



UN Special

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EQUITABLE GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS?

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3 This edition of *UN Special* covers the issue of geographical representation across the United Nations. A regular map of our planet denotes country size based on territory; but a map that represents each country visually in terms of its population tells a different story. We invite you to read the opening article and to examine the centerfold for an overview of the facts on the ground related to geographical representation at the UN. You may also read about the representation of women from the Global South at the UN.

14 Additionally, you will find interviews with the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the UN in Geneva, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, and the Director of the Interpretation Service at UNOG.

16 This edition also addresses the 100th anniversary of the ILO, as well as the release of the 2018 UN Geneva Annual Report. We take a moment to address the recent tragedies in Christchurch, New Zealand and in the skies above Ethiopia, the latter of which cost the lives of 21 of our own dear colleagues. You may also read about Mr. Eric Drummond, first Secretary-General of the League of Nations, about how to enhance humanitarian logistics in Ethiopia, and about street vendors in Kenya, among other topics.

26 Finally, our Staff Voices segment opens a discussion on the Global Service Delivery Model, and we also address the conditions faced by UN Consultants in Geneva. And, we celebrate the work and achievements of the UN Orchestra.

40 We hope you enjoy the April edition. ■

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

Ce numéro de *UN Special* aborde la question de la représentation géographique aux Nations Unies. Une carte ordinaire de notre planète indique la taille d'un pays en fonction de son territoire, mais une carte représentant visuellement les pays en fonction de leur population raconte une histoire différente. Nous vous invitons à lire l'article d'ouverture et à consulter la page centrale pour un aperçu sur le terrain des faits liés à la représentation géographique à l'ONU. Vous pouvez également vous informer sur la représentation des femmes du sud à l'ONU. Vous y trouverez également des entretiens avec le Représentant Permanent de l'Égypte auprès de l'ONU à Genève, avec le Rapporteur Spécial des Nations Unies sur les droits de l'homme et l'environnement, et avec la Directrice du Service d'interprétation de l'ONUG.

Cette édition traite aussi du 100^e anniversaire de l'OIT, ainsi que de la publication du Rapport annuel 2018 de l'ONUG. Nous nous arrêtons un instant pour évoquer les récentes tragédies survenues à Christchurch, en Nouvelle-Zélande, et dans le ciel au-dessus de l'Éthiopie, cette dernière a coûté la vie à 21 de nos chers collègues. Vous pouvez également vous inspirer de M. Eric Drummond, premier secrétaire général de la Société des Nations, et lire sur les moyens d'améliorer la logistique humanitaire en Éthiopie, entre autres sujets.

Enfin, notre segment Staff Voices lance un débat sur le modèle de prestation de services, et nous abordons également les conditions auxquelles sont confrontés les consultants de l'ONU à Genève. Aussi, nous célébrons le travail et les réussites de l'Orchestre des Nations Unies.

Nous espérons que vous apprécierez l'édition d'avril. ■

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Geographical representation at the United Nations Reflecting the people we serve

As the only truly global organization on this planet, the most valuable asset of the United Nations, its staff, should reflect those it aims to serve: all of humanity.

NIRAJ DAWADI, OHCHR

The international character of the United Nations was underscored on its creation in 1945. The Charter of the United Nations, the founding treaty of the UN, states that “due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible”. One of the earliest United Nations General Assembly resolutions (A/RES/153 (II)) of 1947 spells out the idea: “in view of its international character and in order to avoid undue predominance of national practices, the policies and administrative methods of the Secretariat should reflect, and profit to the highest degree

from, assets of the various cultures and the technical competence of all Member nations”. More than seven decades later, much more needs to be done to reflect this geographical diversity in its workforce.

While the UN Charter emphasizes that equitable geographical representation is an important aspect of human resources management for the Organization, a major challenge remains to address the less than equitable representation of the global South overall. More than sixty countries are still unrepresented or under-represented at the UN, and a vast majority of these

countries are developing countries. The Asia Pacific Group of countries, for example, accounts for about 27 percent of UN Member States and over half the world’s population – but still constitutes only around 17 per cent of the Secretariat’s international staff.

Despite efforts, progress in improving the equal representation of geographical regions in the staff of the Secretariat has been slow. It is being increasingly acknowledged that greater efforts need to be made to enhance the diversity of the Organization. The Secretary-General’s 2017 report on Management Reform

addressed the importance of geographical representation, as “Human resources management policies must proactively contribute to greater geographical and regional diversity of the workforce.”

In a political declaration on these proposed reforms, several Member States in September 2017 also expressed their support to the Secretary-General in “developing human resources management policies that enable the Organization to continue to attract, develop, and retain high-performing staff members, and to promote gender parity and geographical diversity.”



Research shows that geographical diversity brings numerous benefits to an organization. It brings different talents together, all of them working towards a common goal using different sets of skills. It brings fresh ideas and views to projects by creating thinking out of the “box” and “comfort zone”. A geographically diverse UN provides dynamic client orientation and engagement with the variety of stakeholders that the UN works with – Member States, intergovernmental organizations, national institutions, private sector, and civil society.

Diversity in geographical representation allows the Organization to better relate to and understand global needs, and respond in efficient and innovative ways on issues of peace and security, development and human rights. Within the organization, staff engagement and motivation are also enhanced, resulting in an increase in creativity in teamwork, developing the ability to have a more diverse set of solutions to complex problems.

There are some good examples of ongoing initiatives to promote equitable geographical representation being undertaken within the UN family. In its “People Strategy 2016-2021”, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) outlines its strategy for recruiting, placing, supporting and developing the organization to ensure diversity in its workforce. It also recruited a

Senior Adviser on gender, diversity and inclusion to develop an action plan towards these aims. The World Health Organization (WHO), in its draft Thirteenth General Programme of Work (2019–2023) highlights plans to increase diversity “by fostering gender parity and geographical representation across all levels of the Organization.” The WHO programme of work goes further and states that “by 2023, at least one third of headquarters Directors will be nationals of developing countries.” In short, as Dr. Bernhard F. Schwartländer, Chef de Cabinet of the WHO Director General put it in a recent interview concerning reforms within the organization, “Diversity makes our work better.”

It also welcomes the impetus that is being given to the implementation of the Secretary-General’s Gender Parity Strategy which seeks to reach gender parity across the Organization. This Strategy should also ensure a diverse gender parity that includes women from the unrepresented and under-represented regions. Indeed, efforts to improve geographical and gender diversity are not mutually exclusive. The Secretary-General’s Strategy is an opportunity to ensure that a diverse gender parity also includes an equitable representation of women from all regional groups.

These days the issue of equitable geographical representation is being actively discussed in different fora, particularly in the context of the Secretary General’s reform agenda. In November last year, Delegates at the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary – ACABQ) urged the Secretariat to ensure the United Nations staff reflects the diversity of Member States as more women and young people are hired to shape a dynamic Organization

with a mobile and multitalented workforce, noting that the Organization’s international character hinges on equitable geographical representation.

The Coordinating Committee of the UN’s International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA) has also stated that the current situation, in which staff from developing countries are less likely to make it to the top levels of the Organization, is unacceptable and unfortunately mirrors political and financial influence in the system.

Early this year, the Secretary-General, in his remarks to Informal Session of the General Assembly, stated “We are also improving the regional balance of our staff, recognizing the immense value of geographical diversity at all levels, unfortunately not always fully understood in the past.”


Tangible progress on ensuring equitable geographical representation requires that it is a core and dynamic part of the Organization’s policy and planning framework. The current UN reform agenda focuses on three major areas – development, peace and security and management – and equitable geographical representation can directly and indirectly contribute to several of the priority areas for improvement under management reforms, such as improving the speed and responsiveness of service delivery, strengthening performance management culture, enhancing transparency and accountability and increasing the trust between Member States and the Secretariat.

Measures to enhance geographical representation are, of course, inextricably linked to recruitment, selection and promotion processes. It will be important to address equitable geographical representation

at all levels of staff. Such processes can be further strengthened, for example, through ensuring that Senior Manager’s Compacts include a responsibility to uphold geographical representation, and that compliance monitoring takes place through regular reporting of data which tracks workforce demographics per department, thereby ensuring greater transparency. Other measures, such as the development of review processes and mechanisms, may be required to mitigate decision-making processes influenced by “affinity bias” or unconscious bias that may be present in the Organization.

The UN is the only truly global organization in the world. Where else could geographical representation be more important? The people the UN aims to serve represent not only some, but all geographical regions, demographics, and cultural perspectives. How the UN can effectively deliver ultimately depends on its most valuable asset – its staff, which should truly reflect the people it serves. ■



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Interview

H.E. Ambassador Alaa Youssef, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt “Better representation for all Member States”

Egypt has historically been a principal driving force and main proponent of South-South cooperation. And since Egypt held the Chairmanship of the G-77 and China throughout 2018 in New York, it raised the banner of equitable geographical representation on behalf of the group. We interviewed H. E. Ambassador Alaa Youssef to share with us on this important issue.



PRISCA CHAOUÏ, UNOG

Do you consider that the UN Secretariat in its current composition upholds the principle of fair geographical distribution?

The endeavour to achieve fair and equitable geographical representation within the UN Secretariat has been at the forefront of the UN's agenda since its inception; nonetheless, not enough progress has been achieved. Many developing countries remain under-represented or completely unrepresented within the Secretariat, and senior management positions within the Secretariat remain geographically unbalanced. According to the UN Secretary General's report submitted to the General Assembly in April 2018, 17 countries are unrepresented in the Secretariat, while 44 countries are under-represented, indicating a clear deterioration over the past five years. The vast majority of these countries are developing countries. Out of 145 developing countries that are UN Member States, only 17

are represented at the level of Under-Secretary General, compared to 14 out of 48 developed countries (which have a significantly lower share of the world population). This situation contradicts article 101(3) of the UN Charter, which provides that “Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible”.

The UN Secretariat plays a central role in setting the agenda of the UN's main bodies and in executing their decisions. Therefore, it must fairly represent all the Member States. There is also much to be desired in the area of age distribution and gender-balanced distribution within the Secretariat. Addressing these issues is not only essential to the Organization's credibility, it also has the potential to improve the Organization's execution of its various mandates through capitalising on a dynamic, diverse and flexible workforce with varied skills, experiences, insights and talents. In addition, it is absolutely vital for Member

States' ownership and trust in the Organization.

How do you explain this? In your opinion, what are the factors that prevent a fair geographical distribution? Can you tell us why?

There are many factors that have contributed to the current situation of unbalanced geographical representation within the UN Secretariat. Historically, under-representation of certain Member States and regions was based on the flawed premise that there were insufficient qualified candidates from developing countries. Proponents of this argument often pointed to the first part of article 101(3) of the UN Charter, which stipulates “the paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity.” However, it is essential to note that there is absolutely no contradiction between merit and integrity on the one hand, and fair geographical

distribution on the other. This argument therefore gradually lost traction, as it became clear that highly qualified candidates from unrepresented and under-represented countries were still not being hired.

Other challenges are currently at the forefront of this debate. Most importantly, the existing geographical distribution system is outdated and needs to be revisited in order to reflect developments on the ground. For example, only a small portion of positions within the Secretariat (less than 10%) are subject to geographical distribution. According to relevant General Assembly Resolutions, only Professional-level posts that are financed out of the regular budget are set aside for geographical distribution. Moreover, the way that geographical representation is calculated for these limited posts is itself questionable. Currently, it takes into account three factors namely membership in the Organization, population and contribution to the budget, with the largest weight on contribution thus effectively favouring

wealthier states. Another hindrance to achieving fair geographical representation is the selection and recruitment system itself, including exams and assessments which remain inherently biased. For example, most appointments in the UN come from internal recruitment, which effectively means staff members are primarily being selected from a pool that is already geographically unbalanced. Other flaws relate to how jobs are posted and advertised. This system should be revisited to place all candidates on an equal footing.

Egypt is known as one of the most active members of the G77 in defending fair geographical distribution. Can you tell us why?

A major tenet of Egypt's foreign policy is to promote the collective interests of all geographical groups to which we belong, whether the "Group of 77" developing countries

and China, the Arab Group, the African Group, or others. Egypt has historically been a principal driving force and main proponent of South-South cooperation and we are wholeheartedly committed to continue advocating for the joint positions and causes of the Global South.

The G-77 and China brings together 134 different States who, together, have a principled collective position that the United Nations should represent all the peoples it seeks to serve. As I mentioned previously, the UN Secretariat plays a central role as the executive arm of the United Nations. It sets the agenda of the UN's main bodies, drafts resolutions, reports and surveys, implements peacekeeping operations and oversees the implementation of all programmes and projects. The UN's international character therefore hinges on the ability

to achieve equitable geographical representation within the Secretariat, including for senior-level and policy-formulating staff members, staff from troop- and police-contributing countries and parts of the Secretariat not financed through the regular budget.

Since Egypt held the Chairmanship of the G-77 and China throughout 2018 in New York, Egypt raised the banner of equitable geographical representation on behalf of the group. As this is a problem that disproportionately affects developing countries, we will remain at the forefront of efforts to address it in a principled and sustainable manner.

What would you recommend to change the situation?

It is absolutely essential that the recruitment of staff into the UN Secretariat observe the relevant Charter provisions on

fair and equitable geographical representation, particularly when it comes to senior and policy-formulating posts. As already mentioned, a number of concrete steps need to be taken, foremost of which is the urgent need to conduct an in-depth analysis of the causes of the current geographical imbalance within the Secretariat to help develop a comprehensive strategy with concrete actions and targets. There is also a need to revisit the current system for assessing geographical distribution, and to ensure transparency with regard to how geographical representation is measured across the Secretariat, as a whole. Finally, it is absolutely essential to address the inherent structural and systemic bias in the assessment and recruitment process. Together, these measures can help us ensure the universal character of the United Nations. ■



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Les femmes du sud ont-elles leur place dans la stratégie de l'ONU sur la parité des sexes?

Pour faire de la stratégie sur la parité des sexes un vrai succès, il est essentiel d'inclure les femmes du sud qui à l'heure actuelle sont les laissées-pour-compte au sein du secrétariat de l'ONU.

PRISCA CHAOUI, ONUG

Il a fallu attendre longtemps avant que les Nations Unies ne se dotent d'une vraie stratégie sur la parité des sexes.

Cette stratégie, applicable à l'ensemble du système, démontre que l'ONU met en

œuvre ce qu'il prêche dans le rang des états membres à savoir, l'égalité entre hommes et femmes.

L'initiative tombe à point nommé. Elle ambitionne de parvenir à la parité des sexes dans tout le système d'ici 2028.

Il est vrai que la stratégie s'est fixé des objectifs quantitatifs mais le plus important reste le changement dans les mentalités, ce qui ne risque pas de se passer du jour au lendemain. La stratégie prévoit par ailleurs des mesures incitatives et recommande, inter alia, de redoubler d'efforts en matière de sélection et de rétention afin de permettre aux fonctionnaires femmes de gravir les échelons à l'instar de leurs collègues hommes.

La question que l'on est en droit de se poser aujourd'hui est quelle est la place des femmes du sud dans cette stratégie?

