES D'ESCHYLE»)

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TRAGEDY RELOADED, PRÉLUDE II, VUE DE LA PERFORMANCE AU FLUX LABORATORY, © LAURA SPOZIO

Entrusted to be “In Women’s Hands”!?

“In Women’s Hands”, an artwork by artist Clara Garesio, exhibited near Salle XX, is one of the latest donations to our Organization. It speaks for itself about the leading role of women in society, and is one of the latest creations of the artist.



EVELINA RIOUKHINA, OLEKSANDR SVIRCHEVSKYY,
UNOG

This beautiful piece of art is about the beauty, the simplicity and strength of women as positive transformative forces of our societies. With her artwork, Ms. Garesio is passing the message to remind of the increasing role of women across the world.

Actually, the leading role of women has been known since the beginning of times. Legendary Queen Eyleuka of Ethiopia (circa 4530-3240), also known as Dalukaha, according to legend was one of the rulers before the Antediluvian (the flooding), she ruled for 45 years. Egyptian Queens are believed to have governed from around 3000 BCE. Cleopatra was the last Pharaoh of Egypt, and the last of the Ptolemy dynasty of Egyptian rulers, she held reigns of power for 21 years. Ku-baba ruled the

Mesopotamian City-State of Ur round 2500 BCE. Although the legendary rulers of Japan, before written history, were said to be empresses, Suiko (554-628) is the first empress in recorded history to rule Japan. Theodora, empress of Byzantium from 527-548, was probably the most influential and powerful woman in the empire’s history. Queen Elizabeth I of England (reigned 1558-1603) is one of the most fascinating women of history. Tsarine Catherine II of Russia, the most renowned and the longest-ruling women leaders of Russia, reigning from 1762 until her death in 1796, modernized Russia, promoted education, and expanded Russia’s borders. The last Dowager Empress Cixi of China was one of the most powerful women in the world for 47 years (1861-1908).

It was not until and just after World War I that the first few women became members of democratically elected parliamentary governments, and Nina Bang, Danish Minister of Education 1924-26, was the first woman to be minister. It took some more time before the women became countries leaders: in 1960 Sirivamo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka became the world’s first woman elected Prime Minister and in 1974 Isabel Perón of Argentina became the first woman President. Today, among all 193 Member



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Eleanor Roosevelt holding the UDHR. November 1949.

States of the United Nations, there are currently around thirty women-leaders (including Presidents, Prime Ministers or Governors), 10 of them are Heads of State: Brazil, CAR, Chile, Croatia, Liberia, Lithuanian, Malta, Mauritius, Republic of Korea and San Marino).

United Nations commitments to the advancement of women began with the signing of the UN Charter in San Francisco in 1945. Of the 160 signatories, only four were women - Minerva Bernardino (Dominican Republic), Virginia Gildersleeve (United States), Bertha Lutz (Brazil) and Wu Yi-Fang (China) – but they succeeded in inscribing women’s rights in the founding document of the UN, which reaffirms in its preamble “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of Nations large and small”. During the inaugural meetings of the UN General Assembly in London in February 1946, Eleanor Roosevelt, a United States delegate, read an open letter addressed to “the women of the world”: *“To this end, we call on the Governments of the world to encourage women everywhere to take a more active part in national and international*

affairs, and on women who are conscious of their opportunities to come forward and share in the work of peace and reconstruction as they did in war and resistance.” The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), a full-fledged Commission dedicated to ensuring women’s equality and to promoting women’s rights, established the same year, declared as one of its guiding principles: *“to raise the status of women, irrespective of nationality, race, language or religion, to equality with men in all fields of human enterprise”...*

Today the status of women is one of the primary objectives of the new SDG 5 of the 2030 development agenda for sustainable development, aimed at ensuring gender equality in political, economic and public decision making positions. The UN Women’s Step it Up for Gender Equality call for Planet 50:50 by 2030, aims at promoting women’s full and effective participation in political decision-making fora (in the context of SDG5), and seeks to address the gender imbalance that exists on delegations to multilateral conferences under the United Nations. “Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality” is also the 2016 theme for International Women’s Day.

Since the very first day, women have played important roles, working for the United Nations, being at the senior level inside the Organization. Today, for example, 13 Under-Secretaries-General are women: Shamshad Akhtar (ESCAP), Zainab Hawa Bangura (Sexual Violence in Conflict), Alicia Bárcena Ibarra (ECLAC), Helen Clark (UNDP), Ertharin Cousin (WFP), Grete Faremo (UNOPS), Cristina Gallach (Public Information), Rima Khalaf (ESCWA), Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women), Catherine Pollard (GA Affairs & Conference Management), Leila Zerrougui (Children and Armed Conflict), Sahle-Work Zewde (UNON), and Heidi Mendoza (observer, IOS). Many women lead UN agencies: UNESCO (Director-General Irina Bokova), ITC (Executive Director Arancha González). Our UN Special partner WHO is led by Director-General Dr. Chan. In the past two more Geneva offices were led by women at USG level: the UNECE – by Brigita Shmognerova (2002-2005), preceded by Danuta Hubner; Navy Pillay was the Human Rights High Commissioner (2008-2014), preceded by

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During the event Planet 50-50 by 2030. Step it Up for gender equality.

Louise Arbour (2004-2008), and Mary Robinson (1997-2002).

More than two hundred women-personalities marked the history of the UN being Permanent Representatives to the UN, and today, in Geneva alone, 38 Permanent

Representatives are women. There are also women who honoured both positions (e.g. Zamira Eshmambetova, former Permanent Representative of Kyrgyzstan to the UN, today is among the UNECE Directors). **The UNECE can be proud of its "50:50" achievement already today: in**

senior positions (D) it is indeed a Gender Equality Leader!

If to imagine hands of all these women together – this will be exactly the masterpiece by Clara Garesio in action! Being created in the form of the Globe through the Women's hands, the hands of the Women of all Nations, it passes the message: **the World needs to be in women's hands!** Being the gift to the United Nations it passes symbolically her message to the whole Organization!

In fact, starting from its acting Secretary-General Sir Gladwan Jebb, through other eight outstanding figures: Trugve Lie, Dag Hammarskjöld, U Thant, Kurt Waldheim, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Kofi Annan, and the current Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, our Organization since 1945 had never been led by a woman. Will the next or any future Secretary-General be a woman, thus entrusting the whole of the UN to be "In a Woman's Hands"? ■



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Fighting for gender equality in the Middle East

Why we're nowhere near finished

Thirty-five years after the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), historic steps have been taken to make this world equitable for all women.

MAHMOUD HAMMOUD, UNOG

However, there are more challenges on the horizon. The *Optional Protocol to the Convention and The Campaign for Equality without Reservation* have not yet compelled the entire Middle East to nullify policies antithetical to the convention's dictates.

Several Middle Eastern countries have persistent reservations to CEDAW, particularly regarding Articles 2 and 16. Although the Committee regularly encourages those countries to renounce their reservations, several continue to maintain inherently discriminatory cultural elements.

In many Middle Eastern countries, International Women's Day — dedicated to celebrating women's accomplishments — is not actually observed. In fact, in those same countries, there are no laws capacitating feminine achievement.

According to UNICEF, there are 800 million illiterates around the world. A full 70% of them are women. Furthermore, over 600 million women live under legislation that either fails to prohibit domestic violence or blatantly condones it!

Laws encouraging gender-based discrim-

ination; customs perpetuating marriage and family inequality; policies curtailing freedom of movement; unabashed tolerance of violence against women; the continuity of human trafficking; and the failure to provide equal access to education and employment opportunities are major concerns that have not been sufficiently addressed.

Many NGOs report that women have substantially lower social ranking than men in some very rich Middle Eastern countries. This is caused and evidenced by their limited opportunities for education, inability to obtain higher wages, and lack of political power. Their forced subservience is further evidenced by the greater parental authority granted to fathers. Women are also disadvantaged regarding civil liberties, as they often cannot do something as simple as moving around freely.

The situation sounds bleak, but there is a ray of hope; CEDAW has had momentous impact on many Middle Eastern countries. In 2004, Morocco introduced a Family Code granting women greater familial and marital rights. For the first time in history,

20% of the highest Consultation Council seats in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are reserved for women. In Tunisia's Constituent Assembly, women secured more seats in October 2011 than women seeking office in British Parliament. Even the United Arab Emirates have achieved decent progress regarding the elimination of female discrimination through active female empowerment.

Kuwait has also made progress in some respects. For instance, women are legally allowed to own property, land-based or otherwise. They also have access to financial services once they turn 21 years old, and they need not seek a male guardian's permission to obtain these services. The tragedy of female poverty is slowly being alleviated in many parts of the region.

While these are encouraging attainments, they cannot overshadow the serious impediments ahead. The interests of Middle Eastern women are absolutely paramount, but no nation can solve this problem alone. Nothing short of a multilateral, international coordination involving the public and private sectors will remediate their plight.

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Primary school in Amman Jordan young girls reading



Kuwait youth

Although it's true that many Middle Eastern countries maintain reservations, there is a way to convince them to repeal their refusals. When delegates of similar cultures explain why they removed their reservations, resistant government officials are more likely to fully conform with CEDAW.

Indeed, this is possible — there are many Middle Eastern countries who accepted

CEDAW without any reservations. If Middle Eastern delegates are mobilized, there will be more widespread, unqualified acceptance of CEDAW.

We may not all have political power, but we can still act. We can do something as simple as writing to Middle Eastern representatives in the UN, urging those countries who have completely accepted CEDAW to

take an active role in strengthening the commitment of neighboring nations. This may not seem like much, but it is the combined force of several raindrops that allows a river to form. ■

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Global Goal 5

Is Geneva leading the way to gender equality?

“Did your organization sign the pledge?” Have you heard the conversation circling the corridors of Geneva these past few months? “It will just mean more work for us” responds another; and less often but I have heard: “It’s ridiculous – we’ll end up sacrificing competence”.

DR CLAIRE SOMERVILLE

If you haven’t already heard about the Geneva Gender Champions Pledge for Parity you soon will. In less than a year this movement has gained momentum and we should all take notice because, whilst it is not the first institutional attempt to roll out a parity policy, it is the first to go city-wide, public and lead from the top. And, what is more, so far without resistance.

