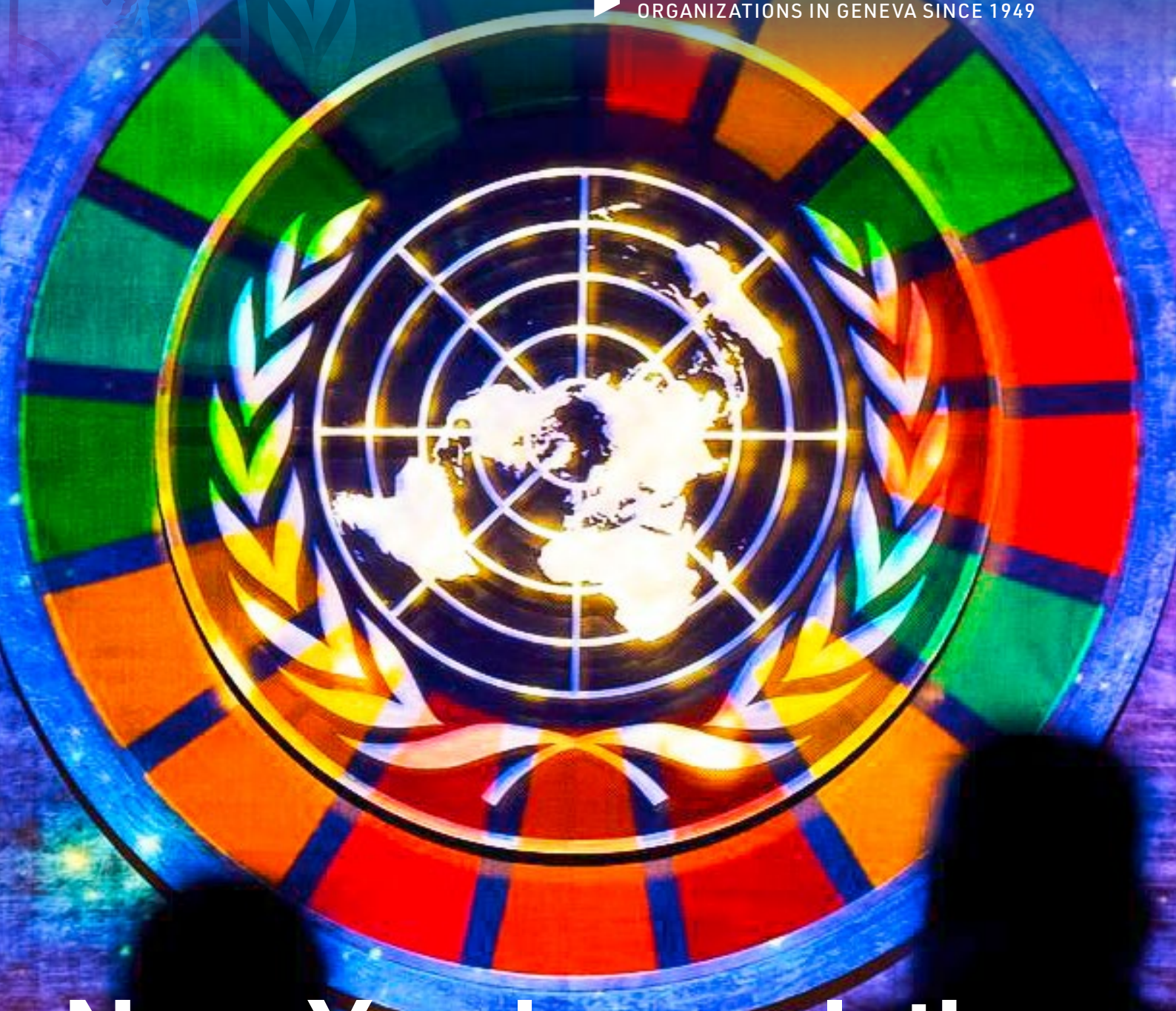


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New Year's resolution: Let's keep the promise on the goals

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–P.8

OMS / WHO

Staff Association

celebrates 70 years – P.16

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New Year's resolution: Let's keep the promise on the goals

It is that time of the year again. For many of you, it is the time when you can visit family and friends in different parts of the world and time to step away from the daily stress of the important work you do. It is also time for reflection and resolution-making. For the cover topic of the month, we have picked the Sustainable Development Goals and the need to keep the promise on achieving them. Ending poverty, improving health and education while tackling climate change must be part of our future resolutions, no matter how bruised we feel after the pandemic and how uncertain the future seems. We hope some of the stories in this issue will help you do that.

This year was an important year for the Staff Association of the WHO's Headquarters. It turned seventy! The President of the association has shared her reflections on the role staff associations play in UN agencies, what has been achieved and the future. The year-long celebrations have ended, but the work continues!

And of course, we have lots more topics and articles. I hope you will enjoy them! Enjoy reading this issue, and don't forget to share the link to colleagues and friends! Happy holidays. ■

Résolution du Nouvel An: Tenons notre promesse sur les objectifs.

Cette période de l'année est de retour. Beaucoup d'entre vous, rendront visite à votre famille, à vos amis, dans différentes parties du monde juste le temps de vous éloigner du stress quotidien et du travail important que vous faites. C'est aussi le temps traditionnellement réservé à la réflexion et à la prise de résolution.

Les Objectifs de Développement Durable constituent le sujet principal de cette édition. Comment tenir cette promesse?

Mettre fin à la pauvreté, améliorer la santé et l'éducation tout en luttant contre le changement climatique doivent faire partie de nos résolutions futures malgré une pandémie qui a laissé des traces et un avenir qui semble incertain. Nous espérons que certaines des histoires de ce numéro vous permettront d'y voir plus clair.

Cette année, marquée par les soixante dixièmes anniversaire de l'Association du Personnel du Siège de l'OMS a été importante! La présidente de l'Association partage son analyse et ses réflexions sur le rôle que jouent les associations du personnel dans les agences des Nations Unies, ce qui a été accompli et l'avenir. Les célébrations de cette année sont terminées, mais le travail continue!

Et bien sûr, comme à l'accoutumée, nous vous proposons de nombreux sujets et d'articles. J'espère que vous les apprécierez! Bonne lecture de ce numéro et n'oubliez pas de partager le lien avec vos collègues et amis! ■

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Climate change or climate crisis?

For a long time throughout the 1980s and even 1990s, it was fashionable to debate whether climate change was really happening, and if so, who or what was causing it.

PHILIPPA BIGGS, ITU

Climate change was not accorded its own individual United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) – rather, it underpins the achievement of nearly all the other SDGs as a cross-cutting driver.

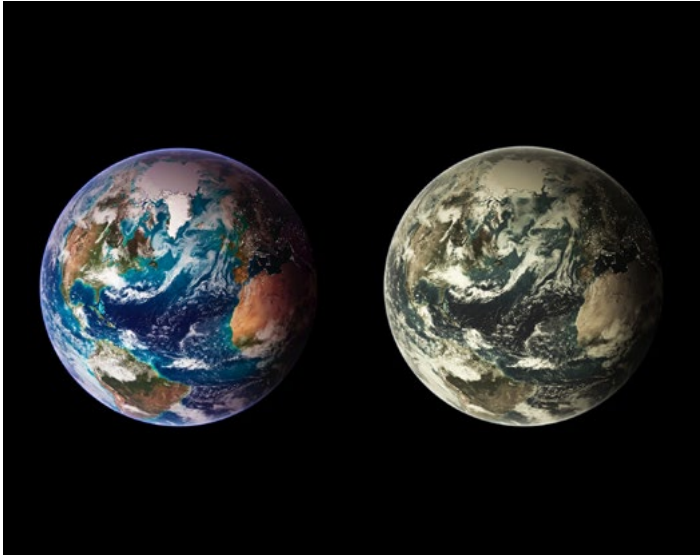
Now that climate change has entered into most people's lives in a very visible, tangible way (summers at exceptional temperatures over thirty, forty or fifty-five degrees Celsius, depending on your location, accompanied by prolonged drought or torrential floods), the debate over whether climate change is 'real' has receded.

The blame game, however, continues, as do our suicidal capitalist system and the arguments over money and compensation. The anger at who is to blame and the injustices of past – and present – mistakes are justifiable, but they do not detract from the fundamental need to take action now to protect the planet. Indeed, the oft-cited saying, "we don't inherit the Earth from our

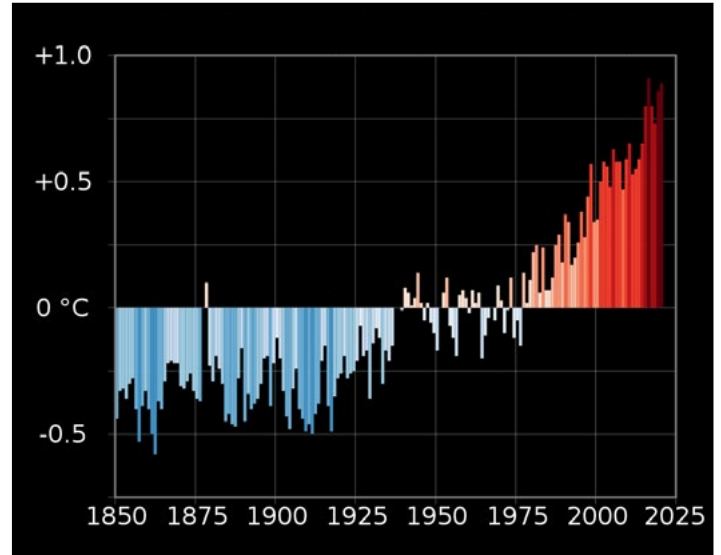
ancestors, we borrow it from our children" makes it clear that we are only guardians of the Earth in the present moment, and our first duty might be to protect this heritage, and our home.

Contrary to general impressions, the science surrounding climate change is still relatively nascent, in scientific terms. A world-renowned community of climate researchers and scientists have published their most definitive estimates of the state of things in the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) reports](#). These reports go a long way towards improving our understanding of what has happened, and what is likely to happen, including (among others):

- More frequent and intense storms, droughts, flooding, tornadoes and hurricanes;
- Melting of the polar ice caps, glaciers and greater evaporation from lakes and reservoirs;
- Rises in sea level potentially exceeding several meters by 2100, the warming of the oceans and the extinction of



We must prevent the Earth from being burned.



Global average temperature change.

- coral reefs and damage to and loss of marine species and habitats as a result;
- Changes and redistribution of precipitation and rainfall, and the rapid melting of the glaciers.
- Reduced crop yields, desertification and droughts covering large areas, greater crop losses and food insecurity.
- Greater energy needs, warning systems and insurance losses in trying to help humans and communities live with all the above.

As valuable and difficult as climate monitoring is, several problems persist with measurement. Firstly, our preoccupation with measuring the relatively obvious – as American biologist Paul Erhlich pointed out, “when your house is on fire, you need a fire hose, not a thermometer”. Giving numbers to possible rises in average temperature may feel comforting – after all, it is scientific, and implies scientists somewhere understand what is happening with the climate. However, global average temperature increases are misleading – local temperatures may prove far more relevant to most people, and we may need to worry about local maximum temperatures,

not calculated averages. At the moment, alarmingly, maximum temperatures seem to set new records nearly every year – for example, in [Europe in summer 2022](#).

Furthermore, scientists themselves are very uncertain about some of the science involved. Climate models are hugely complex, integrating vast amounts of data, and taking into account unknown reinforcement effects and feedback loops. The Earth’s climate may have a number of critical ‘[tipping points](#)’, [some of which we have already exceeded](#). Even well-known scientists have been known to make inadvertent mistakes with estimations, including the [heat absorption effect of oceans](#). Only this summer, climate scientists from the World Weather Attribution project (co-hosted by the Grantham Institute and [Imperial College, London](#)) [admitted that global temperatures are warming up faster than climate models can account for](#).

It has been pointed out that levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere were much higher than at present. However, the Earth responded by growing vast forests (effectively huge reserves

of organic materials), which ultimately became reserves of petrol and gas, some of the same reserves we are burning and releasing today. However, humanity’s presence on Earth, and our urban developments and land management, may effectively prevent some of the Earth’s natural recovery mechanisms (e.g. (re)forestation of the land, algal blooms in the ocean) from kicking into action.

Although the New York Times points out that “[nearly everything we understand about global warming was already understood in 1979](#)”, mainstream acceptance of climate change has certainly grown since 1979 and there is more widespread understanding among the public about the urgency and effects of climate change. However, the global economy has also transformed since 1979, with many sectors becoming more energy-intensive, putting more demands on the planet’s resources.