En d'autres termes, est-ce qu'elle va inverser la tendance observée depuis des décennies et qui fait que peu de femmes des pays du sud arrivent à accéder à l'ONU pour y effectuer une vraie carrière? C'est à dire avoir accès aux postes de grade P5 et au-delà.

Avant de répondre à ces questions, il est utile d'examiner de près les statistiques relatives à la représentation géographique.

Cet examen indique que notre Organisation est loin d'atteindre l'objectif noble auquel appellent de leurs vœux les pays du sud.

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C'est ainsi que le dernier rapport du Secrétaire général intitulé *Composition du Secrétariat: Données démographiques relatives au personnel* d'avril 2018 mentionne qu'au 31 décembre 2017, 19 états n'étaient pas représentés au sein du Secrétariat et 44 étaient sous-représentés. Si l'on regarde la liste des pays «non représentés» et «sous-représentés», l'on constate que la majorité d'entre eux, si ce n'est la totalité, sont des pays du sud. Cette situation, fort regrettable, implique que les femmes du sud font face à une difficulté double à savoir, leur genre et leur appartenance géographique. Il est donc important de mettre un terme à cet état de fait, qui n'est malheureusement pas suffisamment remis en question par les dirigeants de notre Organisation.

Une chose est certaine: la représentation géographique

équitable et la parité des sexes ne sont pas mutuellement exclusives, bien au contraire il s'agit de deux objectifs interdépendants.

Pour revenir à la stratégie sur la parité des sexes, il est regrettable de voir qu'elle reste timide au sujet de la représentation géographique équitable. C'est ainsi qu'elle reconnaît la nécessité de veiller à la représentation géographique dans les efforts visant à atteindre la parité mais elle n'y accorde pas le poids qui, à mon humble avis, aurait dû lui être attribué.

C'est ainsi qu'elle stipule que «Si chaque entité doit s'employer à atteindre ces deux objectifs (la parité et la représentation géographique) en même temps, comme l'a souligné le Secrétaire général, la représentation géographique ne peut servir d'excuse pour ne pas parvenir à la parité entre

les sexes». Cela veut dire, que la représentation géographique n'est pas une obligation pour l'Organisation mais un choix. Or, ce choix perpétuera les tendances observées jusque-là. À compétences égales, des femmes appartenant à un même groupe géographique se verront obtenir des perspectives de carrière prometteuses contrairement à celles appartenant à des groupes régionaux moins lotis.

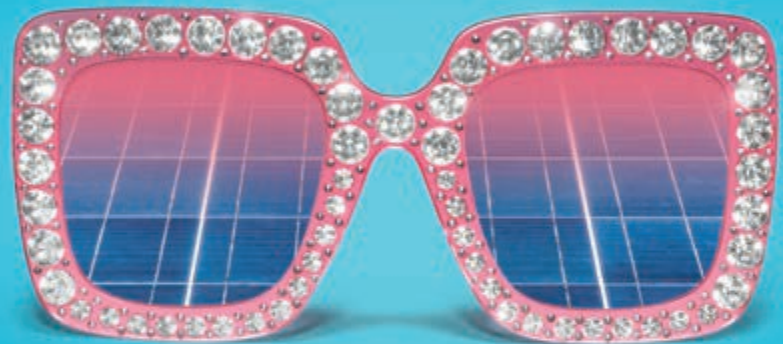
Il ne fait pas de doute que si l'Organisation est sérieuse dans ses intentions d'avoir une stratégie sur la parité des sexes qui ne laisse aucune femme de côté et qui rectifie les erreurs du passé, la représentation géographique devra être une partie intégrante de sa politique. Cela implique la reconnaissance de l'apport des femmes du sud à l'ONU. En effet, celles-ci apportent une vision, un vécu et des compétences dont

l'Organisation a besoin pour prouver qu'elle est aussi diversifiée que les Etats membres qui la constituent. Cela ne demande pas des efforts extraordinaires mais une volonté politique sincère.

Pourquoi ne pas, par exemple, exiger qu'au moins une femme du sud soit sur la liste des candidats recommandés dans tout processus de sélection? Pourquoi ne pas exiger des données ventilées par genre et par appartenance géographique et adopter des indicateurs sur la diversité?

Il nous semble que désormais les femmes du sud devraient être traitées de la même manière que les autres femmes du système. Saisissons cette stratégie onusienne révolutionnaire, pour inverser les tendances et parvenir à l'équité, à l'égalité entre toutes les femmes. ■

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Interview

«Exemple d'une femme du sud à la carrière accomplie à l'ONU»

Entretien avec Mme Marie Diur, Directrice du Service d'interprétation de l'ONUG

SARAH BENCHERIF, ONUG

Marie Diur est chef interprète à l'ONUG depuis un peu plus d'un an. Originaire du Congo, elle a dû se battre et travailler dur pour occuper les différents postes qui jalonnent sa riche carrière internationale. Nous l'avons rencontrée afin de donner la parole à une femme africaine qui a pu arriver à s'imposer malgré les difficultés et un parcours pas toujours évident. Cet entretien nous offre une leçon de persévérance et un exemple que le travail acharné est gratifiant, quelle que soit l'origine géographique.

Vous êtes depuis décembre 2017 directrice du Service d'interprétation à l'office des Nations Unies à Genève. Il s'agit d'un poste clé vu la place qu'occupe Genève dans l'organisation de conférences internationales. Pouvez-vous nous dire qu'est ce qui dans votre parcours vous a permis d'arriver à cette position?

Tout d'abord, mon parcours est assez atypique. Je suis née au Congo et à l'âge d'un an, mes parents ont déménagé à Paris où nous avons vécu jusqu'à mes 5 ans. Ensuite mes parents sont rentrés au Congo me laissant moi et mes deux grandes sœurs à Paris dans un pensionnat jusqu'à mes 14 ans. Entre 14 et 18 ans, je suis rentrée vivre au Congo et à 18 ans je suis partie pour l'Italie. Ce fut un pur hasard et ça aurait pu être un autre pays. Je ne devais y rester que un an mais j'ai fini par y vivre plus de vingt ans!

J'ai toujours su que je voulais devenir interprète, et ce depuis l'âge de 15 ans. Cependant, je ne savais ni par où commencer et encore moins comment faire pour y arriver. À vrai dire je n'y connaissais absolument rien à la profession et au métier d'interprète. Arrivée en Italie, faute de pouvoir poursuivre mes études, je suis devenue femme de ménage à plein temps. J'ai travaillé et vécu dans la même famille pendant cinq ans tout en essayant de prendre des cours du soir. Cette situation a duré quelques années jusqu'à ce que j'apprenne que la FAO (L'Organisation des Nations unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture connue sous les sigles ONUAA ou, plus couramment, FAO soit en anglais Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) recherchait une standardiste à mi-temps. J'ai alors postulé et été recrutée. C'est là que je me suis dit que je devais absolument faire quelque chose pour concrétiser mon rêve. J'ai demandé un rendez-vous au chef interprète de la FAO. Il m'a reçu très gentiment et m'a conseillé une école d'interprètes à Londres. Les frais de scolarité étant prohibitifs pour les non ressortissants de la communauté européenne, il m'a fallu économiser pendant des années pour pouvoir y aller. Je faisais des ménages le matin, je travaillais au standard l'après-midi et du repassage le soir afin d'économiser. J'ai fini par y arriver et après avoir obtenu mon diplôme d'interprète, je suis retournée en Italie avec mon diplôme en poche mais sans travail et sans papiers vu

que j'avais quitté l'Italie pendant mes études. Par chance, j'ai pu reprendre mon poste au standard de la FAO et le hasard a voulu qu'un jour le nouveau chef interprète se retrouve avec un interprète en moins. Il connaissait mon existence car j'étais allée le voir à plusieurs reprises. Il m'a donc demandé si je pouvais venir le dépanner. J'ai ainsi fait plusieurs remplacements au pied levé. Je travaillais le matin au standard où j'étais G2 et l'après-midi en cabine en tant qu'interprète! Tout ça sans être rémunérée car je touchais mon salaire de standardiste à mi-temps! Cela dit, je ne le remerciais jamais assez car ces journées en cabine m'ont permis de faire mes preuves et de me faire connaître. J'ai donc fini par démissionner de mon poste de standardiste. Cela a été le début d'une grande aventure et ma carrière à ce moment-là a véritablement décollé: je travaillais comme interprète pour la FAO, le PAM et le FIDA à Rome et les institutions européennes à Bruxelles. J'ai fini par passer le concours de l'ONU en 2000 et j'ai été recruté à New York comme P3 en 2001. J'ai ensuite été transféré à Vienne comme interprète P4. À Vienne je suis devenue chef de la cabine française et ensuite chef interprète P5. J'ai postulé au poste de chef interprète D1 à Genève que j'ai obtenu il y a un peu plus d'un an!

Donc pour répondre à votre question, je pense que ce qui m'a permis d'arriver là où je suis, c'est surtout la ténacité, le

professionnalisme et le sens du travail. Avoir confiance en soi est aussi essentiel, parce que ça n'a pas toujours été facile, loin de là.

En étant femme et en plus du sud, pensez-vous que vous avez dû faire plus d'efforts que d'autres pour pouvoir arriver à ce poste?

Mes débuts dans la profession n'ont pas été faciles. En tant qu'africaine et femme, on est à un endroit où on ne nous attend pas. C'est exactement la même chose pour toute femme qui deviendrait Président de la République ou Secrétaire Général de l'ONU par exemple. On n'a pas droit à l'erreur et ça j'en étais parfaitement consciente. Cependant, ce qui est très clair et que je dis toujours aux jeunes qui débutent: ne dépensez pas inutilement votre énergie à vous battre contre ça. Ça ne sert à rien. Concentrez votre énergie à devenir un professionnel, un vrai. Apprenez la rigueur et le travail bien fait. Apprenez l'excellence. Lorsque l'on travaille bien, lorsque l'on est professionnel, on s'impose, tout simplement.

Pensez-vous que la représentation géographique équitale a sa place dans les positions clés du Secrétariat?

Bien sûr, je pense qu'il faut qu'il y ait une représentation géographique équitale, mais ne perdons pas pour autant de vue le professionnalisme. Représentation géographique oui, mais il faut des gens compétents avant tout! Des gens compétents il y en a dans tous les pays et de



toutes les nationalités! Il y a des gens qualifiés partout. Les deux aspects doivent aller de pair: compétence et représentation géographique.

À votre avis, quelles sont les actions que l'ONU devrait prendre afin de promouvoir une véritable représentation géographique?

Je vais me contenter de parler de la profession d'interprète. J'ai toujours le sentiment que malgré tous les efforts déployés au cours de ces dernières années par l'Organisation, le manque d'information sur la profession

d'interprète à l'ONU reste criant. Les jeunes interprètes ne savent toujours pas comment se préparer à un concours par exemple, même s'il y a eu des progrès avec la mise en place d'un site internet, d'un compte Twitter, Facebook... etc. Tout cela reste insuffisant. Je le constate lors de mes visites dans les écoles d'interprètes où les étudiants me posent les mêmes questions que l'on me posait déjà il y a dix ans! Les étudiants me disent ne jamais savoir comment procéder. Ils ne savent pas à qui s'adresser pour passer un test freelance, ne savent pas les noms des chefs interprètes ou des chefs de cabine, ne savent pas combien de discours ils devront interpréter lors du concours, quels seront les critères de correction etc. Bref, ils ne savent rien.

La Commission Européenne qui a le même problème vient de créer un site avec toutes les

informations nécessaires, un site où les étudiants peuvent poser des questions et recevoir des réponses. Je rêve d'un site pareil pour l'ONU, un site interactif où on pourrait donner des conseils, des informations, etc. Ce manque d'information est une de mes batailles. C'est la raison pour laquelle je continue d'aller dans les écoles pour continuer à informer. Je voudrais que l'information circule vraiment surtout en Afrique et en Amérique Latine par exemple. Ce n'est que de cette façon que l'on y arrivera.

Un dernier mot aux jeunes professionnels qui débutent leur carrière aux Nations Unies. Si vous pouviez leur donner un conseil, ce serait lequel?

Le métier d'interprète est un métier formidable mais c'est un métier difficile. C'est du sang, de la sueur et des larmes, et je le dis toujours aux jeunes.

C'est compliqué et il faut le savoir avant de s'engager. Si ce que l'on veut c'est un petit travail pépère où on rentre chez soi et on n'a rien à faire en plus, il faut choisir un autre métier. Être interprète signifie constamment travailler, préparer ses documents, travailler ses langues, préparer ses glossaires, suivre l'actualité et travailler sans rechigner. Que ce soit à l'ONU ou ailleurs, le professionnalisme et la rigueur doivent primer. Croyez en vous, croyez en vos capacités! Canailisez votre énergie dans le travail! Ne perdez pas de temps à vouloir prouver quoi que ce soit ou à vouloir prendre votre revanche sur la vie! Visez l'excellence! Et je conclurai en disant que si vous êtes un jeune professionnel débutant votre carrière à l'ONU, rappelez-vous toujours de la chance que vous avez! Ce n'est pas donné à tout le monde. ■

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UN Consultant conditions: still a long way to go

The UN defends “human rights, high principles and concepts such as decent work... while creating a vulnerable workforce under labour conditions that frequently do not meet the local labour standards established in the very same countries where operations take place”¹

THE COMMITTEE OF THE CONSULTANTS COORDINATING BOARD (CCB)

A *UN Special* article in May 2018² outlined some of the unequal conditions affecting most consultants (contractors) working in international organizations in Geneva, particularly the UN. Important developments have taken place since then, leading to the establishment of an Association under the Swiss Civil Code, the Consultants Coordinating Board (CCB).

In August 2018, international personnel were notified by their organizations of the existence of a self-declaration deadline (30 September 2018) set by the Swiss authorities with regard to the automatic exchange of financial and fiscal information between countries. Many consultants became aware, for the first time, that they might be liable to pay Swiss income taxes, social security, and to hold Swiss health and accident insurance. A group of consultants from various UN agencies were mobilized and organized a public meeting at the *Palais des Nations* on 20 September 2018, where over 250 participants gathered, expressing concerns not only about the “tax amnesty” but also on the consultants’ vulnerability due to lack of information.

The frustration was targeted towards the organizations that were not providing information or support on how consultants should fulfil their obligations. As a result, the Swiss Permanent Mission was “forced” to issue clear guidance³ on the steps that every consultant should follow upon arrival.

In fulfilling their obligation and registering with the cantonal authorities, many consultants faced the possibility of being charged with tax evasion on their past years of non-declaration and furthermore, they received ruinous bills, in some cases more than 100,000 CHF as back payments for tax and social security.

Most consultants face a significant amount of financial stress. Social security alone represents 17% of consultants’ income given that international organizations are immune to Swiss Labour Laws, they are not considered as local employers and do not contribute 50% of the social charges. Consultants are therefore paying an “independent’s” contribution (at 100%) – double that of any employee in Switzerland. Social security fees comprise benefits such as pension, unemployment, accident

and maternity allowance that typically cannot be received due to the type of residency permit consultants hold in Switzerland (carte de legitimation type H). It is estimated that the total of mandatory contributions (tax, social and health insurance) towards Swiss authorities amount to approximately 30-40% of a consultant’s income.

