

La revue officielle des fonctionnaires Internationaux - The official magazine of international civil servants



UNtoday

untoday.org



UNITED NATIONS & COVID-19

**A New Paradigm :
Living in Geneva
in Pandemic Times**

**UN Staff under
COVID-19 quarantine**

**Memories of the
Long Service
Awards at the Palais
des Nations**

LOOKING FOR LOCAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL GROCERIES?

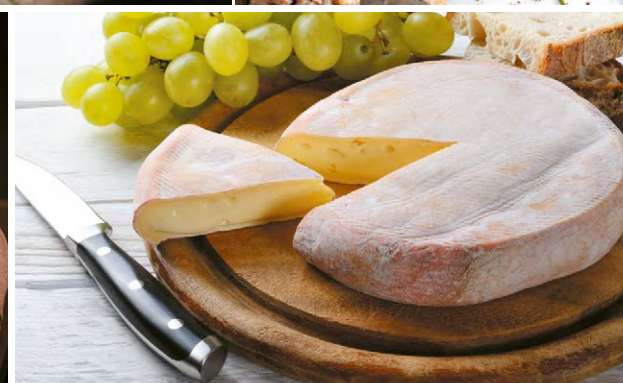
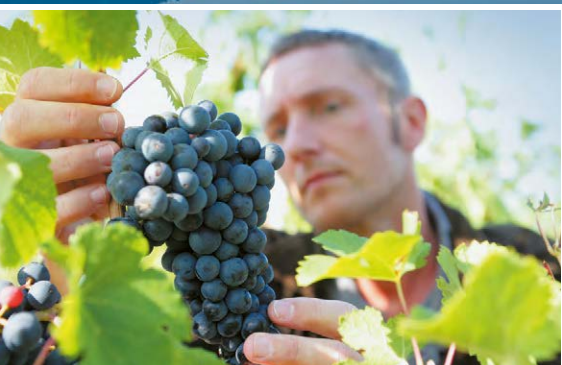
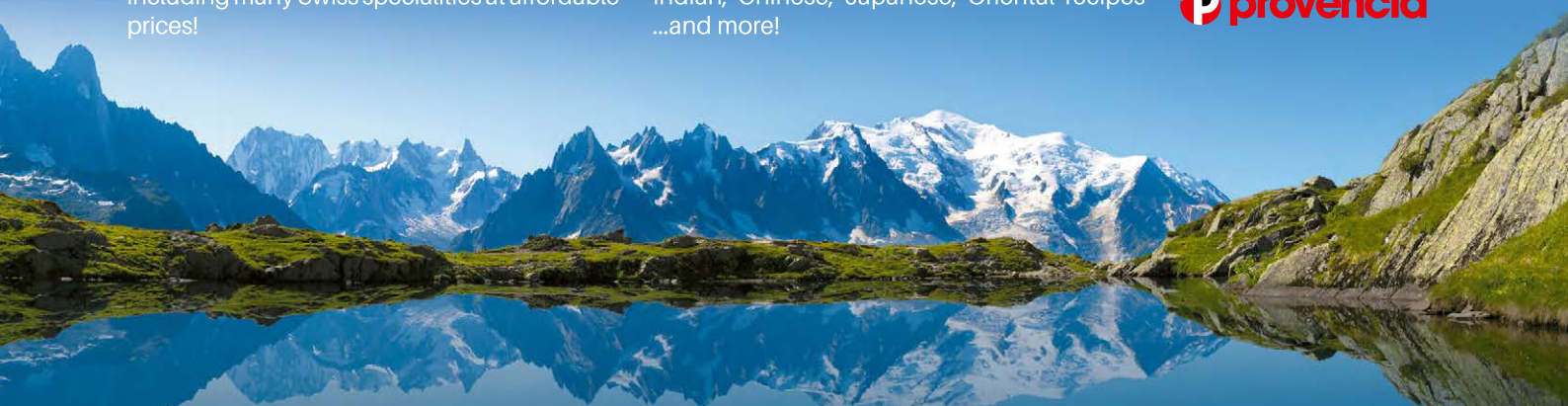
Find them all at French prices at Provencia !

The Carrefour and Carrefour Market stores from the Provencia group in France are unlike any others! Since 1963, our teams have been travelling across our beautiful region to identify its best local products, support the local economy and develop strong relationships with the producers.

In our Provencia stores, you will therefore find more than **3600 local grocery products**, including many Swiss specialities at affordable prices!

As **sustainable development** and healthy consumption are key for us and for you, we also propose a wide choice of loose products, organic foods and we support producers switching to organic farming.

Hungry for international food and flavors? You will find in our stores a large choice of products coming from all around the world to cook tasty English, American, Mexican, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Oriental recipes ...and more!



FIND YOUR NEAREST STORE: WWW.PROVENCIA.FR

01 • BELLEGARDE-SUR-VALSERINE • DIVONNE-LES-BAINS • FERNEY-VOLTAIRE POTERIE • FERNEY-VOLTAIRE CENTRE • GEX • SAINT-GENIS-POUILLY • 74 • BONS-EN-CHABLAIS • DOUVAINE • EVIAN-LES-BAINS • MARGENCEL • SAINT-JULIEN-EN-GENEVOIS • THONON-LES-BAINS •





ALEXANDER MEJIA
Editor-in-chief / Rédacteur en chef

The 2019 Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has affected the way we work at the United Nations in Geneva in ways that we could not have conceived when this all began. Switzerland is in state of emergency, Geneva is in lock down mode, and almost all of us are working from home. The Palais des Nations is closed to delegates and the public indefinitely, something that has not happened since World War II. This pandemic has surpassed all negative expectations and is affecting the work of the UN around the world, diminishing our abilities to help the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. Still, we carry on, remaining productive, optimistic and united in our common efforts to defeat this health crisis.

This edition of *UN Today* is digital for obvious reasons, and as far as we can foresee, the upcoming editions will be as well. I say that in a positive manner, as I believe this will bring us closer to you, our readers and supporters. If something has been an unexpected and satisfactory side of this global health crises, is our newfound skills to do things digital and to connect virtually with our personal networks and to our enhanced professional community. In that light, this virtual *UN Today* should serve to maintain a window into our beloved Palais des Nations and a bridge to the UN family as a whole.

In addition to the Coronavirus coverage, you will find in this edition, among other topics, a pictorial of the Long Service Awards ceremony and interviews with the UN Resident Coordinator in Zambia, with the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, and with the new Permanent Observer of the International Organization of la Francophonie to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

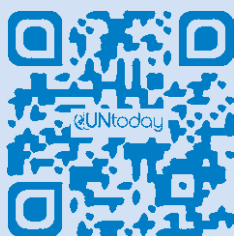
Enjoy your magazine!

La pandémie de coronavirus de 2019 (COVID-19) a affecté le mode de travail aux Nations Unies à Genève d'une manière que nous n'aurions jamais pu imaginer. La Suisse est en état d'urgence, Genève est en confinement et nous travaillons presque tous à domicile. Le Palais des Nations est fermé aux délégations et au public pour une durée indéterminée, ce qui ne s'est jamais produit depuis la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Cette pandémie, dont l'ampleur a dépassé les prévisions les plus pessimistes, bouleverse l'activité des Nations Unies dans le monde entier et diminue notre capacité à aider les plus vulnérables et les plus défavorisés. Néanmoins, nous ne baissons pas les bras et nous restons efficaces, optimistes et unis pour surmonter cette crise sanitaire.

Cette édition de UN Today est numérique, pour des raisons évidentes, et tout laisse prévoir que les prochaines éditions le seront également. Mais je vois cela de manière positive, car je pense que cela nous rapprochera de vous, nos lecteurs et nos soutiens. S'il y a un aspect inattendu et satisfaisant de cette crise sanitaire mondiale, c'est bien la découverte de notre capacité à agir en mode numérique et à nous connecter virtuellement à nos réseaux personnels et à l'ensemble de nos collègues. Dans cette perspective, ce UN Today virtuel nous permet de garder notre cher Palais des Nations bien en vue et de maintenir la cohésion de la famille des Nations Unies.

Ce numéro consacre divers articles à la crise du Coronavirus. Vous y trouverez également, entre autres, des interviews de la Coordinatrice résidente des Nations Unies en Zambie, du Secrétaire général adjoint chargé du Département de l'Assemblée générale et de la gestion des conférences et du nouvel observateur permanent de l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève. Nous vous avons également préparé un photoreportage sur la cérémonie de remise des prix d'ancienneté.

Bonne lecture de votre magazine!



facebook.com/UNTodayMagazine



instagram.com/untoday_magazine



twitter.com/un_today

IMPRESSUM

UN Today

Palais des Nations, bureau C507
1211 Genève 10
sarah.bencherif@unitar.org
admin@untoday.org
www.untoday.org

Alex Mejia

Rédacteur en chef / Editor-in-chief

Sarah Bencherif

Coordinatrice éditoriale /
Editorial Coordinator

Publicité / Advertising

PCL Presses Centrales SA
Régie Publicitaire et abonnements
Av. de Longemalle 9 / CP 137 /
1020 Renens
T. +41 21 317 51 72
regiepub@pcl.ch
www.regiepub.pcl.ch

Contact pour la France :

JBM Magazines
5, rue du Pré Félin
74940 Annecy-Le-Vieux
Jean-Michel BRETIN – T. 06 79 45 86 54

Layout

PCL Presses Centrales SA
Avenue de Longemalle 9
1020 Renens
T. +41 21 317 51 51
www.pcl.ch

Relecture / Proofreader

Julia Genth

Webmasters

Sebastian Hofbauer & Froylan Silveira

Merci à / Many thanks to :

Israel Ledesma
Adam Kane
Matija Potocnik
Alexandra Gigant
Johanna Silvander

La revue officielle des fonctionnaires internationaux des Nations Unies à Genève.

Les opinions exprimées dans ce magazine sont celles des auteurs, et non forcément celles de l'ONU ou de ses institutions spécialisées. La parution de ce magazine dépend uniquement du support financier de la publicité prise en charge par une régie.

The official magazine of the international civil servants of the United Nations at Geneva.

The opinions in this magazine are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the United Nations, or its specialized agencies. The publication of this magazine relies solely on the financial support of its advertisers.

SOMMAIRE / TABLE OF CONTENTS

Éditorial / Editor's note	3
Sommaire / Table of contents	4

GROS PLAN SUR / FOCUS ON

Pandémie de COVID-19 / COVID-19 Pandemic	
A New Paradigm: Living in Geneva in Pandemic Times	5
What does this crisis mean for the future of our work and our organization	8
COVID-19: Hommes et femmes différemment touchés	9
UN Staff under COVID-19 quarantine	10
UN Internships in times of COVID-19	12
Responding to community spread of COVID-19 in Geneva	14

VU DE L'INTÉRIEUR/ INSIDE VIEW

Coumba Mar Gadio: un parcours exceptionnel, une femme de terrain	16
Only Through Structural Change Will the UN Achieve Gender Equality	18
Beyond the Gender Binary	20
United Nations' invisible workforce	22
Non à l'inégalité salariale!	26
Decades of commitment honoured at Long Service Awards	27

3 QUESTIONS À... / 3 QUESTIONS TO...

Movses Abelian, Gender Champion, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management	24
---	----

PHOTOS DU MOIS / PHOTOS OF THE MONTH

Long Service Awards	28
---------------------	----

AFFAIRES INTERNATIONALES/ INTERNATIONAL MATTERS

Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie. Un nouvel Observateur Permanent	30
Another UN International Day?	32
Universel et Régional réunis pour coordonner leurs interprétations	34
Celebrate forests with us!	36

LOISIRS ET CULTURE /LEISURE AND CULTURE

Accepter la vie - Méditation Vipassana au Palais des Nations	38
--	----

DIVERS / OTHER MATTERS

Le CAGI au service des ONG et délégués de la Genève Internationale	39
Discovering Traditional Chinese Medicine in Switzerland	40

LETTRE À LA RÉDACTION - LETTER TO THE EDITOR

	42
--	----

16



26



28



Working
from home.

GROS PLAN SUR... / FOCUS ON...

A New Paradigm: Living in Geneva in Pandemic Times

Alex Mejia*

Because of the Coronavirus global health crisis, we now behave differently. Coping with all these changes can be stressful. Still, we continue to deliver under this new paradigm.

Every night at 9:00 pm my wife and I go out to the balcony of our apartment to join what has become a ritual: collective clapping to remember and commemorate the health workers on the front lines of the fight against the Coronavirus. Who would have said that the whole of Geneva – and the whole of Europe – would be celebrating government workers so publicly, in unison, with total accord, and in oneness of spirit? Who would have thought a few months back that we will be sharing our fears so intimately, that people are actually willing to change their

group behaviour in a matter of days? No one. No one would have really expected that news coming from far away about a strange-sounding virus in China would become so local an intimate. We simply didn't see it coming.

Because of the Coronavirus global health crisis, we now work differently, communicate differently, go out differently, conduct ourselves differently, even perhaps eat differently, as some of us are thinking if there would be scarcity of food and are tempted to go to the supermarket and buy extra just in case. For those of us working at the United Nations in Geneva, the closure of the Palais and all other buildings hosting UN agencies was a

When the announcement came, we thought that it would be a matter of days or a couple of weeks, but now we came to the realization that it will take more than a couple of months.

clear signal that things were serious. When the announcement came, we thought that it would be a matter of days or a couple of weeks, but now we came to the realization that it could be a couple of months, in the best case scenario. Europe is now the epicentre of what our own Dr. Tedros at WHO called a global pandemic, so aggressive in the scalation of infec-

As a first step, it helps to be aware of the fact that a negative reaction to the situation is normal. It is expected to feel somehow scared, lonely, anxious, or even angry and bored. Give your body and mind time to adjust to this new situation.

tions and deaths that it has forced national governments to lock down entire countries.

A whole new lifestyle

And those drastic containment measures are taking a toll in Geneva. Not only in the number of cases and deaths but in the mental health of its citizens. In our particular case, amongst us. There are several colleagues that are distressed as the result of a difficult combination: increased work demands with decreased access to professional resources. And it is not only the massive teleconferencing and the diminished personal contact. It is also the forced adaptation to a new scenario in which we are forcefully combining several roles in a limited physical space: UN staff member, father/mother, spouse, counsellor, cook, cleaner, caregiver, etc. Still, we continue to deliver, but we live in a new paradigm. As UN personnel we share an ethos that is manifested in our attitudes and aspirations, an idiosyncratic cosmivision that gives us a unique identity. We know ourselves as resilient people that can endure and strive under pressure. We can adapt rapidly and feel comfortable in the middle of a crisis. But a crisis like this has never occurred before. There is no precedent and that adds to the pervasive feeling of uncertainty.

Coping with all these changes happening in our lives can be stressful, to say the least. Navigating through them can have a serious impact on your mental health. After all, before the outbreak of this pandemic, we all had busy lives. We had routines that we followed, some of them

without being consciously aware. It is not only the fact that we are now working from home and with limited capabilities. More than that, we need to actively adjust to a whole new lifestyle. And given the rapid speed with which the crisis escalated, and continues to escalate, we are hardly given any time to react. Fear and anxiety are expected in this situation, and they can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in anyone. How each of us reacts, however, can be quite different. Some may be experiencing changes in sleep patterns, difficulties falling asleep, fear and worries about their own health and the health of their loved ones. Others may simply feel lonely without the usual amount of direct social interaction.