The UN-mediated IPCC process is valuable and has done much to advance our understanding and public acceptance of climate change. But do we have the option to sit back and wait for

governments to engage in blame games or live up to their public commitments under the Conference of the Parties (COP) process? As individuals, as consumers, as parents, as guardians of the next generation, we have to try and do what we can to reuse, repair and recycle and reduce our own ecological footprint, and that has to be our priority. Please take a look at your life and see how you can reduce your carbon emissions, for your sake, and for your children’s sake, and above all, for the Earth’s sake. ■

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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

A turning point for climate communication

Our climate has never been more under the spotlight, and so are organisations dealing with climate change. Brigitte Perrin, Head of Communication for the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), tells us how education, communication, and action are all interconnected.



Wi-fi at COP27.

© B. Perrin



Brigitte Perrin

CHRISTIAN DAVID, ONUG

Your name may ring a bell to some readers of *newSpecial* as an interviewer for the magazine. You're the one on the grill today, in your capacity as Head of Strategic Communications for WMO. How does that feel?

I was educated as a journalist and political scientist. Born to two journalist parents, I started working in the media very early in life. Later, I was a TV journalist for several years, and met and interviewed influential people, politicians, and artists. I was always trying to focus on what makes a person unique. In my experience, when people accept to reveal their personality and talk about their life, they always bring something truly unique to the world. One of these interviews was turned into a book, with the former Director General of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

After that, I was the New York correspondent for *UN Special* in the 2010s before crossing the line between journalism and communication. I crossed it for good – and for the greater good.

WMO, like the United Nations (UN), is a fantastic organisation and I am happy and honoured to contribute to making it better known. The transition to digital and agile communication is still in progress at the UN, sometimes at a slower pace than in [society](#). In other respects, parts of the UN are ahead of their time, like the creation process of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which involved global online consultations and brought together Major Groups and civil society in defining a development agenda. I feel a responsibility to make these Copernican revolutions better known to the general public.

Like most UN colleagues who worked on the SDGs, I became a big supporter early on. When I moved back to Geneva, the University of Geneva was starting to promote the SDGs in all schools and faculties, so joining the University was a natural move. And from an academic point of view, it also made sense: sustainable development is the archetype of interdisciplinarity. To achieve the SDGs by 2030, we need to educate not only students, but also the professionals who are in charge today, and empower them with the tools to make the world a better and more sustainable place to live.

At WMO, I work with top-notch scientists who are passionate about climate and feel the urge to communicate – because there is a true climate emergency. It is a real and daily challenge. In the coming years, WMO will be more

and more under the spotlights: extreme weather events are already hitting, hard, every day, everywhere on Earth. Scientists are very well aware of what is happening, and they are building capacities on communication and education. Decision-makers often strive to make the right decisions, they are under tremendous pressure and constraints. Governments, big and small, may not have all the necessary means and skills to act. Our contribution is to empower them by putting science under the spotlight, on prime time on news channels around the world, so we have a basis of commonly accepted science to start building upon. There is huge potential to better promote trusted and verifiable science.

Before WMO, you led communications for the University of Geneva's Centre for Continuing and Distance Education. How did working with academics and researchers frame your approach to communicating on sustainability?

Researchers and academics are trained early on to be specific and meticulous. Accuracy is their Holy Grail. In communications, you need to be sharp, timely, and to the point. Connecting these dots is not easy. Cutting-edge research on sustainability builds on interdisciplinarity, interactions, nexus approaches, social and economic impacts or benefits of political decisions, complicated feedback loops... nothing that will ever make headlines. If scientists want to be heard, they need to turn away from heavy reports and theses that even other specialists do not have the time to read. Hence the success of new, innovative academic challenges like ["My thesis in 180 seconds"](#).

There is also an urgent need for more dialogue between universities, international organisations and the private sector. Still, it can happen only if everyone speaks a language that others understand.

In 2017, the University of Geneva had already supported a project in this regard, the first Geneva Trialogue conference, that we initiated with the Director of the Centre for Continuing and Distance Education, Sophie Huber. Without partnerships between all actors, the Sustainable Development Goals will have no chance of succeeding. This applies precisely to climate adaptation and mitigation.

You have just come back from COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh. Give us your view on this COP.

From the media and the civil society's point of view, COPs never live up to expectations. For me, any step towards collaboration, financing engagements, or incentives to move in the right direction to fight climate change, must be considered as a success. As communicators, it is also our responsibility to build on this success and communicate consistently across UN agencies and partners on the actual impacts of these small steps (or absence thereof, if not sufficient).

COP27 closed with a breakthrough agreement to provide "loss and damage" funding for vulnerable countries hit hard by climate-related disasters. It also emphasised the need to strengthen systematic observations and to achieve [universal coverage of early warning systems](#) – two of the WMO's top priorities. This is a very positive outcome for us.

Climate scepticism is on the rise despite the daily evidence of climate change, similarly to what we saw vis-à-vis expert consensus in relation to COVID-19. How can strategic communications take on the challenges of disinformation?

Misinformation has been set as a priority topic by Melissa Fleming, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communication, and it is an issue we take very seriously. Misinformation undermines

good governance and what brings us together as a species, because we need an agreement on the facts, as a solid base for mutual trust. I am taking part in the UN Climate misinformation task-force where we are discussing the role and responsibility of social media in disseminating misinformation. We just launched a campaign called *Communicating on Climate Change* (www.un.org/en/climatechange/communicating-climate-change) to promote best practices in climate communication. Using authoritative scientific information, avoiding stereotypes, and linking climate communication to justice are some examples of best practices. The poor and marginalized are often hit the hardest by increasing climate hazards like floods, droughts, and storms.

The spread of lies about climate change undermines all other efforts. To survive, we must

wrest control from those seeking to distract from and delay climate action and renew our trust in the scientific community. Working hand-in-hand with the academic community, researchers and experts, and promoting continuing education and trusted communication are crucial to face the current crisis. What we need are strong public authorities, a vibrant civil society, solid research, decisive move in the industry and finance sectors, and lively dialogue leading to solutions. ■

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Secretary-General António Guterres addresses the SDG Moment 2022.

Revisiting the Sustainable Development Goals

On 8 September 2000, full of optimism and resolve, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2)¹, reaffirming that development, together with peace and human rights, constitute the Organization's priorities for the 21st century.

**ALFRED DE ZAYAS,
UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS**

When the eight Millennium Development Goals² (2000 to 2015) were proclaimed by the GA on 14 December 2000, there was hope that the goals would be met. The time was right and the level of political will seemed present. Much credit goes to SG Kofi Annan and later to USG Wu Hongbo.

Unfortunately, on 11 September 2001 the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York upended priorities. The road-map to development was lost as the so-called “war on terror” sabotaged the expectations which hitherto we had so fondly harboured.

The crux of the matter is that achieving the MDG's would have

required financing in the trillions of dollars, and notwithstanding eloquent lip service by most politicians, the priorities had shifted to the promotion of “colour revolutions” and the neo-liberal economic agenda, brilliantly described in Naomi Klein's book *The Shock Doctrine*³.

Proper financing could have been made available for development, but this would have required that countries possessing the strongest economies, like the US and Germany, shift the paradigm away from military-first to human-security first economies.

Alas, they and other major powers had other budgetary priorities and instead of allocating the necessary funds to achieve development goals, most countries

increased their military budgets, to the delight of investors in the war industries, of speculators and war-profiteers. Humanity was left behind, as Ban Ki-moon deplored in August 2012 “The world is over armed and peace is underfunded.”⁴

True democracies would have put the question to their constituencies – whether they wanted enhanced development or ever-growing military budgets? Since the answer would be too apparent, no referendum has ever been held on this crucial issue of development. In the US both Democrats and Republicans are committed to the military establishment.

Notwithstanding the many hiccups in the implementation



Dialogue on Inequalities Solutions during SDG Moment 2022.



SDG Moment 2022.

of the MDGs, some optimistic bureaucrats at the UN claimed a number of successes, announcing that:

- the number of deaths of children under 5 years of age had fallen from 12.7 million in 1990 to 6.3 million in 2013 globally;
- That the percentage of underweight children under 5 years old dropped from 28% in 1990 to 17% in 2013 in developing countries;
- That new HIV infections had declined by 38% between 2001 and 2013;
- That cases of tuberculosis were declining;
- That in 2010, the world had met the MDGs target on access to safe drinking-water⁵

Not having achieved the promise of the Millennium Declaration, a “new” set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals was proclaimed in 2017, with a commitment to

achieve them by the year 2030⁶. The new blueprint for peace and prosperity is called the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and relies on global partnerships and international solidarity. The SDGs build on the work of many UN agencies including the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Briefly, 17 SDG's aim at:

- Eradication of poverty
- Food security
- Good health and preparedness for emergencies
- Quality education
- Gender equality
- Clean water and sanitation
- Affordable clean energy

- Decent work and economic growth
- Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- Reduce inequalities, ban discrimination
- Build sustainable cities and communities
- Responsible consumption and production
- Climate action to address global warming, desertification, natural disasters
- Protection of the oceans and life below water
- Sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems
- Promoting Peace, Justice and strong institutions
- Building effective Partnerships for the goals

Many of these goals are more than just promises, as they are already treaty-based commitments on the part of 173 States

parties to the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 171 States parties to the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 182 States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, and 189 States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

For instance, the right to life, which necessarily includes the right to peace and the right to health, is stipulated in article 6 ICCPR. The right of self-determination of peoples and the prohibition of looting the natural resources of indigenous peoples⁷ are stipulated in article 1 common to the ICCPR and ICESCR. The right to health, education, water, sanitation, employment etc. are all protected in the

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ICESCR. Moreover, transnational corporations, private persons or States must not restrict the policy space of foreign governments, particularly through the “investment protection” chapters of bilateral investment treaties and so-called free-trade agreements. Arbitrations under the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism (ISDS) by-pass the system of public courts, which are transparent, accountable and whose judgments are appealable. In a very real sense ISDS is *contra bonos mores*, as incompatible with the very essence of a State, which is to advance the welfare of persons under its jurisdiction, which requires adopting social legislation, which may conflict with the profit interests of investors. It is unconscionable to privatize profits while the risk of loss is born by the public. The *Philip Morris v. Uruguay* case became emblematic when Philip Morris⁸ sued Uruguay because of Uruguay’s implementation of the WTO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. ISDS cannot be reformed and must be abolished as contrary to *jus cogens*, article 53 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. Alas, ISDS continues to sabotage the regulatory space of States, particularly developing states.

Since the “time of troubles” in the Ukraine, the financing problem of the SDG’s has become ever more tenuous. In February 2014 the overthrow of the democratically elected government of President Victor Yanukovich launched a new hot war and led to significant increases in military budgets worldwide, thus further marginalizing the SDG’s.

The Covid-19 pandemic, with billions of dollars spent to combat it, further detracted from the overall SDG’s. It also demonstrated how poorly prepared States were to tackle any medical emergency. The privatization of medicine and the closure of hospitals when they were not generating enough profit

led to thousands of avoidable deaths. Yet, no one in government has been held accountable for pushing the neo-liberal dogmas against their treaty obligations under the ICESCR and other human rights treaties they have ratified – and blithely ignored.

One would think that the World Bank and the IMF could play a significant role in advancing the SDGs, Alas, although the WB and IMF have association agreements with the UN, they are not subject to the authority of the General Assembly or of the Secretary General. In essence, the WG and IMF are in the service of the outdated “Bretton Woods” model, which was engendered in 1944 to maintain the US economic hegemony in the world. Notwithstanding my 2017 reports to the General Assembly and Human Rights Council, or the assessments of the rapporteurs on foreign debt, the right to food, the right to health, it is evident that the policies of the WB and IMF actually hinder the implementation of the SDGs. The *Lancet* has documented how the privatization of the health sector has proven devastating to prevent disease or to manage it, once a cholera, Ebola or other pandemic has been declared⁹.

Cultivating social justice to arrive at world peace

The SDGs are needed more than ever. They build on the work of UN agencies and civil society, e.g. the June 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in South Africa in 2002, the UN Conference Rio plus 20, the outcome document “The Future We Want”, the establishment of the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate change, the creation of the UN



The article author with the Advisor of the Secretary General on MDGs and SDG's since 2000 Professor Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University.

Division for Sustainable Development Goals, etc.

While the UN has been monitoring progress in the implementation of the SDGs, it appears that the prospects are bleak, especially because of the war in Ukraine and the proliferation of economic sanctions that have upended globalization and displaced supply chains.