According to a survey that was conducted among 418 consultants, 93% of the respondents said they were not fully informed of their obligations in Switzerland. 96% of respondents were working full time for a single UN agency (going against the definition of consultant as an independent contractor) and 86% could be identified through an official email address (e.g. name.surname@UN.org). Most perniciously, the survey found that 33% of consultants were exposed to the risk of poverty (by Swiss standards).

During the last decade, consultants have been increasingly recruited to perform core work within international organizations. This trend is widespread across the UN, with more than 40% of employees holding consultant contracts, and is even more flagrant in duty stations. Full-time in-house consultants are performing staff-like duties; however consultants are not acknowledged as UN officials and may receive as little as a third or even a quarter of the staff net salary, taking account of other benefits such as pension, health insurance, tax immunity, maternity leave and educational grants.

Improvements the situation of consultants in certain agencies

Within some organizations, such as UNHCR and WHO, active groups of consultants negotiated with sympathetic management and found solutions for support and compensation, at least in part, for the internationally recruited consultants. Meetings were also held with the Swiss mission in order to reach agreements with cantonal authorities on how to close loopholes and get fair treatment for consultants that are affected. But these are the exceptions rather than the rule. The achievements of these organizations are at risk of being diluted and lost – particularly due to budgetary pressures.

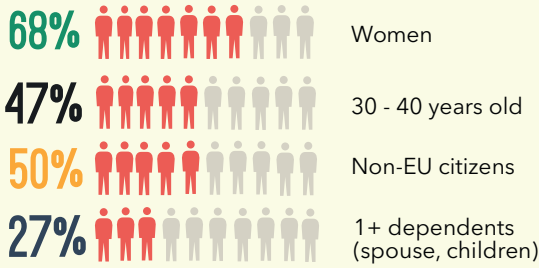
Consultants Coordinating Board (CCB)

In these circumstances, consultants from different UN agencies decided to join forces and the CCB was founded in December 2018, with the mission to:

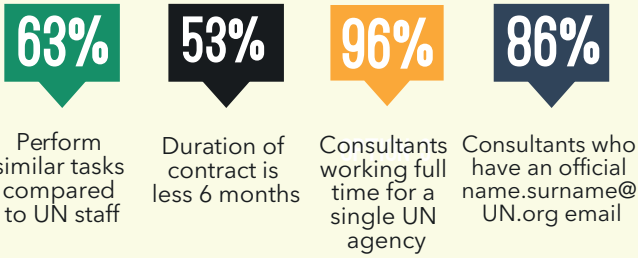
- Gather and distribute information
- Liaise with individuals, organizations and authorities having a stake in the functions of consultants
- Conduct activities for raising the profile and situation of consultants and
- Develop actions to promote consultant wellbeing

At the top of our demands is equal pay for equal work – which means consultants should be remunerated at a living level, and receive equivalent benefits and support to those working for a Swiss employer. All organizations should provide comprehensive and accessible

PROFILE OF A UN CONSULTANT



DE FACTO PRECARIOUS EMPLOYEES?



Results from survey: What does it mean to be UN Consultant in Geneva?

information to current and future consultants about their fiscal and administrative obligations. We also believe that

the CCB can provide effective input into collective efforts to ensure fee rates and benefits are more transparent and

consistent across Geneva, and that institutions like UNOG, the cantonal authorities and Swiss Permanent Mission can do more to help. There is still scope for organizations to help consultants who have to bear high, potentially ruinous, retrospective obligations.

We, as the CCB, do not advocate avoiding our obligations to the Swiss State, but insist that organizations help to address the situation humanely and with due reflection and coordination. In short, we seek concrete and long-term solutions to improve conditions, and demand that consultants be an integral part of discussions around this, recognizing the high principles that the UN seeks to promote.

Fundamental changes take time but there is much that can be done in the short-term. We invite consultants and anyone

interested to become a member of the CCB and to contribute to the Association. We are also looking to expand our Advisory Board so that we can better represent UN agencies in Geneva by linking a larger number of organizations. ■

For more information check our website at: www.un-consultants.net

- 1 Joint Inspection Unit (2014) Use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities in the United Nations Systems organizations https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_document_files/products/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2014_8_Final.pdf
- 2 UN Consultants: a convenient but crooked "staffing" solution https://www.unspecial.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/UNSpecial_May_2018.pdf
- 3 Manual: Persons without Privileges and Immunities (legitimation card "H") <https://www.eda.admin.ch/missions/mission-onu-geneve/en/home/manual-regime-privileges-and-immunities/introduction/Manuel-personnes-sans-privileges-et-immunites-carte-H/Non%20fonctionnaires%20et%20stagiaires.html>

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ILO field work

100 years around the globe

How the ILO makes a grassroots difference world-wide

As the International Labour Organization's (ILO) first century has unfolded, calls for its assistance at grassroots level have continually increased. A vital part of the ILO's work to improve labour standards, rights and conditions now takes place outside headquarters and engages more than a third of its personnel. These field projects have delivered a wide variety of concrete, practical changes to people's lives, showing how decent work can become a reality.

SOPHY FISHER, ILO

Sweeter labour relations bring better productivity



© ILO
Worker in the Colombina sweet factory, Columbia.

The noise in the Colombina sweet factory is deafening and the smell of sugar is everywhere. The factory produces 90 tonnes of sweets a year, working almost non-stop to meet orders.

Efficiency is key, and according to the factory's human resources management director,

Carlos Sandoval, a vital part of that is good workplace relations. "We know that good dialogue makes us highly efficient. The dialogue with trade unions is very important for the company. It's part of the business model."

The positive relations between the company and the trade union, Sintracolombina, were developed with the support of an ILO cooperation project that provides training and counselling.

Both trade union and company leaders learned how social dialogue and labour relations based on respect for rights can contribute to productivity.

"Our discussions are frank. We don't always agree but the discussion is very open and involves great mutual understanding," says Colombina's executive director, César Caicedo. "Both parties know that the company has to be very competitive."



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According to John Jairo Caicedo Villegas, President of Sintracolombina, his company's watchwords are "dialogue, respect and trust in collective bargaining."

"For us, the most important thing has always been communication. We'll always have differences but the important thing is to handle them with respect. And because trade unions are allowed and collective bargaining is the rule, we are one of the country's most productive factories. Every single worker in the factory is a member."

For the ILO specialist in charge of the project, Italo Cardona, good labour relations and understanding of the importance of social dialogue have been crucial to the project's success.

"Collective bargaining and freedom of association are key components of the ILO's efforts to promote decent work. The aim is to promote decent work, that's true, but also to generate new levels of competitiveness that benefit both the company and its workers," he said.

Innovative partnerships to help the long-term unemployed in Bosnia



Emir Slatina, a beneficiary of an ILO employment project in Bosnia.

Alen Camic and Emir Slatina didn't expect to face unemployment. Camic is an experienced mechanic and Slatina has a master's degree in mechanical engineering. But both were laid off.

However, the two Bosnians, both in their thirties, were lucky. They were among the first beneficiaries of an ILO intervention, the Support for Local Employment Partnerships (LEP) project, that provides vocational training to the long-term unemployed and other vulnerable groups.

The pair were given three months on-the-job training in programming and operating computers. The courses were provided by CEBOS, a local graphic design company, in cooperation with a local Sarajevo employment office.

CEBOS couldn't find skilled local labour. So they formed an LEP with the local employment office, a secondary school and other companies, with the aim of turning the long-term unemployed into potential employees.

LEPs are tailor-made interventions which focus on local solutions to specific local employment challenges. The focus is on disadvantaged groups, including women, youth, minorities, returnees, internally displaced and other hard-to-employ persons.

The LEP's particular strength comes from the complementary roles played by the partners – local government, employers' and workers' organizations, businesses, schools and training institutions.

After training, five course graduates – including Camic and Slatina – were hired by CEBOS.



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“On-the-job training fills a void in the labour market here in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as it teaches skills that are in high demand in the private sector and immediately increases employability,” said Emil Krstanovski, ILO National Coordinator in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

“It has proven to be a good approach, as it mobilizes local resources and expertise, decentralizes policy making and encourages innovation,” says Krstanovski. “It’s an example of good practice. Ideally, the programme should be scaled up and replicated.”

A dangerous “playground”: Tackling child labour in gold mining



A child gold miner in the Philippines.

Archie’s ‘playground’ used to be muddy and mercury-laden gold mines. While most children carried backpacks to school, from the age of 11 Archie hauled a sack of ore that weighed more than he did, working 8 to 12 hours for less than US\$2 a day.

“At first, I thought working in the gold mine was fun. My friends and I played games and threw mud at each other,” said Archie. Then one day a big landslide killed and injured a number of miners. For Archie the gold mine was no longer about fun but “fear, pain and agony”.

Child miners like Archie are endangered by a practice known as compressor mining – now illegal.

The children squeeze into narrow entrances to dig for gold in deep, underground pits, often underwater, breathing through hoses powered by diesel compressors. The pits sometimes collapse and the children are exposed to toxic chemicals such as cyanide and mercury.

But as the only son among three children, Archie had no choice but to work for his family.

“Poverty, vulnerability, disaster and the absence of decent work for adults are major push factors for child labour. When families do not earn enough to put food on the table and meet their basic needs, all members have to contribute for survival,” said Khalid Hassan, Director of the ILO Country Office for the Philippines.

The ILO’s CARING Gold project works to address child labour, poverty, vulnerability and poor working conditions in artisanal and small-scale gold mining. Through the project, Archie (who is now 18) enrolled in the Alternative Learning System, a parallel learning approach that will help him to complete basic education.

“I’m ready to embrace whatever comes my way. I realized that the more educated you are, the better career options you have. I just hope it is not too late for me,” he said.

Zimbabwe’s traditional leaders become gender activists



Madamombe, village headman and gender equality advocate, Zimbabwe.

In rural Zimbabwe, headmen and traditional leaders like Madamombe are important. In addition to governing their communities, they allocate land, settle disputes and guard traditional cultural values. Most have a vision of society based on male domination.

However, an ILO project on gender equality realised this system was also an opportunity.

“If change is to happen in attitudes towards women, it is important to include men in our gender programmes,” explained Hopolang Phororo, the ILO Country Office Director for Zimbabwe and Namibia.

The project, part of the UN Joint Gender Programme for Gender Equality, organized

training sessions for male traditional leaders, using the topic of gender roles to open discussions on greater economic empowerment for women. The training included confidence-building, leadership, livelihoods, business development, gender equality, women’s rights, child marriage and gender-based and domestic violence.

Madamombe’s first reaction was that the training was a waste of time and resources.

“It sounded as if they were trying to reduce me to the same level as women,” he recalled. “But I began to see that the training was there to help me understand that whatever it is that I can do, a woman is also capable of doing.”

“I realized that most of the times, men are either hanging out doing nothing or having fun with their friends, while women were either working at home, going out to look for firewood or searching for work to do on farms, in exchange for food to feed the family.”

Now, Madamombe has become a ‘Male Champion’ in the community, advocating for gender equality and sitting on a district gender steering committee. He’s even noticed a reduction in the number of incidents involving violence towards women.

“Perhaps the greatest transformation has been in my family,” Madamombe said. “As someone who makes decisions and arbitrates, I now request my wife’s views, which I seriously consider before I come up with a decision.” ■

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International Mother Earth Day

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, humanity needs to repair its relationship with Mother Earth

Mr. David Boyd, who was appointed Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment in 2018, is an international jurist and expert in environmental studies. In this interview, he explains why it is important that the United Nations should celebrate International Mother Earth Day and considers the relationship between human rights and the rights of nature.



Alex Mejia, Editor-in-chief: April 22 was recognized by the United Nations as International Mother Earth Day through resolution 63/278 of the General Assembly in 2009. From your perspective as an international jurist, what is the role that states like Bolivia have played in the process and what is the importance of this recognition at the United Nations?

Mr. David Boyd: I think that the United Nations and its Member States have an important role to play in the recognition of International Mother Earth Day. Indeed, this resolution was proposed by the Plurinational State of Bolivia, for the international community acknowledges that the Earth and its ecosystems are our home and that in order to achieve a fair balance between the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations, it is fundamental to promote and create harmony with nature.

In addition, the timely recognition of this international day marks a shift in the relationship between humans and nature, particularly in the western world, which, until now, has seen itself as separate from the rest of the natural world. Global climate change and the other environmental challenges that we are facing today represent

a separation with nature. International Mother Earth Day reflects a more traditional indigenous way of thinking, renewing the relationship with nature. Indeed, the notion of Mother Earth reflects the traditions of many indigenous peoples, for whom the planet is a sacred living system, an indivisible and interrelated community that constitutes our home and the source of life. Furthermore, since 2009 the General Assembly has been adopting a yearly resolution on Harmony with Nature, which has created constructive discussions and interactive dialogues. This official day is also a reflection of a growing trend around the world, to move beyond talking about nature, and to perhaps begin to recognize the rights of nature.

One of the books you have written is entitled “The Rights of Nature, a legal revolution that could save the world”. Could you share with our readers how recognition of the rights of nature can contribute to the 2030 Agenda for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals?

Many indigenous cultures have recognised the rights of nature for thousands and thousands of years. During the past thirteen years, as part of the resurgence of these indigenous cultures, we have seen some accomplishments in terms of

legal personality and rights for nature. These changes have occurred in Ecuador, Bolivia, Mexico, Colombia, New Zealand and in over three dozen communities in the United-States. In 2009, Ecuador was the first country to include the rights of nature in its constitution, with the recognition of “Pacha Mama” or Mother Earth. Ecuador was drafting a new constitution, and a group of indigenous people came forward with the idea that the rights of Mother Earth, and not only human rights, should be included in the constitution. This revolutionary constitutional document has now been integrated into more than 70 environmental laws and policies in Ecuador. In 2010, Bolivia enacted a Law on the Rights of Mother Earth, reflecting the objective of people living in harmony with nature, rather than the current focus on producing more goods and encouraging consumption. Another example is the Maori peoples of New Zealand, who, in 2017, after 140 years of negotiations, secured the passing of a law recognizing the rights of the Whanganui River

These legal transformations that recognize the rights of nature also suggest a shift in culture. In fact, the 2030 Agenda and many Sustainable Development Goals including numbers 13 to 15, respectively climate

action, life below water and life on land, are all related to the need for humanity to treat the natural world with more respect and to repair the environmental damage we have caused. Despite progress in recognizing the rights of nature, there are still major challenges in their implementation. However, this new approach does hold the promise of catalysing and accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

How do you see the relationship between the promotion of the rights of nature and the promotion of human rights?

My perspective is that both human rights and the rights of nature could be helpful in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Indeed, humans are part of nature. The relationship that the Maori peoples in New Zealand have with nature can be an inspiration, as they consider rivers and mountains to be their relatives. We need to clarify that when you talk about the rights of nature you do not involve human rights; we are talking about a different kind of rights, just as corporations do not have human rights.

Climate change, pollution and loss of biodiversity have significant negative consequences on ecosystems, but they also affect human life and health. To ensure better lives for current and future generations, we need to protect both human rights and ideally, the rights of nature. To conclude, living in harmony with nature is not just beneficial, it is crucial.