The pledge for inclusive panels taken by leaders of Geneva organizations and missions is one of three concrete

institutional commitments these key actors have taken to advance gender equality in their organization.

Their success is interesting for several reasons.

The climate has changed. In December 2001 UN Special reported on the outcome of an ILO tribunal that found the WHO administration guilty of gender bias. The WHO had acted decisively to redress the gender imbalance at the top by seeking to secure 6 out of 10 new appointments for women.

The move was successfully challenged and the WHO was criticized for reverse discrimination against the male candidate. Would this happen in 2016? Probably not here in Geneva right now. Evidence demonstrates that gender bias persists: Take for example efforts in the USA to examine gender bias in auditions for professional orchestral musicians. With the introduction of behind the curtain auditions the recruitment of women musicians increased from around 5% in the 1980s to close to parity by 2015. Gender bias no doubt also unfolds in the opposite direction too; women are more likely to gain custody of children in marital breakup. We should caution against essentializing gender characteristics when striving for gender equality. However the very acceptance of the Geneva movement underway

right now and its success in getting 85 Geneva leaders on board in just seven months is a measurable indicator of the sea change we are witnessing.

What is also striking is that we are observing an unusual and welcome top down instigation of change with real faces and individual accountability to ensure institutional action. Feminist movements, women activists and lobbyists have been typically grassroots movements exposing gender inequality and lobbying for change from the bottom up. This movement contributed to legal correctives for example in the form of CEDAW and rolled out national and institutional anti-discrimination legislation. Once these legal structures were secured we began to see

policy responses in the shape of gender equality mechanisms such as gender mainstreaming and equal opportunity declarations. But implementing these policies and genuinely affecting change remains a challenge, and this is where leadership can play a critical role.

Of course gender bias remains even in Geneva. In a recent evaluation of one of my classes an anonymous student commented "Why would you hire a pregnant woman to teach a compulsory course?" Gendered bias can rear its head in the most unexpected places – but generally this tone is out of sync with the Geneva gender zeitgeist and testament to this are student initiatives such as the Gender Dialogues that seek to synergize student voices to

challenge gender stereotypes. Their work at the grassroots and as future leaders is critical to advancing gender equality.

The champion's movement is not alone and is just one of many activities happening at the moment contributing towards Geneva gaining a reputation as a global leader in gender equality in the 2030 agenda. Our own programme of gender research at the Graduate Institute is rapidly expanding and supplying our colleagues with a stream of research and analysis that help close the data gaps. Longitudinal studies on rural change and human rights, women in conflict and peacekeeping, the gendered global political economy as well as grappling with the development of transnational

gender expertise as a category of knowledge and action should help cement Geneva as a hub that can deliver not only in the areas of humanitarian action, law and human rights, security and peacekeeping, global health and trade – but also the gender equality global goal. In the spirit of the Geneva Conventions could we soon see the Geneva Model to Gender Equality? ■

N.B. Claire Somerville is a visiting lecturer, outreach and development coordinator in the Programme on gender and social change, Graduate institute Geneva.

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Entre Damas & Genève

La guerre pacifique de Rania

Je rencontre Rania Kinge lors de la préparation du souk syrien organisé par le eComSouk «Made by Syrian Women» à Genève. Habillée en survêtement au milieu des cartons, alors qu'elle réceptionne les paquets de marchandise tout juste livrés.

CHRISTIAN DAVID, UNOG

L'échange avec cette personne talentueuse, enflammée et d'un courage à toute épreuve me surprend et me touche. Son expression est ponctuée d'arguments forts, émouvants, qui révèlent sa profonde humanité, une vision du pays et même des solutions pour le futur.

Votre parcours

Mon père était fonctionnaire international, j'ai ensuite pu suivre mes études en occident. J'ai eu la chance de pouvoir apprendre. J'ai ainsi passé ma jeunesse à côtoyer, au collège du Léman, des personnes qui étaient favorisées par les circonstances. Il est étrange d'imaginer que le destin aurait pu choisir une de mes sœurs, dont j'entraperçois le visage dans la cité de Damas ou d'Alep sous leurs longues tenues. Vers l'âge de 25 ans, je me suis rendue compte que je possédais un don pour le design. Après quelques pérégrinations sur plusieurs

continents, je suis retournée dans mon pays d'origine et ce fut le choc. En déambulant dans certaines rues de la capitale qui n'ont pas changé depuis des millénaires, appelez ça réminiscence ou révélation mais j'ai été emportée par un appel profond et inexplicable. J'ai réalisé à quel point ces petites mains, travaillant sur un coin de table, étaient capables de restituer, des techniques artistiques transmises depuis des centaines de générations. Ces objets frappent l'imagination en capturant véritablement le regard par leur façon et la technique employée.

A cette époque, je me suis aussi aperçue que la population syrienne, attirée par la société de consommation. Les boutiques électroniques et de biens occidentaux fleurissaient aux dépens d'échoppes traditionnelles qui fermaient. Cette situation avait pour conséquence économique la paupérisation accrue des plus pauvres. Tout un pan de la culture de mon pays risquait d'être anéanti sur l'autel de la pseudo-modernité qui était en fait un consumérisme appauvrissant culturellement et même financièrement.

Ajouté à ça, j'ai rencontré des femmes qui étaient pour la majorité, laissées pour compte

dans un pays, comme dans la plupart du Moyen-Orient, où la condition de la femme n'est souvent que virtuelle.

Avec mon imagination inspirée par l'art traditionnel syrien, j'ai décidé de monter des ateliers d'artisanat en faisant appel à des femmes. Je leur ai fait réaliser des objets d'art, de la marqueterie, des tissages. L'idée était que tout objet réalisé puisse rapidement être vendu et génère un revenu rapide. Je précise que les bénéfices de ces ventes sont reversés intégralement aux femmes et donc aux familles.

Atelier à Damas

Grâce à un financement initial (familial), j'ai pu investir, une partie de mon appartement s'est transformée en atelier. J'ai fondé cette entreprise sociale nommée Damascus Concept, une approche inconnue ici et inspirée par mon expérience en occident. Le site web <http://www.raniakinge.com> proposant les produits et eut un succès immédiat. J'ai la forte conviction que la réunion entre la technicité d'une approche commerciale occidentale, utilisant les technologies modernes est applicable pour mettre en valeur des produits de conception moderne mais inspirés par ces traditions millénaires.



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Une ville comme Damas, avec ses ethnies différentes me faisait finalement penser à New-York. Le mélange de ces cultures et de ces ethnies dans un melting-pot où se croisent toutes les influences ne pouvait qu'être prolifique pour les échanges, notamment commerciaux car il possède en lui une richesse profonde.

La guerre

Depuis 2011, le pays se trouve au milieu de toutes les abominations. Devant ces dizaines de milliers de vies et de familles anéanties, ces villes si belles, ces monuments détruits, je ne peux m'empêcher de penser que ce gaspillage était évitable et je pleure mes frères et sœurs disparus. J'ai continué à me battre, mais pas avec les mêmes armes.

Le pays étant sous embargo et, devant cette catastrophe humanitaire, la vente de bijoux paraissait tellement décalée par rapport à l'urgence. Pourtant, le succès était là, les objets se vendaient mais je me décourageais. J'étais prête à abandonner quand j'ai eu soudain l'idée de contacter différentes entités internationales. L'ONU et ses institutions mettent en effet en place des organismes, rédigent des lois, tentent de trouver des solutions.

J'ai obtenu une réponse de l'ITC au bout de trois semaines et les échanges se sont accentués. J'ai été encouragée par M. Cipriani chargé de l'approche commerciale des pays grâce à la mode (Ethical Fashion Initiative). Nous avons décidé d'organiser en février un eComSouk à

Genève, au Palais des Nations puis à l'ITC, j'ai été aidée et accueillie par M. Es-Fih. (ITC e-solutions programme¹)

E-souk au Palais des Nations

Les marchandises ont pu sortir du territoire malgré l'embargo. J'ai dû traverser plusieurs check-points. Pour les endroits où je croise des factions islamiques radicales, c'est toujours très dangereux et nous risquons notre vie en permanence. Le transport et la logistique ont été pris en charge par Atlas Shipping puis par DHL. Le programme Ethical Fashion du CCI a payé mon billet d'avion. Enfin, le CCI, avec le programme Women and Trade, ont payé pour le lunch qui a été préparé par l'association Food for Peace.

L'avenir

Si aujourd'hui vous tuez un islamique radical, vous en aurez 10 ou 100 qui se lèveront pour le remplacer. Si vous donnez aux populations la dignité de vivre de leur métier, de mettre en avant leur culture et leur savoir-faire, les ressentiments s'atténueront quand les gens pourront manger, nourrir leurs familles, être fiers de leurs parcours. Au lieu de dépenser des milliards de dollars en armement, investissez-en au moins une partie dans la production de richesse en utilisant le savoir-faire des

populations et en vous adaptant. Assez de haine, construisez un monde au lieu de le détruire! ■

L'ITC e-solutions programme est un portefeuille modulaire de services de conseil et de renforcement des capacités qui permet aux PME des pays en développement d'aborder de manière efficace, les marchés internationaux par le biais des canaux numériques.




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Women & the UN Charter

How gender equality got into the Charter and how it matters today

The UNOG Library has been running the very successful series of its Library Talks for more than five years now.

CRISTINA GIORDANO, UNOG LIBRARY

At the beginning of 2016, the programme of these cultural events open to the public becomes even richer. Besides the regular talks, where experts from different backgrounds discuss UN key issues, the “Reading Room stories”, where engaging personalities share their experiences with the audience and the book launches, the Library will now host a new Seminar series, giving graduate students the opportunity to present their research and their views.

The first Seminar was held on 8 February, with the participation of the renowned UN history specialist, Professor Dan Plesch, Director of the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy at London University School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and his brilliant students, Elise Dietrichson, Fatima Sator and Hibatallah Al Saud. The topic of the Seminar was how the principle of gender equality can be traced back to the United Nations Charter of 1945, how it was inscribed in this fundamental document and what this still means for the world today.