On a happier note, I salute the excellent work of the Columbia Centre for Sustainable Development at Columbia University in New York under the leadership of Professor Jeffrey Sachs, long-serving Special Advisor on Sustainable Development of UN Secretary Generals.¹⁰ For instance the CCSI’s new report entitled “Roadmap to Zero-Carbon Electrification of Africa” shows how African countries can greatly expand access to affordable electricity, create millions of jobs, and future-proof their economies by scaling up investment in renewable energy. In this context it is worth mentioning Africa’s own 2063 development Agenda, which is being promoted by the SG’s Special Advisor on Africa.

There is no absence of good ideas, no absence of good minds like Jeffrey Sachs, Joseph Stiglitz, Naomi Klein, Arundhati Roy, the WHO Goodwill Ambassadors like Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and many others. What is most needed is

intellectual honesty in the governments of rich countries and the political will to build a better world based on equality and social justice.

I have always admired the motto of the International Labour Organization – *si vis pacem, cole justitiam*. If we want peace, we must cultivate justice. This applies system-wide to all UN agencies and to all women and men of good will. It is time to implement “conversion therapy” away from the military-industrial-digital-financial complex to the real world of human beings who have a right to live in peace and dignity. ■

- 1 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/united-nations-millennium-declaration>
- 2 <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/millennium-development-goals.html>
- 3 <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/millennium-development-goals-mdgs>
- 4 <https://naomiklein.org/the-shock-doctrine/>
- 5 <https://www.un.org/disarmament/update/20120830/>
- 6 [https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20\(July%201\).pdf](https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20(July%201).pdf)
- 7 <https://research.un.org/en/docs/dev/2000-2015>
- 8 <https://www.un.org/en/exhibits/page/sdgs-17-goals-transform-world>
- 9 <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/05/indigenous-peoples-share-hopes-for-the-sdgs/>
- 10 <https://indigenouspeoples-sdg.org/index.php/english/all-global-news/702-indigenous-peoples-engagement-in-the-sdgs>
- 11 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/nov/16/philip-morris-uruguay-tobacco-isds-human-rights>
- 12 <https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X%2814%2970377-8/fulltext>
- 13 [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(22\)01585-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)01585-9/fulltext)
- 14 <https://csd.columbia.edu/sachs>



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Refocusing on Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable Development Goals are here to make the world a better place. What are they? Why are they suddenly becoming more important? Why do we need them?

LISANNE HOPKIN, NEWSPECIAL
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are becoming more and more relevant as their deadline is approaching faster and faster. In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly and the Member States of the United Nations all agreed to 'adopt' the 17 SDGs that will improve the future of planet Earth. The Sustainable Development Goals, which are due to be achieved by 2030, are a 'call for action by all countries in global partnership'.¹ This means all countries – 'developed and developing' – are coming together to provide a better future. The focus of the SDGs is to 'end poverty and other deprivations, improve health and education, reduce inequality, spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests'.²

Since 2011, there have been 193 Member States of the United Nations with Switzerland only joining in 2002 as the 190th member.³ However, Switzerland can be considered as 'well-matched' when it comes to the United Nations, as they share similar interests. Both Switzerland and the United Nations have goals, such as 'poverty alleviation, the respect for human rights, democracy, peaceful coexistence among people and the conservation of

natural resources'.⁴ In fact, it is painfully obvious how alike Switzerland's goals are to the Sustainable Development Goals. It makes sense then that Switzerland became a Member of the United Nations.

It would take a while to break down all the Sustainable Development Goals and provide you with lots of information, and honestly, I would write that article, but it may not be the most interesting, and all of its footnotes may take up a lot of space. Instead, why don't you find out more about the SDGs here: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> or here: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>. Both links are quite similar in that both are published by the United Nations, you just may find slightly different information between the two, which is helpful if you want to find out as much as possible about Sustainable Development Goals.

The SDGs have been put in place to make the world we live in a better place. But they do not solve all problems. They are steps in the right direction if we can accomplish them. However, as life is unpredictable, there may be obstacles that present themselves along the way. As we approach the last seven years of the deadline, we also seem to be moving away from some of the goals that we

set ourselves. For instance, SDG number 1 is to end poverty. But how are we supposed to do that when the pandemic has forced many more people out of jobs, or the war in Ukraine has also done the same and displaced lots of families? On top of that, climate change means many families have to leave their houses, as they are not equipped nor built for the most extreme weather conditions. How, then, is it possible for us to achieve these goals when the world around us seems to be fighting against them?

One way of completing some of the Sustainable Development Goals is to support the right organisations and/or companies. Some organisations will say which SDGs they are working on. For instance, Nestlé is quite transparent about their work on SDGs and what they are doing to contribute to the improvement of the world. Their 'Sustainability' page showcases the SDGs they have done a lot of work on (numbers 1, 2 and 8), but it has also pulled together 'material issues' that contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. Nestlé mentions goals 1-5, 8, 10, and 12-17.⁵ Sustainerv is a global consulting firm that 'works with companies to integrate sustainability considerations into long-term strategies, everyday operations and communications'.⁶ They claim that Nestlé is one of the



All 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

'Top third scored Swiss companies addressing the SDGs'. Companies scoring better than Nestlé are Barry Callebaut, ST Microelectronics, Coop and Syngenta.⁷

There are some other important ways to work towards achieving the SDGs: one step that is quite easy to do is to watch what you shop and where you shop. For instance, fast-fashion clothes are not the way forward if you want to help the environment. Usually the work conditions are unethical too, so there are several Sustainable Development Goals that you are impeding. Try charity shops where they sell second-hand clothes, or there are also apps like Depop or Vinted that allow you to buy and sell second-hand clothes. Simple and easy-to-implement steps. But it's not just about clothes. You should watch what

kind of food you buy and where it comes from. Food should also be sourced sustainably and locally, if possible. And not wrapped in single-use plastic! Take bags to buy your fruits and vegetables in. Again, small steps, but they are steps in the right direction and closer to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Support organisations/charities that you know focus on making the world a better place, and you can see it in the work that they do. Transparency is key, here. It is great if organisations or companies claim they are working towards the SDGs, but if you can't see the proof of their work, and if they're not willing to show you, then perhaps they are just saying things to make themselves look better. Most charities are put in place to help the world, whether

it's animal welfare, human health, stopping the effects of climate change, charities are open about what they do and what they accomplish. It is their purpose to accomplish whatever goals they set themselves. While doing the research, I found a very well-explained blog post covering the Sustainable Development Goals and the ways we can fulfil them. You can find it here: <https://rheaply.com/blog/sustainable-development-goals>.

All in all, it is easy to play the blame game, I do it a lot. But this is your world as much as anybody else's. You have to do your part even if no one else will. You can at least say you have done the work, you did what you could to make the world a better place. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that we will complete the 17 Sustainable

Development Goals that we put into place by 2030. It is a bit more difficult when a pandemic and a war come into play. However, if we give up now, we will lose the ability to inhabit planet Earth. We have seen the effects climate change, poverty, inequality, and more can have on our lives. We have to keep fighting against them. There is no other choice. ■

- 1 "The 17 Goals | Sustainable Development." United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, website.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 "Growth in United Nations Membership." United Nations | Peace, Dignity and Equality on a Healthy Planet, United Nations, website.
- 4 "Frequently Asked Questions: Switzerland and the UN." Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA, FDFA, website.
- 5 "Contributing to the Global Goals." Nestlé Good Food, Good Life, Nestlé, website.
- 6 "Inspiring Meaningful Change." Sustainerv, 13 July 2022, website.
- 7 Huck-Wettstein, Manuela. "Assessment of Swiss Companies' Approaches to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)." Sustainerv, PDF.

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WHO's Staff Association turns 70 years old – a year of celebrations

It is a privilege and honour to be President of the Staff Association on this momentous occasion of 70 years as we continue to work with the utmost dedication and in good faith as we serve the best interests of our colleagues.

Daniella Salmon,
President of the WHO's 70th Staff Committee

DANIELLA SALMON, PRESIDENT OF THE WHO'S 70TH STAFF COMMITTEE

HQ SA 70 Article – 70 years of the HQ SA

In 2022, the 70th Staff Committee of the headquarters staff association celebrated 7 decades of working to protect the rights and promote the wellbeing of all staff.

It is often said at WHO that people are at the centre of what we do and to mark the platinum jubilee of the HQSA, a large part of the commitment in 2022 was to focus on staff engagement.

In February 2022, the Staff Committee held an online retreat to come to an agreement on the areas we considered to be the top priorities for the year. It was an excellent opportunity for committee members new and old, to share our achievements, our concerns, and then prepare our plans for the upcoming year. It proved to be an occasion to really take time to reflect on the impact the last couple of years has had on our professional and personal lives and we agreed that as well as focusing on the 7 priorities for the year, that 2022 would be a

year of celebrations and as circumstances allowed, meeting in the office again and convening to celebrate and enjoy our belonging to WHO.

The 7 priority areas of HQ Staff Association in no particular order are:

- Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
- Internal Justice
- Working conditions and Staff Wellbeing
- Career Management and Contract Modalities
- Staff Engagement
- SC Internal Operations and Improvement

The HQ SA 70th Anniversary celebrations are also intended to lead into the WHO 75 celebrations in 2023 and contribute to building a united, positive outlook for the future.

Our commitment this year was to focus on wider engagement with our constituents and also stronger coordination with regional staff committee members. #strongertogether.

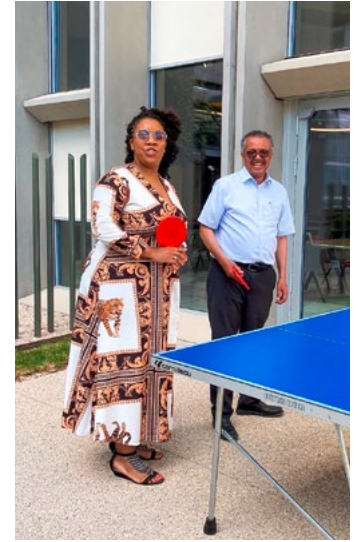


**The WHO's Staff Association is led by a President.
Who is the president of the 70th Staff Committee?**



Daniella Salmon took office as President of the WHO Staff Association on 21 January 2022.

Prior to taking on the role full-time Daniella was working as a Project Manager in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team. She is a human resource professional and has a background in business and law. Daniella began her career at the BBC in the UK and her previous experience ranges from working for public health non-profit organizations, the International Labour Organization, international banking and wealth management and in international law. In 2021, Daniella received the Director-General's LEAD Innovation Team Award for her contribution as part of the Lead Innovation Team.



Respectful workplace

ALL WHO Staff Associations globally, play an active role in creating an empowering and caring environment for all. Together, we are continuing to celebrate staff achievements and push for progress today and every day. Building a respectful workplace across all levels of WHO has been our priority and we have held many sessions focusing on speaking up, bias, respectful communications and will continue to hold space for challenging conversations. Respect goes beyond the behaviours we display and how we treat others, as it also relates to broader issues of culture change through respectful staff engagement and is reflected in our contractual arrangements which can also impact our ability to show up fully and thrive with dignity.

We each have an influence in building a workplace culture that encourages dialogue and understanding, is more diverse, equitable, and inclusive to all. I am Proud to be a representative of many intersecting identities. From my gender, my heritage, to my education, and the language I speak. All of these things shape the experiences I face in the workplace and in the world and they shape my perspective.

70 reasons to celebrate

As we build on the pillars of the WHO Year of the workforce, and aim to foster a nurturing a workplace culture where everyone can feel valued, appreciated, and are able to achieve their full potential, we are proud to celebrate staff success at the United Nations 47th Inter Agency Games

There are over 70 reasons to celebrate in this HQSA 70 Anniversary year. In the spirit of ever more inclusive WHO HQ workforce where we encourage opportunities for staff to have fun and joyous activities together, we take the opportunity to thank all staff globally who represented WHO in the 22 disciplines at the 47th United Nations Inter Agency games in Copenhagen. The staff association was proud to provide a small stipend to a small number of participants from HQ and plans to continue this tradition from here on out.

More information – Arnaud's article on page 32-33

A series of podcasts and stories will be available from November showcasing the achievements of staff at the UN IA Games as well

as a handful of stories collected from staff about their experiences with staff associations.

As the year draws to a close, I take the opportunity to thank colleagues for their continued support and trust in the Staff Committee as we continue to work tirelessly to reflect the interests of our workforce in consultation with management.

I applaud the commitment and hard work of the members of the committee and the collaborative approach of the secretariat displayed throughout the year. ■

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Experiential learning: children learn to collaborate; here they form a circle and evolve in synchrony.

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Moving beyond violence in society – what does it take?

To this day, the norm of violence is omnipresent. We continue to witness violence in many forms and shapes, be it state-sponsored or by families, individuals and institutions. How can this still be in the 21st century despite our millennial cultures, religions and civilizations at their noblest?