Do you have a specific example of a movement for the rights of nature that you would like to share, and is this issue something that you often see at international and national levels?

One of the remarkable and powerful stories related to the rights of nature involves the Colombian Amazon, which has obtained legal rights thanks to a group of Colombian youth activists. Indeed, several years ago, teenagers and children took the Colombian government to court, arguing that destruction of the tropical rainforest was contributing to climate change and loss of biodiversity and therefore violated their constitutional right to live in a healthy environment. In 2018, the Supreme Court of Colombia agreed with the youth and

ordered the Colombian government to come up with a plan to end deforestation within four months.

Thank you. To conclude, what advice would you like to give younger international civil servants, diplomats or people working in International Geneva on how to have a fulfilling professional life?

The single biggest piece of advice I can give is to find something that you are passionate about, and then explore every opportunity to follow your heart and values. When you do something that you love, it is such a joy and easy to get up every day to go to work. ■

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Tristesse et solidarité à l'ONU à la suite du crash d'avion en Éthiopie

L'ONU qui a perdu 21 membres de son personnel rend hommage aux victimes.

SARAH BENCHERIF, ONUG

Lundi 11 mars, les drapeaux bleus de l'ONU étaient en berne au siège des Nations Unies à Genève, et dans d'autres bureaux de l'organisation à travers le monde au lendemain du terrible accident d'avion en Éthiopie.

Dimanche 10 mars matin, un Boeing 737 d'une compagnie aérienne éthiopienne s'est

écrasé à 60 kilomètres à l'est d'Addis-Abeba, la capitale de l'Éthiopie, d'où il avait décollé pour rejoindre Nairobi, la capitale du Kenya. Le crash d'avion a coûté la vie aux 157 personnes qui se trouvaient à bord. Parmi elles, «au moins 21 de nos collègues de l'ONU, selon les dernières informations, sans parler d'un nombre indéterminé de personnes qui ont travaillé étroitement avec l'ONU», a déploré le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies, António Guterres.

Lors de la Cérémonie du 15 mars 2019 à Genève, le Conseil de Coordination du Personnel de l'ONUG a rendu un hommage aux victimes dont voici le texte. ■



Vingt-et-une bougies allumées en hommage aux membres du personnel de l'ONU décédés dans le crash de leur avion en Éthiopie.

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Monsieur le Directeur général,
Excellences,
Chers collègues de la famille des Nations Unies,
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Tout comme vous toutes et tous qui êtes ici présents, c'est avec un cœur accablé, endeuillé et affligé que je prends part à cette cérémonie organisée en l'honneur des 21 collègues qui nous ont quittés dimanche dans des conditions tragiques.

Au nom des fonctionnaires de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève, permettez-moi de transmettre mes plus sincères condoléances aux familles des 157 victimes de cette tragédie et plus particulièrement aux familles des fonctionnaires de l'ONU. Mes condoléances s'adressent aussi à la communauté des interprètes de conférence dont je fais partie et qui ont perdu trois des leurs. L'une de ces interprètes n'est autre que la sœur de Madame Isabel de Luis, fonctionnaire à l'ONUG.

Je voudrais dire aux familles des victimes, à celles et ceux d'entre vous qui les ont côtoyés de près ou de loin, que nous tous aujourd'hui partageons avec vous votre désarroi, votre peine que je ne peux imaginer et votre blessure que nul ne peut guérir. Je n'ai pas de mots aujourd'hui qui puissent vous consoler ou alléger votre souffrance.

Cette tragédie est, et restera, parmi celles qui ont le plus durement touché la famille des Nations Unies. Les vingt-et-un fonctionnaires qui nous ont quittés sans qu'ils n'aient eu le temps de faire leurs adieux ni à ceux qui leurs étaient chers, ni à leurs collègues, appartenaient à douze institutions spécialisées et à une mission de maintien de la paix. Chaque jour, on apprend un peu plus sur eux et l'on découvre qu'ils étaient des femmes et des hommes magnifiques.

Bagdad en 2003 où vingt-deux collègues ont péri, Alger en 2007 où dix-sept fonctionnaires ont trouvé la mort, la RDC en 2011 où un accident d'avion a entraîné la disparition de trente-trois personnes dont un bon nombre de fonctionnaires, sont toutes des tragédies qui sont encore vivantes dans nos mémoires. Elles nous rappellent que certains de nos collègues payent de leur vie pour servir l'Organisation et ses idéaux.

Je sais que cette cérémonie est une cérémonie de recueillement où seules la tristesse et les larmes trouvent leur place. Mais je voudrais en appeler à toutes et tous ceux qui sont ici présents afin de faire de cette cérémonie, une cérémonie de célébration.

Oui nous devons célébrer le dévouement de nos collègues qui sont partis. Oui nous devons célébrer les années qu'ils ont passées à servir l'Organisation et ses nobles objectifs. Oui nous devons célébrer leur expertise et leurs compétences mises sans condition à disposition de l'Organisation. Enfin, nous devons célébrer leur vie toute entière.

Nos collègues ont été emportés par la mort, ils sont loin de nous maintenant mais leur souvenir, leur visage, leur sourire, tout ce qu'ils étaient et représentaient, restera gravé à jamais dans l'esprit et le cœur de ceux qui les ont connus.

À nos frères et sœurs de la famille des Nations Unies qui êtes partis, puissent vos âmes reposer en paix.

Aux membres des familles des victimes, puisse la patience vous accompagner.

Sachez que vous êtes dans le cœur de tout un chacun des fonctionnaires de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève.



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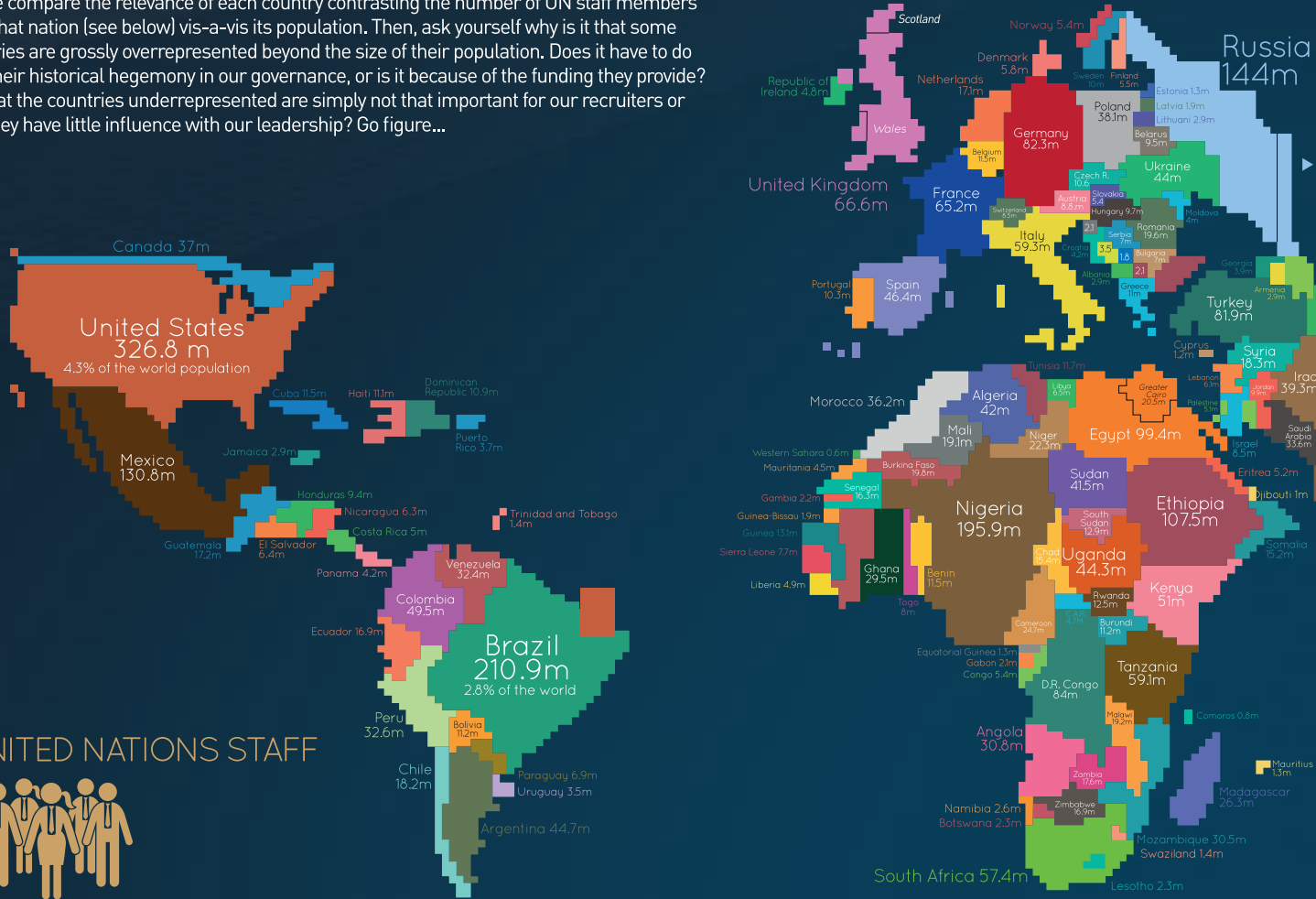

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Equitable Geographic Representation?

This map of our planet is rather different: it assigns size to a country based on its population. Please compare the relevance of each country contrasting the number of UN staff members from that nation (see below) vis-a-vis its population. Then, ask yourself why is it that some countries are grossly overrepresented beyond the size of their population. Does it have to do with their historical hegemony in our governance, or is it because of the funding they provide? Is it that the countries underrepresented are simply not that important for our recruiters or that they have little influence with our leadership? Go figure...



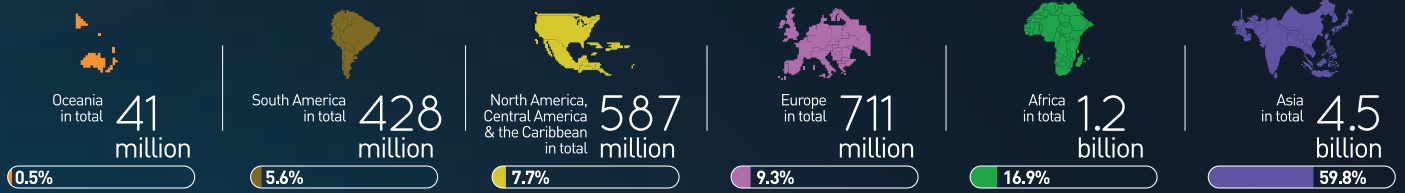
UNITED NATIONS STAFF



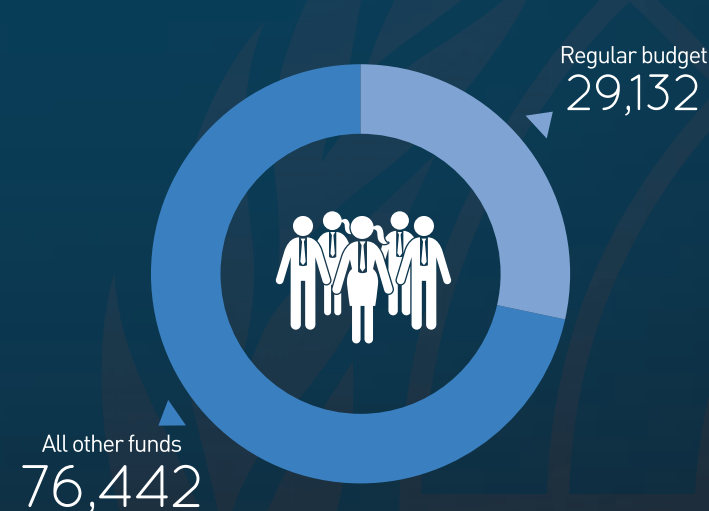
BY STAFF NATIONALITY

United States of America	5,274	China	1,114	Turkey	681	Romania	463
France	4,332	Austria	1,090	Indonesia	678	Sri Lanka	461
Sudan	3,630	Japan	1,071	Serbia	673	Sweden	451
Kenya	3,446	Thailand	1,021	Cote D'Ivoire	668	South Africa	638
Congo, Democratic Rep of	3,406	Russian Federation	1,004	Chad	657	Cambodia	432
Italy	3,135	Switzerland	965	Somalia	648	Congo, Republic of	418
United Kingdom	2,440	Nepal	960	South Africa	638	Zambia	411
Ethiopia	2,394	Colombia	914	Malaysia	636	Viet Nam	410
India	2,268	Syrian Arab Republic	909	Yemen, Republic of	612	Madagascar	409
Afghanistan	2,117	Central African Republic	881	Rwanda	611	Korea, Republic of	408
Philippines	1,972	Ghana	880	Sierra Leone	598	Guinea	388
Canada	1,907	Liberia	864	Niger	585	Malawi	388
South Sudan	1,832	Tanzania	851	Morocco	563	Tunisia	388
Lebanon	1,737	United Republic of	841	Argentina	548	Benin	384
Uganda	1,723	Republic of Cameroon	841	Burundi	547	Bosnia and Herzegovina	370
Germany	1,642	Australia	830	Ukraine	538	Algeria	338
Pakistan	1,548	Senegal	786	Denmark	516	Iran	338
Spain	1,438	Netherlands	778	Haiti	516	Palestinian Territory, Occupied	334
Nigeria	1,417	Myanmar	753	Mexico	510	Mozambique	328
Jordan	1,390	Brazil	752	Chile	487	Finland	320
Egypt	1,227	Zimbabwe	751	Peru	479	Greece	300
Mali	1,217	Bangladesh	736	Ireland	477	Portugal	296
Iraq	1,129	Hungary	716	Burkina Faso	469	Ecuador	278
		Belgium	687				

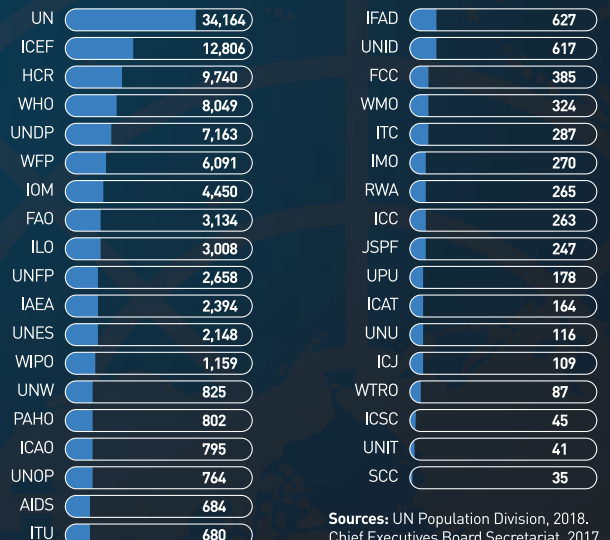
WORLD POPULATION BY REGION



BY FUNDING SOURCE



BY ORGANIZATION



Sources: UN Population Division, 2018. Chief Executives Board Secretariat, 2017.