Many people are familiar with the work of Ms. Eleanor Roosevelt in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but very few know

about the struggle for gender equality by women delegates at the San Francisco Conference where the UN Charter was drafted. Only four countries had women delegates at the Conference: the USA, China, the Dominican Republic and Brazil. The Brazilian Ambassador, Dr. Bertha Lutz, was the most active and outspoken. Thanks to her, the preamble of the UN Charter explicitly mentions “the equal rights of men and women” among the fundamental principles of the Organization. It was not a self-evident statement at the time and

Dr. Lutz had to overcome strong resistance from the other delegates, including Ms. Gildersleeve, the US representative, who called the statement “vulgar”. Paradoxically, Dr. Lutz found more support among men delegates, such as those representing Australia and New Zealand!

But who was Bertha Lutz?

Mr. Carlos da Cunha Oliveira, from the Permanent Mission of Brazil, one of the panellists of the Seminar, gave an enlightening insight on her extraordinary life. A scientist by background, Dr. Lutz was a prominent feminist and social activist in Brazil as early as the 1920ies. In the

1930ies, she fought for women’s suffrage (which became a reality in Brazil already in 1931). She was one for the first Brazilian congresswomen, and defended women’s rights at the time of the reform the Brazilian Constitution. She clearly saw the importance of linking action on the national plan with international action. She signed the Charter of the United Nations

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression”

and was instrumental in the creation of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Her colleagues at the San Francisco Conference

renamed her “Lutzwaffe” because she was as fast and effective as the German air forces (however, Bertha Lutz was of Swiss descent!).

So, how is it possible that such a remarkable woman almost got forgotten? Elsie Dietrichson, from Norway, says that new generations tend to consider rights as acquired and forget about the struggle to conquer them. However, it is a Norwegian author, Torild Skard, who participated in a Library Talk in 2015, who has written the most about Bertha Lutz.

Was Dr. Lutz forgotten because she did not belong to a Western country? Was

she overshadowed by Eleanor Roosevelt’s fame? Students Fatima Sator and Hibatallah Al Saud have explored this hypothesis a part from the US delegate, the other three women ambassadors to the San Francisco Conference were all from developing countries. Two are practically unknown. Researching their lives would bring a whole new perspective to the issue of human rights. First of all, it would highlight the role of non-Western countries in the establishment of an international human rights system. Secondly, it would be a powerful way for more countries to identify themselves with the ideals of the United Nations. This is especially important in a time and age when the UN is under attack and the universality of human right is challenged. As Fatima Sator pointed out, women’s equality, as proclaimed in the Charter, is a powerful catalyst for women’s advancement in all countries. In her native Algeria, she can quote at least two remarkable women who held important positions with the UN. If Bertha Lutz and others following her path succeeded, all women can succeed, no matter the obstacles. It is a beautiful and positive message and we look forward to hear more about the results of this research maybe at a forthcoming Library Seminar. ■

San Francisco Conference

Brazil's feminist Bertha Lutz (C) speaking at a sub-comm. meeting as unident to adopt UN Charter in 1945.



Rachel, sage-femme au Burkina Faso

Un engagement fort pour ses sœurs africaines

Nous avons rendez-vous avec Rachel Ouedraogo, sage-femme pour l'Association Burkinabé Indépendante, pour le Bien-être Familial (ABBEF) dont l'objectif principal est «la promotion de la santé dans le domaine de la reproduction».



ALICE MARTIN & CHRISTIAN DAVID, UNOG*

L'association est reconnue d'utilité publique. Rachel et ses collègues interviennent dans le domaine de la planification familiale mise en place dans le pays avec beaucoup de difficultés.

Parlez-nous de vous et de votre action

Dans mon pays, les filles étaient, la plupart du temps renvoyées des établissements secondaires pour fait de grossesses non désirées. La grossesse est un acte qui se fait à deux et il n'est pas juste que le garçon n'en subisse aucune conséquence. Nous avons le droit à une sexualité mais nous devons aussi nous montrer responsables. Introduire la planification familiale au Burkina n'a pas été chose facile. Heureusement l'Etat a fini par nous accompagner, via la reconnaissance d'utilité publique et l'affectation d'agents, même s'il ne nous finance pas. Nous bénéficions en revanche d'aides de la

Fédération Internationale pour la Planification Familiale (IPPF), notre bailleur de fonds principal. Je voulais vraiment travailler avec les femmes et leur apporter un soutien réel. Les conditions d'exercice du métier dans la fonction publique sont très difficiles et ne permettent pas, à mon sens, de reconforter les femmes. J'ai choisi une autre voie. Mon premier travail dans des cliniques privées où je pratiquais des soins infirmiers dictés par un gynécologue ne m'intéressait pas. J'ai débuté à l'ABBEF comme bénévole. J'exerce désormais dans ce centre d'écoute pour jeunes, où nous mettons tout en œuvre pour conseiller de manière confidentielle et non stigmatiser. Voici un extrait de notre Charte, rédigée par des jeunes: «*Donnez-nous l'information et les services dont nous avons besoin, acceptez-nous tels que nous sommes, ne nous faites pas la morale et ne nous démoralisez pas!*».

Comment vous faites-vous connaître ?

Nous travaillons beaucoup dans les établissements et dans les quartiers. Nous formons des professeurs encadreur dans le domaine de la «Santé Sexuelle et Reproductive». Ils sont chargés de nous détecter des élèves dynamiques qui peuvent sensibiliser leurs jeunes pairs. Cette année nous avons commencé à visiter les villages. Le Burkina est grand et nous avons du mal à nous faire connaître partout. Nous rencontrons les autorités, organisons des émissions de radio, de télévision, également des journées de consultation gratuite, etc.

Quel est le déroulement d'une journée type ?

Nous avons compris que nous ne pouvons pas nous limiter à la planification familiale. Une femme aimerait aussi pouvoir venir peser son enfant et en profiter pour faire son dépistage du cancer du col de l'utérus, etc. Nous avons donc décidé de regrouper tous ces actes médicaux en une seule consultation. Un infirmier s'occupe des enfants, il fait la

consultation des nourrissons sains, la vaccination. La femme en profite pour aborder la planification familiale. Lorsqu'il s'agissait d'un acte isolé, les hommes voyaient d'un mauvais œil que leurs femmes viennent consulter.

Quelles sont les séquelles de l'excision sur les femmes ?

Je reçois une trentaine de femmes par jour, peut-être dix seulement ne sont pas excisées et ce, malgré l'interdiction de cette pratique par la loi depuis 1996. Nous traitons les complications de cycle, de vie sexuelle, de grossesse, d'avortement, dues à l'excision. Nous travaillons avec un gynécologue qui vient chaque jeudi après-midi (les élèves n'ont pas école en général). Nous avons reçu un jour une jeune fille qui souffrait terriblement. Ses parties génitales avaient été cousues suite à l'excision et le sang de ses règles ne pouvait pas s'écouler. Il a fallu l'emmener à l'hôpital d'urgence où elle a été incisée puis opérée.



L'excision est liée en majorité à des fausses croyances d'origine religieuse. Certains disent qu'une femme non excisée est impure, qu'elle sera infidèle ou même qu'elle va porter malheur à son mari, qu'il ne faut pas écouter ce que les blancs disent, qu'il faut continuer nos coutumes d'africains, alors que cela n'a rien à voir avec les blancs! Seules les femmes savent combien elles souffrent dans la salle d'accouchement. Et le problème est que ces mêmes

femmes iront à leur tour faire exciser leurs enfants. Parfois, ce sont les grands-parents qui font exciser les petites-filles lors de vacances au village, à l'insu des parents.

Dans presque tous les accouchements de femmes excisées, l'épisiotomie bilatérale est nécessaire. Les femmes ont alors peur de la grossesse. La sensibilisation marque les esprits. Le changement s'opérera aussi grâce aux jeunes qui

font des études. Je suis allée au Mali et j'ai constaté qu'au Burkina la situation est meilleure. Le Mali est très religieux, ce qui fait perdurer l'excision, y compris chez les intellectuels. C'est moins le cas au Burkina grâce à la loi qui fait peser une menace sur les exciseuses et sur les parents.

Comment la sexualité est-elle abordée ?

Nous vivons dans une zone à forte influence religieuse où, même pour sensibiliser sur des sujets de santé en apparence anodins nous pesons nos mots, les tabous sont lourds. Ici, il n'y a pas d'éducation sexuelle. Les nouvelles générations ont accès à internet et cela va changer car la sexualité s'apprend, y compris pour les hommes. L'infidélité est monnaie courante ici. Les femmes qui veulent quitter leur mari pour cause d'infidélité s'entendent

répondre par leurs mères qu'elles doivent supporter cette situation. Lorsque nous constatons les dégâts provoqués par l'excision, il est évident que cette pratique est pour quelque chose dans l'adultère des hommes. Mais j'ai l'espoir que tout cela change. Dans le centre, je parle de tout avec mes patientes, en toute confidentialité et entre femmes.

Nous quittons Rachel avec la sensation d'avoir rencontré un ange, une petite femme d'apparence fragile, mélange de force et de douceur, qui semble porter, sur ses frêles épaules, toute la douleur de la femme africaine. ■

Rachel souhaite poursuivre sa formation grâce à des cours par correspondance dont l'écologie pourrait être accompagné par toute bonne âme sensible à ce qu'accomplit cette magnifique personne.

* Extrait de *Carnet de route au Burkina*
www.synergies-internationales.ch



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À l'honneur au Palais des Nations

La langue arabe

La date initialement retenue pour la célébration de cette journée est le 18 décembre en référence au jour où la langue arabe est devenue la sixième langue officielle de l'ONU en 1973.

PRISCA CHAOUI, UNOG

Quoi de plus significatif pour le Club du Livre arabe de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève que de célébrer la journée de la langue arabe ? Cette année, la célébration de la journée a été l'occasion d'accueillir Madame Claude Krul, qui fut pionnière dans la traduction de la littérature syrienne moderne en français et Madame Jilan Nada, traductrice et enseignante de langue arabe au Palais des Nations.