DELIA MAMON, PRESIDENT, GRAINES DE PAIX FOUNDATION

At the world level

Despite laws, diplomacy and institutions established to protect societies and individuals? It begs the question how come humanity has not as yet been able to deal with this destructive force that jeopardizes all other achievements? Clearly, human creativity has failed to come up with effective solutions to kick out the norm of violence. On the contrary, our creativity has been used for inventing arms and for investing in defenses against such

arms. The question we must ask ourselves is why? What is the missing key component that could overhaul the banalization of violence sustainably?

In society

In addition, for many, the norm of violence remains the rule in daily life. In homes, schools, work or in the street, depending on country, social background, external influences or other. Only when people become victims of collective violence, against their community or country, do they truly fear and abhor violence, yet without understanding the

intrinsic link between such collective surges of violence and their own violent actions and discriminatory attitudes.

Most don't realize or else dismiss that violence takes on many forms beyond physical violence. Psychological, social or moral forms of violence (when dignity is trodden) are shrugged aside, not to mention sexual abuse. Discrimination and exclusion take place constantly and are felt as being fully justified by seemingly very decent people. How can this be changed?

In education

Families and teachers, who believe that the only way to establish authority is through punitive violent means, presume that this is harmless. This is the teaching model that has been transmitted to them from generation to generation. But what does it teach exactly? It teaches fear and victimization. The issue here is that such families and teachers know of no other model. Young children, constantly witnessing various forms of violence, will embody the normality of violence – first as children, then as teenagers, and finally as adults that can be swayed to use violence to the point of civil strife or radicalization.

Such violence not only perpetuates societal violence. It also affects education results. This

has been a wake-up call with such funding organizations as the World Bank. They realized that investing in education in the form of building schools and training more persons to become teachers was not producing the expected impact in terms of learning. Too many students were going through schooling but unable to read simple texts or do simple arithmetic. This poor outcome has been coined *Learning poverty* by the World Bank and is the term now used to describe very low educational achievements. It describes the near-illiteracy of large numbers of students in developing countries despite having been through primary school.

Of course, one reason is insufficient and outdated teacher training, still focused on providing top-down instruction with no interactions or involvement allowed by students. But the bigger reason is violence: disciplinary violence, discrimination of slower students and exclusion of all those in the back rows, too far back in overpopulated classrooms to hear, see and follow what is going on. These three forms of violence cause students to either shut off or drop out or become restless and unruly. Can education be redesigned to overcome both learning poverty and violent discipline?

The search for solutions

One solution is to extend

education to include skills building. Basic education is still often limited to instruction, yet today, Internet enables fast factfinding, and is becoming progressively accessible, even in developing countries. Children are thirsty for more than rote learning: they seek to gain self-esteem and stronger skills for interacting without bullying or other forms of violence. In the past, such learning took place in the extended family, but today, family units are becoming very small. Children spend most of their waking hours in school from early age. They have few opportunities to learn and practice human values, or to hone their emotional and social skills, or to reflect on violence and its consequences. Now, more than ever, teachers need to help children grow, develop their humaneness and their ability to reflect, discern and resolve. These are indeed key means to overcome societal violence.

Another solution is to extend teacher training to prevent disciplinary violence and provide better solutions for building authority. A third solution is to train communities and community leaders likewise so that they can understand and appreciate that their school's teachers have moved away from violent discipline.

All this has led one Swiss foundation, Graines de Paix, to take

up the challenge of connecting the two very separate fields of *inclusive education quality* and *violence prevention* in order to achieve stronger societal cohesion, harmony and peace on the ground. For this, it has designed a systemic education method combining these societal goals and fully integrating them into teaching the basic school subjects. There is no separate disconnected topic to teach. It has then provided proof of concept in two developing countries, Côte d'Ivoire and Benin by training teachers, respectively since 2012 and 2018. It has just been awarded the prestigious UNESCO-Hamdan Prize 2022 for its innovative teaching transformation work in Benin.

Education should be at the heart for building societal peace because of what it brings:

The competency effect

One cannot expect to prevent violence sustainably without developing competencies inside society. These are best learnt throughout childhood through education if its scope is broadened to include competency learning and regular practice, through student dialogue. Dialogue requires listening, respect and consideration. Learning through dialogue between students themselves is easy to achieve using participative and collaborative teaching methods, which in themselves teach peace.

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Participatory practices: parents learn how and why to adopt positive educational postures, thus ensuring disciplinary consistency with that introduced in the classes.

The mass effect

A mass effect is required for overcoming violence in society. Violence cannot be rejected by only a few. When the majority moves away from the norm of violence, the few who remain violent feel compelled to change. Education provides this mass effect by encompassing the entire 4-18-year population, and by doing so year after year. This mass effect is then amplified when children bring what they learn to their parents and when teachers help their communities embrace these changes.

Sustainability

Diplomatic and humanitarian representatives occasionally share with us their profound frustration at seeing how their peace efforts and breakthroughs fall apart. Peace is not peace when limited to short truces between wars and civil strife, nor if violence continuously takes over. Education can become a main contributor to peace sustainability once the world's

future stakeholders will have benefited from a peace-culture developing education, centered on violence-free, humane teaching that have helped them grow with convergence and togetherness skills.

Supporting Education advancements that are instrumental for violence prevention is thus becoming more prevalent and certainly deserves larger consideration.

Graines de Paix's mission is "to design and implement transformative education solutions that foster learning fulfillment, violence and radicalization prevention, and societal peace." It works to increase educational performance through violence prevention at school, while building peace through developing emotional, social and reflection competencies inside the classroom. The NGO was founded in 2005 in Geneva and received consultative UN ECOSOC status in 2011. It has

been awarded two international Prizes for its substantial work in designing educational curricula and experiential learning resources: from the Leaders for Peace Foundation in 2019 and from UNESCO in 2022. ■

For more information: [website](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#)

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Handicap International commémore les 25 ans de *Broken Chair*

Chaque jour, 70 civils voient leur vie brisée par l'usage d'armes explosives. Depuis 25 ans, Broken Chair incarne le combat de Handicap International pour leur venir en aide.

HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL

C'est en 1997 que Handicap International (HI) installe *Broken Chair* sur la place des Nations à Genève, avec la volonté de mobiliser les États et l'opinion publique pour mettre un terme à la crise humanitaire engendrée par les mines antipersonnel.

Créé par l'artiste Daniel Berset sur demande de HI et installé face aux Nations unies, ce monument haut de 12 mètres est un défi adressé à la communauté internationale. Il lui rappelle ses obligations de respecter le Droit international humanitaire et de protéger les civils contre l'usage des armes explosives en zones peuplées. Le but initial était d'obtenir à Ottawa,

en 1997, le plus grand nombre de signatures d'États au bas du traité en faveur de l'interdiction des mines antipersonnel.

«L'idée était d'attirer l'attention du public en créant un *message puissant et de qualité. Pour parler d'un sujet aussi cru, il fallait passer par le symbole*», explique Paul Vermeulen, premier directeur de Handicap International Suisse et initiateur du projet *Broken Chair*.

Broken Chair aurait dû être démontée quelques mois après son installation, suite à la signature du Traité d'Ottawa en décembre 1997, qui interdit l'acquisition, la production, le stockage et l'utilisation de



mines antipersonnel. Grâce à sa popularité et au message qu'elle porte, la chaise est sur la place des Nations depuis 25 ans.

25 ans de combat en faveur des victimes

Après le combat contre les mines antipersonnel, *Broken Chair* incarne ensuite l'engagement de HI dans le processus d'interdiction des bombes à sous-munitions (BASM). Depuis 2003, l'organisation se mobilise pour que ces armes, qui violent le droit international humanitaire, soient définitivement bannies.

Le 3 décembre 2008, l'aboutissement de ce combat est de taille: 96 pays signent le traité d'interdiction des BASM à Oslo, qui entre en vigueur en 2010. Le traité d'Oslo interdit définitivement l'utilisation, la fabrication, le commerce le stockage des bombes à sous-munitions.

En 2016, HI décide d'une nouvelle feuille de route pour *Broken Chair*. Dans le cadre de son combat contre le bombardement des civils et en réponse au désastre humanitaire que reflètent ces chiffres:

- Au cours des dix dernières années, plus de 260 000 personnes ont été tuées ou blessées

par des armes explosives dans le monde.¹

- 90% des victimes en zones peuplées sont des civils. Contrairement à 25% en zones non-peuplées.

- En 2021, 66% des victimes des mines antipersonnel étaient des enfants.²

Broken Chair incarne aujourd'hui le cri désespéré des populations massacrées par la violence militaire, en référence notamment à l'usage des armes explosives en zones peuplées.

«Initialement l'emblème de la campagne contre les mines antipersonnel, la chaise est aujourd'hui un symbole incontournable de l'humanité, de la lutte contre les fléaux et le soutien aux victimes. (...) Nous nous devons d'être aussi courageux et ambitieux qu'en 1997 et ne jamais perdre de vue l'importance de la sécurité humaine et du désarmement humanitaire», explique Carolyne Mélanie Régimbal, Secrétaire générale adjointe de la Conférence du désarmement des Nations unies.

Broken Days

Durant tout le mois de septembre 2022, pour commémorer les 25 ans de *Broken Chair*, HI était

en campagne avec les Broken Days pour montrer le rôle que ce monument occupe symboliquement sur le plan diplomatique, des droits humains et sur le terrain.

Cette campagne visait à la fois à renforcer l'ancrage du monument à Genève, face aux Nations unies, et à souligner l'importance de l'action de l'organisation.

Différentes actions ont eu lieu au cours du mois pour sensibiliser la population:

- Une campagne digitale de sensibilisation «Vie brisée».³
- Broken Chair Expo, une exposition retraçant l'historique de *Broken Chair* et son importance dans le combat de HI
- 24 drapeaux sur le pont du Mont-Blanc, aux couleurs de HI et de *Broken Chair*

Le jet d'eau et Broken Chair #enbleu

Le Village de HI, le 23 septembre, avec une journée de sensibilisation pour les élèves et étudiants du canton de Genève. Plus de 250 élèves ont répondu présents. Le Village a été installé sur la place des Nations avec des ateliers pédagogiques permettant d'aborder les sujets liés aux missions de HI ainsi qu'une conférence pour les étudiants sur le thème

«Le travail de plaidoyer de HI pour la protection des civils: de la signature du Traité d'Ottawa en 1997 au combat contre les armes explosives aujourd'hui.»

À propos de HI

HI est une ONG qui intervient depuis 40 ans dans les situations de pauvreté et d'exclusion, de conflits et de catastrophes. Œuvrant aux côtés des personnes handicapées et vulnérabilisées, elle agit et témoigne pour répondre à leurs besoins essentiels et améliorer leurs conditions de vie. Depuis sa création en 1982, HI a mis en place des programmes de développement dans près de 60 pays et intervient dans de nombreuses situations d'urgence. L'organisation a reçu plusieurs reconnaissances internationales, dont le prix Nobel de la paix en 1997. ■

1 [Action on Armed Violence \(AOAV\), A Decade of Explosive Violence Harm, 2021](#)

2 [Cluster Munition Coalition, Cluster Munition Monitor 2022](#)

3 [Cliquer pour découvrir la vidéo](#)

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Pour plus d'informations: [Broken Days | Handicap international CH \(handicap-international.ch\)](#)



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- *Sustainable development – Solar Power on Tour (SPOT)*
- *“An incredible melting pot.”*

newSpecial is delighted to include profiles presented by Zahi Haddad, in his book “126 Heartbeats for International Geneva”. We thank the author and his publisher, Slatkine, for this exclusivity.

“Melting pot!” The image, which springs forth instantly, dances in Charlie Hieronymi’s eyes, with a teasing smile. Because that is Geneva. A melting pot of cultures, differences, to create something unique. A beautiful mosaic. And multiculturalism, Charlie knows a beam of it. Of Hungarian origin, he walks his long silhouette of two meters all around the blue waters of Lake Geneva, which he seems to hold in the palm of his hand.

After studying international relations, he begins a banking career which in particular made him the interpreter of Armand Lombard in Hungary of the 1990s, suddenly opening up to the world after the fall of the Berlin Wall. This period prepares another revolution for Charlie. Fascinated by the image, he spends a few years as a webmaster at the International Ocean Commission and then as a consultant for the development of internet solutions. While the “Web” is in full swing, Charlie weaves his own. Acquires new tools, masters the art of video and enters the bustling world of fashion. “At

the time, compared to the photo, video was little used. Hence, I settled in a niche sector.” With enthusiasm and curiosity, he takes an innocent childish look at the creations of Swiss designers. The films are linked like a necklace made of pearls and Charlie becomes unavoidable. In the digital world, where everything is still to be shaped, he offers the fashionshow.ch platform to unite and represent Swiss fashion. Before passing from New York to Tokyo, under the banner of Swiss presence.