In honour of the victims of attacks on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand

On 15 March, the Human Rights Council held a debate on the mitigation and countering of rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies, in accordance with resolution 73/262 of the General Assembly. The Council first observed a minute of silence for victims of attacks on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand.

SARAH BENCHERIF, UNOG

In her opening statement, Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that racism was contrary to everything the United Nations and the Council stood for: an end to racism, intolerance and xenophobia, and an end to discrimination of every kind. The murderous Islamophobic and terrorist attacks just hours ago on two mosques in New Zealand were another terrible reminder that racism killed. The debate was prompted by resolution 73/262 which expressed alarm at the rise of movements based on racist and extremist ideologies spreading xenophobia. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action emphasized the key role of politicians and political parties in taking concrete steps to promote equality, solidarity and non-discrimination.

Statement by HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal and Idriss Jazairy¹ following the terrorist attacks in New Zealand

Words cannot express adequately the pain and anguish we feel at the heinous attacks in New Zealand. We share the anguish of our fellow Muslims at those who have orchestrated such diabolical carnage in a

place of prayer. As husbands, fathers and grandfathers, both of us can only imagine the pain and suffering felt by the families affected by this tragedy. In the weeks and months ahead, we must all stand together and raise aloft those values that must form the core of Islamic belief that we share with People of the Book – compassion, respect and dignity. If we fail in this, then terror is victorious.

Those ideologues and demagogues who set themselves above the rights of man and the laws of God have no place in our world, no matter who their victims or what their ideologies are. Their targets reflect the increasing polarisation of people worldwide, where hatred and fear can be spread and exacerbated at the click of a mouse, and where atrocities are streamed live for the voyeuristic thrills of criminal extremists and white supremacists. If it is true that ‘evil only wins when good people do nothing’, then let us now raise our collective voices, both Christians and Muslims alike, in repulsion and condemnation of these attacks.

Let us move away from the insidious culture that allows everyday hatred to creep into

how we think about each other. Let us remember that it is empathy and not ethnicity that creates a community. Let us instead focus our thoughts on the shared humanity, which ties us to each other more deeply than any superficial differences might suggest.

We echo the words of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern who spoke about the ostracisation of immigrants and the Muslim community. “They are us,” she said and we would add, “and we are you”.

This is a time not only for good government, but more importantly, for good governance. We must face up to the divisions blighting our world. We must all work together to defeat hatred and give hope. This is not a mission of optimism, but one of necessity.

We may never properly come to terms with the senseless hatred that fuelled this outrage. However, we must offer our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims who lost their lives and our support to the wounded survivors of these attacks as they struggle to recover from the physical and mental trauma. Let us draw strength from our

faith and our shared values. Most importantly, these terrible attacks must not be allowed to feed the hateful inhumanity of the few. Rather, these images of death and destruction must strengthen our compassion and elevate our common humanity. Instead of retribution and prolonged vitriolic responses, let us call now for peace and decency, standing together as one. When all is said and done, our conscience may question, “What part did I play? Did I help or was I part of the problem?” Now is the time to cling onto our shared ideals, our hopes and to the ties that bind us all, no matter where we come from or who we are. Now we work to overcome this darkness and remember that, in the words of Rabindranath Tagore, “Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark.”

In these dark moments we wish to assure the peace-loving government and people of this exemplary nation that we are all New Zealanders. ■

¹ The signatories are HRH Prince Hassan Bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Ambassador Idriss Jazairy, Executive Director of the Geneva Centre on Human Rights and Global Dialogue

2018 UN Geneva Annual Report

“Our DNA” now available

DNA is the fundamental building block of life. It is a metaphor for the qualities that define us. The report “Our DNA” explores the qualities found in the DNA of UN Geneva, where multilateralism and the embrace of innovation come together to empower collective action.

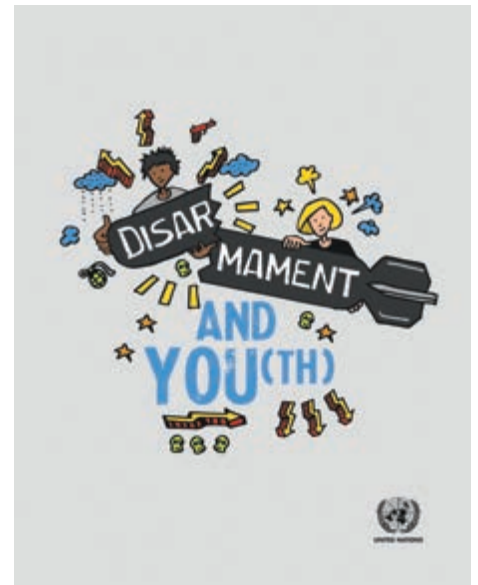
These qualities are very much part of the makeup of International Geneva and of the global United Nations family. As UN Geneva enters a renovation and growth phase at the Palais des Nations, it is pioneering new ways to deliver its core services more efficiently, finding new ways to better communicate the messages of its clients and the Organization, and evolving working methods to become a more modern workplace.

In this report, telling our stories from a different perspective and with a variety of multimedia, UN Geneva explores the global impact and reach of its actions throughout International Geneva and beyond. It is in UN Geneva’s DNA to continue evolving and adapting to a rapidly changing world in order to promote peace, rights and well-being for all of humanity.

Ensuring our complex work is accessible to all, UN Geneva developed a special youth report *Disarmament and you(th)*, aimed at the 14-18 age group. It lists concrete actions which can be taken by anyone, anywhere, to eliminate, control or reduce weapons.

The 2018 UN Geneva Annual Report can be downloaded in PDF format on www.unog.ch/annualreport and will soon be available for download on Apple Books and Google Play Books.

Scan the QR code to watch the video foreword of this report featuring Michael Møller, Director-General of UN Geneva. ■



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Staff Voices: The Global Service Delivery Model could lose money

In this 'Staff Voices' piece, Ian Richards shares his view on the Global Service Delivery Model. Richards is an economist at UNCTAD. The model was developed jointly with colleagues experienced in management consulting and accounting.

IAN RICHARDS, UNCTAD

A \$64 million plan to move 750 back office jobs from the UN's main duty stations to four new centralized service centres in Budapest, Montreal, Nairobi and Shenzhen, could end up being a waste of money.

Called the Global Service Delivery Model, this holdover from Ban Ki-moon hopes to save the organization \$23 million a year. Locations were chosen following an Amazon-style bidding war. While the assessment scores remain a closely-guarded secret, low wages played a key part.

The proposal, currently before the General Assembly, makes a number of promises.

First, that service quality will improve, although with administrative staff working far from their clients and no measurement of current service levels, this is hard to substantiate. It is also not clear why a relatively new service centre in Entebbe should shift operations to neighbouring Nairobi.

Second, that delivery of administrative services will "follow the sun," allowing offices and missions to get same-day service in whichever continent

they are based. Yet the centre for French-speaking operations in Africa and Europe is slated for Montreal, five to eight time zones away.

The project's main selling point is financial. Through resulting cost savings, Member States have been promised that they'll recuperate their initial investment by 2022. But putting the figures into the kind of business model used for making investment decisions, and with modest adjustments for capital costs, technology improvements and cost overruns that include fast-rising salaries in some chosen locations (see endnote), it appears unlikely that the project will break even before 2029 – so in ten years instead of three. By then, with new technologies and ways of working, an entirely different administrative system might be in development, rendering the investment obsolete.

António Guterres, in contrast to his predecessor, is pushing decentralization, handing department heads unprecedented powers to hire staff and manage procurement. They may choose to increase the size of their own administrative offices at the expense of the services they buy from the four centres, undermining an already fragile business case.

From a business point of view then, the Global Service Delivery Model, not forgetting the associated disruption, would appear to be a poor investment. With the UN facing cash shortages, there may be more productive ways to spend \$64 million and cheaper ways to reduce administrative overheads.

Endnote

In developing the model, we took the cost figures provided in A/73/706 and adjusted them as follows:

We assumed that costs in both the baseline and GSDM options would reduce by 2.5 per cent a year. This reflects the impact on headcount of evolving technological improvements as well as recent budget trends concerning posts in administration. Reduced headcount would have the effect of slightly reducing the relative gains of moving to a lower wage location.

We assumed minor cost overruns of 30 per cent, given that the proposal might contain optimistic forecasting, that it might not be possible to mitigate all the risks outlined in the proposal, the likelihood of unforeseen cross-subsidies from other budgets, funds already spent, implementation delays and relatively fast-growing salaries in Budapest, Nairobi and Shenzhen. For context, estimates for Umoja's overspend run from 120 per cent and up.

We employed a net present value calculation, which is standard for investment decision-making, and set a discount rate of 2 per cent to reflect the risk-free cost of capital faced by the governments. ■

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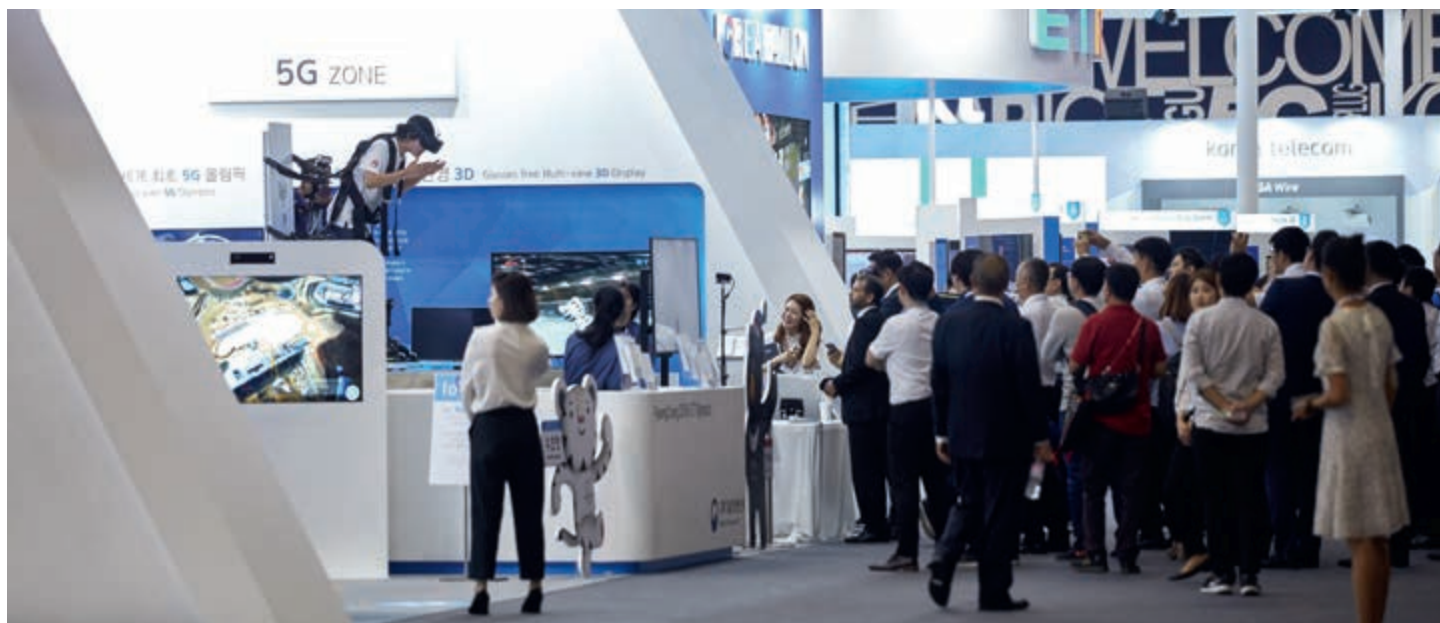
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A photograph of a silver fish, possibly a salmon, standing on its hind legs in a boxing ring. The fish is wearing red boxing gloves and is in a boxing stance. The background is a dark arena with bright spotlights.

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Innovative technologies are driving development throughout the world -and on display at ITU Telecom World.

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Collaboration and connectivity at ITU Telecom World 2019

Technology has been central to development throughout the course of human history. The rapid growth of information and communication technologies (ICTs) across the world proves this fundamental connection on an unprecedented scale – and with revolutionary impact.

ITU TELECOM

Today, it could be said that all development is linked to digital development: from education to transportation, urban planning, sanitation, health, manufacturing, industry and, of course, communication, there is no industrial sector today that does not rely on ICTs as the essential backbone infrastructure providing access to services – and the associated benefits of social and economic development.

At the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the specialized United Nations agency for ICTs, one of our priorities is to ensure that those benefits are made available to all of the world's population, not just a limited few. ITU is committed to connecting all the world's people, wherever they live and whatever their means. And we are certain that connectivity, and the ICT services, products and solutions it enables, is essential to meeting

every one of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

But how can we accelerate universal connectivity and the development it brings when nearly half of the people in the world remain offline? The ICT sector is working with us towards an ambitious long-term goal of connecting the next 1.5 billion citizens by 2020. This will require not only enormous investment in networks and other infrastructure, but also – crucially – significant political commitment.

Infrastructure alone, however, is not enough. According to ITU, around 90% of the world's population is covered by at least 2G or 3G services – yet adoption remains at barely 51%. So for connectivity to be meaningful, to actually reach people and change lives, we need to offer affordable, fit-for-purpose services and equipment. We need local content in local languages,

relevant to local context. And we need programmes to raise awareness of the benefits of connectivity, as well as to teach the digital skills essential to taking full advantage of this potential.

Digital literacy is just as important for meaningful connectivity as cheap handsets or 3G networks in rural and remote areas. Innovation and inclusivity are as vital as infrastructure and investment.

It's clear that neither public nor private sector can go it alone. The task of connecting the whole world is as enormous as the developmental benefits it will bring. The leadership, resources and skills required are as great as the impact it will have. Government must work closely with the private sector, with all stakeholders throughout the digital ecosystem, with NGOs and international organizations, with civic



© ITU/R.Farrell

ITU Telecom World Award winners benefit from international visibility, access to investment potential and partnerships.

society, communities, academia and media.

Public private partnerships, in whatever form, are the key to driving meaningful connectivity and bringing the world online. This is where ITU's leading annual event, ITU Telecom World, has such an important role to play. By bringing together leaders from government, industry, regulatory bodies, international agencies, consultants and academia from developed and emerging markets alike, the event works towards meeting the SDGs through digital technology, focusing efforts on infrastructure, investment, innovation and inclusivity.

It features an international exhibition of tech solutions and projects, a world-class forum of interactive, expert-led debates, an Awards Programme, and a networking programme connecting organizations, nations, individuals and ideas.

The ITU Telecom World Awards Programme, in particular, is an opportunity to encounter, engage with – and celebrate – the best in innovative tech solutions with very real social impact.

Open to both initiatives or projects within large companies and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the Awards recognize ICT applications, products and solutions directly addressing developmental needs, whether on a local, smaller scale or through global outreach.

It is a platform recognizing corporate efforts to accelerate development through technology, and providing global exposure for innovative projects at the forefront of meaningful connectivity.

The international visibility, UN credibility and access to networking, investment potential and partnerships offered by

the Awards has proved highly valuable since the programme's introduction in 2015 – and is an excellent stage for precisely those public-private collaborations so essential to growing connectivity.