Talk to any expert and they will tell you that all this is expected in a crisis. After all, this situation is new, it is unknown territory, and it puts a strong strain on your mental well-being. They will also tell you, that there are several rather simple things you can do in order to protect and improve your mental well-being. As a first step, it helps to be aware of the fact that a negative reaction to the situation is normal. It is expected to feel somehow scared, lonely, anxious, or even angry and bored. Give your body and mind time to adjust to this new situation. Remember that, you are adapting to a completely different lifestyle over the course of just a few days. Also don't forget to take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. If you are religious, pray. I do that regularly and can attest to the positive difference it does in my life.

Preserving your mental health is crucial

In the middle of this new paradigm there is another stress factor that is all too common these days: the "infodemic". Keep in mind that that too much of the wrong information can exacerbate anxiety. Facts, however, minimize fear. Most of us have been bombarded with information on COVID-19. No hour passes without a new headline, another WhatsApp message, a concerning phone call with a friend. The sheer amount of information alone certainly is reason enough for stress. But more than that, it makes us susceptible for fake news, rumours, fear mongering, or even scams. In practical terms, adjusting consciously to this 'new normal' can mean taking intentional breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting. It is advisable to cut down on the amount of information you choose to ingest and to improve the quality instead. Rely only on trusted sources and try to tune out the rest. Essentially, there are two authoritative sources when it comes to news about the pandemic: one is the WHO and the other is your national authority. While different news outlets all over the world are trying to chase us with headlines, I invite you to be intentional about what you are reading and rely on trusted sources. Your mental health is important. You need it. **▶**

* Alex Mejia is Editor-in-Chief of *UN Today* magazine and Division Director at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

World-Class Education

EHL - Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne has been pioneering in Hospitality Management Education since 1893, preparing 30'000 students to pursue careers in 150 countries and build a smart network of inspiring professionals sharing the same values.

A degree from the world N°1 university for hospitality and leisure management opens the doors to global careers in travel, hospitality, luxury, finance, consulting, and any other service industry where customer relationship is at the center of the strategy.

ehl.edu



EHL is the n°1 hospitality management school worldwide
"QS World University Rankings"
"CEO World Magazine"
2019 & 2020.

What does this crisis mean for the future of our work and our organization?

Ian Richards*

This week I was supposed to deploy to Zambia. Instead I'm confined at home watching the snow melt on the Jura.

So I've learned to use Microsoft Teams in all its glory, both for meetings that were necessary and unnecessary. I've also been able to admire colleagues' home decoration. Like you, I've been cooking three meals per day, while trying to maintain variety – it's not easy.

Along the way we're all learning not to touch things we used to take for granted. So we use keys to press lift buttons and enter pin codes. We push door handles with our elbows. We take routes less travelled to avoid others. We discover a whole new world of what can be ordered online, even in Switzerland.

No longer will we take open borders for granted, nor flights and international train services, nor the reliable supply of soap and toilet paper. It can all stop at a moment's notice.

But one day it will start again and we will bounce back. As the world has from previous epidemics, although not without scars.

And what will it mean for the world of work and the UN?

Our office space

By this summer many of us were supposed to be sitting in the new H building hot-desking space. But would you accept to use a keyboard and chair used by another colleague only hours before, knowing viruses can linger on plastic surfaces for up to 48 hours?

Can you imagine sharing an open desk with colleagues talking straight across at you, droplets lingering in the air, gently wafting your way, all throughout the day?

And with up to 48 staff in each work zone, can you imagine the potential for cross-contamination as we lie in wait for second, third, fourth waves of the coronavirus to hit us?

And with a tiny snack bar of 35 square metres, called "grab and go", who will want to go there?

The organization's push to reduce contract security

And what about contracts? If we look outside, who are the heroes of the moment? Yes, the doctors and nurses, and we applaud them every night.

But also, the supermarket workers, delivery drivers, the cleaners. Many of them on precarious contracts, apparently self-employed as uberized employees.

The same kind of contracts the UN is thinking for its own workforce as it calls for more flexibility. The kind of contracts that don't guarantee health coverage, nor the ability to stay in Switzerland even if borders are closed. After all this, should the UN still be pushing these?

Work-life balance

Reading the testimonies on the UN Geneva Community Facebook group, this crisis will also prompt a big rethink about work-life balance. Colleagues have turned into full-time teachers, full-time cooks, full-time supermarket queuers and full-time staff. We've all grown more sensitive to how private lives and work can be hard to disentangle, even for our bosses.

So let's hope for more compassion at work, and more understanding about the circumstances we are all going through.

Funding the UN

And what about the UN itself? Governments will be suffering financially with lower tax returns and large amounts spent in stimulus packages. But one thing the start of the crisis showed was the lack of coordination among countries, on confinement measures, on economic counter-measures, on human rights aspects, the ability of developing countries (let alone developed countries) to cope, and on solidarity between peoples.

So far, and unlike in past catastrophes, it is people of developed countries that have felt vulnerable and uncertain, and that's important because everyone now feels they are in the same boat. No-one has been handed any privileges during this pandemic. It may affect the poor badly, but it also affects the rich too.

So like battered countries emerging from the second world war, there will be calls for greater multilateral cooperation and that's an opportunity that as UN staff we must seize. ▶

* Ian Richards is Executive Secretary of the Staff Coordinating Council at United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), President of the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA).

COVID-19: Hommes et femmes différemment touchés

Catherine Fiankan-Bokonga*

Alors que le coronavirus poursuit sa rapide propagation à travers le monde, professionnels de la santé et experts ne peuvent que constater l'importance du genre, déterminant la façon dont les personnes sont touchées. D'une part, les hommes sont plus enclins à être infectés et à mourir lorsqu'ils sont hospitalisés pour des formes graves. D'autre part, les femmes constituent la majorité des travailleurs de la santé dans le monde et à ce titre, sont naturellement plus exposées.

Plus de morts masculines

Une analyse des patients atteints du COVID-19 enregistrés en Chine de décembre 2019 à février 2020 souligne que les hommes représentent environ 60% des personnes infectées tombant malade. Selon le Centre chinois de contrôle des maladies, le taux de mortalité chez des infections masculines confirmées était environ 65% plus élevé que les féminines. Même constatation en Corée du Sud. Les hommes représentaient près de 62% de tous les cas, et ceux infectés avaient 89% plus de chances de mourir que les femmes.

Idem en Europe où l'agence italienne de recherche en santé publique, constate que 60% des cas de coronavirus et 70% des décès dans le pays jusqu'à mars 2020 sont survenus chez des hommes. Selon les experts, la fragilité de la population masculine face au coronavirus s'expliquerait, entre autres, par le fait qu'elle soit majoritairement fumeuse. Ainsi leurs poumons sont endommagés et deviennent un terrain propice aux inflammations. Mais selon les scientifiques qui ont étudié d'autres formes de coronavirus (SARS & MERS), les hormones œstrogènes pourraient également avoir un rôle important dans la protection des femmes face au COVID-19.

Les femmes majorité des travailleurs de la santé dans le monde

D'après une analyse de 104 pays réalisée par l'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (OMS/2019), environ 70% de la main-d'œuvre mondiale des soins de santé est composée de femmes. Dans la province chinoise du Hubei, où le virus est apparu pour la première fois, plus de 90% des agents de santé sont des femmes. Les premières études locales montrent qu'elles sont les plus exposées en raison de leur rôle. Pour rappel, fin février, on comptait au moins 3300 agents de santé qui avaient contracté le virus dont 13 sont décédés, selon les autorités sanitaires locales. Dans la région Europe, l'OMS souligne que 43% des docteurs sont des femmes et 84% sont infirmières.

Deux personnes portent des masques en rentrant chez elles avec leurs courses lors de l'épidémie de coronavirus à Long Island City.



UN PHOTO/EVAN SCHNEIDER

En Espagne, au 4 avril, 15000 travailleurs de la santé étaient infectés par le COVID-19 ou placés en isolement, soit environ 15% des cas enregistrés dans le pays.

Aux Etats-Unis, où le nombre de cas ne cesse de grimper, le US Census Bureau annonce que les femmes occupent 76% des emplois dans le secteur de la santé. Et dans le domaine des soins infirmiers, où les travailleurs sont en première ligne des interactions avec les patients, elles représentent plus de 85% des effectifs. On craint que la ruée des personnes testées positives vers les hôpitaux surcharge les agents de santé, les affaiblisse et finisse par les rendre à leur tour très vulnérables.

Une opportunité

L'actuelle épidémie de COVID-19 est source de désarroi, et souvent de peurs. Elle met à nu les faiblesses d'une société mondialisée, hyper connectée, qui se sentait invincible dans une vie à 2.000 à l'heure où mobilité extrême et maîtrise des fuseaux horaires était la norme. Cette crise sanitaire mondiale aura peut-être non seulement le mérite d'offrir une formidable opportunité de ralentir le tempo, de retrouver de vraies valeurs, mais également de désormais, scientifiquement et politiquement, prendre en compte la question de sexospécificité. ▀

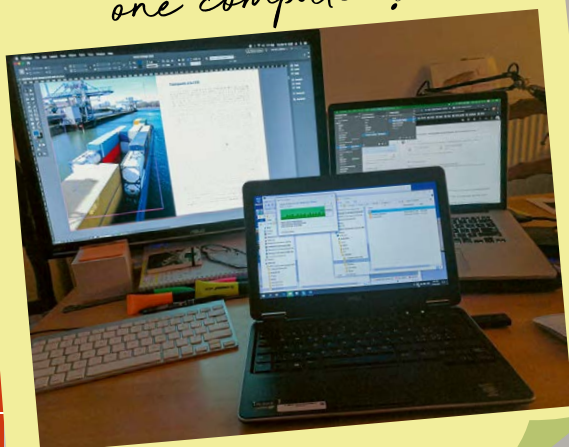
* Catherine Fiankan-Bokonga est correspondante et vice-présidente du Club Suisse de la Presse.

UN Staff under the COVID-19 quarantine in Geneva

Since 16 March all UNOG staff have been requested to work from home. Here are some of their views and thoughts on full-time telecommute.

*I work
how*

Do I need more than one computer?



Only now I appreciate...

Every now and then, I saw a colleague of mine 'greeting' his office when he arrives in the morning. He also pays careful attention to the plants he set up in his office. There is nothing excessive in his gestures by any mean, but it always struck me as a genuine acknowledgment of appreciation of his space which, I presume, he considers an integral factor of his job delivery. I have always considered each person has his/her own method to optimal job delivery which is more or less contingent on the workspace and that there are as many methods as there are human beings. Well, teleworking did away with my delusion. Although the nature of my work technically lends itself to be self-reliant and not dependent on a location, provided of course a virtual private network connection, I find myself in dire need of a proper workspace instead of a makeshift one. I now appreciate the fact that a proper office space provides me not only with the needed logistical tools to deliver my job but also secures for me a natural psychological disposition to perform that I don't need to manufacture elsewhere. I am one of those essential staff. I use it to come to my office while exercising all the needed precautions and responsibilities. So, hello my office and hello my plant. I hope you did not miss me much and you won't miss me for longer.

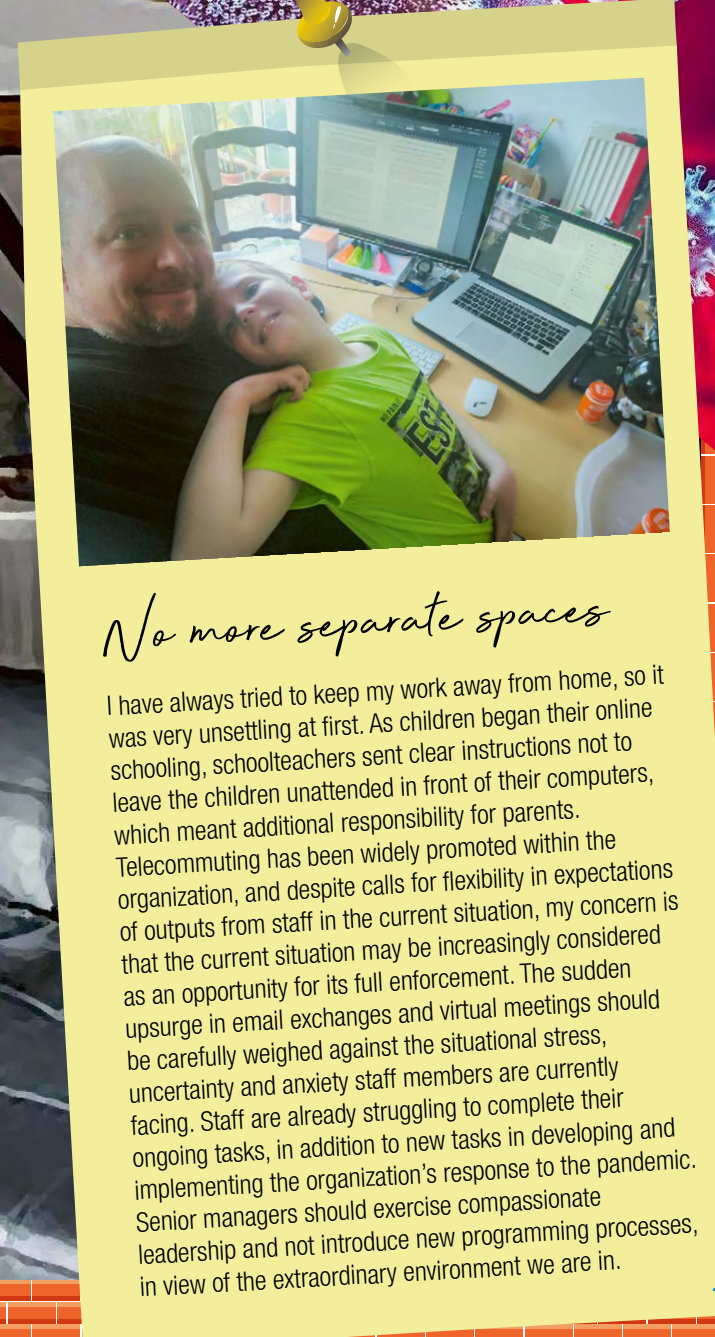
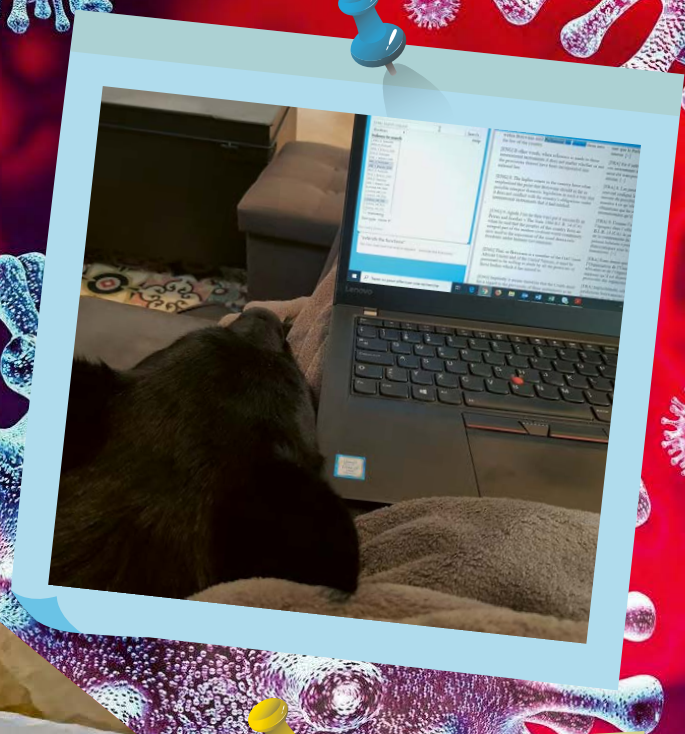
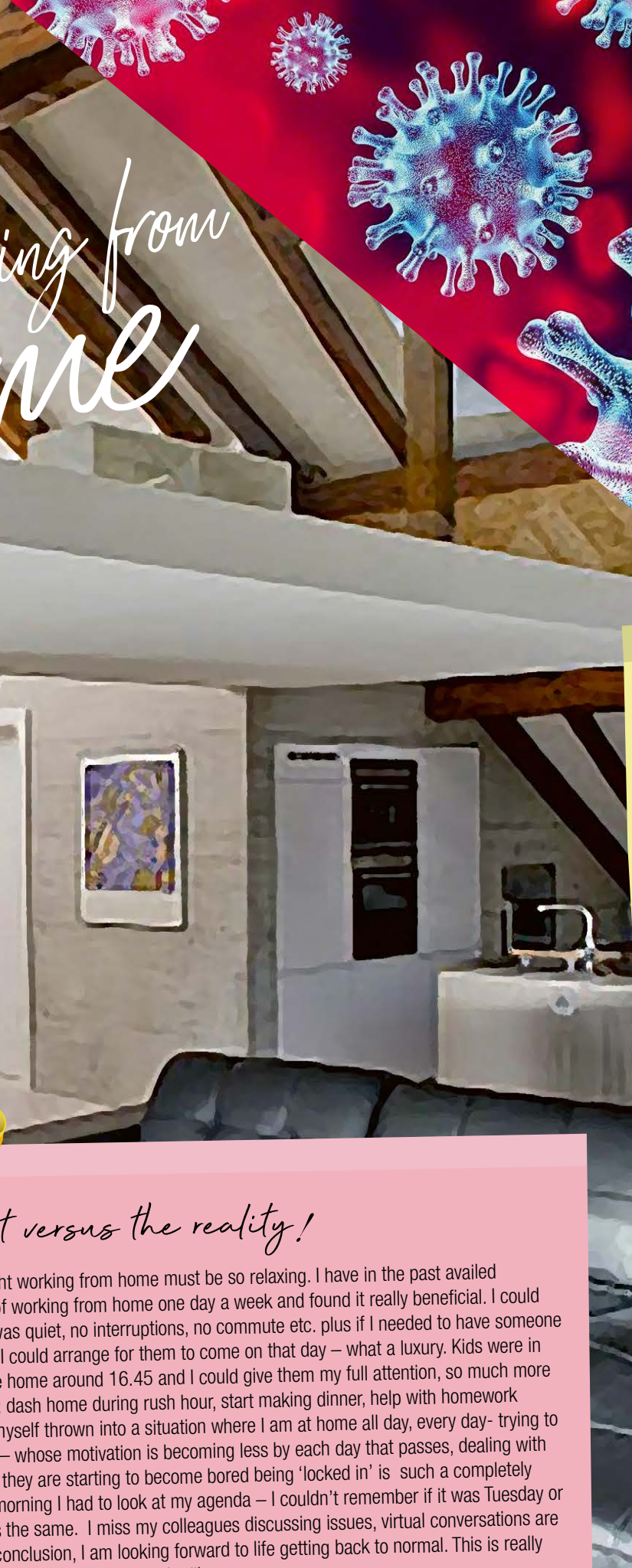
What about the noise?