«La langue arabe porte en elle les trésors d'une sagesse islamique millénaire et la voix des poètes, philosophes et savants qui ont mis la force et les beautés de cette langue au service de l'humanité, comme le grand Avicenne dont nous célébrons cette année le 1000^e anniversaire du Canon de la médecine. Nous pouvons mobiliser cette force pour diffuser la connaissance, encourager la compréhension mutuelle et construire des espaces de coopération pour le développement et pour la paix». Telles furent les paroles prononcées par la Directrice générale de l'UNESCO, Irina Bokova lors de la célébration de la journée de la langue arabe en 2013.

L'écho de ces paroles résonne encore plus fort dans l'enceinte du Palais des Nations, puisqu'au moment où Claude Krul nous parlait de la beauté des écrits syriens qu'elle a traduits, Staffan de Mistura menait des pourparlers dans le but de faire renaître la paix dans un pays meurtri par un conflit qui l'ensanglante depuis 5 ans maintenant.

Al-jabr (الجبْر) algèbre, (قهوة) qahwa café, qutun (قطن) coton, tous sont des mots que l'on utilise au quotidien sans que l'on ne se rende compte qu'ils sont d'origine arabe. N'est-il pas vrai que toutes les langues se nourrissent les unes des autres et s'enrichissent mutuellement ? Comme la langue n'est que le reflet de la culture qui la porte, appelons de nos vœux un brassage permanent des langues et par conséquent des cultures. Appelons de nos vœux un regain de paix dans tous les pays arabes qui se sont soulevés pour crier haut et fort leur attachement à la démocratie et aux droits de l'homme. Car, étouffer ces cris n'est autre qu'enterrer une langue porteuse d'un hymne à la joie et à la splendeur. ■

A la retraite et au pain sec



MARIANA DARNET, UNOG

Je me permets de m'adresser à vous pour vous alerter d'un problème qui touche tous les fonctionnaires partant à la retraite actuellement aux Nations Unies dans l'espoir de que cette situation s'améliore dans les plus brefs délais.

Après 34 ans de travail aux Nations Unies je suis très heureuse de partir à la retraite le 30 décembre 2016.

J'ai assisté l'année dernière au cours de préparation à la retraite ou on nous apprenait à nous préparer à cette nouvelle étape de notre vie.

Malheureusement j'ai appris par des tiers et confirmé lors de la réunion du Staff Council du jeudi 4 janvier que les futurs retraités doivent faire face à un retard dans le paiement de la pension de sept mois ou plus et que le délai est en augmentation.

Les causes évoquées sont des difficultés avec le nouveau système qui mettent en valeur un manque de personnel; un nombre plus important de départs en retraite et des détails manquants dans les documents présentés par les futurs retraités ce qui oblige à demander aux services concernés des renseignements supplémentaires et cela retarde la procédure.

Je comprends absolument ces problèmes mais en ce qui me concerne personne ne m'a appris à vivre à Genève, une des villes les plus chères au monde **sans revenu pendant plus de sept mois!**

Je paye 2400F de loyer dans un appartement de 80 m² pas luxueux du tout à la Servette, quartier tout à fait populaire! Je suis mère célibataire d'un enfant de 12 ans, je suis seule à Genève et sans famille. Ma seule famille, ce sont des cousins en Uruguay qui arrivent à grande peine déjà à boucler leurs fins de mois.

Donc il n'y aura personne pour m'aider! Mais comment vais-je faire pour payer mon loyer, mes factures d'assurance maladie qui seront alors à ma charge, les acomptes pour mes futurs impôts à payer à la fin de l'année 2017, mes cotisations à l'AVS puisque je n'aurai pas 64 ans et tout le reste, je me le demande vraiment.

Lors du cours on m'a préparé à changer de vie mais là c'est différent: on va m'enfoncer dans des dettes que je n'ai pas à présent!

Je me suis adressée à la banque UBS pour demander un prêt mais on ne prête pas d'argent à un retraité! Pour la banque c'est comme si on était déjà mort!

Il faut être conscient que si on ne paye pas son loyer pendant trois mois on va aux poursuites et on risque d'être expulsé du logement.

Je suis en plus très étonnée de ce que **personne ne dise rien!** J'ai du mal à croire que je sois la seule employée bientôt à la retraite qui ne peut compter sur aucune aide!

On croit à Genève et au sein de l'Organisation que les employés ne peuvent pas avoir de problèmes d'argent, et qu'ils disposent d'un compte bancaire bien garni, mais **c'est faux** on n'a pas tous des économies! Seule avec un enfant je vis correctement mais sans pouvoir économiser.

Je me force à le faire depuis que j'ai appris ce problème de délais, mais je ne peux pas économiser l'argent nécessaire pour vivre sept mois ou plus.

Je vous remercie de me lire, je tenais à exprimer l'angoisse avec laquelle je vis. J'espère que tout le possible sera fait pour raccourcir cette attente **démesurée** et injuste pour une employée qui a donné tellement d'efforts à l'Organisation et qui mérite une retraite en paix. ■

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Les mutilations génitales féminines

Tolérance zéro!

Le 6 février était la journée internationale 2016



SOLANGE BEHOTEGUY, UNOG

Maintenant que le contrat mondial, adopté en 2015 par 193 États Membres, appelant à mettre en œuvre d'ici 2030 les Objectifs de développement durable et «on the top of the agenda», il est plus que jamais important de garder en tête un numéro: 5.3.

En langage institutionnel, la Cible 5.3 de l'Objectif de développement durable 5 sur l'égalité des sexes est ainsi libellée: «Éliminer toutes les pratiques préjudiciables, telles que le mariage des enfants, le mariage précoce ou forcé et les mutilations génitales féminines». En langage courant, cinq point trois ça veut dire: Y en a marre! Il faut arrêter les mutilations génitales féminines, ou MGF!

Près de 200 millions de filles et de femmes dans plus de 30 pays ont subi les MGF. Dans la majorité des pays où la pratique est très répandue, plus de 40% de la population féminine a moins de 15 ans. Tant que cette pratique existe nous ne pouvons pas parler d'égalité de sexes. Y mettre fin aura pour effet d'autonomiser les filles et les femmes, de promouvoir

leurs droits et de soutenir leur sentiment d'autonomie.

Les MGF recouvrent toutes les procédures comportant l'ablation partielle ou totale des parties sexuelles externes de la femme ou toute autre atteinte aux organes génitaux féminins pour des raisons culturelles ou d'autres raisons non médicales.

Quels effets ont les MGF sur la santé des femmes et des filles?

Les effets des MGF peuvent comporter un dommage physique et psychologique à court et à long terme -allant jusqu'à la mort – en fonction de divers facteurs, notamment le type de MGF pratiqué, le degré de savoir-faire du praticien, les conditions dans lesquelles la mutilation est effectuée, le degré de résistance et l'état de santé général de la fille ou de la femme qui subit l'ablation. Les complications immédiates peuvent être les suivantes: sévère douleur, état de choc, hémorragie, infection, rétention d'urine, ulcération de la zone génitale et lésion causée au tissu adjacent, fièvre, et septicémie. Les conséquences à long terme: anémie, formation de kystes, abcès et cicatrices, incontinence urinaire, dysfonction sexuelle, hypersensibilité de la zone génitale, et complications durant l'accouchement.

De nombreuses organisations intergouvernementales ont appelé à l'élimination des MGF, notamment l'Union africaine,

l'Union européenne et l'Organisation de la coopération islamique, ainsi que l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies dans deux résolutions. Cette réponse mondiale arrive à un moment où les MGF sont reconnues comme un problème mondial.

Dans les lieux où existe la pratique traditionnelle de l'infibulation, forme extrême des MGF qui comporte la couture ou la fermeture des lèvres, la tendance actuelle est de passer à une procédure moins sévère. Dans un certain nombre de pays, davantage de praticiens pratiquent les MGF comme moyen d'atténuer la douleur et le dommage causé. Mais aucune de ces tendances ne remédie à la violation des droits fondamentaux que les MGF constituent, et elles peuvent en fait contribuer à leur persistance. L'objectif international est de mettre fin à toutes les formes de MGF en l'espace d'une génération et de dispenser des soins attentifs et de qualité à toutes celles qui ont subi cette procédure. ■

Source: <https://trello.com/b/buCyHWxM/international-day-of-zero-tolerance-for-female-genital-mutilation>

La carrière, c'est comme une aventure

Un sourire engageant, une voix posée et l'art de vous mettre à l'aise dans une conversation, voilà quelques-uns des traits qui caractérisent Andrée Lorber-Willis, Directrice de la Division des services administratifs de l'Union Interparlementaire.



© Denise Gaurdin

MARIE-JOSÉ ASTRE-DÉMOULIN, SDLS, UNOG

Audrée Lorber-Willis est l'incarnation même d'une belle réussite professionnelle et, l'approche de la Journée internationale des femmes constitue une belle opportunité pour lui demander quelles sont les recettes de son succès. La question suscite chez elle un moment de réflexion puis elle se lance.

«Je suis en train de lire «Lean in», un livre de Sheryl Sandberg qui parle des femmes et du leadership. C'est intéressant et j'aimerais pouvoir formuler une réponse élaborée, comme dans ce livre, mais, à vrai dire, je n'ai jamais abordé ma carrière de manière stratégique.

Je crois que j'ai eu la chance de rencontrer des personnes inspirantes. Certains collègues et la plupart de mes chefs – à l'exception de l'un d'entre eux, peut-être (rires). Au fond, la clé d'une relation humaine réussie pour moi est la même, que ce soit dans ma vie privée ou dans ma vie professionnelle: se laisser inspirer, avoir envie de mieux faire, être digne de la confiance qu'on nous accorde, apprécier ce qu'on a, aimer ce qu'on fait.

Professionnellement, j'ai toujours trouvé des raisons «transcendantes» de faire ce que je faisais. J'ai passé vingt ans dans des postes à responsabilités croissantes à la Fédération des Sociétés de la Croix Rouge

et du Croissant Rouge et j'ai été immensément fière de contribuer à la mission de la Fédération. J'ai voyagé partout dans le monde pour eux et je me suis parfois retrouvée en Angola dans une situation de guerre ou au Malawi dans des périodes d'arrivées massives d'immigrants. Ces prises de contact directes avec la réalité du terrain m'ont rendue plus humaine et plus sensible.