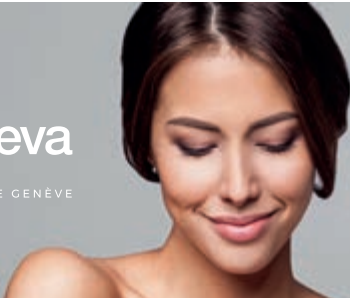
Additionally, the event provides a powerful stage for exhibiting the projects, technologies and ideas that are driving development at local, national and international levels on the showfloor, as well as attending the Forum debates on "Innovating together: connectivity that matters" to learn, network and share knowledge. Innovative ideas in the Forum; innovative solutions in the exhibition; and innovative cooperation across nations, sectors and organizations – these are our goals at ITU Telecom World, as we work together towards universal access.

ITU Telecom World's combination of influential audience, uniquely international

perspectives and in-house ITU expertise have established its importance as an informed, valued platform for building the partnerships that can drive ICT adoption, meet the SDGs and improve lives everywhere through technology.

Held this year in HungExpo, Budapest, Hungary, from 9-12 September, ITU Telecom World 2019 is, of course, only one small step towards connecting the world. Every step counts, however, on the journey to accelerate development throughout the world through technology. And together, we can make those steps larger, longer and more effective. ■

To find out more on ITU Telecom World 2019, visit telecomworld.itu.int. You can read about – and apply for – the Awards at <https://telecomworld.itu.int/2019-event/awards/>



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Meet Khadija the Alibaba of Kenyan street vendors!

Last year, I took a sabbatical from my job as a French language trainer at the Palais des Nations to join my husband in Nairobi, Kenya. While there, I met a British-Kenyan woman, Khadija Mohamed-Churchill, from Tana River County, a poor, arid county of pastoralists in the south of Kenya.



Kwanza Tukule founder Khadija Mohamed Churchill and a street vendor.

© Veronique Magnin

VÉRONIQUE MAGNIN, CENTRE FOR LEARNING AND MULTILINGUALISM (CLM), UNOG

Khadija has recently moved back to Kenya from the UK, having lived and worked in London as a strategy consultant for 10 years and obtaining an MBA at Imperial College, London. She is best described as a ball of energy and enthusiasm and is full of innovative ideas about how to help the poorest urban Kenyans improve their lives. She is also the CEO of a social enterprise called Kwanza Tukule Foods: “First, Let’s Eat” in Swahili.

Tell me about yourself

My name is Khadija Mohamed Churchill, I’m the CEO of Kwanza Tukule Foods. After 10 years of living, studying for an MBA and working in London, I returned to my home country Kenya two years ago to start a social enterprise that aims to ensure that there is affordable nutritious food for the many poor in Kenya.

What inspired you to start your social enterprise, Kwanza Tukule and why did you focus on food?

The business model was born from glaring realities: an estimated 10 million Kenyans, living in both urban and rural areas, experience routine hunger and are unable to access adequate food. In the urban areas, in their bid to overcome hunger, these Kenyans rely on street food. The vendors are a critical food access point for informal sector workers, representing approximately 70% of Kenya’s workforce. Apart from feeding the informal sector workers, street food vendors also feed the majority of the people living in the slums. It is against this backdrop that Kwanza Tukule was created, as a business to business enterprise partnering with farmers and street food vendors and accelerating access to affordable and quality food in the informal areas in Kenya. At Kwanza Tukule, we believe that by leveraging technology,

green energy, last mile distribution and economies of scale we can ensure that nutritious food is affordable and accessible for all.

Tell me about the project and what it hopes to achieve

Kwanza Takule is a cashless and subscription-based operation. We are a one-stop-shop for food vendors’ business and material needs. We focus

on food vendors because they are a critical access point for many Kenyans. Street food contributes significantly to local diets, especially among the urban poor, since street foods are convenient, cheap and easily accessible. People living in urban centres in Kenya get 33% of their nutritional intake from street food and 40% of low income neighbourhoods consume street food.

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Street canteen.



Street vendor.

However, food vendors face a variety of challenges in their service provision, for example: sourcing for cooking energy, which, following a government ban on charcoal, has become expensive and inaccessible; sourcing for cooking ingredients; lack of storage space and structures; lack of adequate water storage and drainage; and regular rubbish collection. These challenges can be overcome with the use of technology, green energy, a streamlined supply chain, last mile distribution and economies of scale.

We launched the business in the industrial area of Nairobi. We currently supply our customers with seven 'value added' boiled pulses, briquettes, tents, tables

and chairs. For the pulses we source them directly from farmers, cutting out intermediaries. We use bio-gas and boil pulses in bulk. Finally, we deliver to food vendors and schools in the slums using tuk tuks and boda bodas. Vendors pay via mobile phone and we collect food waste from vendors for our bio digester.

Our products are:

1. fortified yellow beans – (enriched with calcium, zinc and iron)
2. *wairimu* beans
3. *nyayo* beans
4. green grams
5. black eyed peas
6. *githeri* (a mixture of beans and maize)
7. *muthokoi* (a mixture of beans and a different kind maize)

8. briquettes
9. asset finance (small loans) for tents, tables and chairs

Kenya is known as the innovative digital hub of East Africa. What innovations and technologies have you incorporated?

It's true that Kenyans are innovative and are leapfrogging technologically in many ways. For Kwanza Tukule, innovation is at the heart of everything we do. Firstly, we are cashless which means all our customers pay via mobile phone making the process efficient and transparent. In addition, we use bio-gas for all our cooking, lighting, refrigeration and other operations. Bio-gas is green and affordable because we convert waste from food vendors to energy. In addition, we are

building an online mobile platform where all our vendors can order everything they need in one place.

What is your vision for Kwanza Tukule in the next five years?

By our estimation, there are about 1 million food vendors in Nairobi, from people who sell roasted maize by the roadside, to women who sell slices of fruit to small scale restaurants. Our plan is to provide all these food vendors with everything they need in one place at an affordable price. We also want to expand to other cities in Kenya and even East Africa. We aim to be the Alibaba of all vendor needs and improve the lives of everybody in the street food supply chain – from producer to consumer. ■

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International Partnerships and Supply Chain Management for Good

Enhancing Humanitarian Logistics in Ethiopia

The delivery of humanitarian assistance, especially emergency food aid, can be constrained by the capacity of organizations to manage logistics.



Logistics for Good – WFP, NLCaP and BCaD participants in the field.

**MR. AFEWORK YOHANNES GERMAMO¹,
ARTICLE EDITED BY CRAIG ATKINSON**

Factors like geography, infrastructure and population-size present challenges to the coordination of supply chains, including those for international assistance, and can expose needs for training in both public and private bodies. In the case of Ethiopia, institutional access to training to overcome obstacles to the timely import and distribution of food aid could mean the difference between life and death for the country's most vulnerable.

Trade and Humanitarian Assistance in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a land locked country and, for over two decades, has used neighboring Djibouti's port as a corridor for more than 90 percent of its trade. With over 100 million inhabitants, Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa and witnesses substantial import and export activity on a daily basis. Economically, Ethiopia has been one of the fastest growing countries in Africa over the past decade, posting double-digit growth

figures. Yet, growth has created port congestion and increased trade costs.

An estimated eight million people in Ethiopia require emergency food-assistance and nearly one million are refugees from neighboring countries. In addition to public and private investment activities, humanitarian logistics plays an important role in Ethiopia's food system. Food assistance is mainly imported and a lack of supply chain skills at the local level constrains the operations of both enterprises and aid organizations in the country.

A 'Local-Global' Supply Chain Management Training Partnership: BCaD and ITC

Established in Ethiopia in 1998, BCaD Consulting Management PLC is a business development and management consulting service provider. BCaD focuses on performing consultative studies, capacity building, advisory services across several sectors. BCaD primarily delivers its services in Ethiopia and conducts limited activities in other African countries.

In 2007, BCaD partnered with the International Trade Centre (ITC), the joint agency of the United Nations and World Trade Organization, on the delivery of export market development training. BCaD would later adopt ITC's supply chain management (SCM) training system in 2009: the consultancy signed a license agreement with ITC and joined its global network. The Supply Chain Management Programme at ITC engages and equips local organizations, such as BCaD, to offer SCM training and professional certification. To date, BCaD has fully trained numerous SCM professionals in diverse sectors. Trained professionals have shown great progress in their career paths.

Partnering with the World Food Programme in Ethiopia

The World Food Programme (WFP) of the United Nations is the leading player in the international delivery of food-assistance. Its operations in Ethiopia are some of the most affected among humanitarian organizations that utilize the country's trade corridor. Port congestion, warehouse congestion and

shortage of transport are not tolerable for WFP and other players. In the effort to save lives, the timeliness of food assistance is the main concern of humanitarian logistics providers.

WFP recognized that the congestion was in part to do with a lack of coordination in logistics at the national level and also a result of limited capacity in supply chain management skills amongst key players. In 2011, and going beyond its mandate, WFP developed a project to build capacity in SCM skills. Under the project, WFP advertised a request for a proposal from providers of SCM training services.

The request for proposal would later create an opportunity for BCaD to demonstrate the value of ITC's training system and materials. In 2012, BCaD was awarded a contract from WFP that proved to be an important testing ground to scale-up training. Ensuing contracts delivered the full ITC training package to 30 participants across the major logistics players in Ethiopia.



The Impact of SCM Training Partnerships

Training created synergy between participants and, through discussion and case studies, allowed for sharing on different logistics operations approaches and challenges. Opportunities were created for BCaD to give training around the country and to coach and mentor participants to help them implement their acquired skills in their respective organizations.

ITC also helped BCaD in the identification of an international expert from Singapore to collaborate with its national SCM trainers in training high-level officials. The workshop became instrumental in the formation of the Ethiopian National Logistics Council (ENaLCo) that, now, reports to the Prime Minister. In 2016, this led the creation of another body at a lower level,

the National Logistics Community of Practice, to include the private sector and involve all players in logistics in Ethiopia (including freight forwarders).

The challenge of port congestion cannot be tackled by capacity building via training alone. However, the role of ITC's Supply Chain Management in providing a common understanding of how to develop an efficient supply chain was a significant step towards streamlining logistics in Ethiopia, humanitarian and otherwise. Now a 'Community of Practice', mainly the alumni of ITC training, plays a key advisory role in coordinating the nation's supply chains.

About International Trade Centre's Supply Chain Management Training

The Modular Learning System in Supply Chain Management

(MLS-SCM) is a comprehensive training programme covering the total supply chain process, developed by ITC and a team of international supply chain experts. It consists of a series of up-to-date training packs, each covering a particular aspect of this process. The programme promotes the competitiveness of enterprises through better supply chain management. The firm-level capacities that business managers should develop to enter and operate in value chains, which are outlined in this SME Guide chapter, reflect the training material of this course.

Most enterprises spend at least 60% of their earnings on buying goods and services. As a result, improved supply chain management has the scope to deliver substantial savings, increased competitiveness and higher profits. Some enterprises participating in the MLS-SCM training programme have achieved cost reductions of 50% or more.

The training programme for SMEs – delivered through ITC partner institutions in over 40 countries – provides concepts and tools to SME managers seeking to take their business to a higher level.

The ITC certification process consists of a flexible three-step

approach that provides increased professional recognition. It also allows participants to have their credentials recognized by other agencies, such as the Institute for Supply Management.

Key achievements

- Sustainable vocational training programme
- 16-year track record in developing and least developed countries
- ISO 9001:2008 certified
- Global outreach with 51 countries and 135 partner institutions
- 5,194 professionals certified
- 77,710 professionals trained (41% women) trained in supply chain management
- 7,302 supply chain management training events held
- 2,310 supply chain management trainers trained

Note: Data from 2002 to 2016. Gender disaggregated data collected since 2007. Total of 34,774 participants in 2007–2016 period, out of which about 41% (14,198) were women. Source: ITC (2013). ■

For more information on the MLS-SCM programme and a list of local partners, go to: www.scm-learningnet.org.

1. CEO BCaD – Consulting Management PLC

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The unsung hero of internationalism: Eric Drummond, the first Secretary-General of the League of Nations.



Eric Drummond, 1928. Emil Stumpp.

© Courtesy of Lord Strathallan

JOHN BURLEY¹

One hundred years ago, on 28 April 1919 in the elegant Banqueting Hall of the Quai d'Orsay in Paris, British diplomat Eric Drummond was appointed Secretary-General of the League of Nations. A few days later, he began work with a skeleton staff in his private house just off Oxford Street in London.

The League was based temporarily in London: the first staff worked in makeshift offices in Piccadilly, living a hand-to-mouth existence because of financial difficulties. To fill senior positions, Drummond recruited officials who had worked together on allied maritime transport problems during the latter stages of the war. In October 1920, they and 160 staff of the League arrived in Geneva in time for the first session of the League's Assembly in the Salle de Reformation in the heart of Geneva.

A recently published book by four former staff members of the United Nations and its agencies seeks to resurrect the memory of this unsung hero of internationalism, the forgotten pioneer of international cooperation. The book *“Eric Drummond and his Legacies: The League of Nations*

and the Beginnings of Global Governance” describes how Drummond, his deputy (Jean Monnet, later a founding father of the European Union) and others created the independent impartial international civil service (ICS) that to this day provides the glue that holds the multilateral system together. It gives the first comprehensive account of all the legacies of the League of Nations that passed to the new generation of international organizations created after the second world war.

There have been 12 secretaries-general of the League and the UN. The book concludes that Drummond stands in the first rank. The youngest to have been appointed (at age 43) and the longest serving (at 14 years), an understanding of Drummond's personality and character provide clues to his success. Heavily influenced by his Scottish aristocratic upbringing – his clan motto translates as “advance with caution” – he was modest, self-effacing, open to dialogue, collegial, patient, fair, tactful and approachable. He generated trust and was loyally supported, attributes he returned in full measure. He possessed “not so much exceptional gifts as ordinary gifts to an exceptional degree”.

It was these qualities that led to the establishment of the ICS as we know it today: impartial, neutral, objective and independent, whose members owe loyalty exclusively to the international organization. All this is reflected in the oath of office that staff members take today and which is essentially the same as that introduced by Drummond.

The good reputation of the ICS quickly took form, thanks in part to the quality of the senior staff that Drummond appointed: Fridtjof Nansen reacted quickly to refugee problems; Arthur Salter and Alex Loveday built a strong Economic and Finance Section that responded promptly to the economic problems that followed the war; Paul Mantoux achieved early successes with the Political Section; Robert Haas, as head of the Communications and Transit Section, helped establish practices to secure freedom of transit for international trade; Erik Colban instituted a system whereby grievances of minority populations in newly-created European states could be considered by the League; the Rachel Crowdy, the sole woman at the senior level, achieved wonders with her tiny Social Questions Section; and William Rappard directed the Mandates Section and devised processes that held to account imperial powers which were mandated to govern former German and Ottoman territories.

Dag Hammarskjöld, another great Secretary-General, paid tribute to how Drummond had built up the international civil service as “something lifted above all national concerns”.

Drummond's great achievement was to show how the Secretary-General could generate the necessary trust and confidence among member states and staff that remains the hallmark of successful high ranking international civil servants.