After ten years in business, Charlie whistles halftime. He needs a break to reinvent himself, to see something else. And it is Hawaii that will help him on this path. A temple of creativity, a crossroads where East and West converge, creatives of all kinds, international stars of cinema and show business, the island welcomes him with open arms. Like the University of Manoa where he takes art and communication courses. Time also to sign the photos of the book “Cuisiner cru” which will be a hit in France.

But the wind from the Pacific eventually brings Charlie back to Switzerland... onto the banks of the Aare in Bern. The Federal Office for the Environment has instructed him to organize a ministerial conference on the Green Climate Fund. Wishing to commit to concrete solutions, Charlie quickly picks up his wand again, alone, and manages energy-related mandates, such as this study on European energy policies which he carries out for a Japanese “think tank”, in the aftermath of the nuclear disaster at Fukushima. The former “Nati” fencer crisscrosses Europe, meets experts, representatives of NGOs and governments. He documents and trains himself and reflects on the meaning of sustainable development for each of his interlocutors and the contradictions that this can cause.

In this context, SPOT is conceived in a timely manner. With three other partners. Quite simply. “It seemed fundamental to me to conduct awareness campaigns on climate issues and to provide all the necessary thinking tools to

understand them in a 360-degree approach. It is not enough to tackle the symptoms but also and above all to understand what has put us in this situation.” Thus, the quartet represents original projects by architects, artists, scientists and adventurers, meets students mobilizing around climate change, and is gradually building an international network. Far from an alarmist attitude, Charlie wants above all to be constructive. A promoter of an international agreement to combat the harmful effects of climate change. Another kind of melting pot. ■



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En accord avec les ODD

Construire des collèges au Burkina-Faso

ODD 4: Accès à une éducation de qualité
 ODD5: Égalité entre les sexes
 ODD10: Réduction des inégalités
 ODD 17: Partenariat pour les objectifs mondiaux

**ALINE VISINAND, YANNICK HUMEAU,
 CHRISTIAN DAVID ET TOUTE
 L'ÉQUIPE PRÉSENTE AU BURKINA
 FASO**

Voici un projet qui fonctionne et qui est duplicable, notamment dans les pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest. Cette démarche, basée sur l'autonomie, apporte une dimension qui n'apparaît pas dans des projets intégralement subventionnés, parfois imposés sans tenir compte des besoins réels.

La situation des collégiennes burkinabè est grave. Echecs scolaires, abus, 300 (!) grossesses non désirées à Bobo-Dioulasso en 2020, autant de futurs prometteurs stoppés net... Car il n'y a pas de collège dans leur village (>10 000 habitants). Elles qui ont

tant lutté pour pouvoir aller à l'école, voient tous leurs efforts ruinés quand elles doivent s'exiler en ville voisine pour continuer leurs études.

«Village Debout», est une association locale est implantée depuis 20 ans dans ce pays. Cette longue pratique a permis d'éprouver les méthodes visant à favoriser l'autonomie de populations en les responsabilisant. Ce n'est pas notre projet, c'est le leur, ils sont les experts de leur territoire et cela suscite une forte émulation. Nous leur apportons un soutien pour le projet qu'ils accomplissent et le finalisent par eux-mêmes pour devenir les référents et «essaimer» les villages voisins.

«L'éducation est
 l'arme la plus puissante
 qu'on puisse
 utiliser pour changer
 le monde»

Nelson Mandela

C'est en pratiquant cette méthode qu'ils sont capables de bâtir en un temps record (6 mois), des collèges dans les villages reculés du Burkina Faso, dans la région de Bobo, en totale coopération avec la population locale, qui construit le bâtiment, nous ne finançons que les matériaux. Immédiatement après l'achèvement des travaux, le bâtiment



est cédé à l'Etat Burkinabè, partenaire officiel des projets, qui prend en main la gestion du collège.

Le premier en date, Co-financé par le fond 1% de l'ONU a coûté 25 000 Fr. et a vu le jour en six mois. Il est en fonction, géré par l'Etat, qui fournit le personnel administratif et les professeurs pour 120 élèves.¹

Impact fort, autonomie, transparence, rapidité: aucun frais de gestion, 100% des fonds alloués à l'achat des matériaux, 100% parties prenantes sont bénévoles!

Forts de ce succès, nous souhaitons en construire une série de 10, aux alentours de Bobo-Dioulasso. Pour ce faire, nous avons créé le «Fonds Village Debout», statutairement restreint à la construction de collèges au Burkina Faso, et uniquement pour financer les matériaux, rien d'autre. Le but est de permettre à toutes et à tous de participer, en pleine transparence. Les contributeurs du Fonds sont tenus informés régulièrement de tous les développements des projets, y inclus tous les documents comptables, photos, factures, ainsi que tous les mouvements et activités concernant le Fonds.

Un second collège ouvre à la rentrée 2022-2023!

La construction a démarré au

mois de mars, et touche à sa fin. Les coûts ont sérieusement augmenté, suite à l'inflation, notamment sur le prix de la nourriture, qui fait augmenter tous les autres prix, celui des fers, des tôles, des IPN, qui a plus que doublé en quelques mois.

Notre budget est déjà largement dépassé, bien que nous assurions les coûts les moins chers possible, bien en dessous du cahier des charges de l'état burkinabè. 100% des fonds que nous trouvons étant alloués à l'achat des matériaux, uniquement. La main d'œuvre est fournie par les villageois et les parents d'élèves.

Une banque locale, les Caisses Populaires du Burkina, considérant nos efforts et notre sérieux, a décidé de nous accompagner, en participant généreusement au projet, à hauteur de 20%, pour ce collège, ainsi que les suivants. C'est très encourageant, et nous sommes d'autant plus motivés à trouver de nouveaux partenaires afin de nous accompagner.

À toutes fins utiles, si un intérêt de votre part devait émerger, nous gardons à votre disposition toutes les factures, preuves, photos, contrats, prêts, réalisés par toutes les parties depuis le début des travaux. Ceux-ci ont été divisés par phases, et nous en sommes à la phase 8. Il semble que nous ayons encore besoin de

deux, voire trois autres phases pour finir. Cette action donne donc d'excellents résultats en termes de coût, de mobilisation des énergies et de motivation.

Les gens s'approprient le projet, travaillent sur leur territoire et finalisent à chaque fois ce qu'ils ont commencé en devenant de surcroît, les référents pour le projet du village voisin. Il ne s'agit pas d'une aide apportée par un organisme mais véritablement d'une insertion dans la population qui crée la demande en fonction de ses besoins.

«Village Debout», vise à favoriser l'autonomie des populations dans des territoires précaires. Cette approche territoriale a permis la construction de ces deux collèges en un temps record, dans ces villages reculés du Burkina Faso. Ces collèges fonctionnent déjà, avec une bonne centaine d'étudiants.² ■



¹ La vidéo: <https://youtu.be/4OQbcbUsRqo>

² Pour en savoir plus sur le projet, visionnez l'interview ci-après

Visitez aussi le [site web de Village Debout](#), la page [facebook](#) et le lien [linkedin](#)

Pour financer ces actions, vous aurez aussi libre accès à nos trésors, en fonction des stocks disponibles, qui seront partagés entre tous les donateurs. Ils sont exposés sur notre nouvelle boutique en ligne: www.villagedebout.org/boutique



Bernard Manhan displays his vaccination card. The 57-year-old father of eight resides in Bahn refugee camp in Liberia. He fled violence in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011.

WHO Donors making a difference

The European Union teams up with WHO to boost COVID-19 vaccination coverage in Africa.

WHO COMMUNICATIONS

A €16 million grant to WHO from the European Union has helped raise COVID-19 vaccination rates in a group of countries in Africa where coverage levels were among the lowest in the world.

A major objective of the push is to make COVID-19 vaccination available to vulnerable groups such as the elderly, as well as populations displaced by conflict or natural disasters. The support is also building countries' capacity to carry out vaccination programs, which can be leveraged to protect people from many other diseases.

With the extra boost that EU funds provided, Mozambique has now vaccinated nearly all its adults, and the other 14 countries are making strides that include raising vaccination rates, training health workers, developing strategy and policy and digitalizing data-collection systems.

The 18-month project began in June 2021 and runs through the end of this year, working in Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan.

WHO's effort is one piece of the larger [EU Humanitarian Initiative in support of COVID-19 vaccination in Africa](#), which is providing €100 million to 41 projects in 34 countries. Many other organizations are participating in the initiative, including the International Organization for Migration, the International Committee of the Red Cross, UNICEF and the World Food Programme.

In this issue, see photos and stories highlighting WHO's work with the UN inside camps for displaced people in Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria and South Sudan.



© WHO/J. Pereira

Data managers, immunization officers and district physicians in four provinces in Mozambique have been trained through the EU-funded initiative.



© WHO/South Sudan

Bringing COVID-19 vaccination to settlements like Mangalla spares residents from having to make expensive cross-country trips.

► **Questions& answers:** [EU project increases COVID-19 vaccination in northeast Nigeria](#)

Hajara Maimuna Idi is sitting under a tree at the Gubio Road settlement for internally displaced people in Borno State, northeast Nigeria. She is baffled by the reluctance of her fellow residents to get vaccinated for COVID-19, even though a vaccination centre is located within the settlement.

“I got vaccinated because I was made aware that it was for the benefit of my health. I didn’t want to be hospitalized because of COVID-19,” she said. “The sensitization team made us understand that the COVID-19 vaccination would help build our immune systems to fight the virus.”

Maimuna is one of the 43 community volunteers trained by WHO to mobilize their peers to get the

vaccination. The volunteers hail from six densely populated host communities across three local government areas in Borno State.

► **Photo story:** [In Mozambique, WHO and the EU team up with health workers to reach the most vulnerable.](#)

► **More:** [Mozambique vaccinates nearly all adults against COVID-19](#)

► **Photo story:** [In Liberia, refugees from Côte d’Ivoire step up for their COVID-19 vaccinations](#)

Liberia’s vaccination campaigns are prioritizing the most vulnerable: health workers, adults over 60, people with illnesses, refugees and other displaced people.

“Our target is to make sure that more people in the community get vaccinated. That way we will all be safe,” says Oretha Vanwen, a community health worker who

administers COVID-19 vaccines to refugees and to members of the host community.

[In South Sudan, a vaccination drive involves a camp and its host community](#)

Bornalia Kuajo Peter, a community leader in Mangalla, got his COVID-19 vaccination in front of a crowd to make a point.

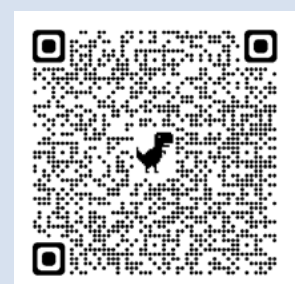
“I have taken one in front of you as assurance as your sub-chief that these vaccines are safe, especially for old people like us,” he said. “In my area, most people are aged 50 and above, so I urge you all to come and take the vaccine.”

WHO [thanks all governments, organizations and individuals who are contributing to the Organization’s work, and in particular those who have provided fully flexible contributions](#) to maintain a strong, independent WHO.

Donors and partners featured in this week’s stories include the European Union, the International Organization for Migration, the International Committee of the Red Cross, UNICEF and the World Food Programme.

The work described in these stories is made possible by a €16 million contribution to WHO from the European Union. ■

QR code included for more on this story





The swiss antibiotic resistance strategy pays off

“Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is increasing worldwide and is one of the major challenges for the 21st century.” This sentence introduces chapter 13 of the “Swiss Antibiotic Resistance Report 2022” (SARR), a report commissioned by the Federal Council (Swiss Government). The report was presented in November and highlights some positive developments in Switzerland.

CHRISTIAN PAULETTO¹

The steady increase in bacterial antibiotic resistance in both humans and animals was the motive for the Federal Council to draw up its “Strategy on Antibiotic Resistance” (StAR) in 2015, including a broad spectrum of measures. One such measure is the publication of a detailed report every two years since 2016. Though the various aspects of this problem are very differentiated in terms of their cause, effect, interaction and trends, some general findings may be drawn from this report. However, before delving into it, the global context needs to be recalled.