Depuis cinq ans, je travaille à l'Union Interparlementaire qui est un instrument essentiel de défense de la démocratie. C'est une cause noble. Certes, je ne contribue pas à sauver directement des vies mais la démocratie permet aux gens d'avoir de meilleures vies. Et puis, nous sommes le leader en matière de promotion des femmes en politique!

Au fond, pour moi, la carrière c'est comme une aventure. Un voyage au cours duquel je me laisse porter par les rencontres et les opportunités.

Mon conseil à un jeune en début de parcours, ce serait sans doute de s'armer d'une solide formation. Il me semble essentiel de disposer de bonnes connaissances pour se sentir légitime. Ainsi, si on reçoit des remarques négatives, au lieu de se sentir diminué, on cherche à comprendre comment s'améliorer. Et puis, c'est ainsi qu'on parvient à une meilleure perception de ses forces et faiblesses.

La curiosité est aussi cruciale. Ainsi que le recul et un brin d'autodérision – allier humour et sérieux, cela me paraît essentiel pour créer une bonne atmosphère. Et, au fond, tout est là: avoir des rapports agréables avec les autres, c'est la clé du bonheur, qu'on soit dans une position de leader ou pas, d'ailleurs. L'aventure

humaine, il n'y a rien de plus grisant!» Sur ce point, et sur de nombreux autres sans doute, Andrée rejoint les leaders les plus inspirants. Sheryl Sandberg, par exemple lorsqu'elle déclare¹ la motivation vient des choses qui nous tiennent à cœur. Elle vient aussi de l'importance qu'on accorde aux personnes avec lesquelles on travaille.

Rien d'étonnant, dès lors, qu'Andrée ait réussi sa carrière et qu'on ne puisse que lui souhaiter de poursuivre sur sa lancée en conservant ses remarquables principes et valeurs! ■

¹ <http://www.ipu.org/french/home.htm>

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International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights

*Farewell to Leila Alaoui,
a committed and talented artist,
who lost her life in the call of duty.*



SARAH JORDAN, SDLS, UNOG

You have almost certainly seen the poster announcing the 2016 edition of the International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights¹ (FIFDH) to be held in and around Geneva from 4-13 March. It has been displayed in the city since 4 February. It was revealed to the public on the FIFDH site on 15 January with the following commentary from Isabelle Gattiker, director of the Festival: “The face of this shepherd, caught head-on, but who gazes elsewhere, struck us because it betrays a power in him. His face reveals more than mere naturalism, he is proud, intriguing and mysterious. It’s an image that conveys a story.” Little did she know what that story would be. On that same day, the young woman who took the photo on the poster, the Franco-Moroccan photographer and video artist Leila Alaoui, was the victim of a terrorist attack in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. She died three days later from the injuries she sustained. She was 33 years of age.

Terrorist attacks are blind and arbitrary – they don’t target anyone in particular – their victims are men, women or children, irrespective of nationality or religion. The 30 victims of this attack were as random a bunch as those killed in Paris in



Leila Alaoui died of a heart attack on 18 January 2016, the victim of a terrorist attack in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

© Augustin Le Gall

November 2015. Leila, unlike some of the women who feature in the documentaries in the Festival, didn’t die because she was a woman. She died just because she was there, at that time, on that day and in that place, on mission for Amnesty International, for a photographic assignment that was, ironically, on the theme of women’s rights.

Leila Alaoui was a social activist who used photography and art to draw attention to issues such as cultural identity, diversity, migration and displacement. The photo in the FIFDH poster is from her collection “No Pasara” – portraits of young Moroccans who dream of a better future. Leila’s exhibition “Natreen” (We are waiting) is of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. She had prepared it before leaving for Burkina Faso and her photos will be exhibited at the Maison des Arts du Grütli throughout the duration of the Festival,

as planned. A sadly fitting epitaph for a young woman who is described in her bio as “a voice to the voiceless” and “one of the most promising photographers of her generation”¹.

This year’s festival – through a woman’s eyes

Isabelle Gattiker is at the helm of the FIFDH for the second year running. She too is a committed woman in her thirties. She describes her meeting with Leila Alaoui as a “coup de foudre”, or “a meeting of like minds”, at both professional and affective levels. She selected Leila’s first professional photo for the poster – and then Ougadoudou happened. As Isabelle puts it, the press coverage for this year’s edition is more than she could ever have hoped for – but for the most tragic of reasons. As the director of the Festival, but also as a young woman and a young mother, here is her selection of some key women-focused evenings that follow the FIFDH’S



Isabelle Gattiker,
director of the Festival

tried and tested formula of a subject, a film, a debate.

Saudi Arabia and human rights, in partnership with Amnesty International, will be the first subject to be raised at this year's Festival. The film "A Wind of Change?", to be screened on 4 March, looks at the life of women in this reputedly repressive Kingdom. The debate after the projection promises to be passionate with a panel including Ensaf Haidar, wife of the Saudi writer, dissident and activist Raif Badawi, Nadine Al-Beldair, a Saudi journalist, as well as academics and representatives from civil society.

On the same evening, at the opening ceremony, in the presence of Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, High Commissioner for Human Rights, the film "Sonita", an Irano-Swiss production and winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the American Sundance Festival will be screened. This documentary tells the true story of an Afghan teenager, Sonita

Alizadeh, whose parents tried to sell her into marriage. In 2014, she uploaded a YouTube video called "Brides for Sale", which shows her protesting against the Afghan practice of selling child brides. The clip went viral and drew attention to her plight and that of other young women in her country. She went on to earn a full scholarship to study music in the US, and is now an activist, as well as Afghanistan's youngest female rapper. Her very powerful clip will give you a taste of what to expect².

Sonita and filmmaker Rokhsareh Ghaem Maghami will be present on this occasion.

For the first time in the context of the FIFDH, the theatre of the Comédie de Genève will be hosting the film and debate programmed for 7 March on the subject of "The Democratic Republic of Congo: Breaking the silence. Women demand justice." The Mayor of Geneva, Esther Alder, will open the proceedings. The documentary film to be screened, "The man who mends women – the wrath of Hippocrates", traces the career of the Congolese doctor, Denis Mukwege, who treats victims of sexual violence. Nominated several times for the Nobel Peace Prize, Dr. Mukwege will participate in the debate that follows the projection alongside

the former High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay. On 8 March, International Women's Day, another significant first for the FIFDH: Dr. Mukwege will address the Human Rights Council at the Palais des Nations. This important, yet often taboo, subject of sexual violence to women will continue to be developed later in the day with the screening of the documentary "Escape from ISIS" followed by a debate on the sexual enslavement of women practised by this terrorist organization in occupied territories in Syria and Iraq. This is but a brief overview of what this Festival – the biggest in the world dedicated to film and human rights issues – has to offer this year. Other themes to be raised include the death penalty in the United States, free speech in Russia, climate change and capitalism, the destruction of architectural treasures in war zones, the mafia in Mexico, the exploitation of cheap labour in the textile industry, sport and human rights, migration, as well as many others. Based at the Théâtre Pitoëff in the rue de Carouge, the Festival will continue until 13 March with projections, debates and events scheduled across the Greater Geneva area. For the first time this year, several events have been scheduled in different refugee welcome centres, the

aim being to raise awareness and foster positive exchanges with those who are immediate victims of human rights violations. ■

Further details and full programme:
www.fifdh.org

¹ Wikipedia – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leila_Alaoui

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n65w1DU8cGU>

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Advancing global health at the Geneva Health Forum 2016

The Geneva Health Forum; the flagship global health event both here in Geneva, as well as in Switzerland, which is internationally acknowledged and valued; is a joint initiative launched in 2006 by the Geneva University Hospitals and the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Geneva in partnership with leading Swiss public institutions engaged in promoting better access to health; as well as major international organisations and institutions active in global health in Geneva and around the world.

It is a unique global event in which those working on the frontline of health and health-care meet with the shapers and formulators of policy. Each Geneva Health Forum conference attracts around 1000 participants from all over the world.

Focus on sustainable innovations

As the Geneva Health Forum

brings together a variety of stakeholders both active in and interested in global health, such as frontliners staff, policy shapers, academics, the media, civil society, foundations and the private sector, this forum reaffirms the importance and strategic location of Geneva as a preferred region for international dialogue and as the health policy capital of the world.

The sixth edition of the GHF taking place at the Geneva International Conference Centre from 19th to 21st April 2016 will provide the participants with a unique convention platform in which they can network, identify the most sustainable innovations, explore solutions and collectively develop recommendations to address the most pressing issues currently facing global health. The Forum will discuss innovations ranging from technological solutions; as well as human resource facilities, mental health programs, preventive medicine, drug

delivery systems, quality assurance for health care, and much more. It will also look at the issues from different viewpoints than just the health sector, such as waste management, energy supply, food or water delivery to hospitals, emergency transportation, etc. Reverse innovations will be specially addressed.

Partnership with the World Health Summit

For its tenth anniversary in 2016, the GHF will host the World Health Summit (WHS) Regional Meeting in Geneva. This exciting partnership between the two most dynamic events in Europe in terms of global health, seals a deep bond between the members of these international networks, but also a desire to bring together the ideas, analyses and recommendations on crucial issues for the health of humanity.

Where health issues are at stake, it is essential for the organisers of these events not



to be in competition, certainly stimulating for research, but that could mask the message when it comes to recommendations for public policy. A voice of global health requires the unification of forces, the combination of skills and the sharing of ideas.

The theme of the 2016 GHF is ***affordable and sustainable innovation in health care***, because the organizers want the “miracles” performed in

health and so often boasted of, rightly so in the richer countries, to be better shared and distributed throughout the world. Why should a young sufferer of Hodgkin’s disease now enjoy a near-normal life expectancy in developed economies, but still almost certainly effectively suffer a death sentence in poor countries? Why are the performance diagnostics of communicable diseases not available in the countries where epidemics are emerging

most frequently? Yes, they save valuable time with early warnings and save lives, but they could avoid health crises of international magnitude, sometimes of a considerable economic and social cost.