Drummond was by no means perfect. Some felt at the time he should have been more direct and open in his dealings with member states. He mis-judged the political difficulties in securing an expansion in the membership of the Council when Germany joined the League in 1926 and he failed when trying to use his “good offices” to broker a solution over Manchuria in 1932. But Drummond's quiet persuasiveness, total integrity and an unswerving commitment to internationalism foretold the manner in which subsequent secretary-generals might be able to succeed in their “impossible job”.

The League failed in its principal objective of securing peace and security, in part because of its lack of universality. But this does not mean that the technical achievements of the League should be forgotten. A new generation of scholars are correcting the historical record. The about to be digitalised LON Archives in the Palais are a wonderful aid in this process.

The book shows that there was nothing that the League did that did not transit in one form or another to the UN and the agencies. Apart from the well-known similarities between the governing bodies, the legacies are endless. Examples of how the League built structures and approaches to international cooperation that have continued include:



Drummond, seated on chest, defending the Budget against British opposition and thereby creating the ethos of an impartial official, 1932. Detail of caricature by Derso and Kelen.

© United Nations Archives at Geneva.

- The sole new Principal Organ created by the UN Charter – ECOSOC – is the direct result of recommendations from a 1939 League group of experts;
- The 1951 UNHCR Refugee Convention is based almost exclusively on the several League Conventions on refugees;
- The League pioneering work on the status of women led directly to subsequent UN achievements;
- The League’s practice of authoritative independent

economic analysis (five Nobel laureates in economics worked for or were closely associated with the League) has been continued by the IMF, UN, UNCTAD and others. The League developed the first series of internationally comparable economic and social statistics, tasks which transited to the UN Statistics Office and the IMF.

- Officials attached to the League’s Health Organisation drafted the constitution for a post-war international health

organisation that became the WHO;

- The League’s path-breaking work on nutrition in the 1930’s set the stage for an international food and agriculture organisation, the FAO;
- The ILO which was umbilically attached to the League became fully autonomous after the war;
- The League’s inter-war work on inland transport in Europe found a new home in ECE;
- The practice of non-governmental organisations participating in the work of IGOs dates from the League, thanks in large part to the significant contribution of international women’s organisations in the 1920’s;
- The first human rights document approved by an inter-governmental body, the 1924 World Child Welfare Charter, was transformed into the 1959 UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child.

old League offices, in the renamed Palais Wilson. And two initiatives of League staff have blossomed, the International School of Geneva with over 4000 students and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies with stunning new buildings in the heart of the international quarter.

When Drummond died in 1951, the UN General Assembly rose to observe a minute of silence. His gravestone makes no mention of the office he held, but describes him as a “A Great International Civil Servant”. Structures of international cooperation that Drummond conceived and constructed endure. A century on, efforts to attain peace, justice, wellbeing and prosperity are sustained by the UN system.

John Burley, on behalf of his fellow authors: David Macfadyen, Michael D.V. Davies and Marilyn Norah Carr. ■

1 On behalf of David Macfadyen, Michael D. V. Davies and Marilyn Norah Carr

Genève Internationale must also be regarded as one of the legacies of the League. Thanks to Drummond’s decision to house the secretariat in the old Hotel National on the right bank of the Lake, this area of Geneva has been transformed by the physical presence of the new IO’s. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) occupies the

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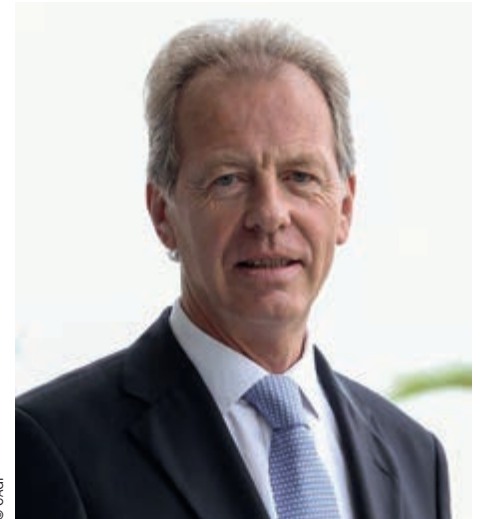
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Interview

Pierre de Cocatrix

Outgoing Director of the International Geneva Welcome Centre

Ambassador Pierre de Cocatrix looks back on his four years as Director of the International Geneva Welcome Centre (Centre d'Accueil de la Genève Internationale or CAGI). This structure is an indispensable point of entry to International Geneva, providing tangible assistance to newcomers when they arrive in the city and then fostering their integration.



© CAGI

Ambassador Pierre de Cocatrix, Director of the International Geneva Welcome Centre (CAGI).

SARAH JORDAN, DEPUTY EDITOR

I had the pleasure of interviewing you for *UN Special* four years ago when you took up office... How do you view the CAGI today as your departure approaches?

Very positively! In April 2016, just a year after my appointment, we celebrated the 20th birthday of the CAGI here at La Pastorale with officials from the Confederation and the Canton, friends, partners and institutions. Since then, we have continued to consolidate and innovate with our five services – the newcomer network, housing, events and cultural kiosk, NGO support and the delegates' welcome service. Together with my heads of services, we have raised awareness of the concrete help we can give to newcomers to International Geneva by making presentations to diplomats and international civil servants at the UN, WIPO, GAVI, GLOBAL FUND, UNHCR, ILO, CERN and WTO.

Can you give me some examples of how the CAGI helps newcomers to integrate?

In the last four years, we have continued to develop CAGI events in partnership with the UN, the city of Geneva and private entities so that the international community and local community can get to know each

other. We have co-hosted Mix & Mash sessions at the Brasserie de l'Île four times a year for three years now. We have had many visitors to the information stands we staff on these occasions: a lot of young people from the international community, but locals too. Our goal is not only to inform, but also to get International Geneva interested in local Geneva. The welcome and integration of internationals is our mandate. The Confederation and Canton entrusted us with this task 23 years ago. In 2018, we also introduced Pechakucha evenings – concise presentations of an idea in 20 slides. These have attracted people of all ages and profiles, including Sami Kanaan, the Mayor of Geneva, and Corinne Momal Vanian, Director of the Division of Conference Management at the UN.

The enhanced credibility and visibility our partnerships have given to the CAGI is a great satisfaction for me. Building on the bases left by my predecessor, Ambassador Christian Dunant, we have consolidated and extended these high quality alliances. The UN is our biggest partner. The Cultural Kiosk at door C6 sells tickets to all kinds of cultural events. To make life easier for its clients, it now accepts credit cards. Our delegates' information desk at door 40,

open during eight or nine conferences in 2016, opened for 14 conferences in 2018! This boom in frequentation has required a bigger implication on the part of our events team – with more students to recruit and train to staff the desk. We were also present at two UN open days in 2015 and 2017, when we shared a stand with the Foundation for Geneva and the Swiss Mission. We now have cultural partnerships with 40 entities, in Geneva, neighbouring France, the Lemman basin and the Canton of Valais. Tickets are even available for the Fête des Vignerons. On 19 July, this once-in-a-lifetime event will host a special representation for International Geneva.

So you don't just initiate newcomers to International Geneva, but to Swiss life and culture too?

The CAGI is very Swiss – with our Escalade party in December for 400 newcomers and Swiss National Day in August, we promote tradition and culture – these are determining factors for integration. The CAGI is a doorway into International Geneva, a kind of visiting card. I am often requested to present the CAGI alongside the Swiss Mission. There are small equivalents elsewhere, but the CAGI with its five personalised services is unique.

When I interviewed you in 2015, you quoted your predecessor who, on your arrival, had said that you should give “a new dimension to the CAGI”. Do you think you have achieved this?

It's normal to want to leave one's mark. I think I have improved the structure of the CAGI. A team of 10 has now become a team of 14. I have encouraged more flexible working hours: 50%, 60% or 80%. I am in favour of this as it means I can engage new team members. With my five heads of services, I encourage individuality and innovation. Inspired by what Mr. Møller has been doing at the UN, we created a new communications service in April 2018. Michael Cochet, the head of events, has taken on this new task and we now have a new, clearer and easier to navigate site, a new logo and a partnership with the tourist guide *Le Petit Fûté*. Today, an organization that fails to communicate is lost. Our latest product, in partnership with the Foundation for Geneva, is a guide to sports and leisure clubs in and around Geneva, published in English and French. With a group of volunteers, we will organize two informal events, before and after the summer, for people who want to discover these clubs. So far,

we have contacted heads of missions and their deputies and DGs, and their deputies. This will trickle down to their staff and represents another concrete step towards integration. We have had very good feedback.

And as you leave your functions, to whom would you particularly like to address your thanks?

Firstly, to all the institutional members who support and finance the CAGI. We have 33 stakeholders from the public and private sectors. Public private partnerships are nothing new to us! Our founding and associate members are the most significant, but another 22 represent the wider CAGI family and I would like to thank them for their support.

Like my predecessor four years ago, I would like to thank my staff – all 14 of them. Without one's staff, one is nothing. A good team spirit is essential. Managing people is a difficult job, but it is thanks to my team that we have this result.

I have been a diplomat 33 years, in bilateral and multilateral contexts. This was my last job and I have loved every minute of it, working from this beautiful manor house, La Pastorale. In the last four years, I have received visits from Korea, Thailand, Vienna, Copenhagen and Brussels. They wanted to see how we did it – the secret ingredients of welcoming and integrating newcomers into International Geneva. I did not tell them everything – I want Switzerland to be the only one to have a CAGI as wonderful as ours! We are proud of the CAGI and the positive light it shines on Switzerland. We had 1.4 million visitors to our site in 2018. We welcome 1,500

newcomers per year – that is 100-150 per month with Christmas and the summer being our busiest times. Between 700 and 900 people actually come to the CAGI to take advantage of our services. Positive feedback is our satisfaction. The Confederation and the Canton of Geneva were visionaries in 1996 when they founded the CAGI. They anticipated well. My predecessor was unhappy when people said they had spent a few years in Geneva and had not heard of the CAGI. This hardly ever happens now. It is rarer and rarer for newcomers not to know about us.

The CAGI is an instrument of the policy of the host country. I am very happy to be passing on five restructured, highly efficient services to my successor, Ambassador Salman Bal. And like Michael Møller, I feel like a gender champion – 14 staff, with a 50/50 gender balance, one cannot do better!

And how do you see the future of the CAGI? And of multilateralism?

The UN and other organizations are reforming or evolving depending on their mandates. Our role at the CAGI is to adapt to this and to be reactive. Geneva can be proud of being a centre of world governance and a centre of multilateral diplomacy, something which is more tangible here than in other cities. Although the CAGI is small, what it does is concrete! Alongside other private and public instruments, we have a bright future, but we have to remain attentive.

Ambassador de Cocatrix, thank you for your time and I wish you all the very best for the future. ■

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The dance of the debutants which was the first of many performances in the main ballroom.

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What are the Chances of Holding an Annual Ball in Geneva for Staff of the UN Common System?

Considering all the world-wide issues, some would think that holding a ball here in Geneva would be inappropriate.

This is what the Federation of International Civil Servants' Association (FICSA) officers believed before they attended the IAEA Staff Association ball in Vienna.

JOELLE MARX¹, BRETT FITZGERALD², GEMMA VESTAL³, EVELYN KORTUM⁴
 On 9 February 2019, the IAEA Staff Association held their annual ball at the Hofburg Imperial Palace in Vienna, Austria. The Hofburg is a former principal imperial palace of the Habsburg Dynasty. Today, the building is used as the residence and workplace of the President of Austria, Alexander Van der Bellen. It is also home to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's

(OSCE) Permanent Council. Events, such as banquets, trade fairs, conventions, concerts and balls are held here. FICSA officers were delighted to be in attendance. The first IAEA Staff Association Ball was organized in 1961, and is sometimes organized jointly with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Office in Vienna (UNOV.) For the past twenty years, IAEA has held their own Staff Association Ball.

This year, the main sponsors were United Nations Federal Credit Union (UNFCU), Volvo and Casino Wien. Sponsors donated prizes – airline tickets, free nights at a hotel, skincare products – and tickets were drawn from the tombola drum during the event. This ball is considered one of the most prestigious events of the Vienna Ball Season. When asked why, Imed Zabaar, IAEA's Staff Council President explained, "This is the only international high-profile ball in Vienna after the Vienna Opera Ball. In addition, a large number of ambassadors and officials attend our ball." This event brings together many noteworthy guests of different nationalities and cultures, including diplomats and officials of Vienna-based organizations, to celebrate and honor the spirit of IAEA and the successes of the organization. This year, the theme chosen by the organizing committee was "Life is Beautiful."

Just by looking at the pictures, you can tell that countless hours of preparations took place to ensure the ball was a resounding success. When asked to discuss preparations, Mr. Imed Zabaar stated, "Organizing an event for a remarkable multinational audience is not an easy task and it is very challenging. We are extremely lucky to have a dedicated organizing committee and a lot of volunteers who make this happen." His favorite parts of the evening were after his opening speech and the midnight surprise show.

Attendance at the ball comes at a price – between €60 and €110 per ticket. The money raised through ticket and food purchases is donated to charity organizations. Tickets were sold out within two days, and this year 3,500 guests attended.

FICSA was particularly interested in how the charities, which received donations at

the end of the evening, were chosen. It was explained that the decision on which charities received monies from ball proceeds were based on pre-defined guidelines. Charities usually fall into one of the following categories: children, homeless, refugees, victims of famine, victims of natural disasters, environmental protection and emergency health situations as addressed by the IAEA. To the extent it is possible, one charity is chosen from each category. The IAEA Staff Association chooses charities that are non-politically aligned, non-denominational and non-discriminatory.

The FICSA officers who attended as VIP guests of the IAEA Staff Association were serendipitously in Vienna as the ball fell at the heels of the 72nd FICSA Council, which took place in Vienna from 4 through 8 February. This was the first ball they attended in their lives!

Getting Ready

Personal preparations for the ball are no small feat. A strict dress code is upheld. Women must wear a floor-length ball gown or evening dress. Men must wear a dinner jacket or tuxedo with a bow tie. Formal national costumes can be worn as long as it falls below the knee. Evelyn struggled to find an appropriate outfit for the event; “I was desperately trying to look for some suitable outfit, but the guidelines were quite stringent. Vienna colleagues brought some gorgeous dresses into work for me to try, but I would not have been able to eat anything. The more I tried on dresses, the more I felt that this is not how I wanted to go. Finally, I wore a smoking jacket, my husband’s bow tie and I bought some nice new pants. This is how I felt I could go to the ball comfortably.” This year was the first time

ever that women were allowed to wear this type of attire, so women who do not feel comfortable wearing dresses and heels could still attend and not feel out of place.

First Impressions

The FICSA officers pulled up outside of the Hofburg Imperial Palace awestruck. Evelyn noted, “Before I walked in I felt that the Hofburg was just stunning, from the outside. It was as beautiful from the inside.” Gemma mused whether there would be a similarly impressive building in Geneva to be a venue of a same event. Unfortunately, nothing came to mind. The group sat at the President’s table where they had a sweeping view of the main ballroom.