The concep

For years, I always thought myself to the possibility of accomplish so much, it w like a plumber to come, school all day, they came relaxing than the normal etc... But now finding n work, home-school kids the sibling squabbles as different situation. This n Wednesday, every day is really not the same. In c not what I imagined wor

ing from
me



It versus the reality!

Working from home must be so relaxing. I have in the past availed myself of working from home one day a week and found it really beneficial. I could have quiet, no interruptions, no commute etc. plus if I needed to have someone I could arrange for them to come on that day – what a luxury. Kids were in school, I could arrange for them to come on that day – what a luxury. Kids were in school around 16.45 and I could give them my full attention, so much more than I could at home during rush hour, start making dinner, help with homework etc. I found myself thrown into a situation where I am at home all day, every day- trying to get things done – whose motivation is becoming less by each day that passes, dealing with the fact that they are starting to become bored being ‘locked in’ is such a completely different experience. In the morning I had to look at my agenda – I couldn’t remember if it was Tuesday or Wednesday, it was the same. I miss my colleagues discussing issues, virtual conversations are not the same. In conclusion, I am looking forward to life getting back to normal. This is really what working from home would be like.

No more separate spaces

I have always tried to keep my work away from home, so it was very unsettling at first. As children began their online schooling, schoolteachers sent clear instructions not to leave the children unattended in front of their computers, which meant additional responsibility for parents. Telecommuting has been widely promoted within the organization, and despite calls for flexibility in expectations of outputs from staff in the current situation, my concern is that the current situation may be increasingly considered as an opportunity for its full enforcement. The sudden upsurge in email exchanges and virtual meetings should be carefully weighed against the situational stress, uncertainty and anxiety staff members are currently facing. Staff are already struggling to complete their ongoing tasks, in addition to new tasks in developing and implementing the organization’s response to the pandemic. Senior managers should exercise compassionate leadership and not introduce new programming processes, in view of the extraordinary environment we are in.

UN Internships in times of COVID-19

Valerii and Kiva Sun*

Two UNOG interns share their experience of working from home during these strange times of COVID-19 pandemic.



Social Distancing during a meeting at the Palais des Nations

Valerii is an intern at the United Nations Office at Geneva who currently lives in Geneva

Following my ideals and principles

After living in Italy for the past few years, I was quite surprised to be offered the opportunity for an internship at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The ideals and principles of the organization have always been dear to me, so it did not take long for me to decide to accept it. But I must confess, it was quite a challenge to move to a new country and start a new life, after just leaving a place which had become the epicentre of the COVID-19 outbreak in Europe.

I'd been assigned with several different tasks including taking pictures, researching, producing and developing content for a new UN Geneva website, and the Annual Report. As the coronavirus spread across Europe, my photography work focused on the social distancing and other recommendations at the workplace, conferences and meetings in the last days before access to the Palais des Nations was restricted. As the situation progressed, all events were cancelled or postponed, and we were advised to work remotely, to encourage social distancing. The last days in the office were rather comforting and the staff were very helpful and supportive of us and each other.

Even after having been given the opportunity to telecommute, almost everyone tried to come in.

Stay home

Things changed dramatically after receiving a UN Broadcast about COVID-19 in Switzerland, and the deeply worrying news about the first positive case within the Palais des Nations. All non-critical personnel was required to telecommute.

It was hard to realize that we all had to actually stay home. After just two weeks since starting my internship, it was a difficult, yet necessary measure.

Learning new ways of working

Since Monday, 15 March, we've been making the best of telecommuting. I've been researching historical facts for the history section of the new website, as well as learning how to use motion graphics software to create an animation for the upcoming launch of the UN Geneva Annual Report.

This global crisis has certainly been challenging for those of us who are working away from loved ones, worrying deeply about them. Working from home can feel lonely, at a time of mass panic and anxiety. For me, as an intern without a network of friends in Geneva, it is hard to be isolated. Along with several other interns, we have occasionally been able to hang out.

I think taking care of each other is extremely important now, especially those being directly affected by the virus. Let us hope for the best and continue working by any means possible to get through this crisis together.

Working from home in Geneva.



Kiva from Shanghai (China) is an intern at the United Nations Office at Geneva who currently lives in Ferney-Voltaire (France)



Kiva working from home during COVID-19 pandemic.

Accepted with mixed feelings

2020 has been a tough year to start an internship at UN Geneva. After finishing school in the UK, I watched the increasing numbers of confirmed cases in China and felt concerned for my family. I received the offer from UN Geneva with mixed feelings, while there was panic at home, I realised that this opportunity could provide a different perspective in life.

One month before I left for Geneva, I found a lovely apartment, not far from Palais des Nations. Unexpectedly, just before my flight, my host cancelled my reservation because she was nervous about coronavirus! Though shocked, I understood her concern. The virus has already affected many people, and I felt that global panic was coming.

Settling in

Without much time to search, I was able to find a place to stay in Ferney-Voltaire, France.

I arrived in Geneva on a Sunday and started to work on Monday, in early March. Though the virus was still on my mind, I couldn't help being excited to be in a new work environment and meeting other interns from all around the world. At that moment, I finally felt like I was finally ready to settle down, get to work, and eventually make an impact of my own.

After my fourth day at work, we received the announcement informing us that everyone would have to work from home.

Going back was a plausible choice

The announcement caused a shockwave of emotion, sparking conversations in the office and around the building. I spoke to many other interns, asking how they felt, and consulted some of them to figure out what I should do. My friend gave me the choice of going back home with her,

which was a plausible option, especially with the outbreak becoming more contained in China.

I decided to stay, because even with the outbreak, my internship is a once in a lifetime opportunity. It also gives me the chance to see how French and Swiss citizens are coping with the pandemic.

Panic-buying

At first, I was concerned that people were not taking things seriously. I believe that changed after the French President held a press conference announcing tough new restrictions, limiting movement and closing borders. To me, it was a positive sign that European governments were starting to take control of the situation. Unfortunately, it also caused mass confusion and panic-buying, leading to some shortages at the stores.

Changing by the day

Things have changed a lot since I arrived. In Ferney-Voltaire, an official permit is required to leave the house, which limits most of my activities.

With everything that's happening, it's very hard to keep my head straight. But I do believe that it's important to keep myself physically and mentally healthy. My friends and I still try to follow productive daily routines with work and leisure activities to balance to our minds.

Though hard, it is important to keep working together, enjoying our lives, washing our hands frequently, and of course, working not to spread the virus, but to spread love. ▶

* Valerii and Kiva Sun are interns in the Production and Support Section of the Division of Conference Management at United Nations Office at Geneva.

Kiva, from Shanghai (China), equipped with mask and permit to leave her house.



© KIVA SUN

Shortages at the supermarket in Ferney-Voltaire, during the COVID-19 pandemic.



© KIVA SUN

Responding to community spread of COVID-19 in Geneva

The 2019 Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has surpassed all negative expectations and has wreaked havoc around the world, affecting the most vulnerable and creating devastating losses in countless families. Switzerland is in state of emergency, Geneva is in lock down mode, and the UN family in this beautiful city is working from home. The Palais des Nations is closed to delegates and the public indefinitely, something not seen since World War II. Still, we remain optimistic, productive and united in our common efforts to defeat this health crisis.

Several countries have demonstrated the ability to reduce or stop transmission of the COVID-19 virus. The Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 aims to slow and stop transmission, prevent outbreaks and delay spread; provide optimized care for all patients, especially the seriously ill; minimize the impact of the epidemic on health systems, social services and economic activity.

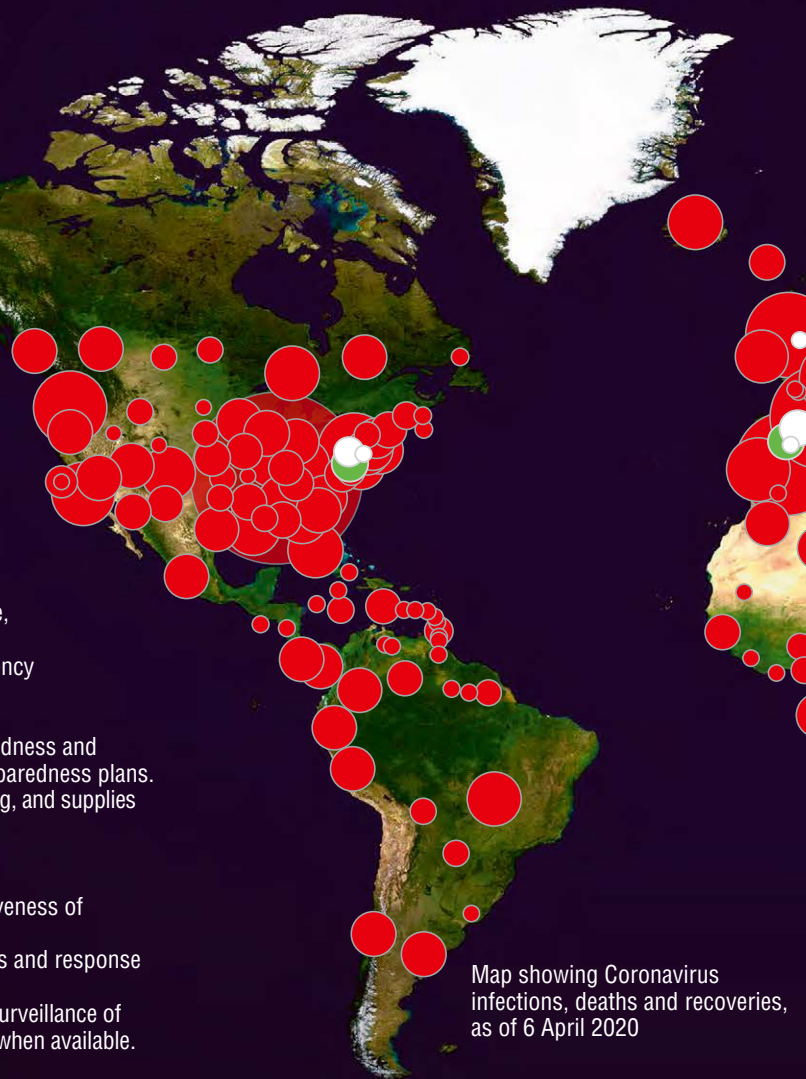
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Highest priority

- Enhance whole-of-society coordination mechanisms to support preparedness and response, including the health, transport, travel, trade, finance, security and other sectors.
- Involve public health Emergency Operations Centres and other emergency response systems early.
- Sensitize the public to their active role in the response.
- Engage with key partners to develop national and sub-national preparedness and response plans. Build on existing plans such as influenza pandemic preparedness plans.
- Enhance hospital and community preparedness; ensure that space, staffing, and supplies are adequate for a surge in patient care needs.

Secondary priority

- Establish metrics and monitoring evaluation systems to assess effectiveness of measures.
- Document lessons learned to inform on-going and future preparedness and response activities.
- Prepare for regulatory approval, market authorization and post-market surveillance of COVID-19 products (e.g. laboratory diagnostics, therapeutics, vaccines), when available.

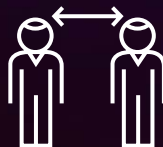


Map showing Coronavirus infections, deaths and recoveries, as of 6 April 2020



Wash your hands frequently

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.



Maintain social distancing

Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.



Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Practice respiratory hygiene

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

Basic protective measures against the new coronavirus



UNOG | ONUG
Staff Coordinating Council
Conseil de coordination du personnel

We, the UN family in Geneva remain engaged and committed to delivering our mandate for the people we serve. A key component of epidemic and pandemic preparedness is ensuring systems are in place for real-time information to flow from a trusted source to the people at risk.