Antibiotics resistance, a truly global issue

Antibiotic resistance is a global issue in many respects. First, it affects all the six regions defined by the WHO. Second, one of its multifactorial causes is globalisation, i.e. increased travels and trade in meat products. Even for Switzerland, the SARR concludes that Swiss and foreign incoming travellers and meat import are among the major routes for the introduction of resistant bacteria, which would then spread to other humans or in the environment and might transfer their resistance genes to other bacteria. Third, the health impact of

resistance is significant. The SARR notes that “in 2019 1.27 million deaths were attributable to bacterial AMR, with the highest burden in western sub-Saharan Africa.” Fourth, of course, the WHO plays an instrumental role in coordinating the action by governments to control this phenomenon. The May 2015 World Health Assembly adopted a *Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance*.² Before that, the Assembly had adopted its Resolution WHA58.27 for *Improving the containment of antimicrobial resistance* in 2005, and the WHO had published a *Global Strategy for Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance* in 2001.³

One concept promoted by the WHO is the “One Health” approach (the French term “une seule santé” is even more explicit). The StAR fully implements the One Health perspective, and now proves its capacity to bear fruits in the long run. Bacteria can live everywhere, in humans, animals, the environment or food. Thus, a workable strategy to address bacterial resistance needs to integrate all those areas and their respective stakeholders. This is why the Swiss Strategy and Report join together four different Federal Offices (in charge of public health, veterinary and food safety affairs, agriculture, and the environment).

Antibiotics consumption in human medicine

Since bacterial resistance appears to be closely correlated with the consumption of antibiotics in human and veterinary medicine, the latter has been one of the targets of the Swiss strategy. The report reveals that in 2021, total consumption of antibacterials in human medicine (inpatients and outpatients combined) was 8.6 DDD (defined daily doses) per 1'000 inhabitants per day (DID). This reflects a gradual decrease of 7% from 2012 to 2019 and a (mainly COVID-19 induced) sharp decrease of 19% between 2019 and 2021. In total, about 27,000 kg of antibiotics were sold

for human consumption in 2021. The WHO's 13th General Work Programme 2019–2023 recommends a country-level target of at least 60% of total antibiotic consumption being Access group antibiotics (according to the Access-Watch-Reserve, or AWaRe classification). In Switzerland, Access group antibiotic consumption accounted for 53% of total consumption in 2012, 61% in 2019, and 64% in 2021. In the Watch group, which includes antibiotics particularly critical for the development of resistance, a decrease has been achieved in the last ten years (from 5.4 DID in 2012 to 3.1 in 2021). This group's proportion of all antibiotic prescriptions was 36% in 2021, i.e. below the WHO target of at most 40%.

Antibiotics consumption in veterinary medicine

The Strategy's result in veterinary medicine is even more impressive. Sales of antimicrobials amounted to 28,402 kg in 2021, i.e. a decline of 48% (or 26,590 kg) since 2012. Penicillins remain the main antibiotic class used for animals, especially for poultry production (75.8% in 2020). Since 2012, “highest-priority critically important antibiotics” have decreased by approximately 67%, in part as a result of a revision of the Ordinance on Veterinary Medicinal Products (SR 812,212.27), effective in April

2016, that bans “critical antimicrobials” for livestock.

Information and monitoring

Though sales bans of specific products are among the options envisaged in the StAR, the Strategy strives to achieve results mainly through awareness and information. Physicians can access updated resistance data and treatment guidelines online. Hospitals are regularly informed on their individual antibiotic use, and are benchmarked against comparable hospitals. Since October 2019, veterinarians must register all prescriptions of antibiotics in the Information System for Antibiotics in Veterinary Medicine. This record shows an increasing prescription of so-called first-line antibiotics, a proof that veterinarians do apply the government guidelines (available online).

Water sanitation

Adding up the aforementioned quantities of antibiotics sold for human and animal treatment, it results that potentially 55 tons of antibiotics are excreted and enter the water cycle either through wastewater or the soil. Since 2016, selected wastewater treatment plants are being upgraded in Switzerland to allow the elimination of micropollutants. Technologies such as ozonation or activated carbon eliminate 90%

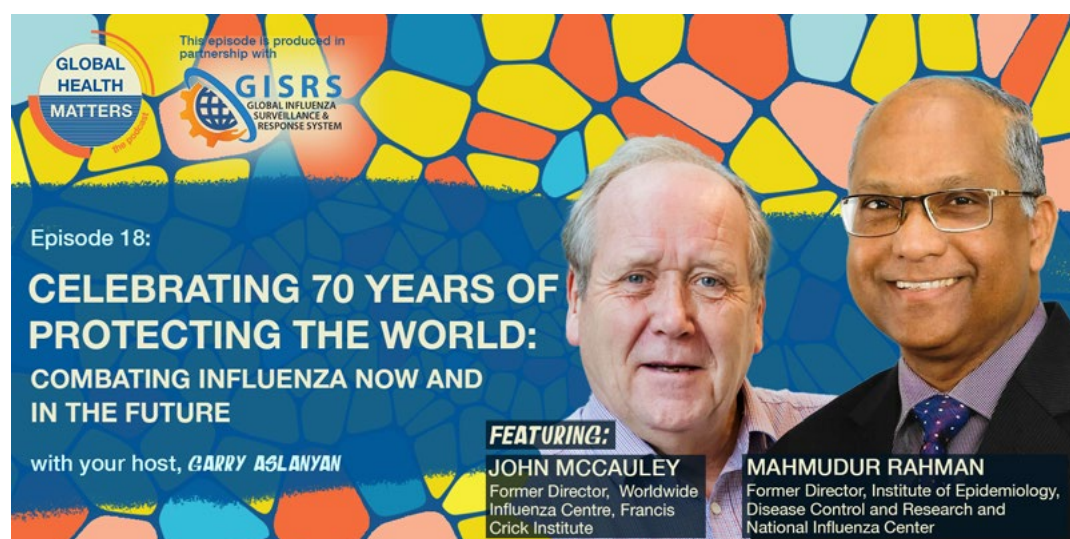
of the antibiotics. In 2020, twelve treatment plants representing 11% of Switzerland's wastewater were equipped with such technologies. The planned upgrade of plants extends until 2040, at which time approximately 70% of municipal wastewater would be treated against micropollutants, which should lead to a significant reduction of the load of antibiotics released into the aquatic environment. Already now, measures of the concentration of antibiotics in the Rhine River show a positive trend, and this trend will be further confirmed in the future across Switzerland in surface and in groundwater.

Conclusion and lessons

The overall takeaways from the Strategy and Report could be summarised as follows:

- An integrated strategy according to “One Health” is a must. While universities split the world into various disciplines, bacteria don't.
- Efforts must be long-term oriented.
- Though measures must apply at all levels, including, when necessary, a ban on the use of some antibiotics, basic measures such as information, training, awareness, and monitoring are a must, and indeed form the basis of the strategy.

The Report constitutes a valuable contribution to the understanding of this highly complex research area and the likely impact of public policies. ■



1 Member of the Board and lecturer on the Swiss Political Institutions at the Université Populaire du Canton de Genève.

2 See official records of the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly (document WHA68/2015/REC/1, Annex 3), and WHO (2015), Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance, ISBN: 978-92-4-150,976-3, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241509763>. See also http://www.who.int/drugresistance/global_action_plan/en/.

3 See <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10.665/231.633?locale-attribute=en>.



Basketball match between UN City Copenhagen and UN Yemen teams.

Healthy competition

The 2022 47th UN Inter-Agency Games

Initiated in 1968, the purpose of the United Nations Inter-Agency Games is to enable the staff members and retirees of the agencies and organizations of the United Nations System to get to know each other through sports and thereby to improve mutual understanding and work relations.



ARNAUD DEVILLIERS, UNICC

After 2 years of postponement due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 47th UNIAG were held from 15th through 18th of June 2022 in Copenhagen. The vibrant capital city of Denmark welcomed more than 1 200 enthusiastic participants from numerous UN agencies and duty stations. UN City Copenhagen offered a programme bringing the greenest and the most inclusive games to date.

The WHO delegation comprised 42 participants including colleagues from IARC, UNAIDS,

UNICC and UNITAID. Among the 22 sport disciplines organized, WHO was successful in several competitions by winning individual and team prizes. In athletics, the team combining WHO, UNEP and UNHCR runners, won the 1st prize and a WHO runner was the fastest at the 10km race. WHO has also a successful tradition in badminton and finished the competition at the 1st place. Success was also scored in basketball where WHO had joined the UN Geneva team for the gold trophy. The women's volleyball team consisting of a mixed team



Athletics competition - 10 km Race.



UN Geneva Basketball team.



Award Ceremony with WHO Director-General.



WHO Badminton team.

of WHO and UNIDO, was successful in winning the 2nd prize. The darts team, consisting of a mixed team of WHO and IFAD, and the golf team, joining WHO and UNOG, brought back bronze medals at home.

With so many trophies and medals won at the Games, the WHO Staff Association thanked the commitment of the athletes by organizing an award ceremony with the participation of the Director-General. The event was organized as part of the Headquarters Staff Association 70th anniversary to celebrate staff as the “most valuable asset of WHO”. The SA is committed to create and offer opportunities for staff to have fun and joyous activities together, in a spirit of ever more inclusive WHO workforce.

The Games are a good way for staff to get involved in a healthy team activity and provide a good boost for staff morale. Introducing a competitive edge to the practice of any sport tends to

motivate people to do it better and more regularly. Next year’s Games will be hosted by the Vienna-based agencies, but the venue is yet to be decided. ■



WHO/UNOG Golf team celebrating 3rd place.



Appel aux dirigeants

Annemasse, 9 novembre 2022. En amont du lancement de la COP27, l'Alliance Internationale pour les Objectifs de Développement Durable (AI-ODD) a lancé un appel à tous les dirigeants de la planète pour mieux intégrer l'Agenda 2030 dans leur discours lors de la COP27, mais surtout dans leurs politiques et leurs actes.

La COP 27 à Sharm-el-Sheikh devrait être la COP de la «mise en œuvre». AI-ODD a lancé un appel aux dirigeants de la planète, en septembre au Caire, pour mieux intégrer l'Agenda 2030 (17 objectifs de développement durable – ODD), dans les discours, les politiques et les actes. 7 ans après leur adoption, ils n'irriguent pas le circuit des décisions politiques.

ne sont pas tenues, pourquoi les courbes ne s'inversent pas, ce qui génère une défiance face aux dirigeants.

Nous regrettons fortement que l'Agenda 2030, boussole de la durabilité par excellence, adoptée par tous les Etats, en 2015, à l'ONU de New York, ne soit toujours pas connu et pas suffisamment mis en œuvre, excepté dans quelques pays exemplaires (Maroc...). Cela permettrait d'avoir une approche plus transversale, tout en mesurant les impacts avec un système de pilotage équilibré entre les éléments économiques, sociaux et environnementaux. Or, 7 ans après son adoption aux Nations Unies, cet Agenda 2030, **adopté dans un contexte de multilatéralisme quasi exemplaire**, par tous les Etats après une consultation massive, n'irrigue pas le circuit des décisions politiques.

PASCALE FRESSOZ¹

Cet appela été lancé lors du Forum Climat et le Développement (EDF), organisé en présence de plusieurs ministres au Caire, du 11 au 13/09/22, sous le patronage du Président d'Egypte et sous les auspices du Président de la COP 27, Mr Sameh Shoukry par Pascale Fressoz, présidente de AI-ODD. Cette action fait suite à une rencontre entre Mr el-Sissi, Président d'Egypte et AI-ODD,

en 2019, sur la déclinaison des ODD. De manière symbolique, AI-ODD a aussi demandé à ce que le drapeau des ODD soit mis sur les pyramides, pour montrer le côté universel des ODD, l'alliance entre humanité et durabilité!

La grande question posée à la COP, et d'autres lieux au niveau international et local, est de savoir **pourquoi il est si difficile d'agir, pourquoi les promesses**



Les ODD restent néanmoins un concept global élaboré par les Nations Unies permettant d'avoir une vision à long terme et montrant les interdépendances entre chaque action sur des objectifs précis, tout en mettant en évidence leurs interdépendances. Ils ont le mérite d'être acceptés dans les institutions, nationales et internationales, et certains critères peuvent être mesurés et comparés, dans le temps et entre pays. Le SDG's index permet de voir le classement mondial, avec une approche à la fois globale et détaillée ([sdgindex.org](https://www.sdgindex.org)) pour chaque pays. C'est donc un moyen simple et reconnu de comparer les politiques de changement. Il semble urgent de renforcer la sensibilisation de nos «élites» à intégrer cette notion de complexité et d'interactivité, ce concept transversal, tellement le besoin est pressant!