How to make progress in health fairer and better, or more equally distributed? GHF 2016’s hosting of the WHS for three days in Geneva will be a unique opportunity to encourage interaction between the academic

and medical worlds, major global health experts from international and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), public-private partnerships and from industry – leading tomorrow’s health innovations and permanent missions and delegations to the United Nations in Geneva. In 2016, from the 19th to 21st April Geneva is the place to be to discuss the overall health aims we want for tomorrow! ■

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Trade learning Swedish style

"... I would like to work with donors and within the UN system on trade and development issues, particularly interesting right now is using value chain analysis for disaggregating incomes for women, youth and minority groups as well as looking at how we can use youth volunteerism to create positive impacts on trade initiatives on the ground."



© John Gillies

STEPHANIE TORO

Thanks to the Swedish Development Co-operation Agency SIDA, I was fortunate enough last summer to have the opportunity to discover the international institutions in Geneva, and specifically to complete an internship at the International Trade Centre (ITC). ITC is a joint organization of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) with 283 staff and 602 consultants in Geneva and around the world. As a half-UN, half-WTO organization, it also has a very specific mandate as the only 100% aid for trade organization. The ITC slogan is "trade impact for good." It is short and sweet, but what does that really mean?

100% Aid for SME Trade

As an aid for trade organization (Aft), ITC works on private sector development in developing economies. ITC works with country governments, trade ministries, trade support institutions, as well as with

businesses directly to create a conducive environment for trade. The main beneficiaries are small and medium sized businesses (SMEs), but they also work with micro-enterprises and farmers on various projects. Their ultimate goal is to contribute to poverty eradication and sustainable development by developing internationally competitive SMEs, which are sources of jobs and incomes. ITC works on trade and international business development across a wide geographic range, in a variety of sectors, and at many different levels of the enterprise value chain.

Understanding Private Sector Needs

My previous experience in the European Commission working with trade agreements between the EU and Central America as well as Colombia-Peru made it clear to me the importance of engaging the private sector to create successful trade negotiation strategies within the multilateral trading system. Working

The Trade Learning Challenge is to scale-up skills and learning outcomes, to embed the results which create organizational change.

with a female small business owner in the Botswana pork sector through the Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development, introduced me to the trade facilitation challenges facing businesses on the ground.

Trade Skills for SMEs and Trade Professionals

At ITC I worked in the Trade Learning and Capacity Building Programme. I worked closely with my supervisor to draft the proposal for this new programme area, with the aim of creating trade learning and

capacity building products and solutions which can be delivered at scale. This included working on a product and service development strategy based on ITC's intervention logic. Through this work, which spans the training and advisory services delivered in all sections and divisions of ITC, we contributed input to the Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance unit, responsible for the new ITC Strategic Plan for 2015-2017. This work will streamline ITC's training and advisory services and help make the product and service offer more transparent to clients and donors.

Additionally, I had the opportunity to participate in planning and executing a new training venture – a week-long training held together with the World Trade Institute (WTI) in Bern,

Switzerland on the “Essentials of Trade Promotion”. This week-long training brought together about 18 ITC experts on various issues and challenges in SME trade promotion, with 30 participants from over 15 countries. These participants were so bright and engaged in their work, ranging from issues of trade facilitation for female informal cross-border traders in Tanzania, to trade promotion for selected value chains in Nepal.


Challenges Ahead

As a result of my ITC experience, I want to work at the intersection of trade, development, and inclusive and sustainable growth. Working in a Geneva international organization does place restrictions on how to perform that work. With donors, including Sweden, placing an increasing amount

of aid money in very tightly earmarked funding does in a sense hamper ITCs ability to create longer term efforts in certain countries (rather than shorter term projects that may lack sustainability) Alongside these concerns is that of monitoring and evaluation, and particularly of impact evaluation. This is where the organization needs to place an increasing effort in order to meet demands of donors, but at the same time make the best possible investments in sustainable solutions for client countries. I am convinced that creative financing solutions exist which take into account donor requirements, leverage ITC's competences, and still meet the needs and demands of clients. I look forward to seeing what the future holds! ■

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Why do they write?

MARIE-JOSÉ ASTRE-DÉMOULIN, SDLS, UNOG

As the taxi drives me along the cobble-stones streets of Tepoztlan, I have satellite vision of Mexico as the place where a giant hand seized the American continent and squeezed it tightly. Its grip was so tight that the coast line exploded into a myriad of tiny islands, now sprinkled in the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean; so tight that angry volcanoes and high mountains surged in the middle of the land, transforming the place into a perfect hideaway for a writing retreat¹.



© Marie-José Astre Démoulin

Behind a wooden door, in a cosy house, forty participants from all over the world have gathered to attend a 10-day series of classes delivered¹ in either English or Spanish. Under the Volcano is an inspiring international writing programme, now in its 13th year under the aegis of its founder and director, novelist Magda Bogin.

I have a meeting with three participants and I am impatient to get an answer to two burning questions:
Why do you write? And why did you feel the need to register for this workshop?

OLIVIA

Olivia Gorra^{2,3} is an opera singer and voice coach who lives in Mexico City. She approaches me in a colourful local dress, which she wears with dignified elegance. She presents her writing project with enthusiasm:

“I am taking this memoir workshop because I want to write a book about adoption. I hope that my popularity as a singer in this country will contribute to lifting the veil on a topic that is still a taboo. I also want to generate some reflection on the complexity of the existing administrative procedures around adoption.

It breaks my heart to see that so many orphans want to find a family whilst, at the same time, some couples get discouraged by the complexity of the law. And, as everybody wants very young children, the chances of getting children to find loving families are reduced, since the process isn't fast enough.

I am a mother of a beautiful adopted daughter – who is now 7 – and of a “biological” 20-year-old son. I love both my children dearly and we form a wonderful family.

I want to share my own experience because I know that some people are scared about the unknown genetic traits of an adopted child. They just need to keep in mind the fact that “nobody is perfect”. Whether they are adopted or not, children have a tendency to do things that their parents disapprove of, that's just life!” ■



© Marie-José Astre Démoulin

JANET

Of British origin, Janet Dawson lived in many different countries with her Canadian husband before settling in Tepoztlan 8 years ago.

“I have a diploma in Modern Art Studies and I specialised in Mexican art. I have given a number of talks on the topic of the representation of food in Mexican paintings.

Now, I want to start writing articles and this is why I need to improve my writing skills. At the moment, I am interested in the way two Mexican women painters have been influenced by the mountains. These exchanges are very rich and we organize social events in order to promote local artists.

I also contribute to initiatives linked to the fight against breast cancer. Last year, we issued a calendar with twelve recipes suggested by local woman, using healthy ingredients. For this kind of initiative, my capacity to write some good pieces will help to better market our calendars. And the more we sell the better, because the profits go to a campaign on the promotion of mammograms in the region.⁴”

Every effort counts when it comes to promoting a good cause. And art, in all its aspects – cooking, painting, and writing – contributes to better health and to a better life!” ■



REYNA

Reyna Grande is a radiant young woman. She lives in California and is an internationally recognized and published author⁵.

"I came to this workshop because I was awarded a fellowship. I thought that the mix of participants from all over the world would stimulate my creativity and it was also an opportunity to get some tutoring for my next book.

My urge to write came from my experiences as a little Mexican girl arriving illegally in the United States.

In fact, I was born in Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico, into a very poor family. My parents left for the United States to find work when I was still a toddler. At the age of nine, my father made me join him.

As you can imagine, this is a radical change in anyone's life. There is a lot of pain and some amount of shame attached to it: the feeling of being different, not being able to speak the language, etc.

I want to write about these situations in order to help other people who are going through similar situations. Many readers tell me that I gave them courage and hope; that is my greatest reward! ■

These women are so generous and committed to their goals that, as I leave the place, I am preoccupied by a question – other than that of the painful ride on the cobbled streets: is it really possible to zoom out of this place and go back to your own Google map location on earth once you have been exposed to such an empowering environment and to these outstanding women.

With women like these, "International Women's day" doesn't need to be celebrated on 8 March for they make it a reality day after day! ■

¹ <http://underthevolcano.org>

² <https://www.facebook.com/CCOliviaGorra>

³ <http://www.oliviagorra.com>

⁴ <http://www.tepozrosa.org/366103049>

⁵ <http://reynagrande.com>

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UN Orchestra and 1% for Development Fund Double Anniversary

Geneva's UN Staff celebrates commitment and talent which go beyond the call of duty.

MARTINE COPPENS, FRIEDRICH VON KIRCHBACH¹

Working for international organisations often means handling politically charged issues, coping with complex hierarchies and meeting tight deadlines. Notwithstanding the concomitant pressures, UN Staff has consistently shown its ability to contribute to the spirit of the United Nations beyond work-specific job descriptions. The number and variety of voluntary initiatives of UN Staff bear witness to this determination.

In 2016, two major initiatives celebrate milestone anniversaries: the 1% for Development Fund is turning 40 and the UN Orchestra has its fifth birthday. Both of them are examples of how colleagues of ours had a vision driven by the spirit of the United Nations, convinced others to join them, and developed initiatives which are now creating value for thousands of beneficiaries. And while both the 1% for Development Fund and the UN Orchestra began within the United Nations, they have opened up to international Geneva and are

now important bridges between different parts of the Greater Geneva community and beyond.

The United Nations Orchestra

The United Nations Orchestra was co-founded in 2011 by its current President, Martine Coppens, and its Musical Director, Antoine Marguier, who put forward the original idea.

The aim of creating the United Nations Orchestra was to connect all people and all Nations in a way which would evoke a feeling of shared emotions and values through music. The musicians are not only dedicated to the ideals of their day-to-day work in their capacity as UN officials. They also have the firm belief that the transient power of music is the best voice to foster peace. The musicians are highly talented and enjoy sharing their common passion with other colleagues. Being part of the Orchestra also enables them to perform with well-known soloists, such as pianist Khatia Buniathishvili, in an ever expanding number of venues.