In the absence of such information rumours can spread rapidly through social media, resulting in an "Infodemic". The WHO manages the interactive dashboard/map that provides the latest global numbers of cases and the numbers by country of COVID-19 cases on a daily basis. Please visit www.who.int



205 Total number of countries infected

15 March 2020

Total Confirmed
169,387

Confirmed Cases by Country

- 81,020 China
- 24,747 Italy
- 13,938 Iran
- 8,162 Korea, South
- 7,844 Spain
- 5,813 Germany
- 5,437 France
- 3,774 United States
- 2,200 Switzerland
- 1,739 Denmark
- 1,395 United Kingdom
- 1,256 Norway
- 1,136 Netherlands
- 1,032 Sweden
- 886 Belgium
- 860 Austria
- 839 Japan

Total Deaths
6,513

- 3,099 Hubei China
- 1,809 Italy
- 724 Iran
- 292 Spain
- 127 France
- 75 Korea, South
- 42 Washington US
- 35 United Kingdom
- 22 Henan China
- 22 Japan
- 20 Netherlands
- 14 Switzerland

Total Recovered
77,257

- 55,094 Hubei China
- 4,590 Iran
- 2,335 Italy
- 1,306 Guangdong China
- 1,250 Henan China
- 1,213 Zhejiang China
- 1,014 Hunan China
- 984 Anhui China
- 934 Jiangxi China
- 834 Korea, South
- 743 Shandong China
- 631 Jiangsu China
- 570 Chongqing China
- 517 Spain

6 April 2020

Total Confirmed
1,289,380

Confirmed Cases by Country

- 337,971 United States
- 135,032 Spain
- 128,948 Italy
- 100,186 Germany
- 93,780 France
- 82,665 China
- 60,500 Iran
- 48,451 United Kingdom
- 27,069 Turkey
- 21,652 Switzerland
- 20,814 Belgium
- 18,917 Netherlands
- 15,940 Canada
- 12,206 Austria
- 11,730 Portugal
- 11,298 Brazil
- 10,284 Korea, South

Total Deaths
70,590

- 15,887 Italy
- 13,055 Spain
- 8,078 France
- 4,934 United Kingdom
- 3,739 Iran
- 3,212 Hubei China
- 3,048 New York City US
- 1,867 Netherlands
- 1,632 Belgium
- 1,590 Germany
- 734 Switzerland
- 574 Turkey

Total Recovered
270,372

- 77,310 China
- 40,437 Spain
- 28,700 Germany
- 24,236 Iran
- 21,815 Italy
- 17,582 United States
- 16,354 France
- 7,298 Switzerland
- 6,598 Korea, South
- 3,986 Belgium
- 3,463 Austria
- 3,081 Canada
- 1,488 Denmark
- 1,241 Malaysia



If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early

Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.



Practice food safety

Use different chopping boards and knives for raw meat and cooked foods. Even in areas experiencing outbreaks, meat products can be safely consumed if these items are cooked thoroughly and properly handled during food preparation.

Be READY to fight #COVID19

For the latest health advice, go to:
www.who.int/COVID-19



Source: WHO

Coumba Mar Gadio : un parcours exceptionnel, une femme de terrain

Olivier Meyer, Paloma Redondo*



© UN ZAMBIA 2019

Madame Coumba
Mar Gadio

Coumba Mar Gadio, Coordinatrice résidente du système des Nations Unies en Zambie, évoque pour *UN Today* ses vingt années d'activité à l'ONU et les défis professionnels et personnels qu'implique un tel engagement.

Curiosité et ouverture

Enfant, Coumba Mar Gadio aimait surtout les découvertes, les excursions et la lecture. Elle adorait les sorties organisées par l'école au parc zoologique ou aux îles du Sénégal, mais elle éprouvait aussi un grand plaisir à se rendre à la bibliothèque et à se plonger dans la lecture de différents ouvrages. La curiosité et l'ouverture qu'elle manifestait déjà à l'époque l'ont tout naturellement menée, après de brillantes études, vers une carrière à l'ONU.

De nationalité sénégalaise, Coumba Mar Gadio occupe depuis presque un an le poste de Coordinatrice résidente/Officier désignée pour la sécurité du système des Nations Unies à Lusaka, en Zambie. Elle a déjà exercé les mêmes fonctions avec succès en Guinée Équatoriale entre 2015 et 2019.

Madame la Coordinatrice résidente a déjà une belle carrière onusienne derrière elle, puisqu'elle a intégré l'Organisation en 2001. « Je venais juste de terminer un doctorat en sociologie du développement rural et un Mastère en "Women Studies", et j'ai trouvé en l'ONU l'organisation qui me permettrait de mettre en pratique les connaissances acquises ». Un choix naturel, puisqu'elle avoue avoir toujours été intéressée par les questions des droits sociaux, économiques et politiques, tout particulièrement ceux des femmes.

On ne s'étonnera donc pas que l'une de personnalités qu'elle admire le plus soit une femme, à savoir l'ancienne présidente du Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. « Elle m'inspire pour son leadership en matière d'égalité des sexes et d'indépendance des femmes. Je l'admire pour avoir prouvé au monde que les femmes peuvent diriger au plus haut niveau ! Elle a défendu les droits humains, les droits des femmes et le développement en Afrique ».

Une longue série de défis

Au début de sa carrière à l'ONU, Coumba Mar Gadio a occupé le poste de Conseillère régionale en politique du genre et du développement pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre au PNUD. Elle a ensuite dirigé l'équipe "Genre et développement" pour la même sous-région, au Centre régional du PNUD à Dakar, où elle a en même temps assuré par intérim, pendant quatre ans, la coordination des équipes multidisciplinaires qui appuyaient les 22 bureaux du PNUD en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre.

Les tâches actuelles de Coumba Mar Gadio, en tant que Coordonnatrice résidente et Officier désignée pour la sécurité, sont très variées. « Ma principale responsabilité est d'assurer avec efficacité et détermination la coordination de toutes les actions des Nations Unies sur le terrain, tout en assurant la mise en œuvre du programme de réforme de l'ONU et en participant à la réforme humanitaire au niveau du pays hôte ». Parmi ses nombreux objectifs figurent la réduction des inégalités et le respect des droits de l'homme, dont la réalisation passe par le renforcement des capacités institutionnelles et l'élaboration de politiques publiques en matière de protection sociale, d'emploi des jeunes, d'égalité des genres et de lutte contre la violence faite aux femmes. Coumba Mar Gadio défend la diversification de l'économie, notamment dans l'agriculture, l'un des cinq grands piliers du plan national de développement de la Zambie, en vue de la réalisation des objectifs de développement durable.

Dialoguer et coordonner

Les importantes fonctions qu'elle occupe impliquent une étroite collaboration avec les autorités zambiennes. « Je dirige et coordonne les efforts faits par l'ONU pour aider le gouvernement à mettre en œuvre son 7ème plan de développement national à travers les projets et programmes du cadre de coopération mis en place par l'ONU en Zambie, plus connu sous le nom de cadre de partenariat 2016-2021. Je mène une importante action de sensibilisation au plus haut niveau de l'État et auprès des partenaires du développement afin de mobiliser les ressources nécessaires ».

La Zambie, qui est comme les autres pays d'Afrique australe affectée par les changements climatiques, est confrontée à une sécheresse sans précédent qui a conduit certaines provinces du pays à la famine. Pour aider les autorités zambiennes à faire face à cette crise humanitaire, l'ONU a mis sur pied un plan d'action en collaboration avec ses partenaires techniques et financiers. « Je dirige la mise en œuvre et la coordination de ce plan dans les sept domaines d'action que sont l'éducation, la santé, l'eau, l'assainissement et l'hygiène, la protection, la sécurité alimentaire, la nutrition et le relèvement rapide ».

Un engagement personnel

Au fil de sa carrière bien remplie, Coumba Mar Gadio a dû faire face à des moments très difficiles, qui restent gravés dans sa

mémoire. « J'ai été très attristée par les crises humanitaires au Sahel, la situation sécuritaire, la sécheresse, la faim et les déplacements de populations. La visite des camps de réfugiés, et aussi la visite des prisons, me rendent toujours très triste ». Mais heureusement, Coumba Mar Gadio a pu vivre au cours de sa carrière de nombreux moments de satisfaction, par exemple lorsqu'elle voyait ses efforts dans la réponse aux crises humanitaires couronnés de succès, grâce à la mobilisation de ressources et à l'appui fourni aux populations affectées. « Cela me rend très contente car l'impact positif sur la vie des populations bénéficiaires est rapide et visible ».

Lorsque *UN Today* lui a demandé quels étaient les objets les plus importants, aujourd'hui, sur son bureau, Coumba Mar Gadio n'a pas hésité. « Mon ordinateur », a-t-elle répondu en premier. « Il me permet de rester connectée avec le monde entier, et surtout avec mon siège, en ce qui concerne les directives et les activités de l'Organisation. Et aussi de coordonner et d'échanger avec mon équipe, d'être au courant de l'actualité en Zambie, et de rester en contact avec la famille et les amis ».

Concilier vie professionnelle et vie familiale

Sur ce point, Coumba Mar Gadio avoue que malgré ses efforts il n'est pas toujours facile de concilier vie professionnelle et vie de famille, d'autant plus qu'elle réside loin des siens, restés au Sénégal. « En tant que mère et épouse, j'ai des responsabilités familiales et je dois répondre aux attentes de ma famille ». Très concernée par les inégalités homme-femme, elle considère que le fait d'être une femme n'a pas été pour elle un handicap sur le plan professionnel, mais qu'il reste encore beaucoup à faire dans ce domaine. « L'ONU est en train de mettre en place beaucoup de mesures, dans le cadre de la Stratégie pour la parité homme-femme, afin d'atteindre la parité à tous les niveaux de l'Organisation d'ici à 2030. J'ai espoir que d'autres mesures tenant compte des besoins spécifiques des femmes sur le terrain suivront pour réduire l'écart » conclut-elle. ▀

* Olivier Meyer est réviseur à la Section française de traduction à l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève. Paloma Redondo est consultante à l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève.



LE RICHEMOND
GÈNÈVE

WHERE LEGENDS STAY
SINCE 1875

LEGEND
HOTELS & RESORTS

info@lerichemond.com
022 715 7000
lerichemond.com

SWISS DELUXE HOTELS

Only through structural change will the UN
achieve gender equality and leave no one behind

Progress Made and Action Needed

By Young UN*

Young UN reflects on progress made and action needed to achieve gender equality in the UN System.

2020 marks a series of important anniversaries for advancing gender equality, including the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 20th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security, as well as the 10th anniversary of the creation of UN Women.

As we enter this important anniversary year and the Decade of Action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, it has never been more important for the UN to practice and embody its principles.

Young UN is a global network of more than 1700 people working across the UN system in more than 100 countries. We share a common vision of a UN that fully embodies the principles for which it stands.

Due to the advocacy of gender champions – including those from Young UN – and the leadership of key senior officials, the organization has made important progress for improving gender equality within our own ranks. However, much more is needed to improve gender equality and ensure that also within its ranks, the UN “leaves no one behind.”

Though we recognize there is a litany of important topics that need attention, in order to improve gender equality and the experiences of young personnel, the issues of gender parity, family friendly policies and sexual harassment must be thoroughly addressed through structural change.

Gender Parity

We welcome the strides made towards achieving gender parity. The Secretary-General launched the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity strategy in 2017 and has led by example by reaching gender parity at the top levels of the organization. UN Women published the Enabling Environment Guidelines in support of the strategy with recommendations and examples of good practice throughout the UN system.



Using the most recent data available, the 2019 report on the improvement in the status of women in the UN system found that women's representation in the UN system increased from 38% in 2007 to 44.2% in 2017.

Nevertheless, and of particular importance for Young UN, is that female representation continued to be negatively correlated with seniority, with the greatest gap at non-headquarters locations. Furthermore, the average age of a woman at a P1 position is almost 33 years and at P2-level, it is 37 years. Far too many an early career in the UN involves internships, consultancies and other precarious contract modalities. As highlighted by the Fair Internship Initiative which campaigns for equally accessible internships, reports on the composition of personnel indicate that over two thirds of the interns in the secretariat are women, demonstrating that the UN is perpetuating structural inequalities by relying on unpaid female labour.

We look forward to the implementation of policies for young female staff in the System-wide Strategy. This includes, for instance, the talent management pilot initiative of 50 staff across the UN system, with a focus on young women from the global south to offer opportunities and experiences. We welcome inter-agency initiatives such as "EMERGE – Programme for Emerging Women Leaders" for staff at the P-3 level and would be delighted to see similar initiatives across the system which include women at more junior levels, General Services staff, as well as consultants and interns.

As Young UN has previously called for, improving gender parity in a sustainable way means supporting young and mid-level staff on a UN career path that is challenging, fulfilling and viable. Improving gender parity means focusing on more than numbers but also ensuring a cross-UN perspective that changes organizational culture in terms of reviewing contract modalities, combating unconscious biases, investing in talent management, and implementing other enabling policies.

Family Friendly Policies

An essential part of achieving gender equality is ensuring that family friendly policies are realized in practice. There is a significant drop in women's representation between P2/P3 levels and P4 level, highlighting the importance of parity efforts at mid-career levels, which often coincide with caregiving.

Equal parental leave has been implemented in some UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNAIDS and we urge others to follow suit. It is essential to ensure that parental leave is compulsory and inclusive of all types of family structures, including single-parent households and LGBTQI+ families. Notably, family leave does not cover staff on consultancy contracts although many young staff are in those types of modalities for years.

Efforts have been made on flexible work arrangement (FWA) policies and the Secretary-General released a promising FWA bulletin. Challenges remain with implementation. The majority of respondents of Young UN's Future of Work survey are inter-

ested in working from outside the office (87% within and 83% outside their duty station), flextime (82%) or coworking (66%). However, the majority did not have flexible work options available or felt supported by their supervisor. Young UN advocates for approval of FWA requests by default to promote a culture based on performance rather than presenteeism and the expansion of flexible workplace policies to include more options such as flextime and coworking.

Addressing Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Power

In 2018, organizations across the world were shaken by the global #MeToo movement, in which people shared their stories on sexual harassment and abuse of power. The UN was no different. We welcome the steps the organization has taken to address this important issue but asks that more is done.

As a network of young personnel, we know from experience that young personnel are particularly vulnerable to abuse of power. This was brought to the attention of senior officials through the first 'Safe Space survey' which found that interns and consultants (who are more likely to be young) were the least likely to be aware of reporting mechanisms.

There has been progress including the creation of a dedicated Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) taskforce which produced a CEB UN Model Policy on addressing sexual harassment and Code of Conduct for UN Events, and implemented a ClearCheck Database that is being rolled out across the system. The specialist investigation capacity of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) has also been strengthened.

However, the recently released Score Card from the UN Feminist Campaign suggests that the momentum for this topic may have waned. It imperative that the UN keeps up the momentum. In particular, there should be increased resources for reporting abuse of power and sexual harassment incidents with an increased victim-centered focus, as well as the monitoring and implementing the model policies created by the CEB.

Conclusion: Leave No One Behind

As we enter this important anniversary year and the Decade of Action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, it has never been more important that the UN practices its principles on achieving gender equality.