Plusieurs membres de AI-ODD (ONG française présente dans 25 pays), représentant d'autres organisations par ailleurs (WOMENVAI, OISAT, HCRFF...) sont intervenus à la COP, notamment Saïda Agrebi, sur la question du Genre et du Climat, et Umar Anka sur l'impact du réchauffement sur populations africaines. Présence également de Gouda El-Anour, Responsable de AI-ODD Egypte et Vice-Président du premier média égyptien, Lylie Coelho, Rezk Shehata et Jean-Marc Governatori, membre de AI-ODD et Président du Parti

L'Ecologie au Centre. Il est l'auteur d'une **Charte Mondiale sur l'écologie**. A. Zegrari, VP AI-ODD France, vient de son côté de publier un article sur la migration: le nombre de réfugiés climatiques pourrait atteindre 216 millions, d'ici à 2050, selon la Banque Mondiale.

Notre volonté est d'agir avec envie et optimisme. Notre livre «*Agir pour un monde durable. Réussir la transition à l'aide des ODD*» aide à comprendre comment Agir, au niveau des Citoyens, Entreprises, Collectivités, à planifier et conduire le changement en «9 Etapes», en faisant le lien entre

un cadre de référence, les ODD, et les outils de gestion pour tout type d'organisation. ■

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Accès aux informations

Lien vidéo, appel aux dirigeants: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlwNlzh26A0&t=4s> (vidéo 2:57 / 5:09)

Courrier rédigé à l'attention des Présidents et Présidentes (en pièce jointe)

Lien sur le Forum pré-COP, Environnement et Développement, le Caire (ed-forum.org)

Lien SDG index: <https://www.sdgindex.org>

Lien sur le site de AI-ODD: aiodd.org

A.I.O.D.D.

GLOBAL HEALTH MATTERS the podcast

Episode 19

LIFTING THE LID ON CORRUPTION TO CURE HEALTH SYSTEMS

with your host, *GARRY ASLANYAN*

FEATURING:

JONATHAN CUSHING
Global Health Programme Director, Transparency International

MONICA KIRYA
Senior Adviser, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre

PATTY GARCIA
Former Minister of Health, Peru. Professor of Public Health, Cayetano Heredia University

WHO launches 4th Health for All Film Festival

Join the movement for increasing health impact with film.

WHO has launched a call for short films for the 4th edition of the Health for All Film Festival.



The Health for All Film Festival opens the call for short films from 31 October 2022 to 31 January 2023.

“The WHO Health for All Film Festival has become an incredible platform for telling powerful stories from around the world about people who face all kinds of health challenges, and those who devote their lives to improving health,” said WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. “Films provide an authentic way for affected people to connect with others and contribute to a better understanding of the communities we serve.”

The call for short films (up to 8 minutes long) opens on 31 October 2022 and will close on 31 January 2023. WHO invites public institutions, nongovernmental organizations, communities of patients and of health workers, students in public health and film schools from around the world to submit their original short film. The festival is also open to independent film-makers, production companies and TV broadcasters.

Around 70 shortlisted films will be presented to the public in April 2023 via WHO's Youtube channel and website. From this list, a jury of distinguished professionals, artists, activists and senior experts at WHO will select the award-winning films.

Sharon Stone, critically acclaimed actress from the USA and public advocate of health and humanitarian issues, has confirmed that she will join the



Merel van der Stelt, winner of the 'Student prize' in 2022



Merel van der Stelt, winner of the 'Student prize' in 2022



Jury members of the Health for All Film Festival 2022.

jury again in 2023, having participated in the 2022 festival.

Three “GRAND PRIX” will be awarded, one for each main category, aligned with WHO’s major global public health goals: universal health coverage, health emergencies, better health and wellbeing. There will also be special prizes for films about climate change and health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, a student-produced film, and a very short film (1’ to 2’30” in length).

Winning films from the festival are helping to increase awareness and support for key health issues worldwide. With an average of 1150 submissions each year from 110 countries, the films are increasingly being used by other institutions and partners for health promotion and education, and future synergies are being explored with WHO Academy and WHO Behavioural Insights programme.

“Storytelling is an engagement between people. It’s not just

someone making a film, it’s someone watching a film,” said WHO Executive Director of Health Emergencies Programme, Dr. Mike Ryan, film festival juror in 2021. “This is exactly how WHO should be transforming: Transforming how we engage with the world and this festival is just one example of how we can change our mindset.”

In honour of WHO’s 75th anniversary in 2023, this call for films is also exceptionally open to historical films and to recent films by students sharing their vision about current challenges and future solutions to improve health. A special playlist will be created to highlight these testimonies. ■

For more details, visit the festival website: www.who.int/film-festival



Carlos Gómez-Mira Sagrado and Rossana Giacomelli, winners of the ‘Special prize on rehabilitation’ 2022.



Graffiti Mural in Cotonou.

© Deborah Randolph Talon

Benin

when travel nourishes the soul

DEBORAH RANDOLPH TALON, WHO

I remember my very first visit to Cotonou, Benin. I was 16, I had come to play basketball, and after winning the game, we were invited to a party where I danced my first zouk. It was sang in Fon, one of the indigenous languages of Benin. The melody, movements and words were so beautiful I knew I had to come back, even if it was only to learn the language or study the rhythms of this new dance.

However, through my young eyes, I was not very impressed by Cotonou, and I felt there was nothing much to do nor see there. All I remember were red, dusty, sandy roads in the middle of town and loads of mopeds.

And yet, as the Universe would have it, I ended up marrying a

man from Benin, and with thanks to the United Nations for allowing home-leave travel to your husband's place of residence, the family was able to visit this October. What an eye-opener! The country has developed its infrastructure and its tourism by leaps and bounds. It is currently positioning itself as one of the main tourist destinations in Africa.

We stayed mostly in the capital Cotonou. And here, we were spoiled by beautiful, clean, sandy beaches (I stress on clean as they were literally spotless), cafés, roof-top bars, restaurants including clean and delicious street-food bars ("maquis" as they are called by the locals). All this was facilitated by well-built connecting roads, free of traffic, thus making our visits to tourist sites, or moving between Ouidah

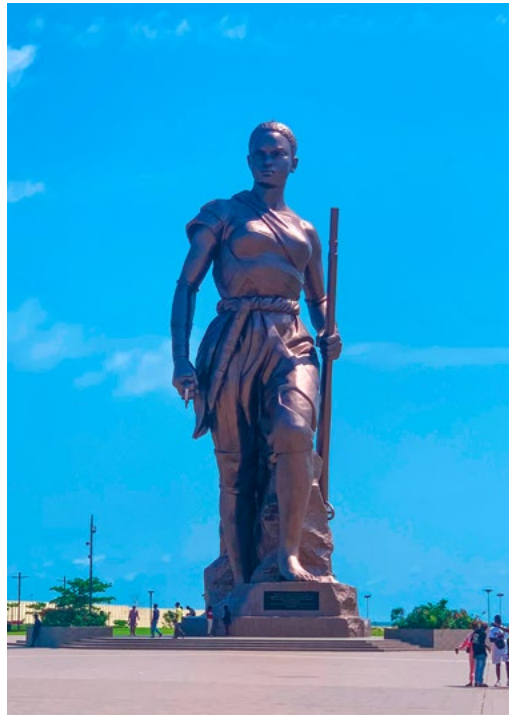
and Cotonou, effortless. In addition, there was virtually no noise pollution.

Security reigns, as well as the respect for nature and public property. African history and the pride to be African is underlined in almost all the new art works that are decorating the city. Lastly, and I may be biased, but the Beninese were one of the most friendly, loving people I have encountered.

So where is this new jewel, you may ask? Benin is situated in West Africa, on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea. It is sandwiched between Togo on the West and Nigeria on the East. It is a narrow strip going inland and borders with Burkina Faso and Niger in the North. Furthermore, it is one of the "smaller" West African



Statue of the King Gbewou in Ganvie



The Amazone Warrior in Cotonou.

countries with a population of around 12.45 million¹ in 2021 and as per World Bank data,² it falls into the category of the least developed countries.

Formerly cradling the ancient Kingdom of Dahomey³ with its capital Abomey, it later became a French colony and achieved its independence on 1 August 1960. Like most West African countries, it has the sad history of slavery and was one of the pivotal centers in the slave trade. A number of Haitians, African-Americans and Caribbeans can trace their ancestry back to Benin. Lastly, it is known as the birthplace of the African Voodoo religion.

From our short stay, we noticed that Benin is working on attracting tourists not only by strengthening its infrastructure, but by building pride in all Africans, reminding them of their rich history and culture.

This is evidenced with the actions such as:

1. Successful negotiations with France for the return of 26

artifacts. The 26 objects were plundered from a royal palace in 1892, when French forces invaded the Dahomey and made it a French colony. The French assault ended the reign of King Behanzin, who had resided in the palace at Abomey. After a successful exhibition in Cotonou between July and August 20, 2024, the artifacts are currently being transferred to a museum in Abomey. Unfortunately, we did not have the opportunity to visit the exhibition in Cotonou, but heard from others how moved they were to finally be in the presence of their heritage. Some friends even mentioned the magical aura they felt in the presence of the artifacts. Highlights of the collection include a wooden effigy of King Behanzin depicted as half-man-half-shark, a pair of elaborate wooden thrones and four painted gates from the palace.

2. The revealing of a 30m statue of a female Amazon warrior (Agoodie) of the Kingdom of Dahomey. (The Agoodie is a term that refers to members of a regional military corps entirely composed of women.)

Situated with her back to the sea, she exudes, strength, power and respect. For me, she was a reminder of the strength of every woman, irrespective of their background and culture. In her, I saw my mother coming home tired after work and looking after six children, I saw the strength and intelligence of the market women I had worked with during my first job in Accra, as they gave their all under the hot sun knowing that they were the main or only caregivers for a whole family system. Lastly, it reminded me that both women and men have the capacity, strength and duty to protect a nation and its honor.

3. An over-one kilometer graffiti mural celebrating Benin history and culture. Located on the sea front in Cotonou, the colorful graffiti can be seen from afar. Pictures of Voodoo ceremonies, dancing, beautiful African women, or everyday life in a West African city are depicted in rich, vibrant colors.

Outside of Cotonou, our family visited Ganvie, a lake village

on stilts. We were also advised to visit the Musée Historique d'Abomey, a world heritage site since 1985, the Parc National de la Pendjari, one of the best wildlife parks in West Africa, as well as the "Route des esclaves" (slave road) in Ouidah.

For those who are interested in learning more about the history and culture of Voodoo, a local guide could provide further information through visits to Porto Novo, Ouidah and Abomey.

From Geneva, it is easy to get to Cotonou with the major airlines. We traveled with Air France with a stop in Paris, however it is also possible to get there with Turkish Airlines, Brussels and Ethiopian Airlines.

Benin was the first country I have visited with my children where they wanted to return immediately after leaving (we currently have a pending request to go back this Christmas).

I think this is mainly because the tourist sites we visited in Benin had far more to them than just beauty; they were full of history, cultural and religious significance. It was a visit that provided food for the soul. Indeed, our short stay in Benin was like my first zouk: full of deep magic and beauty. In such presence, you cannot help but fall in love. ■

1 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>

2 <https://data.worldbank.org/?locations=XL-BJ>

3 <https://www.britannica.com/place/Dahomey-historical-kingdom-Africa>

4 <https://www.expourtbenin.bj/>



L'un des monuments les plus emblématiques de Venise, le pont des Soupirs relie le Palais des Doges aux prisons.

© Claude Maillard

Italie du Nord (4/4)

Venise, la reine de l'Adriatique

Renommée pour son emplacement exceptionnel au milieu de sa superbe lagune ainsi que pour son architecture et son patrimoine culturel, Venise est inscrite sur la liste du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO depuis 1987. La magie et le charme fou qui se dégagent de cette ville en font un lieu et une destination uniques au monde.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

Venise est la capitale administrative de la Vénétie. Avec ses paysages diversifiés qui s'étendent de la plaine du Pô jusqu'au Lac de Garde et aux montagnes du nord de l'Italie, la région abonde en villes historiques; Vérone, Padoue, Vicence, Trévise, Belluno, Chioggia et bien entendu la principale, Venise.

Nous laissons derrière nous Maranello, le fief de Ferrari, et Ravenne, considérée comme la capitale mondiale de la mosaïque (*voir le newSpecial du mois passé*). Venise se profile à l'horizon. Dénommée *Venetiae* en latin, elle est parfois surnommée la «Cité des Doges», la «Sérénissime», la «Reine de l'Adriatique», la Cité des Eaux»,

la «Cité des Masques», la «Cité des Ponts» ou encore la «Cité flottante».