However, the Orchestra's objective is not limited to performing high quality concerts. We believe that our artistic gifts should also be devoted to support humanitarian causes through music.



Thanks to the 1% Fund support, these primary school children in DRC can now study in a newly built school, which replaces a thatch roofed school that could not be used during the rainy season.

Since its creation, the Orchestra has given 28 concerts and raised CHF 150,000 for humanitarian initiatives. Among our highlights were the Mozart Concert in favor of UNICEF in 2012, the GE200 jubilee concert in 2015 on the occasion of Geneva's entry into the Swiss Confederation and the concert for UNHCR in June 2015 in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. Mr. Michael Møller, Director General of the United Nations Office in Geneva, is the Orchestra's Honorary President and as such he has never ceased to extend his full support to the Orchestra.

On 13 March 2016, the UN Orchestra will mark the occasion of the double anniversary with a concert featuring a remarkable duo: the sisters Julie and Camille Berthollet, Winner of the France 2 "Prodiges" Contest and nominated for the Victoires de la Musique Classique 2016 in the category "Instrumental Soloist Discovery of the Year". Like the UN Orchestra and the 1% Fund, they are a product of the Greater Geneva area. The Brahms Double Concerto will be performed by Julie Berthollet playing the violin and Camille Berthollet the cello. This will be followed by another masterpiece: the great 5th Symphony of Shostakovich.

The 1% Development Fund

The 1% for Development Fund was created by a small group of UN Staff in 1976, who felt that they wanted to make a personal commitment to overcoming extreme poverty, in addition to their professional work for the United Nations. In the OECD countries, the target of earmarking 1% of GDP for development assistance had proven elusive, and the work of the international

organizations focussed on larger, systemic issues and did not necessarily reach those in greatest need. At the individual level, a convincing response was to decide to live on 99% of one's income, dedicate 1% to finance small projects with direct impact, and do that through a self-administered fund with 0% overhead to ensure that every penny donated would reach the beneficiaries.

After its creation in 1976, the 1% Fund grew rapidly. Word spread among small NGOs all over the world, who requested assistance. In summer 1978, the 1% Fund had 100 members. Five years later, already 100 projects had been financed. Colleagues in other duty stations picked up the idea and created their own 1% Funds in New York, Vienna and Rome.

An additional driver for the growth of the 1% Fund was that its members enjoyed interacting for a common cause with highly motivated and like-minded colleagues from across the different international organizations and since 2004 also from outside the United Nations. Many of its members became personally involved in the selection of the best projects to be supported, at the 1% Fund's General Assemblies, within the Project Evaluation and Follow-up Committee or simply when coming across worthwhile initiatives while travelling for their work. A survey in January 2016, in which 44% of the 180 Fund members participated, underscored how much its members appreciate that all the work of the Fund is done on a voluntary basis,

with zero administrative costs, and in a fully transparent manner. Perhaps the most important motivation has been the fact that with a modest contribution – the equivalent of a cup of coffee per day, members could make a tangible difference in the lives of people, be it through the construction of school rooms, maternity wards and wells providing essential drinking water, building sanitary infrastructure, providing equipment for small cooperatives, repairing a crumbled bridge, and a multitude of other initiatives carried out under some 800 projects.

Compared to the resource requirements for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the role of the 1% for Development Fund is only a drop in the ocean. But for those involved – both as contributors and as beneficiaries – it can make a world of difference. ■

¹ Martine Coppens is the President of the UN Orchestra
Friedrich von Kirchbach is co-ordinator of the 1% for development fund

Come and join us on Sunday, March 13th at 5 p.m., in the Victoria Hall, to celebrate the commitment and talent of these two initiatives reflecting the spirit of the United Nations. An unforgettable evening awaits you, not to be missed!

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International cooperation of Turkmenistan in the field of transport

Following the goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

On September 25 2015, 193 countries adopted 17 global goals and 169 relevant objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

AMANGELDI RAHMANOV

One of the key structural elements of sustainable development, along with energy, food supply and nutrition, water and oceans is formation of a reliable transport infrastructure. In the outcome document of the World Forum “Rio + 20” it was stated that transport and mobility are essential for sustainable development. Indeed, they can play a great role in accelerating the progress of specific goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

Speaking about Turkmenistan’s position in this area, the current year 2016 will enter into the chronicles of independent and neutral Turkmenistan as one of the most successful years in the country’s history of foreign policy. On 22 December 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted with consensus a resolution initiated by Turkmenistan and entitled “Towards comprehensive cooperation among all modes of transport for promoting sustainable multimodal transit corridors”. The adoption of this resolution opens new and even more opportunities for the creation of a global partnership for sustainable transport.

As President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov pointed out, the global transport strategy of XXI century is the strategy of the integration breakthrough, combining geographical and infrastructural, technical and technological capacities of countries and regions. Future is for the combined transportation system with access to major international and regional sea, river, road, rail and air units, an optimal mix and use of the advantages of each.

Following this strategy, Turkmenistan has put forward important international initiatives and is taking necessary measures for their implementation. This was clearly demonstrated by organisation of the high-level international conference “The Role of Transport and Transit Corridors in Ensuring International Cooperation, Stability and Sustainable Development”, held in Ashgabat in September 2014.

The conference adopted the Ashgabat Declaration, which reflected an understanding of the need for elaboration of criteria of cooperation in the field of transport. Particular

emphasis was placed on the importance of taking into account the needs of developing countries, including those that are landlocked. The declaration has brought important new priorities in the work of the Community of Nations and became a fundamental document for drafting the UNGA resolution of 19 December 2014 “The role of transport and transit corridors to ensure international cooperation for sustainable development”.

The most important task in this regard is to fully realise the advantageous geographical position of countries that are a natural transit bridge between Europe and Asia. Located at the crossroads of North-South and East-West, as the Central Asia and the Caspian Basin regions, Turkmenistan is a strong element of a strategic stability in the southern belt of Eurasia and is a promising economic partner for European and Asian countries, as well as a major energy and transport and transit hub of continental importance. In view of this, Turkmenistan has identified development of transport infrastructure as one



of the absolute priorities of its state policy.

For the purpose of effective implementation of its capacities, Turkmenistan is guided by long-term programs aimed at ensuring the competitiveness of the national transport and communication complex on the world market, as well as its progressive integration into it, and the further expansion of infrastructure through the main thoroughfares, connecting routes and hubs in the East-West and North-South. The priority in this regard is the construction of an extensive and combined infrastructure of transport links and transit, covering the spaces of continental Eurasia with access to the sea terminals of the Black Sea and Baltic regions, South and South-East Asia and Middle East.

The use of the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway is greatly important in the formation of the international transport corridor North-South. And the transport corridor Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman is for facilitation of further expansion of mutually

beneficial trade and economic cooperation between the Central Asia and the Middle East.

In addition, the large-scale project on transport corridor Central Asia-Middle East is considered as one of the most effective factors in ensuring sustainable development both in the regional and international scale.

We should also mention the construction of the transport corridor Afghanistan-Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan-Georgia and a project to build a railway line Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan.

One of the significant inter-modal hubs of transport infrastructure in Turkmenistan is the International sea port of city of Turkmenbashi on the Caspian coast. It will create exclusively favourable conditions for the access of European countries to the commodity markets of the Middle East and the countries of the Indian Ocean. Construction of its own Navy for Turkmenistan has a strategic and political importance.

It is also important to note the support by Turkmenistan of the International Road Transport Union's initiative to create a Modal Highway in Central Asia with access to Turkey.

In addition, our country has expressed its willingness to act as an active partner in the TRACECA program.

Thus, the basis for the integration of transport and transit systems of Turkmenistan into the world system is the creation of an extensive transport and communication infrastructure and network of logistics terminals. Aimed at addressing the global challenges facing the international community, Turkmenistan creates favourable conditions for formation of transport and transit corridors that meet the requirements of time. ■

Amangeldi RAHMANOV is Head of the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy of the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Doctor of Historical Sciences



Tuesday's color is French

A mom's insight on the value of bilingual education

JEAN DUBOIS

Recently, my 9-year-old son and I were riding the bus from his school into the center of Geneva. One of his friends from school was on the same bus. This polite boy, who was not Anglophone, began speaking to my son in fluent English with only a minor accent, chatting and joking with ease. When I addressed this boy in French, he replied, "Please speak to me in English. My mother wants me to practice my English. I speak to my cousin in English on Skype." Impressed with this, I asked him where he came from and he told me that he was Swiss. I was surprised. I had assumed that most Swiss children attended public school and that bilingual schools were for Anglophones like us. When I later remarked to my son how kind the boy was to speak to him in English, it occurred to me that he had to speak to my son in English because my son is still learning French. For these boys to be friends, at least one of them had to be a willing and able to speak the other's language. What an analogy for the world.

Why would this boy's parents choose a bilingual school then? I wondered. When we moved to Geneva, neither of my children spoke French, so my husband and I considered French immersion in the Swiss public schools or an English language private school. Our older son chose Swiss public school. However for my younger son the thought of not being able to communicate with his peers or his teachers was frightening.

While we could have sent him to an English speaking school, we were fortunate to find a bilingual school in Vandoeuvres. We hoped that our son would learn French more quickly if the French language were not just taught as a "subject" but rather certain subjects were taught in French.

"I hate Tuesdays" my son complained regularly to me on Tuesday mornings during the drive to school the first three months. "Why Tuesdays?" I asked upon hearing this the first time. "Usually it's Mondays that people don't like." I added. "You don't understand Mom, Tuesday are French days. Everything's in French and it's so boring. I just sit there not understanding anything." He sounded a bit desperate so I tried to encourage him. "I know you don't think this when you are sitting in class feeling clueless, but even when you are not understanding, your brain is still learning and putting the pieces together. One day it will figure out the French language and you won't be as frustrated. My own experience told me this was true, but he was not convinced.