Advancing gender equality and the meaningful participation of women in decision-making at all levels are critical to success. We encourage young personnel to join the Young UN movement and actively contribute to shaping our agenda on these topics and more going forward.

We urge all personnel, especially management, to work with young personnel to ensure that the UN "leaves no one behind".

* Young UN: with contributions from Hannah Phillips, Carla McKirdy, Klara Nordström, Raquel Santos Garcia and Nanayaa Kumi.



Beyond the Gender Binary

The challenges of heteronormativity

Gurchaten Sandhu*

As the UN system looks to reform and make efforts for a more inclusive and diverse work force, what will this mean for the most unrepresented members of society in particular gender diverse persons?

The buzz words these days in the UN HR corridors is the future of work for the United Nations workforce. The global context within which the United Nations system operates is changing considerably, mainly driven by many emerging challenges and issues, including that of gender diversity. Yet as the UN system looks to reform and make efforts for a more inclusive and diverse work force, what will this mean for the most unrepresented members of society, in particular gender diverse persons? This issue is one such challenge that it must be fully prepared to take on to ensure a diverse work force. The UN

system, however, in the way it approaches human resources, legal affairs, and security matters, among others, continues to focus exclusively on the existence of a gender binary of men and women only.

Around the world, however, there is increasing awareness about gender diversity, and an increasing number of people who identify beyond the binary of male and female. From the fa'afafine in Samoa, the waria in Indonesia, the hijra in India, Muxe in Mexico, to the two Spirit from the United States and Canada, shows us that gender identities other than male and female have always existed throughout history. And recent data shows that more and more youth identify other than male or female. If the work force of the UN is to truly reflect "we the people of United Nations...", it must adopt a most holistic and non-binary approach to gender.

Gender diverse individuals face violent backlash for not conforming to gendered expectations of "proper" gender expression, behaviour, and presentation. They are also often the target of discrimination. Within the UN System, trans, non-binary and gender diverse identified staff have experienced being victims of harassment, or have faced an Organization that does not know how to account for their gender identity, or desires to change their gender identity and undergo transition. Yet these trans, and gender diverse people have often told UN-GLOBE

that the very reason why they wanted to join the UN in the first place was because they believed it would be the one place where their gender identity wouldn't stand in the way towards that which all of us want: an opportunity towards career success. This is why it is imperative that the UN, as an employer, stands for the very basic human rights principle of equality: the principle that one's background, race, HIV status, nationality, religion, social origin, race, national extraction, culture, and sexual and gender identity should not be an impediment to career success.

The initial steps towards gender diversity

One of the main challenges for trans and non-confirming people is access. Rigid heteronormative and colonial laws in many countries make it impossible or difficult for trans persons to change their national identity papers to align with their gender identity. And without national identity papers aligning to their gender identity, they are unable to access the very institutions that were established to protect the most vulnerable members of society and lift them out of poverty. This includes the UN. Trans and non-binary persons frequently inform UN GLOBE of the issues they have accessing UN Offices around the world, including Offices based in countries with more progressive gender identity laws in place. From being outed to dead named, trans and gender non-confirming persons are subjected to transphobic policies before even entering UN buildings. The same issues also present themselves online, when gender diverse persons apply for vacancies in the UN, and faced with application forms that recognises only two genders, restricting trans and non-binary persons from even applying. Extending gender categories beyond male and female is the key to establishing within the UN greater awareness and respect for people of diverse gender identities and expressions.

Transforming the workplace culture

Training of staff is crucial to ensure a UN system that is more aware and inclusive of people of diverse sexual and gender identities. Trainings should particularly target human resources, legal, and security officers, as well as all those staff members who are the first point of contact with UN beneficiaries and visitors, such as officers who register migrants for IOM, for example, or those staffing information booths. Managers should also be targeted. Trainings should have a mandatory online component that is complemented with in-person training for staff with specialized functions and in the categories mentioned above.

Organizations of the UN system are generally responding positively, and sympathetically, but there is a need for a UN system-wide common approach that can ensure the UN system is prepared to tackle a changing landscape when it comes to gender. In order to capacitate the UN system to meet the needs of trans-identified individuals, and under the overarching goal of a more diverse, more inclusive UN system, UN-GLOBE developed UN-GLOBE Recommendations for an inclusive work-

If the work force of the UN is to truly reflect “we the people of United Nations...”, it must adopt a most holistic and non-binary approach to gender.

place for trans and gender non-confirming staff members, dependents, and other stakeholders of the UN System. The Recommendations are a result of the work done by a task force comprised of staff with backgrounds in legal affairs, political affairs, human resources, and communications, and with trans-identified voices in the lead. These recommendations are intentionally comprehensive to ensure all needs of trans, non-binary and gender

diverse-identified individuals are met. They cover everything from gender-neutral restroom facilities, to gender-neutral language, to security, to expanded choices when it comes to gender markers in employment forms.

These recommendations are a perfect fit with the UN System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity. The Strategy cannot succeed without a change in culture – from binary gender to one of gender diversity that is inclusive of trans-identified individuals, gender non-confirming individuals, those who don't identify with a gender, and others. A conversation on the damaging effects of gendered expectations of “proper” gender expression, behavior, and presentation is also needed. UN GLOBE is working actively to advocate that these recommendations become roadmap towards a more diverse, more inclusive, and stronger UN system.

UN-GLOBE stands ready to help the Organizations of the UN System implement policies that can help ensure inclusiveness for the increasing number of staff who identify as trans and gender non-confirming.

UN-GLOBE

UN-GLOBE is the inter-agency system wide group representing LGBTIQ+ staff, interns and consultants in the UN system. UN Staff, interns and consultants can join by registering here: <http://www.unglobe.org/join-us-1>. ▶

* Gurchaten Sandhu is the president of UN Globe.

Shine
HAIR & CARE
022 734 84 14

Rue de Montbrillant 84 - 1202 Geneva

Mon - Fri 8am - 7pm
Sat 8am - 5pm

Olaplex & Revlon partner
www.shinecoiffure.ch

  @shine_coiffure

United Nations' Invisible Workforce

Fair Internship Initiative

Unequal gender norms and sexism makes women and interns more vulnerable within our Organisation.

According to the 2018 review of UN internship programmes, from 2009 to 2015 female interns made up 56% of all UN Secretariat interns, with male counterparts accounting for 29% (15% of responses not identifying their gender).

A high number of interns at the United Nations (UN) are not paid and do not receive written agreements in which their rights are clearly stated. A survey conducted by the Fair Internship Initiative (FII) in 2019 illustrates that an overwhelming majority of the UN interns came from high-income families in developed countries and more than 80% of unpaid interns do not receive any sort of grant. A surprising 37,1% of respondents stated that despite the internship agreement being written, it did not contain any indication on their rights and entitlements (including leave days, sick leave, social and health insurance, protection from harassment, access to justice, etc.). These conditions put interns in a vulnerable position in which access to justice in case of misconduct or harassment is often limited.

What is common among all interns is the financial burden caused by unpaid internships. Only 16.5% of the surveyed unpaid interns would have been able to



afford the internship without family's economic support. 30.1% have taken on a second job to finance their stay for internships.

Within the UN, internships are one of the least protected working positions and are largely occupied by women. This raises a concern about social norms regarding the generally higher willingness of (young) women to perform unpaid work, as young women are more likely to do so than young men. According to cultural anthropologist Linda Mülli who is researching early career workers in the UN, there is a readiness to 'do what it takes' to enter a high-profile career. The latter is still considered exceptional for women. This is a trend replicated amongst consultants, another form of temporary and potentially precarious work, with most UN consultants in Geneva also being women. In addition to this dynamic, Mülli found that women claim to receive mentoring from senior professionals less likely than men. Women also claim to be more reluctant when it comes to networking. Mülli observed that men, in addition to being less likely to accept unpaid positions, also have greater access to support from their superiors because "it seems that most 'youngish' men are welcoming career support from senior colleagues". Women, on the other hand, are more likely to pursue their careers more independently, and to gain jobs without networking. Mülli explains that women tend to create a "counter-narrative," imagining networking as a strategy of a person who is not delivering 'a good job'.

Gender can also shape the internship experience with regards to parent-interns. Interns who are also parents (notably mothers) do not benefit from any financial or in-kind support (such as childcare facilities at their place of work). The lack of such measures, combined with the absence of a stipend, negatively impacts parent interns, who therefore are discouraged from applying and face additional burdens when accepting such positions.

Harassment

As the nature of the labour market is rapidly changing, the legality, benefits and fairness of internships are frequently coming

under scrutiny. In most jurisdictions, in fact, interns are not even entitled to minimal labour law protection, creating a situation of legal and personal uncertainty as internships may become a loophole for firms to employ unprotected and often unpaid workers. When internship agreements do not contain indications of rights and entitlements, interns are put in a precarious position. Such rights and entitlements include issues related to leave and sick days, amongst others, but it also encompasses a lack of information regarding protection from harassment and access to justice. By shirking clear definitions and expectations of an internship, there is a troubling risk for abuses. It follows that interns may easily suffer exploitation, abuse or harassment, as in most cases they are not legally protected as employees. The 2017 FII survey received a response from an intern which perfectly sums up the precarity that this creates: "A few staff members made advances of an unprofessional nature toward me (indecent proposals) and there was no mechanism for me to report them through. This caused me great distress, and to this day I am not sure how to address this without finding myself in a "my word against theirs" situation, in which I am guaranteed to not be taken seriously, as they outrank me in the organisation." – UN intern for 6 months in 2017.

The temporary and insecure nature of internships can in some cases be the reason that interns are preyed upon by abusers in their organisation. An internal UN survey highlighted that it is often temporary and junior employees, terms which apply to interns, that are the recipients of such foul behaviour. Laura Turquet, coordinator of the UN Feminist Network, reacted to the survey in January 2019, saying: "Often younger staff, those on less secure contracts, and so on, are regarded as more vulnerable, less likely to report, and so unfortunately those people are more likely to be targeted."

Sexual harassment from delegates and diplomats to the UN has also been reported by interns. Although often circulated by hearsay, without statistics to support the stories, such instances expose inappropriate ideas of workplace behaviour. As the perpetrators in these cases are not under the direct employ of the

These conditions put interns in a vulnerable position in which access to justice in case of misconduct or harassment is often limited.

UN, and given the sometimes-fragile diplomatic nature of such appointments, what justice can an intern expect? And, does the absence of data represent an absence of such cases, or a more sinister reality that interns do not feel they can formally pursue such matters?

Justice

Interns being non-staff personnel have limited access to the system of administration of justice. The General

Assembly, in its resolution 63/253 of 24 December 2008, decided that "interns, type II gratis personnel and volunteers (other than United Nations Volunteers) shall have the possibility of requesting an appropriate management evaluation but shall not have access to the United Nations Dispute Tribunal or to the United Nations Appeals Tribunal".

It is possible for interns to address disputes through direct negotiations with the UN and they may file complaints of discrimination, harassment and abuse of authority against staff members. However, many interns, poorly networked and on-site for a limited time, are unaware of this option, and so for them, it may as well not exist. Moreover, if these processes for addressing disputes take longer than three months, it is highly likely that any reporting intern would be unable to pursue them to their end, as the process would probably outlast their internship period.

What next?

Although all interns find themselves in a quite unprotected position, women and LGBTQ+ interns may face added layers of vulnerability due to entrenched and unequal gender norms and sexism. For this reason:

We urge the UN to raise awareness about mechanisms on prevention and eradication of (sexual) harassment, as well as on internal justice and mediation mechanisms, such as the Ombudsman & mediation services.

We urge the UN to develop gender policies specifically targeted to interns or at least to specifically address gender-related issues in their respective internship policies. We encourage the development and dissemination of online training tools on gender-related issues.

We urge the UN to develop measures to support parent interns. We urge the UN to develop and raise awareness about breastfeeding rooms, notably among interns.

We welcome plans by agencies such as the World Health Organization to provide for health insurance for interns and urge other agencies and Secretariat entities to follow this example. We emphasise the need for insurance schemes to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health. ▶



© FAIR INTERNSHIP INITIATIVE

Movses Abelian,

Gender Champion,
Under-Secretary General
for General Assembly
and Conference Management

Sarah Bencherif*

1. People tend to believe that Gender Champions are women. You are among the few men who have been designated Gender Champion. Can you tell us why it's important to have men championing gender equality, and what you, in particular, bring to this role?

Secretary-General António Guterres stated in his message for International Women's Day 2019 that "Gender equality is fundamentally a question of power." I agree that power dynamics does have a significant role in our quest for gender equality. Gender equality is a matter that concerns us all, regardless of our gender. We are all responsible for providing equal opportunities to people of any gender, ensuring a gender-balanced representation in positions of responsibility and breaking down barriers based on gender stereotypes and unconscious bias. Leading the way towards the achievement of these goals should not depend on our gender.

Senior leaders and managers have a key role to play in contributing to changing the mindsets and cultures in their own organizations with a view to making gender equality the norm. Male Gender Champions can help to spread this important message among peers in traditionally male-dominated networks and environments.

I am committed to maintaining gender parity in my Department, as well as creating a diverse and inclusive workplace for all. To achieve this, I will continue to support initiatives aimed at increasing managers' accountability, empowering



© UNHQ / DGACM / LAURENCE HALLÉ

individuals, giving equal opportunities to staff of all gender identities, mitigating bias and fostering a culture of inclusion. I will also continue to raise awareness of the importance of using gender-inclusive language across the six official languages of the United Nations.

2. The Feminist UN Campaign recently issued its report card assessing the Secretary-General's progress in building a gender-equitable Organization. The report states that 2019 was a year of incremental progress, frustrated by institutional obstacles. Could you elaborate on these institutional obstacles?

In 2019, the United Nations was facing serious liquidity problems which have carried over to 2020. Some of the measures taken to manage this situation, such as slowing down or freezing the hiring of staff throughout 2019 has made the goal of building a gender-equitable Organization a bit more challenging. With fewer resources available to the Organization, reaching gender parity targets at all levels becomes more difficult as it depends on the ability to fill vacant posts.

Nevertheless, the UN has still managed to make progress. As recently stated by the Secretary-General on 1 January 2020, for the first time in its history, the UN achieved gender parity across the senior-most ranks of full-time Under- and Assistant-Secretaries-General. It has taken the UN 75 years to reach this milestone, which speaks to the need for continuous commitment and dedicated actions on the part of senior management.

In the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM), gender parity has been achieved at all levels in all four duty stations thanks to the strong support of its leadership, a solid accountability framework and the measures taken to strengthen the female talent pipeline, among others.

Despite the institutional obstacles we currently face, there is still a lot that we can do to pave the way for a future where defining parity targets is no longer required to increase the repre-

sentation of women. We can start by focusing on setting the tone for our teams, increasing managers' responsibility and supporting work environments where people of all gender identities can thrive.

3. There are some indications that the SG's Gender Strategy is mainly benefitting female staff from a particular geographic grouping, and largely leaving behind women from the Global South. What should, in your view, be done to address this situation and ensure that the Strategy is truly inclusive?

Gender parity and geographical and regional diversity among UN staff are key elements of the Secretary-General's overall reforms. They respond to the understanding that the more diverse our workforce, the better we will be able to serve the people of the world.