Venise, une ville unique au monde

Venise¹, ville des amoureux, des gondoles et des ponts, fut construite sur les rives marécageuses de l'Adriatique. A la charnière des IV^e et V^e siècles, les habitants du golfe de Venise se virent obligés de se réfugier sur les îles de la lagune pour se protéger des tribus barbares des Huns et des Lombards.

Au Moyen Âge, Venise était l'un des ports les plus importants de la Méditerranée, avec un réseau étendu de contacts commerciaux. Elle importait des épices et de la soie de l'Est, qu'elle échangeait ensuite contre des

produits du Nord, comme le sel et le blé. La ville s'occupait aussi du commerce d'esclaves. Le plus grand développement de Venise survint au IX^e siècle, quand elle devint une république maritime indépendante, en concurrence avec Pise et Gênes. Parmi ses plus grands «succès», on peut citer la conquête et le pillage de Constantinople en 1204. De nombreux objets alors volés sont aujourd'hui conservés à la basilique Saint-Marc.

Venise était une cité-État républicaine. Les autorités, dont le Grand Conseil qui élisait le chef de l'État, résidaient au Palais des Doges. Les Doges étaient les magistrats en chef et les dirigeants de la République de Venise entre 726 et 1797, date à laquelle Napoléon s'empara de



Du haut du Campanile, la vue sur la place Saint-Marc et sur Venise et sa lagune est époustouflante.



Le Campanile dominant la place Saint-Marc s'élève à une centaine de mètres de haut.

la ville. En 1815, après le traité de Vienne, Venise se retrouva sous occupation autrichienne pendant un demi-siècle, et ce n'est qu'en 1866 que la ville devint une partie du Royaume italien et la capitale de la Vénétie.

De nos jours, la partie historique de Venise est construite sur 120 îles séparées par environ 180 canaux et reliées par 435 ponts. La localité de Mestre, qui constitue l'expansion de la Cité des Doges sur la terre ferme, est le point de passage obligé pour atteindre la gare Santa Lucia érigée sur les berges du Grand Canal, voie maritime la plus importante de Venise qui traverse la ville sur 4 km, de la Piazzale Roma à la place Saint-Marc. Sur cette avenue fluviale, le ballet des Vaporetti, bateaux-taxis, gondoles ou autres embarcations est un spectacle sans égal. Le pont du Rialto, le plus ancien de Venise (XVI^e siècle), qui enjambe le Grand Canal est le monument le plus connu et le plus photographié de la ville. A peine plus récent, le pont des Soupîrs de style baroque construit en marbre blanc relie les anciennes prisons au palais des Doges. C'est l'un des lieux

touristiques les plus célèbres de Venise, à deux pas de la Place Saint-Marc et de sa basilique.

Au cœur de la Cité des Doges

Du nom du saint protecteur de Venise, la place Saint-Marc est depuis des siècles le symbole historique de la ville. Ses premières origines remontent au IX^e siècle; sa taille et sa forme actuelle datent de 1177 et Napoléon Bonaparte n'hésitait pas à la définir comme étant «*Le plus beau salon d'Europe*». Unique pour son charme, elle accueille de nombreuses activités, des marchés aux représentations théâtrales, des processions aux défilés du carnaval. Le carnaval de Venise compte parmi les plus fameux du monde. Chaque année avant le Carême, les masques et les tenues raffinées règnent dans Venise et un cortège de personnages venus d'une autre époque parcourt la ville.

Élevé d'une centaine de mètres, le Campanile est le plus haut bâtiment de la ville et, depuis son sommet, on peut jouir d'une vue magnifique sur Venise et sa lagune. Construit au début du X^e siècle, il servait de phare pour les navigateurs et de clocher.

De toute splendeur, la Basilique Saint-Marc est l'une des plus belles cathédrales du monde. Sa construction a débuté en 828 pour abriter le corps de Saint-Marc, ramené d'Alexandrie. Bâtie en forme de croix grecque sur le modèle de deux basiliques de l'ancienne ville impériale de Byzance, elle comporte cinq dômes et à l'intérieur, où la couleur dominante est le doré, plus de 4000 m² de mosaïques recouvrent les murs. A ses côtés, le Palais des Doges, dont la forme actuelle résulte du travail commencé vers 1340, fascine par son mariage réussi de deux architectures – gothique et Renaissance –, et l'ensemble est tout à fait remarquable.

A l'écart, l'Arsenal, fondé au XII^e siècle, était devenu au fil du temps l'un des plus importants chantiers navals du monde. Entouré de murs crénelés, il était reconnu pour la rapidité et l'efficacité remarquables des constructeurs de bateaux. Aujourd'hui, loin de la foule, le quartier est tout à fait charmant et il fait bon y déambuler.

Murano, l'île des verriers.

Murano, la plus grande et la plus

connue des îles de la lagune vénétienne, n'est qu'à 10 minutes de Venise par vaporetto. Habitée très tôt, elle est un port maritime prospère et en 1291, suite à plusieurs incendies à Venise, les verriers sont déplacés à Murano qui devient ainsi le centre mondial de la verrerie. Cette industrie assure sa prospérité jusqu'au XVIII^e siècle, puis l'île devient ensuite un lieu de villégiature; sa population décline et tombe aujourd'hui à 5000 habitants.

Murano possède aussi son Grand Canal le long duquel sont construits maisons et palais et où l'on retrouve les ateliers de verrerie. Mais Murano n'est pas seulement l'île du verre; c'est également le lieu où se trouve l'église Santi Maria E San Donato, l'une des plus anciennes de la lagune construite au VII^e siècle. Cinq siècles plus tard, l'église est reconstruite dans le style veneto-byzantin pour célébrer l'arrivée du corps de Saint Donat. L'abside située côté canal avec sa double galerie à arcades décorée de motifs floraux et animaliers est particulièrement remarquable.

On ne quittera pas l'île sans avoir visité le musée du verre de



© Claude Mallard

Jusqu'au XIX^e siècle, le pont du Rialto, le plus célèbre de Venise, était le seul pont pour traverser le Grand Canal.



© Claude Mallard

Burano, la plus belle des îles de la lagune vénitienne avec ses petites maisons peintes de couleurs vives.



© Claude Mallard

Sur le Grand Canal, le ballet des vaporetti, bateaux-taxi et gondoles est un spectacle sans égal



© Claude Mallard

Loin du tourisme de masse, l'Arsenal de Venise qui est toujours exploité abrite des laboratoires de l'Institut marin

Murano qui retrace l'histoire de cet art au fil des siècles et qui permet d'y admirer certaines pièces exceptionnelles.

Burano, la plus belle des îles de la lagune

Située au nord de la lagune de Venise, l'île de Burano est célèbre dans le monde entier pour sa dentelle mais aussi pour ses magnifiques petites maisons colorées qui bordent les canaux de ce village de pêcheurs. On raconte que les femmes de l'île peignent leurs maisons de couleurs vives pour que leurs maris pêcheurs les retrouvent par temps de brouillard!

Au XVI^e siècle, les dentelières de Burano ont inventé le point qui a rendu leur dentelle si fameuse: le «punta in aria», littéralement le «point en l'air». Il s'agit d'un point à l'aiguille qui, en jouant sur la transparence et les reliefs, permet de confectionner des motifs aussi bien figuratifs que plus abstraits, voire géométriques. Les dentelières travaillent sur une sorte de petit traversin court équipé d'un cylindre en bois posé sur leurs genoux: le «tombolo». Grâce à l'engouement suscité auprès de la bourgeoisie européenne, cette industrie de la dentelle amena la richesse sur l'île de Burano.

Avant de reprendre le vaporetto pour Venise, n'hésitez pas à faire un détour par l'église San Martino, célèbre pour son campanile qui penche fortement mais aussi pour ses belles œuvres d'art.

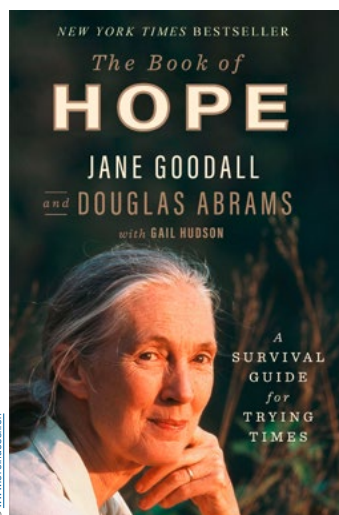
Le colossal patrimoine artistique et architectural de Venise et des îles de la lagune contient des œuvres qui sont le témoignage de siècles et de siècles d'histoire et de nombreux courants artistiques. Pas moins de trois journées sont nécessaires pour pouvoir apprécier cette richesse qui fait de ce lieu une des incontournables merveilles du monde à absolument découvrir. ■

1 www.veneziaunica.it

The Book of Hope: A survival guide for trying times

By Jane Goodall and Douglas Adams, with Gail Hudson

This is a very promising, and much needed, book at the present moment. It is intended as an interesting dialogue about that mysterious emotion, hope, by Douglas Adams with Jane Goodall, famous for her pioneering work with chimpanzees and for establishing community development organizations in Tanzania and elsewhere.



REVIEW BY PHILIPPA BIGGS, ITU

This book reads as an intriguing discussion of observations and anecdotes, based on experiences from Jane's life and elsewhere. It serves as a non-scientific guide to hope; indeed, it recognizes the elusive, often illogical, nature of hope. According to Jane Goodall, "when we focus on the future, we do one of three things – we fantasize, big dreams mostly for fun or entertainment; we dwell, focusing on all the bad stuff; or we hope, envisioning the future while recognizing the inevitability of challenges". The optimist thinks 'oh, it'll be alright'. The pessimist thinks, 'it's never going to work'. Hope is a stubborn determination to do all you can to make it work".

Jane Goodall offers four reasons for readers and people more generally to remain hopeful, in this era of global challenges, risks and threats:

- The amazing human intellect;
- The resilience of nature
- The power of young people; and
- The indomitable human spirit.

In terms of the **amazing human intellect**, humanity has clearly proved innovative and highly adaptable to changing circumstances and changes in our environment, throughout human history. Jane Goodall acknowledges that technology is neither good nor bad in themselves – indeed, "it is the way we have used our intellect that has made a mess, not our intellect per se. A mixture of greed, hate, fear and the desire for power has caused us to use our intellect in unfortunate ways. But the good news is that an intellect smart enough to create nuclear weapons and AI is also capable of coming up with ways to heal the harm we have inflicted on our planet"... It depends on how we humans choose to use our intellect – to make the world better or to destroy it?"

In terms of the awesome **resilience of nature**, the book is on firmer ground, and offers many inspiring examples of nature's ability to bounce back (or take

new directions altogether), once given a chance to recover from environmental disaster, damage or degradation. However, the importance given to the recovery of individual species may miss a bigger point about the persistence of life and nature, and its adaptability, with nature capable experimenting with different lifeforms altogether... Today, dinosaurs no longer exist on our planet, although their distant relatives the reptiles and distant descendants, birds, continue to survive.

The chapter on the power of youth is much needed, given the apathy, resignation and indifference that seem to pervade some sections of society at the moment, about a whole range of issues. If we are to cope with climate change, ultimately, we need individuals to care, and to take action, and to deal with any part of a problem they can help with. However, such action is hardly confined to youth, but needs to belong to all of us – young and old alike. Maybe we need the energy and enthusiasm of young hands, combined with the experience and wisdom of older heads.

The chapter on the indomitable human spirit is full of inspiring examples of people who have gone on to achieve great things, despite adversity. My favorite

example was the story of Jia Haixia (who became fully blind following an accident) and Jia Wenqi (who lost both his arms after touching a power line at the age of three). Despite these challenges, they succeeded after several attempts in planting a forest with over 10,000 trees: "though we are limited physically, our spirit is limitless. So let the generation after us, and everyone else, see what two handicapped individuals have accomplished. Even after we are gone, they will see that a blind man and an armless man have left them a forest".

The main thing that worried me about this book was its resolute optimism, in the face of mounting evidence of climate crisis. There is also a certain irony about the authors Jane Goodall and Douglas Adams flying around the world to meet and implore others to take action and reduce their ecological footprint, via a printed paper book.

Did this book make me feel better about the huge and sometimes overwhelming challenges facing us at the moment? No, not necessarily. But it did encourage me to believe that we can take action to help and protect nature, as long as we hold on to hope. Indeed, I am not sure we have any other choice... ■

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**CE MAGAZINE EST
DISTRIBUÉ DANS LA GENÈVE
INTERNATIONALE ET LOCALE**

Tirage combiné total (impression et
numérique): **>10500 exemplaires**

Imprimé sur du papier certifié FSC.



Au service du personnel des organisations internationales de Genève depuis 1949. *Serving the people of international organizations in Geneva since 1949.*

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