This February, I attended a lecture on the benefits of a bilingual education. The speaker, Tamera Peters, described many outcomes of bilingualism that I myself could appreciate having learned French and worked and lived abroad as a result. She noted two particular benefits that I see developing in my son: cultural awareness and empathy for other cultures,

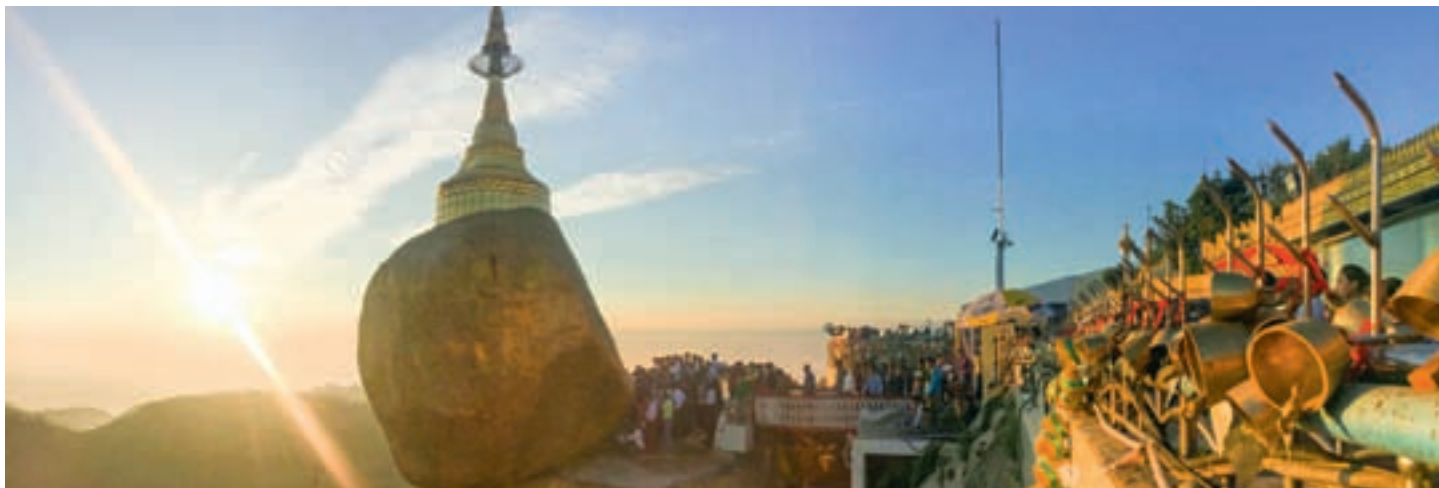
and, a sense of achievement and confidence. For a child, being exposed to a second (or third) language instills awareness that the world is full of diversity and that there are others who communicate differently and express their culture through their language. After just 6 months of French language exposure, I am sure that, were we to return to the United States, my son would view his world differently. Were he to encounter one of the many immigrants back home, he would have a better sense of their language and cultural struggles and no doubt feel more empathetic. Now that my son realizes that he can learn a second language, he is having fun learning German and becoming curious about German culture. As a bonus, learning German is improving his French because the course is taught in French. He likes German so much that he wants to visit Germany this summer. It seems the more he is exposed to languages, the more of a global minded person he becomes. The world needs more of those.

Mrs. Peters also noted the sense of achievement and resulting confidence that comes with learning to be bilingual. I have read studies that learning a second language as a child has great cognitive benefits. The brain must simply work harder to accomplish something as ordinary as solving a multiplication problem. I see my son everyday not only learning the geography of the world or his multiplication tables, but also

learning and deciphering a new language in the process. His brain is working double-time. He is also learning the necessity of consistent effort, the ability to be willing to make and learn from mistakes, good listening skills and focus. These are skills that will generalize too many other aspects of his life.

I haven't heard my son complain about Tuesdays for several weeks. I take that as a sign that his second language is becoming more normal to him. In fact, today, a Tuesday, he exited school and excitedly told me that he had a surprise test in Geography that was all in French. "And you know what? I understood all of the French and didn't need any help. I can't believe it!" he marveled, as did I. I guess Tuesdays aren't so bad after all. ■

For more information on bilingualism visit www.liacademy.ch/bilingualism



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EVELINA RIOUKHINA, UNOG

This place is to be seen to be believed. Many years ago we published a photo on the cover of UN Special¹ of the Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda and the article; both caused big interest, questions and even strong arguments and polemics at that time. After this article I became totally fascinated to go there, and finally the dream came true. This is not an easily accessible place. Pretty long flight to Yangon, former capital of Myanmar, long drive (depending on the road and traffic), up to 5-7 hours to the remoted mountain area in the Mon State of Myanmar. Then you can chose: either to walk up to the top of the Mountain as all pilgrims and Buddhist monks do (it takes around 2-3 hours), or to take a drive up the steep mountain on the top

of the truck. After an hour of this adventure drive amidst the mountain jungle and breathtaking scenery, you are almost there. However, you still need to walk a long way (obviously, no shoes). Those who cannot undertake such climb, or cannot walk, can be carried up by four strong carriers on a sedan. Old or young, sick or healthy, – this is the place for all who are fond of Asia, to make a pilgrimage at least once in a lifetime, so we were well prepared to all those difficulties and we knew how difficultly accessible the place could be.

Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda, today known as the Golden Rock Pagoda, is one of the most venerated places in Asia, and is recognized as one of the wonders of South East Asia². It definitely deserves to be qualified

as one of the wonders of the world's virtue of the fact that, it sits uniquely at the apex of a huge, almost egg-shaped granitoid boulder. This boulder is perilously perched on a projecting tabular rock and is balancing off the extreme verge of the sloping surface of the rock, overpassing it by nearly half of its length. The boulder and the rock table are two separate pieces. This slope drops down perpendicularly. One side of the rock table is separated from the rest of the hill by a deep chasm. They say that by gently rocking the boulder, a thread can be passed through between it and the rock table. When viewed from a certain angle, this separation can be also seen by a beam of light through it. How is it built, and more important – what power

or physics law keep it standing there for more than 2500 years – remains mystery. The legend says that it was built by one Hermit on the relic of the hair of Buddha, on the boulder that resembled his head, and the Buddhist attribute it to the spiritual power of the Hair relic enshrined in the Kyaikhtiyo³ Pagoda.

If you believe in the force of spirituality you might be satisfied with the explanation. If you are more skeptical, you will definitely try to solve the mystery. I tried to solve it going for several hours around it, looking from all angles and came with more questions and mysteries than I hoped to give answers. Yes, it is to be seen to be believed. And I would add, after having been seen, it is impossible to. ■

¹ UN Special No. 614, 2003 (photo was offered to UN Special by a local freelance photographer at my request. At that time, tourism in Myanmar was rare).

² According to the publication by the Tourism authorities of ASEAN Countries.

³ In the Mon language, "Kyaik" means Pagoda, "Ithi" in Pali means hermit, and "Yo" means "to carry on the head", literally, "Kyaik-Thi-Yo". The pagoda carried on a hermit's head.

Tribute to Garry



**EVELYN KARTOUM, ON BEHALF OF THE
64TH STAFF ASSOCIATION, WHO**

A BIG thank you to Dr. Garry Aslanyan, staff member within the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) at WHO, for his tireless work as *UN Special* Editor-in-Chief over the last year.

In this role, Garry has demonstrated his excellent skills as a manager, mentor and public relations expert. He has the ability to recognize a story and present it as a concise and compelling account. He has kept his team on track, organizing multiple writers working on multiple stories for multiple issues. He has been receptive to new ideas and suggestions and brought in many of his own. His open and direct approach in committee discussions has always been much appreciated, and he has used his management competencies to build up an effective and creative editorial team.

He has always encouraged the spirit of voluntarism that guides the work of the *UN Special*. In 2015, the magazine was selected as finalist for the

Secretary-General's Award on 'Staff Volunteerism' (*UN Special* edition December 2015), which Garry received on behalf of all voluntary contributors and editors in New York (see photo).

Some of his memorable contributions were the winter and summer reading issues, and themed editions on United Nations Goodwill Ambassadors (September 2015) and the United Nations 70th anniversary celebrations (October 2015) featuring interviews with Michael Møller, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and Dr. Margaret Chan, the Director-General of the World Health Organization.

The new Editor-in-Chief as of April 2016 will be Alex Mejia, who has been part of the Editorial Committee for two years. The WHO Staff Association looks forward to working with him as he takes the mandate forward. Garry will continue to be part of the team as the Deputy Editor-in-Chief, and will support and guide his editorial colleagues in bringing the work of the United Nations in Geneva to a wider audience. ■

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Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Sixth UN Secretary-General passes away



Boutros Boutros-Ghali on his first working day in office as Secretary-General.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the sixth Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the first UN Secretary-General from Africa, passed away on 16 February 2016. He is being praised for guiding the Organization through the tumultuous early 1990's and for helping shape the UN's response to post-Cold War realities.

His term was marked by brutal conflicts in Haiti, Somalia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, among others. Soon after his inauguration, the Security Council met in its first-ever summit of Heads of State. Boutros-Ghali authored the report called *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping* (known simply *An Agenda for Peace*) with an analysis on ways to strengthen UN capacity for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping. The report was written in 1992, with Vladimir Petrovsky, former UNOG Director-General, as Chair of the *Agenda* Drafting Group, then being

Boutros-Ghali's Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. *An Agenda for Peace* continues to be a lasting legacy.

Boutros-Ghali brought formidable experience and intellectual power to the task of piloting the United Nations through one of the most tumultuous and challenging periods in its history, and guiding the Organization of the Francophonie in subsequent years. As Secretary-General, he presided over a dramatic rise in UN peacekeeping. He also presided over a time when the world increasingly turned to the United Nations for solutions to its problems, in the immediate aftermath of the cold war. His commitment to the United Nations – its mission and its staff – was unmistakable, and the mark he has left on the Organization is indelible”, marked the current Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

UN Special expresses the deepest condolences on this sad occasion. ■

UN Special

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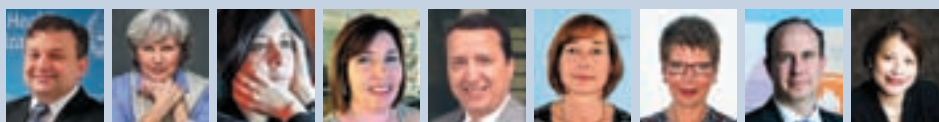
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