UN leaders should look at both angles when recruiting and giving opportunities for development to their staff.

In DGACM, we have made efforts in the past years to increase the number of applicants and recruited personnel from less represented regions and countries, particularly among our language staff, as they constitute the highest proportion of staff members in the Department.

Our language staff are recruited through competitive examinations which have been redesigned to make them more accessible and more inclusive. Previously, candidates were required to travel to their capitals or other designated examination centers thus limiting participation from those living in remote areas or smaller countries. The exam is now conducted fully remotely by leveraging communication platforms and proctoring technologies. We have supplemented this by promoting these opportunities through social media and outreach campaigns, some of them targeted to universities and professional associations in underrepresented countries.

These efforts have resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of applicants from under-represented regions and the number of nationalities included in the final list of successful candidates, including from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

The examinations are gender-blind and, historically, the rate of female candidates who have both applied and successfully passed has been very high.

Every UN entity should assess their own specific situation by collecting and analyzing data on the gender and origin of applicants at each step of the recruitment process and devise appropriate strategies to achieve both the gender and the geographic representation goals. It is a challenge to meld the two, but one that could undoubtedly be overcome with the right strategies in place. ▶

* Sarah Bencherif is Editorial Coordinator of *UN Today*.



Save 7.5 cts./l on fuel with TAMOIL

With the TAMOIL – UNOG Staff Council loyalty card, obtain a discount of CHF 30.- for every 400l of fuel purchased



How it works:

1. Pick up a UNOG Staff Council loyalty card at Office C527 at the Palais des Nations
2. Refuel at a TAMOIL service station with shop in the cantons of Geneva or Vaud*
3. Show your UN badge and collect a stamp for every 10 liters of fuel
4. Exchange the completed loyalty card for a CHF 30.- credit valid on fuel on your next purchase

*except for TAMOIL Vessy, TAMOIL Aubonne and TAMOIL Perly Route de St. Julien 286

Non à l'inégalité salariale!

Prisca Chaoui*

Face à l'injustice en matière salariale les fonctionnaires de l'ONUG ne baissent toujours pas les bras.

Février 2020 a marqué le deuxième anniversaire de l'introduction des coupes salariales pour les fonctionnaires de la catégorie professionnelle et au-delà basés à Genève. Le Tribunal de l'Organisation internationale du travail (TAOIT) a déclaré le 4 juillet 2019 que les coupes, décidées en 2016 par la Commission de la fonction publique internationale (CFPI), étaient illégales. Il a demandé aux cinq institutions spécialisées ayant contesté ces coupes à savoir, l'Organisation internationale du Travail (OIT), l'Union Internationale des Télécommunications (UIT), l'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (OMS), l'Organisation Mondiale de la Propriété intellectuelle (OMPI) et l'Organisation Internationale des migrations (OIM) de revenir aux salaires en vigueur avant l'introduction des coupes et de payer rétroactivement les fonctionnaires avec un intérêt de 5 %.

Ce jugement fut certes accueilli par des cris de victoire émanant des fonctionnaires travaillant pour ces cinq institutions. Mais cette liesse ne fut pas partagée par ceux de l'ONUG ou ceux des fonds et programmes placés sous la juridiction du Tribunal du contentieux administratif de l'ONU. Première dans son histoire, ce dernier fut saisi par plus de 800 fonctionnaires voulant contester ces coupes. L'audience relative au cas eut lieu en octobre 2018.

Selon le code de conduite des juges du Tribunal du contentieux administratif, le jugement aurait dû être rendu 3 mois après la tenue de l'audience. Or, le jugement se fait attendre depuis, tout comme Godot d'ailleurs, sans aucun signe d'une éventuelle arrivée. Le Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG a écrit par deux fois à la présidence du tribunal, demandant des informations sur une date approximative pour la sortie du jugement. Par deux fois, il reçut la même réponse décevante et inacceptable selon laquelle le registre de Nairobi où le cas est examiné accuse un retard dans le traitement des dossiers. La

question que tout un chacun est en droit de se poser est de savoir s'il n'est pas important de considérer le cas des coupes salariales comme étant un cas prioritaire à cause de son impact sur le devenir du système commun.

En effet, actuellement des fonctionnaires travaillant dans un même lieu d'affectation sont payés différemment pour un travail de valeur égale. Cela contredit l'objectif du système commun mis en place pour prévenir la concurrence entre les entités onusiennes et surtout cela contredit un des principes fondamentaux du droit du travail qui veut que l'on reçoive un salaire égal pour un travail de valeur égale.

A l'heure qui l'est, l'incertitude règne. Nous sommes, d'une part, face à un tribunal, prétendument indépendant, mais pas du tout pressé d'émettre un jugement. D'autre part, le Secrétaire général qui finit par rencontrer le personnel de l'ONUG, suite à l'insistance du Conseil de coordination, déclare être démuni face à la situation, mais deux jours plus tard, l'Assemblée générale adoptait une résolution sur l'égalité salariale (n'est-ce pas de l'hypocrisie pure et dure ?) et finalement nous constatons que la CFPI n'a point froid aux yeux puisqu'elle octroie des indemnités de poste différentes pour un même lieu d'affectation.

Quiconque allait baisser les bras face à cet état des choses qui dépassent les limites du raisonnable et de l'acceptable. Mais les fonctionnaires de l'ONUG ne sont pas de ceux qui acceptent un non comme réponse à leur quête légitime. C'est pour cette raison que, deux ans après l'introduction des coupes salariales, 150 personnes se sont rassemblées le 20 février 2020 au Palais des Nations pour réclamer la mise en place immédiate de l'égalité salariale. Leur quête sera-t-elle encore longtemps ignorée ? J'ai bon espoir de croire que cela ne sera pas plus pour longtemps. ▶

**Rassemblement
du personnel
de l'ONU pour
dénoncer les
coupes salariales.**

* Prisca Chaoui est Secrétaire exécutive du conseil de coordination du personnel de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève (ONUG).



© OLIVIER MEYER

Decades of commitment honoured at Long Service Awards

Olivia Starrenburg*

© UN PHOTO / MATIJA POTOCNIK

"I am proud to serve the United Nations and I keep my head high and upright in my mission – which is not easy. But this is the United Nations, and all of you here are my friends and serve with as much determination as I do."

Sergeant Claude Foudral spoke these words of reflection about his more than 35-year UN career in Geneva and abroad, at the Long Service Awards recently held at UN Geneva.

Colleagues, families and friends gathered to recognize the outstanding contributions of nearly 500 staff at two Long Service Awards ceremonies, on Friday 31 January and Tuesday 4 February 2020 respectively. The ceremonies were co-hosted by the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council and the United Nations Office at Geneva.

Director-General Ms. Tatiana Valovaya presented the awards on behalf of the Secretary-General, to those who had served the UN for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 or 35 years. She said it was a great honour to do so and expressed gratitude on behalf of the UN and the Secretary-General for the decades of service.

"You have all followed different paths, work in different capacities and are of different nationalities, but each of you has made a conscious decision to contribute your skills and expertise to the United Nations.

"The Organization has evolved and overcome many challenges over the decades, and the reason it has been able to do so is because we have you, the staff, who are indeed the United Nations' most valuable resource," said the Director-General.

The long serving staff received certificates, and those celebrating 25, 30 or 35 years of service also received medals (silver, gold and platinum respectively, awarded by the Staff Coordinating Council). They were photographed with the Director-General and were congratulated by Nataliya Myronenko, Chief of HRMS, staff representatives, Ian Richards and Prisca Chaoui, along with their many other colleagues present at the ceremony.

The Long Service Awards followed a new format in 2019. The event had previously been hosted by the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council and included awards for 25-, 30- and 35-years of service. This year, the awards were standardized Secretariat-wide, and the Secretary-General established awards as of 10 years of service, to further recognize the efforts of staff in achievement of the Organization's mandates.

As one of the longest-serving staff, Sgt. Foudral – a member of our Safety and Security Service – was invited to speak. He shared about the experiences and people that had both marked and motivated him; from inspiring leaders and devoted colleagues, to a defining encounter with an abandoned child whilst serving on a field mission. These were the things that made him so proud to work for the United Nations, he said.

"Thank you for this honour. This work, this environment have helped shaped me as a person, and I hope sincerely that this noble mission still makes a difference and that, despite the challenges, it eases suffering."

With special thanks to the Division of Conference Management for their support in producing the Long Service Award certificates and taking photographs at the event. ▀

* Olivia Starrenburg is Internal Communications Officer at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG).



DECADES OF COMMITMENT HONOURED AT LONG SERVICE AWARDS



Colleagues, families and friends gathered to recognize the outstanding contributions of nearly 500 staff at two Long Service Awards ceremonies, on Friday 31 January and Tuesday 4 February 2020 respectively. The ceremonies were co-hosted by the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council and the United Nations Office at Geneva.

EVENT AWARDS



Director-General Ms. Tatiana Valovaya presented the awards on behalf of the Secretary-General, to those who had served the UN for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 or 35 years. She said it was a great honour to do so and expressed gratitude on behalf of the UN and the Secretary-General for the decades of service.

The long serving staff received certificates, and those celebrating 25, 30 or 35 years of service also received medals (silver, gold and platinum respectively, awarded by the Staff Coordinating Council). They were photographed with the Director-General and were congratulated by Nataliya Myronenko, Chief of HRMS, staff representatives, Ian Richards and Prisca Chaoui, along with their many other colleagues present at the ceremony.

Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie

Un nouvel Observateur Permanent spécialiste de négociation, gestion de crises et de consolidation de la paix

Catherine Fiankan-Bokonga*



© OIF GENÈVE

L'Ambassadeur
Georges Nakseu
Nguefang, nouvel
Observateur
Permanent
de l'OIF à Genève.

Le 5 mars Georges Nakseu Nguefang a présenté ses lettres de créances à la Directrice générale de l'Office européen des Nations Unies, Tatiana Valovaya, en tant que nouvel Observateur Permanent de l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie auprès de l'ONUG. Docteur en droit et avocat, le canadien d'origine camerounaise a été membre des cadres et professionnels de l'Université de Montréal avant d'intégrer l'OIF en 2004. Tour à tour chargé de la prévention, de la gestion des crises et de la consolidation de la paix, puis des affaires politiques et de la gouvernance démocratique, le diplomate a accepté de

partager quelques informations sur les activités de son organisation dès son arrivée à Genève.

Cette année l'OIF fête son 50^e anniversaire. Quelles sont les activités prévues à cet effet en Suisse ?

Cette célébration constitue un moment important pour notre organisation qui a connu une évolution significative depuis sa naissance en 1970 à Niamey (Niger). C'est pourquoi en lien avec les autorités suisses, nous organiserons plusieurs activités d'envergure jusqu'à la tenue du Sommet des chefs d'État et de gouvernement à Tunis (Tunisie) les 12 et 13 décembre prochains.

Les activités de la Représentation permanente de l'OIF à Genève s'inscriront dans le cadre global des célébrations défini par la Secrétaire générale de la Francophonie, Son Excellence Madame Louise Mushikiwabo. Ce sera l'occasion de célébrer la

langue française qui constitue le socle de notre Organisation et de promouvoir nos valeurs communes, notamment, la solidarité, la diversité culturelle, le vivre ensemble, la démocratie, les droits et libertés.

L'événement ne constitue-t-il pas aussi une opportunité de mieux faire connaître l'OIF ?

Effectivement, cet anniversaire symbolique est également pour nous un moment important pour la visibilité de l'OIF, à l'heure où celle-ci opère un tournant décisif dans son histoire. En effet, la Secrétaire générale a lancé, depuis son élection l'année passée, un travail de fond sur l'Organisation, visant à recentrer ses actions pour les rendre plus pertinentes et utiles pour les bénéficiaires directs de ses programmes.

Plusieurs réflexions thématiques seront également organisées en vue d'enrichir la contribution de la Francophonie à la recherche de solutions aux nombreux défis auxquels le monde actuel est confronté.

Chaque année, le 20 mars, lors de la Journée Internationale de la Francophonie, la langue française qui unit près de 300 millions de personnes sur cinq continents est fêtée. Avez-vous des événements précis prévus à cette date au Palais des Nations ou en ville de Genève ?

Sous réserve des restrictions éventuelles qui pourraient être édictées par les autorités suisses, pour tenir compte de l'évolution de la crise sanitaire actuelle liée au COVID 19, nous prévoyons d'organiser plusieurs activités au Palais des Nations et dans la ville de Genève. Nous mènerons ces célébrations en collaboration avec un grand nombre de partenaires, parmi lesquels les Nations Unies, le Groupe des Ambassadeurs Francophones, des organisations de la société civile, les organisateurs de la Semaine de la langue française et de la Francophonie en Suisse, ainsi que des institutions scolaires et académiques genevoises.

Pour être plus précis, le pont du Mont-Blanc sera pavoisé aux couleurs de la Francophonie avec le soutien de la ville de Genève, du 16 au 22 mars. Au sein du Palais des Nations, nous organiserons à la mi-journée une activité conjointe avec l'association des interprètes et traducteurs de langue française de l'ONU et une activité culturelle avec le Groupe des Ambassadeurs Francophones en soirée.

Bien que le français soit une des langues de travail du Secrétariat et de l'ONUG, elle est toujours "sacrifiée" au profit de l'anglais. De quelle manière avez-vous l'intention de lui rendre la place qui lui revient ?

La promotion de la langue française aux côtés des autres langues est une question éminemment importante pour l'OIF. Le multilinguisme est à ce titre au cœur des priorités de la

L'OIF intensifiera ses efforts pour contribuer à valoriser la langue française et à lui rendre la place légitime qui lui revient.

Secrétaire générale de la Francophonie. C'est la condition essentielle d'un multilatéralisme inclusif. Il est donc de notre responsabilité collective de trouver les moyens nécessaires pour rendre plus effective sa mise en œuvre au sein du système multilatéral.

C'est pourquoi dans un esprit constructif et en lien avec les Nations Unies, la Francophonie intensifiera ses efforts pour contribuer à valoriser la langue française dans ce contexte multilingue propre au multilatéralisme et à lui rendre la place légitime qui lui revient, comme langue partagée par 88 états et gouvernements de par le monde dont 19 en Europe.

Concrètement, quelles actions comptez-vous mener ?

À cet effet, nous envisageons à la fois d'intensifier la sensibilisation de tous les acteurs aux enjeux « démocratiques » du multilinguisme, de consolider notre collaboration avec les autres groupes linguistiques et, de mobiliser davantage les missions diplomatiques francophones autour de cet enjeu, afin qu'elles en soient le premier relais au sein des instances internationales. ▀

* Catherine Fiankan-Bokonga est journaliste correspondante et est vice-présidente du Club Suisse de la Presse

Remise des lettres de créances de l'Ambassadeur Georges Nakseu Nguiefang à M^{me} Tatiana Valovaya, directrice générale de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève, mars 2020.





Another UN International Day?

Niraj Dawadi*

“Ignorance and prejudice are the handmaidens of propaganda. Our mission, therefore, is to confront ignorance with knowledge, bigotry with tolerance, and isolation with the outstretched hand of generosity. Racism can, will, and must be defeated.”

Kofi Annan, Former UN Secretary General (1997-2006)

Background

In recent times, we hear a lot about xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism; discriminatory and xenophobic attacks against migrants and refugees; propagation of racism and xenophobic attacks through cyberspace; racism in sports; and incitement to racial, ethnic and religious hatred, which put various racial, ethnic and religious groups at risk. People of Asian origin, in particular Chinese people, have been subjected to racism and negative racial stereotypes amidst the latest Coronavirus outbreak. The pervasiveness of racial bias together with gender bias has also made its way into in

the development of artificial intelligence, adding to concerns. At the workplace, while policies may be neutral and prohibit discriminatory and racist acts, discrimination may be more implicit, in the forms of, for example, micro-aggressions, perpetuation of negative racial stereotypes, or implicit biases in administrative processes related to recruitment, promotion and retaining of the workforce. Collectively, raising awareness about racism promotes strengthening of inclusive communities as well as a diverse workforce, where differences are valued.

Why is 21 March so important?

Every year, the international community observes the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, in remembrance of the 69 unarmed and peaceful protestors who were killed in Sharpeville, South Africa on 21 March 1960. The

killings galvanized many people around the world to act to end the racist apartheid regime. In proclaiming the day in 1966, the United Nations General Assembly called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination.

The international community has taken important steps to tackle racism, through the development of important human rights treaties with strong commitments to fight racism and discrimination. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) which entered into force 4 January 1969, defines racial discrimination as "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."

The 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance adopted the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which together with the ICERD provides a comprehensive international framework to address the scourge of racism and place victims at the centre of efforts of international community to prevent, combat and eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Despite these efforts, no country is free from racism. Structural racial discrimination against racial or ethnic minorities pervades all aspects of their lives. The Secretary General in his latest report to the General Assembly stated that "(A) groundswell of xenophobia, racism, intolerance and violent misogyny are being observed, as well as attacks against religious minorities. Hateful and destructive views that promote xenophobia, racism and intolerance are enabled and amplified exponentially by digital technology. There have been alarming instances of hate speech, including by political leaders. Some political leaders are bringing hate-fuelled ideas and language into the mainstream, normalizing them, coarsening the public discourse and weakening the social fabric." The report also states that racial discrimination, racism and intolerance are serious human rights violations and are often the root causes of the most egregious abuses.

A number of initiatives have been undertaken and are ongoing at the United Nations. For example, the General Assembly has proclaimed the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), with the theme "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development". In

2017, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Human Rights Council on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards has been mandated by the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council to commence "the negotiations on the draft additional protocol to the Convention criminalizing acts of a racist and xenophobic nature." In June 2019, the Secretary General launched the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, with the objective to enhance and coordinate United Nations efforts to address root causes and drivers of hate speech, and to enable effective United Nations responses to the impact of hate speech on societies.

As the global population becomes increasingly urbanized, the role of cities and local governments in tackling racial discrimination becomes vital. UNESCO for example, has been celebrating the International Day by organizing in cooperation with the member cities of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities. Educational institutions, including schools, colleges, universities, museums as well as cultural and sports venues have an important role to play in combating everyday racism.

Although we have commemorated more than 50 International Days for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the struggle to combat racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia is still as vital as ever. Next year, the international community commemorates the 20th anniversary of the first World Conference against Racism, and Member States should come together under the motto "United against Racism" in this continuous struggle.

As we observe the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, addressing racism at the individual level means calling it out and speaking up against it. One of the greatest leaders of our times Nelson Mandela said, "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love

comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." As individuals, every one of us can stand up against racial prejudice and intolerant attitudes, be it at the workplace or in our communities. And that would make the commemoration of this year's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination more meaningful.

Be a human rights champion,
[#fightracism](#) and
[#Standup4humanrights!](#) ▶

"No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

Nelson Mandela

* Niraj Dawadi is a Human Rights Officer at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Coopération étroite entre les cours régionales des droits de l'Homme et le Comité contre la torture

Réunion pour coordonner leurs interprétations

Sébastien Touzé*



© SÉBASTIEN TOUZÉ

Sébastien Touzé,
membre du
Comité contre
la Torture,
professeur
à l'Université
Panthéon-Assas
et directeur
de la Fondation
René Cassin.

Au-delà de l'aspect diplomatique qui sied à toute rencontre de cette nature, l'objectif de cette initiative est de répondre à un impératif de coordination des pratiques et des interprétations. Les organes de traités évoluent en effet dans un système conventionnel particulièrement dense impliquant une ouverture et

Depuis 2016, c'est devenu une tradition... Le Comité contre la torture, avec le soutien de la Fondation René Cassin – Institut international des droits de l'Homme (Strasbourg, France), invite les trois juridictions de protection des droits de l'Homme à venir à sa rencontre.

une concertation permanente avec l'ensemble des institutions, juridictionnelles ou non, agissant dans le domaine des droits de l'homme. Si dans le cadre onusien, cette coopération est presque naturelle du fait de la mutualisation de certains services du Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'Homme et de la proximité de nombreuses agences, elle était jusqu'alors délicate avec les juridictions africaine, européenne et américaine. Cette réunion annuelle vient donc combler un vide et permet aussi et surtout de renforcer l'action du Comité contre la torture qui joue par cette initiative un rôle moteur dans la coordination internationale en matière de protection des droits de l'Homme. Organisée sur la base d'un programme de travail focalisé chaque année sur des thématiques spécifiques, cette rencontre permet aux juges et aux experts de définir des lignes d'interprétation, d'échanger sur des questions juridiques sensibles afin d'éviter les conflits d'interprétation. Ces derniers, malheureusement récurrents dans la pratique, constituent incontestablement un frein dans le respect des engagements conventionnels des Etats parties aux différentes conventions et, plus largement, contribuent à discréditer des décisions qui

souffrent régulièrement d'un défaut d'effectivité. Nombreuses sont en effet les critiques émanant d'Etats qui considèrent, souvent à juste titre, que les interprétations divergentes ne peuvent être tolérées et remettent en question la légitimité du travail des organes de protection des droits de l'homme. Il est ainsi de la responsabilité de chaque organe de traité de travailler afin d'éviter des interprétations déconnectées et qui, sous couvert d'évolutions nécessaires, occultent des décisions antérieures d'organes régionaux et agissent même contre ces dernières.

A travers ces rencontres, c'est un objectif de renforcement de l'effectivité qui est recherché et ce par une définition de lignes qui, si elles ne peuvent être totalement communes, n'en demeurent pas moins cohérentes et conciliables. Ceci est vérifié sur des sujets communs qui doivent être réfléchis en totale cohérence comme des problématiques plus spécifiques, propres à chaque organe, qui permettent aux organes régionaux de trouver, dans le travail du Comité contre la torture, un relai nécessaire pour renforcer la mise en œuvre de leurs décisions.

Une coordination dans l'interprétation

Relativement aux premiers, des discussions de fond ont pu avoir lieu sur la définition des notions communes fondamentales comme la torture, les traitements inhumains et dégradants, permettant au Comité d'élargir certaines interprétations en prenant appui sur les solutions développées au niveau régional. Dans le même esprit, des travaux ont été menés sur des questions juridiques particulièrement complexes auxquels sont confrontés les organes de protection des droits de l'Homme afin de trouver une orientation coordonnée au niveau tant universel que régional. A ce titre, des solutions convergentes ont ainsi pu être définies en ce qui concerne l'extraterritorialité des traités de protection des droits de l'homme, les questions d'immunité de juridiction, la compétence *ratione temporis* ou la coordination avec les règles et obligations émanant des organisations régionales. Cette circulation des réflexions et des interprétations a ainsi permis, très rapidement de développer des références croisées dans les constatations et arrêts rendus et, plus largement, a permis une diffusion réciproque des positions retenues au régional et à l'universel.

Concernant les seconds qui portent sur des sujets spécifiques à certains systèmes, les discussions menées ont permis d'élaborer une solution construite sur la base d'une interprétation décloisonnée et développée de manière concertée. Il en a ainsi été relativement à la notion de compétence civile universelle qui, inscrite dans la Convention contre la torture, n'est pas présente dans les autres conventions de protection des droits de l'Homme. Sur ce sujet particulier et technique, la jurisprudence européenne a ainsi pu prendre explicitement appui sur la pratique du Comité contre la torture afin de trancher une affaire particulièrement sensible. Dans le même sens, l'appréciation de la situation spécifique à certains Etats a pu donner lieu à des discussions afin de permettre, via le contrôle sur rapport réalisé par le Comité, un suivi dans l'exécution des arrêts rendus par les juridictions régionales. Ce travail de monitoring dérivé participe ainsi à la pleine et entière réalisation des obligations souscrites

par les Etats et participe à la fois au renforcement des traités onusiens et des conventions régionales lesquelles sont ainsi mobilisées lors de l'examen de nombreux rapports périodiques.

Confrontés à plusieurs requêtes ayant un objet similaire, les organes présents à l'occasion de ces réunions ont notamment pu réfléchir sur les règles et principes applicables au crime du passé. Ces violations des droits, antérieures à la ratification des traités, restent malheureusement impunies. Les victimes, dont certaines sont encore en vie, n'ont jamais obtenu réparation. Leur recours est leur dernier espoir mais se heurte à des difficultés juridiques relatives à la compétence des organes. Les discussions ont ainsi porté sur la recherche d'une solution commune permettant de déterminer la compétence des juridictions régionales et du Comité contre la torture.

Un renforcement réciproque de l'efficacité des systèmes de protection des droits de l'Homme

De l'avis unanime des organes présents à l'occasion de ces réunions, ces derniers sont devenus essentielles et contribuent indubitablement au renforcement des mécanismes de contrôle sur différents plans. Bien entendu, la coordination évite des solutions divergentes désastreuses pour la crédibilité des systèmes conventionnels mais, au-delà, elle permet en particulier de rapprocher les greffes et secrétariats afin de pouvoir réfléchir sur les bonnes pratiques afin de renforcer leurs capacités. Sur ce dernier point, il est ainsi indéniable que l'établissement de liens constants et permanents entre les institutions offre un avantage indéniable qui se manifeste par des échanges d'informations réguliers et par des échanges informels nécessaires afin d'assurer une coordination optimale entre les différents mécanismes de recours individuels. C'est ainsi, au-delà de la rencontre entre juges et experts, une réunion qui a réussi à mettre en place une relation directe entre le secrétariat du Haut-Commissariat aux droits de l'Homme et les organes régionaux.

Plus largement, cette rencontre annuelle démontre que la protection et l'évolution des droits et des libertés reposent avant tout sur le travail des juges et des experts qui, loin d'une approche dogmatique ou/et politique, sont parvenus à travailler pour un renforcement de l'effectivité des obligations imposées par les traités et de leur acceptabilité par les Etats parties. Cette réunion est en ce sens essentielle et fondamentale dans un contexte de transformation tant de l'objet même des droits de l'Homme que des mécanismes qui en assurent la protection au niveau international. ■

* Sébastien Touzé est membre du Comité contre la Torture, professeur à l'Université Panthéon-Assas et directeur de la Fondation René Cassin. Information de contact : cat@ohchr.org.

Celebrate forests with us!

Paola Deda*

Join us in celebrating the International Day of Forests 2020 focusing on forests and biodiversity.

If "International Day of Forests" rings a bell, this might be because ever since this special day to celebrate forests was designated in 2012, the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber section has been working hard to bring forests closer to you. Remember a cave made of paper which we brought to the Palais des Nations to show you some innovative wood-based products that will make our lives more beautiful (and sustainable!) in the future? Or a tasty breakfast made from forest products we hosted in 2019? Or the fashion show featuring clothes made from wood-based textiles, or a workshop where you could create your own forest ecosystem in a jar? These varied celebrations of the International Day of Forests remind us all there is much more to forests than simply trees, and that sometimes you have to look beyond trees in order to see the forest.

This year's theme of the International Day of Forests, forests and biodiversity, gives us the opportunity to reflect on the ex-

tent to which all our everyday lives are impacted by forests.

Biodiversity can be defined as an interdependent plethora of life forms

Biodiversity can be defined as the plethora of life forms found on earth ranging from genes, micro-organisms, plants and animals to entire ecosystems. Forests are home to approximately 80 per cent of all life on land, thus constituting a hub of biodiversity. The different elements in this biodiversity system co-exist in a complex web of direct and indirect interdependencies that ultimately spans our planet. This interdependency can take different forms. In forests, trees exchange energy and information with each other. We can also observe circular interspecies connections. In a symbiotic relation-

Amur leopard.



ship, fungi make nutrients better accessible to trees, while trees give fungi access to water. Trees and shrubs also offer food and shelter to animals. In turn, carnivore predators control herbivore populations that may otherwise threaten ecosystem stability by damaging forests, which ultimately again support fungi.

We as humans are also part of this interconnected web.

The air we breathe, the water we drink, and the energy we consume; all originates from the processes controlled by trees and other plants. Without forests and the many services they provide, life as we know it would not exist.

In order to safeguard these important ecosystem functions and preserve and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests for generations to come, the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section works with its Member States to strengthen sustainable management of forests and the contribution of forests and forest products to sustainable development in the ECE region.

Managing forests sustainably, and restoring them when needed, is crucial for people, biodiversity and the climate. We do so by strengthening capacities, collecting data, facilitating policy dialogue and communicating the important role of forests in contributing to the achievement of a wide range of Sustainable Development Goals. And we all reap the fruits of this labour: integrated forest management with biodiversity maintenance has expanded in the UNECE region, and the area of forests protected for biodiversity purposes in the UNECE region has increased by 12% between 1995 and 2015.

We should not forget however that we are still experiencing a loss of biodiversity on an unprecedented global scale. While we should do everything we can to conserve and increase biodiversity, we should also not underestimate nature's resilience and adaptability. There is evidence that some negative trends can be halted or reversed.

Some truly incredible stories exist that serve to remind us of the sheer power of nature in the face of adversity.

**This year's theme
of the International
Day of Forests, forests
and biodiversity, gives us
the opportunity to reflect
on the extent to which
all our everyday lives are
impacted by forests.**



**Paola Deda,
Director
of the Forests,
Land and Housing
Division at the
United Nations
Economic
Commission
for Europe
(UNECE).**

For instance, the Siberian tiger population fell as low as 40 in the 1940s. Thanks to restoration and conservation efforts, the number has risen to 540 Siberian tigers living in the wilderness in Russia today; a country that is home to 95 per cent of the species' global population.

In other instances, nature has sometimes found innovative solutions to the most challenging conditions and threats. For example, elks have developed a portable air conditioning system to withstand the summer heat. In summer, their large spade-shaped horns are covered with a thin layer of skin. When it is hot, blood flows through the skin around the horns and then gradually circulates back into the animal's head to cool it. Once temperatures cool down in autumn, the skin comes off and elks rub their horns against trees to accelerate this process.

Even more ingenious, the fieldfare, part of the thrush family, defends itself from hostile birds by dowsing their enemies with bird droppings. These droppings glue the other birds' feathers together, which makes it more difficult for them to fly and attack.

All these ingenious species that inhabit and rely on interconnected forest ecosystems show us that forest biodiversity is too precious to lose and definitely worth celebrating. So, come and celebrate with us – visit <http://www.unece.org/forests/idf2020> to find out about exciting events we have lined up for you this year. ▶

* Paola Deda is the director of Forests, Land and Housing Division at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

Accepter la vie

Méditation Vipassana au Palais des Nations

Jean-Luc La Planeta*

Si demain la science invente une pilule qui guérit de toutes les souffrances physiques, le monde sera sûrement un vrai paradis. Pourtant il restera probablement une partie sur laquelle aucun médicament ne pourra agir. Avez-vous remarqué comment nos sens et notre esprit nous jouent des tours en permanence. En nous faisant croire certaines choses, notre mental produit des attentes, frustrations, jalousies, peurs, stress qui sont hélas bien réels.

Cela est épuisant et peut même nous faire dire ou faire faire des choses que nous pouvons regretter par la suite en créant du mal-être en nous et autour de nous.

Le Club de Méditation des Nations Unies à Genève vous propose un voyage passionnant au cœur de la conscience. Cette exploration intérieure permet d'atteindre les niveaux les plus profonds du fonctionnement de l'esprit et depuis cet endroit, défaire les nœuds et autres impuretés mentales.

Cette pratique s'appuie sur des lois scientifiques et vous pourrez voir avec clarté comment vos pensées, vos sentiments, vos jugements et vos sensations sont à l'origine des mouvements de vie. Par l'expérience directe, vous comprendrez la nature selon laquelle vous progressez ou régressez, la façon dont vous produisez de la souffrance ou la manière de s'en libérer. Vous bénéficierez alors d'une conscience augmentée, l'absence d'illusions, le contrôle de soi et la paix.

Si c'était aussi simple, pourquoi tout le monde n'est-il pas encore affranchi ? Parce que cela nécessite un travail personnel, et que tout le monde n'est pas disposé à consacrer quelques minutes par jour à comprendre comment son esprit fonctionne. En effet, il ne serait pas réaliste de s'attendre à ce que tous les problèmes se résolvent en quelques jours seulement.

La bonne nouvelle c'est que si vous pratiquez, les résultats arrivent progressivement mais sûrement. Plus on pratique la technique, plus grande est la libération de la souffrance, et plus proche est le but ultime de la libération totale. Tel un musicien, surtout au début, vous devrez vous entraîner régulièrement pour



jouer la mélodie qui est la vôtre. Le cours requiert un travail sérieux et régulier de vingt minutes par jour et une heure par semaine durant trois semaines pour commencer à en sentir les bénéfices. Ensuite il n'est plus besoin de chercher à vous convaincre, les effets seront tellement visibles que votre entourage sera sûrement étonné de votre calme et votre nouvelle sagesse.

Une étape importante consiste à développer une certaine maîtrise de l'esprit. Pour y parvenir nous vous demanderons de fixer votre attention sur la réalité naturelle du changement constant du flux de la respiration lorsqu'il entre et sort des narines. Après quelques jours ou semaines d'entraînement, l'esprit plus calme et plus concentré, sera disposé à entreprendre la pratique elle-même : observer les sensations à travers le corps, comprendre leur nature, et développer l'équanimité en apprenant à ne pas y réagir.

La pratique dans son ensemble est réellement un entraînement mental. De la même façon que nous faisons usage de l'exercice physique pour améliorer notre santé physique, de même peut-on en faire usage pour développer un esprit sain.

Toute personne sincère est la bienvenue aux cours de Vipassana, pour voir par elle-même ce que la technique apporte et en mesurer les bénéfices. Pour tous ceux qui en font l'essai, Vipassana s'avèrera être un outil inestimable pour atteindre un bonheur véritable et le partager avec les autres. Vous serez chaleureusement accueilli et pourrez recevoir l'enseignement authentique tel qu'il a été transmis depuis des générations dans la plus pure tradition. ▶

Les cours sont proposés **chaque lundi à 12 h** au Palais des Nations **salle C.018**. Si vous êtes intéressé ou avez des questions n'hésitez pas à prendre contact avec Jean-Luc LA PLANETA : jeanluc.laplaneta@un.org.

* Jean-Luc La Planeta travaille à l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève (ONUG).

Le Centre d'Accueil de la Genève Internationale (CAGI) au service des ONG et délégués de la Genève Internationale

Salman Bal*

La participation et la contribution des acteurs non-étatiques, y compris la société civile, au sein de la gouvernance mondiale sont de plus en plus importantes et reconnues, et ceci est particulièrement marqué à Genève. Dans ce contexte, le CAGI offre une palette de prestations visant à favoriser l'installation et le développement des ONG à Genève ainsi que l'accueil des délégués de passage.

Point de référence et porte d'entrée pour toute ONG souhaitant s'établir à Genève, le CAGI, via son Service ONG, fournit des prestations d'informations et de conseils. Le Service répond aux sollicitations ayant principalement trait à la création de nouvelles entités, au transfert de siège ou à l'ouverture de bureaux de représentation, à la recherche de locaux, à l'inscription et la mise à jour du profil des ONG auprès du CAGI, et propose également une bourse d'emploi en ligne.

L'an dernier, le nombre d'ONG a poursuivi sa croissance avec 36 nouvelles organisations recensées pour un total de 420 acteurs. Près de la moitié de ces nouvelles organisations sont actives dans le cluster des droits de l'homme et de l'action humanitaire.

Le CAGI offre des services pratiques et logistiques favorisant le travail des ONG de la Genève internationale et des délégués de passage tel que la mise à disposition de 5 salles de réunion.

En outre, le Service Accueil Délégués du CAGI accorde une subvention pour réduire les frais d'hébergement des représentants des ONG issus des pays en voie de développement et des gouvernements PMA qui participent à une conférence, réunion ou formation gratuite à Genève. Le CAGI se charge de la réservation de l'hébergement auprès de ses partenaires hôteliers et prend en charge son paiement. De son côté, le délégué participe à ces frais en payant au CAGI une contribution par nuit dépendant du financement obtenu pour son séjour à Genève.

De plus en plus de délégués font appel au CAGI pour obtenir un soutien à l'hébergement. En 2019, le Service a soutenu plus

de 1'056 délégués (soit +6% par rapport à 2018) pour un total de 7'444 nuitées pour des événements organisés, entre autres, par le HCDH, l'OMPI, l'UNRISD, l'OMS, le Service de l'information de l'ONUG, la CNUCED, l'OMC, l'OIF, les Conventions du BRS et de Minamata contre le Mercure.

Pour faire face à l'augmentation des sollicitations, le Service applique dès le 1er janvier 2020 de nouvelles modalités pour sa subvention à l'hébergement. Le CAGI maintient le délai d'un mois pour le dépôt des demandes, augmente la contribution minimale de CHF 35 à CHF 50 et simplifie les procédures individuelles et de groupes. Pour plus d'informations, consulter le site internet du CAGI.

Le CAGI facilite la participation des délégués en proposant un guide pratique du délégué en ligne relatif à leur séjour. Cette prestation est complétée d'un Delegates Information Desk dont la mission est d'informer sur le site des événements les délégués sur la vie pratique, culturelle et touristique durant les principales conférences organisées à Genève et de les orienter au sein des OI. Itinérant, il peut être installé dans toute organisation internationale et centre de conférences qui le souhaitent. A ce jour, l'ONUG, le HCDH, le BIT, l'OMPI, la CNUCED et l'OMC font appel au Desk pour 12 grandes conférences internationales annuelles permettant aux participants d'y trouver un relai d'informations. ▶



* L'Ambassadeur Salman Bal est Directeur du Centre d'Accueil de la Genève Internationale (CAGI).



Demonstration of Qigong during the exhibition on Traditional Chinese Medicine held in the Palais on 24 September 2019.

Discovering Traditional Chinese Medicine in Switzerland

Lin Dan*

The application of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Switzerland and some of the benefits it brings.

During the past decades, traditional systems of medicine have received growing attention around the world. According to some estimates, people in many developing countries rely heavily on traditional practices to meet their primary health care needs. In China, although Western medicine is widely available, many people choose to look for relief and healing by seeing a doctor of zhongyi (Traditional Chinese Medicine, or TCM). Western medicine and Chinese medicine are practised virtually side by side at every level in the national health care system.

Traditional Chinese Medicine differs in fundamental ways from Western medicine

With a long history of more than 2000 years, the TCM practice offers natural, safe but nevertheless effective therapies and cures for many diseases with much less side effects. TCM takes a unique theoretical and practical approach to health. In treatment, it includes the use of various intervention modalities, such as Chinese herbal medication, acupuncture, moxibustion, massage and Qigong. These modalities may be used separately or in combination.

In 2009, 67% of Swiss citizens voted for accepting Chinese Medicine as a complementary medicine to be covered by the health insurance in Switzerland.

I met D' Dong Hongguang at the opening of an event entitled "Discovering the Culture of Traditional Chinese Medicine", held at the Palais des Nations on 24th September 2019. D' Dong was the initiator of the event, which was sponsored by the Permanent Mission of China. He gave me a comprehensive view of how Chinese medicine is applied in Switzerland. D' Dong is Médecin Associé in the University Hospital of Geneva and works in the Pain Clinique of The La Tour hospital as Pain specialist.

He is the Vice-President of the World Federation of Acupuncture-Moxibustion Societies, the deputy Secretary General of the World Federation of Chinese Medicine and the Vice-President of the Association Romande des Médecins Acupuncteurs (AG-MAR). He is also as an expert of the traditional, complementary and integrative medicine team of World Health Organization.

Advantages and benefits of traditional Chinese medicine

Regarding the advantages and benefits of traditional Chinese medicine, he pointed out that Chinese medicine is capable in tackling many health issues. In 1996, invited by Professor Aldo Campana, the Director of the Department of Gynaecology and Obstetrics at the Geneva University Hospitals (HUG), D' Dong joined the Department at HUG. They wanted to integrate Chinese medicine into reproductive health in Switzerland and explore its potential value. The team tried to explore the synergy and integration of the best elements of Eastern and Western approaches in treating many complicated and difficult conditions, such as premenstrual syndrome, infertility, menopause and pelvic pain.

By introducing acupuncture into the treatment of infertility, he and his team were able to treat both the physical and the psychological aspects of the disorder and thus boost the chance of pregnancy. Evidence also shows that acupuncture has a positive influence on in vitro fertilization and increase the rate of pregnancy. For women undergoing assisted reproductive technology, it is possible to integrate acupuncture into all conventional procedures and increase its success rate. As for menopause syndromes, acupuncture is effective in relieving symptoms such as hot flashes, insomnia or mood swings, and thus improve the patient's quality of life.

Pain management is another area that TCM is widely used. In 2018, a multidisciplinary centre for pain management was established at the Hôpital de la Tour (La Tour Medical Group) in Geneva. D' Dong works together with a group of experts from different cantons of Switzerland at this centre, which is now among the top facilities in Europe providing an integrative approach in the field of pain management. By combining the strengths of Eastern and Western medicine, the centre is able to tackle

In addition to reproductive health & pain management, Traditional Chinese Medicine can also help with problems of the digestive system, immune system dysfunctions & psychogenic problems such as stress-related syndromes.



D' Dong

© D' DONG

The exhibition on Traditional Chinese Medicine held in the Palais on 24 September 2019.



© D' DONG

both chronic and acute pain, as well as provide the best medical care for pain-related psychological and physical conditions.

In addition to reproductive health and pain management, TCM can also help with problems of the digestive system, immune system dysfunctions and psychogenic problems such as stress-related syndromes. It is also effective in weight management.

The future of Chinese medicine in Switzerland

Regarding the future of Chinese medicine in Switzerland, D' Dong highlighted that there is now more training and research in the field of TCM. He works with other colleagues to find compatible TCM solutions at the HUG. AGMAR runs a three-year TCM training programme for doctors in Switzerland, with an aim to integrate acupuncture and other forms of Chinese medicine into the mainstream allopathic medicine to provide a better health care. All these efforts to bring Chinese medicine to Switzerland are showing tangible results.

In 2018, the Sino-Swiss Centre for Traditional Chinese Medicine was established in Meyrin. The Centre has been recognized by the Chinese State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine as a model platform for Chinese medicine. It is supported by the World Federation of Acupuncture-Moxibustion Societies, La Tour Medical Group, Shanxi University of Chinese Medicine, Shenzhen Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital and the HUG. The Centre offers integrative medical care in different areas, including reproductive health, pain management, sports injuries, and supportive treatment for cancer and anti-ageing treatments. It also serves as a platform for international exchanges on Chinese medicine and integrative medical care. ▶

* Lin Dan works at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG).

Dear Editor-in-Chief,

Let me congratulate you on the first issue of *UN Today*. I hope *UN Today* will fill the dire need for a voice for UN staff in this age of upheaval. Hence, the focus on "The future of Work" is apt and timely.

As we hold this magazine in our hands, we are amid an escalating worldwide crisis, the Covid-19 epidemic. Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, wrote, "Covid-19 has started behaving a lot like the once-in-a-century pathogen we've been worried about. I hope it's not that bad, but we should assume it will be until we know otherwise."

These are times we feel like the whole world is collapsing around us. Many are seeing the face of death. The world economy may end up with a \$3 trillion loss, and thousands will be left to fend for themselves.

These are all the times when the world may remember the UN. Thousands of UN staff were on the frontlines of disasters, crises and conflicts. The UN was there when the earth's ozone layer started to disappear when the financial meltdowns happened, and today when the world is threatened by climate change. In 2000, the UN brought together 189 countries to proclaim the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Steven Pinker, in "Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress", said this regarding the progress achieved by MDGs: "And here is a shocker: The world has made spectacular progress in every single measure of human well-being. Here is a second shocker: Almost no one knows about it."

Coronavirus infections are not a new affliction on humanity. Coronavirus is striking us the third time in the last seventeen years. Four milder strains of coronavirus are always with us, causing common colds. Yet we don't have a vaccine or an anti-viral drug. During the 2002 coronavirus infection, known as SARS, an attempt was made to develop a vaccine. The initiative by a company was abandoned after the SARS faded away in four months. Pharmaceutical companies will not have the interest to create a vaccine or a drug for which there are not enough patients. The deadly Ebola virus has been around since 1971, affecting mostly the sub-Saharan Africa, yet a vaccine was approved only in December 2019.

Even if we could contain Covid-19, infections like this will make more frequent appearances in the future. The current world system is unable to take any preventive steps. The pharmaceutical and medical "commodity" mindsets will not allow that to happen.

The last hope of the world is on the UN. The UN should spearhead a global initiative within the framework of public, public-private and civil society partnerships to develop vaccines and anti-viral drugs to prevent the next pandemic. We are in the third month of this crisis yet have not seen any long term plan from any UN body or organization. Such a comprehensive action is not just the remit of a specific UN body, but the collective responsibility of the whole UN system and its affiliated organizations. And the UN can do it.

This is not the time for UN staff to be in the side-lines and watch the world being dragged into one crisis after another. We must make a collective appeal to initiate global action against pandemics. It is the responsibility of the UN Staff to rise and do what is required now. The future will judge us for what we did or failed to do.

Sincerely yours,

Harikrishnan Tulsidas

Economic Affairs Officer, Sustainable Energy Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

Le petit détail qui agrandit votre réfrigérateur. En toute spontanéité.

Vous avez besoin de plus de place au frais?
Équipé de la fonction MonoFridge, le CombiCooler
V4000 convertit en quelques heures le compartiment
de congélation en un compartiment de réfrigération
supplémentaire. Ce sont les petits détails qui font
la différence. Plus d'informations à l'adresse vzug.com



La perfection suisse à la maison