Reactions

As Brett, Gemma, Evelyn and Tanya departed from the ball at close to two in the morning, they were astonished by the enjoyable evening they had just had. The evening was full of fun and laughs! Evelyn noted, “Of course we visited all (or at least most) rooms and danced a little to the different tunes or just listened to the music. My husband and I very much enjoyed the ballet, the waltz of the debutants and the different instrumental pieces. The ingenious remake of the ABBA group made me hum to ABBA songs in my head for several days after.”

Is there a Geneva ball in the future for staff by staff?

Maybe! While planning and bringing to fruition a ball would be a tremendous amount of work, it would give UN common system staff in Geneva something to look forward to and coalesce around. Furthermore, funds raised could go to some deserving charities. For this to be successful, it might require a partnership between two fairly large staff associations. For example, those of the World Health

Organization and the United Nations Office at Geneva Staff Coordinating Council. Together, they would need to find main and associate sponsors for the event, such as the Canton of Geneva, for example, and some fancy watchmakers. There are already some successful precedents, such as the Swiss Red Cross Association Ball.

That Geneva ball, held in partnership with the Geneva Red Cross, first took place in 2002. Since 2016, the ball has been held at Espace Hippomène. This venue has a capacity of 3,500 guests. The Red Cross invited around 500 guests. A table seating 10 guests is worth CHF 7,000. Their 2018 Ball raised CHF 795,000. The money raised is donated to

charities both in Geneva and abroad. The main sponsors of the 2018 Red Cross Ball in Geneva were GTBank, Mandarin Oriental and MENE, which costs them CHF 100,000 each. Their 2019 Ball will be held in October.

It is the authors’ hope that this article might plant the seed of some ideas for an annual Geneva ball for UN common system staff. It could liven up our duty station and benefit some worthy causes. ■

- 1 FICSA Spring 2019 intern from Colgate University.
- 2 WIPO staff currently serving as FICSA President.
- 3 WHO staff who was the former FICSA General Secretary.
- 4 WHO staff currently serving as FICSA General Secretary.



Global Peace and Unity

Revisiting Penn's Vision for the League of Nations

DR. ABBY ABILDNESS¹

William Penn, called “the man who invented the European Parliament” and “the greatest law giver” lived between 1644 and 1718. He became known for his political writings as early as 1670 while studying at Oxford University. Over the years, he developed principles of governance that would enable people of different backgrounds to live together peaceably in a “spirit of unity”, where justice for all would prevail. These principles became the foundation of the US Constitution and also for the League of Nations, and what we know today as the United Nations.

Penn left England for America in 1681 after being given a land grant by King Charles II for the territory that would become the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It was a time in history when governmental authorities resorted to abuse and bloodshed in order to establish themselves and where society hadn't found reason to accommodate differences, much like our times today. He founded the commonwealth with the intention of establishing a “holy seed example to be a precedent to the nations to do the thing that is wise and just”. Penn hoped his experiment in government would reverse the trajectory of tyranny and abusive power and that brotherly love would heal trauma and division and establish healthy communities free of violence and bloodshed.

To demonstrate this, Penn successfully negotiated a peace

treaty with the indigenous people already in the land and set up a government that established Pennsylvania as a safe haven in which persecuted people could live peaceably and in harmony with people of other belief systems.

And in 1701, he penned his Charter of Privileges, describing the democratic principles upon which Pennsylvania would be governed: religious freedom, tripartite government, the consent and participation of the governed, as well as other laws pertaining to property rights. In 1751, the 50th Anniversary of the Charter of Privileges, the Speaker of the Pennsylvania House caused the casting of a bell to be a symbol to “Proclaim Liberty throughout the Land and to all the inhabitants thereof”. Thus the Liberty Bell, known around the world, began as a celebration of William Penn's initiative.

Soon after the authors of the U.S. Constitution consulted Penn's writings and Thomas Jefferson called him the greatest lawgiver of all time. The preambles and constitutions of many States and Nations today reflect Penn's foundational writings.

Penn's vision did not end with the establishing of Pennsylvania. It was in 1697 that he proposed the first plan for the union of all of the colonies under a representative congress to promote the prosperity, welfare and happiness of a unified country.

Ultimately, however, Penn's commitment was to peace among nations and how they might work together in a parliament of nations with an international court of justice. As early as 1693 he had published “*An Essay Toward the Present and Future Peace of Europe*”, by the Establishment of a European Dyet, Parliament of Estates which was the conceptual forerunner of a group of nations that we know today as the League of Nations.

In 1902, almost 200 years after Penn's death, artist Violet Oakley was commissioned to depict his vision in three series of murals on the walls of the newly built Pennsylvania State Capitol building: “Founding of the State of Liberty Spiritual”, “The Creation and Preservation of the Union”, and “The Opening of the Book of Law”. These encompassed Penn's principles of liberty, the history of the law, and the future of peace and unity between the nations.

In 1927, Oakley took a book of her paintings to the opening of the League of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. She believed the message of Penn's would be brought to life through the League of Nations, as he had envisioned the peace and unity of all nations. Oakley further believed it was a sovereign destiny that this model of peace bridge from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which had become known as the City of Brotherly Love to Geneva², which was considered an international symbol of peace, harmony, and brotherly love.

Today, as nations are embattled in conflicts for each of their own special interests, the need for a precedent may be greater than ever. Perhaps it is time to revisit the model given by William Penn so that the principles it embodies can be made known to and adopted by Governments seeking the highest and best for their people and themselves; that they may “do the thing that is wise and just”. ■

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- 1 This article is written by Dr. Abby Abildness, Executive Director of Healing Tree International that endeavors to restore global peace principles by reviving the heritage of William Penn's foundational governmental writings.
- 2 Founded by William Penn, Penn named the city Philadelphia, which is Greek for brotherly love (from philos, “love” or “friendship”, and adelphos, “brother”). As a Quaker, Penn had experienced religious persecution and wanted his colony to be a place where anyone could worship freely.

En route pour le titre de meilleur orchestre amateur au monde?

L'Orchestre des Nations Unies n'est plus. Vive l'Orchestre des Nations, nouveau symbole de partage interculturel!

Animé par une passion inébranlable, le chef d'orchestre français Antoine Marguier explique l'évolution de ce qui fut, durant 8 années, l'Orchestre des Nations Unies.



Le chef d'orchestre Antoine Marguier.

CATHERINE FIANKAN-BOKONGA

Vous assurez désormais la direction de l'Orchestre des Nations. Mais où est donc passé l'Orchestre des Nations Unies que vous aviez créé?

Pour comprendre, il faut se pencher sur le passé. L'Orchestre des Nations Unies a vu le jour en 2011. Il était essentiellement constitué de musiciens amateurs. À travers l'exécution de plus de cinquante concerts nous avons fait de notre mieux pour véhiculer l'esprit et les valeurs de l'ONU.

Le même principe a été retenu pour l'Orchestre des Nations?

C'est exact. L'ensemble réunit toujours des musiciens amateurs de haut niveau, originaires du monde entier. Tous ont poursuivi des études instrumentales avant d'opter pour des professions différentes. L'encadrement musical et le travail ont permis à ces personnes de concrétiser leur rêve: jouer à un niveau professionnel, en donnant le meilleur d'eux-mêmes.

Grâce à votre talent pédagogique vous avez réussi à mener

cet ensemble musical d'amateurs à un niveau de qualité exceptionnelle. Il vous a même permis d'attirer de grands solistes.

Effectivement, Maxim Vengerov, Khatia Buniatishvili, ou encore Camille et Julie Berthollet ont été accompagnés par l'Orchestre des Nations Unies. Des concerts de prestige, à l'instar de la soirée d'hommage à Ban Ki-moon, une tournée Music for Peace en Corée du Sud ou de représentations à travers la Suisse pour célébrer les 15 ans de son adhésion à l'ONU ont notamment été organisés.

Le lien avec l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève n'est pas rompu.

Pour mettre en valeur la qualité de la relation entre l'Orchestre des Nations et l'ONU, la Présidence d'honneur reste assurée par Michael Møller, Directeur Général de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève.

À part le changement d'appellation, qu'est-ce qui différencie les deux orchestres?

L'Orchestre des Nations est à présent une fondation. Ce nouveau statut est l'expression

d'une nouvelle ambition, celle d'élargir son action en faveur des plus démunis en soutenant des organisations humanitaires, partout dans le monde, tout en restant un symbole des valeurs universelles de paix et d'amitié des Nations Unies. Outre la très dynamique *Association des Amis de l'Orchestre des Nations*, nous espérons désormais être soutenus par des sponsors, des mécènes. Leurs dons rendront possible la professionnalisation de notre équipe administrative qui est aujourd'hui totalement bénévole. Nous pourrions aussi plus nous concentrer sur la musique, nos collaborations avec des artistes reconnus, et développer le parrainage de jeunes solistes. Sur le rôle d'Ambassadeur de la ville de Genève, de la Genève Internationale et de la Suisse que confère l'orchestre lorsqu'il se produit à l'étranger.

Le 15 mars, au Victoria Hall, le concert inaugural a vu la participation du violoncelliste Gautier Capuçon. Il a été organisé en partenariat avec Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF), Suisse. Pourquoi ce choix?

Nous avons souhaité que cette nouvelle aventure démarre aux côtés d'une organisation internationale qui défend et promeut la liberté de l'information. Comme nous, elle est «sans frontières», et son siège suisse est basé à Genève. Une partie des bénéficiaires du concert sont allés au *Fonds de soutien et de solidarité en faveur des journalistes et acteurs de l'information* persécutés ou en danger de RSF.

Avec l'Orchestre des Nations Unies, vous vous étiez fixé comme objectif d'être le meilleur orchestre amateur du monde. Ce défi est-il toujours d'actualité?

Le meilleur, peut-être pas, mais plutôt parmi les meilleurs. D'ailleurs, comment mesurer? Cela prendra le temps qu'il faudra. Tout n'est qu'une question de construction, d'engagement de chaque musicien, et de passion surtout. ■



© Claude Maillard

Quelque part entre Kanji et Dumbur, sur le chemin qui mène au Ygma La, col qui culmine à 4720 mètres.



© Claude Maillard

Loin de tout, coupé du monde, le village de Kanji situé à 4100 mètres d'altitude.

Ladakh partie $\frac{3}{3}$ Beauté minérale

Au Ladakh, à une altitude moyenne de 5300 m, dans un environnement façonné à l'échelle géologique, une population de 150 000 habitants perpétue un mode de vie ancestral soumis à de rudes conditions climatiques.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

Rassemblées à l'ombre d'un bosquet formé de quelques arbres, nos mules attendent patiemment d'être chargées. Arrivés la veille à Kanji, petite bourgade nichée sur les rives de la rivière Kong Tokpo, nous avons pu contempler un fabuleux coucher de soleil sur les sommets déchiquetés des montagnes environnantes. Loin de tout, 325 habitants vivent ici de la culture de l'orge, de moutarde et de pommes de terre. Diskit, notre guide de haute montagne Sonam, et notre cuisinier Ratna sont là pour nous accueillir. Ratna est népalais

et vient de passer deux mois au camp de base de l'Everest pour s'occuper d'alpinistes en quête du plus haut sommet du monde. Quatre muletiers et deux aides font également partie du staff qui nous accompagnera durant la semaine.

Paradis pour les amoureux de grands espaces

Notre bivouac est installé près de la rivière. Il n'y a pas si longtemps, tout son lit large d'une centaine de mètres était occupé par les eaux tumultueuses provenant des glaciers environnants. Maintenant, il ne coule plus qu'un mince filet d'eau,

tout juste suffisant pour faire la vaisselle et un brin de toilette. La sécheresse met à mal le pays et cela devient catastrophique pour les bergers que nous allons rencontrer quelques kilomètres plus haut, à Dumbur. Une poignée d'hommes et de femmes sont là, regroupés dans une dizaine de cabanes, pour veiller sur les troupeaux de moutons, de chèvres pashminas et de yacks dont la femelle appelée dri donne du lait qui servira à fabriquer du fromage. Prévu plus haut, notre second bivouac a dû être anticipé en contrebas, faute de trouver de l'eau pour abreuver nos mules.



© Claude Maillard

On ne peut pas rêver plus beaux décors pour faire un trek.



© Claude Maillard

Coucher de soleil sur les sommets déchiquetés le long de la rivière Kong Tokpo.



© Claude Maillard

Toujours ce même accueil chaleureux dans les villages reculés du Ladakh.



© Claude Maillard

Paradis pour les géologues dans les environs de Sumdah.

Face à nous se profile le Yogma La, col qui s'élève à 4720 mètres dont le franchissement nous permettra de pénétrer dans la région du Zaskar. Derrière nous, nous laissons Dumbur et ses occupants qui nous ont accueillis à bras ouverts. Toutes les montagnes environnantes qui avoisinent les 6000 mètres ne sont que roche et leurs sommets sont désespérément dépourvus de neige. Le mince filet d'eau qui se frayait un chemin dans le lit de la rivière a même disparu, laissant place à un désert constitué de galets que

nous allons délaissé afin d'entreprendre une ascension plus escarpée. De toutes parts se prélassent des marmottes peu effarouchées qui ne se soucient guère de notre présence.

Le panorama sur toute la vallée encore ensoleillée est exceptionnel; «encore» ensoleillée car, ironie du sort, la pluie va venir contrarier notre progression vers le sommet du col. Après s'être subitement assombri, le ciel va déverser des trombes d'eau qui vont rendre le sentier boueux, glissant et, face au précipice, extrêmement dangereux. À 50 mètres

du sommet, après nous être concertés avec le staff, transis de froid, nous devons rebrousser chemin. Dépités, trempés jusqu'aux os, nous trouverons refuge à Kanji pour passer la nuit. Comme toujours à nos petits soins, Ratna mettra les bouchées doubles pour nous confectionner un repas digne d'un «grand chef» et qui nous mettra un peu de baume au cœur.

Adieu le Snigutse La, col de 5100 mètres programmé le lendemain. Confrontés aux caprices de la météo, nous devons nous résoudre à

rejoindre Lamayuru par la route. De là, nous rejoindrons Hinju afin de poursuivre notre trek, notre chemin contournant la montagne devenue infranchissable. Sous l'orage, nous ferons étape à Wanla, puis après avoir traversé à gué un torrent dont le pont avait été emmené, regagnerons Ursi, puis Hinju situé à 3740 mètres d'altitude. Aussitôt notre bivouac planté au bord d'un torrent grossi par les pluies, nos mules iront rejoindre yaks, moutons et chèvres pour passer la nuit loin de nous. Le plus compliqué sera de les récupérer le lendemain matin!



© Claude Maillard



© Claude Maillard

Coupés du monde

Droit devant nous se dresse le Spangting, géant de la montagne aux parois vertigineuses qui culmine à 5750 mètres. Sa face nord est occupée par un glacier qui alimente le torrent que notre chemin longe. Parvenu à 4807 mètres, hauteur de «notre» Mont-Blanc, petit coup d'œil au fond de la vallée, là où Hinju n'est plus qu'une petite tache verte perdue au milieu de cette immensité désertique. Diskit, le staff et les mules partis après nous sont sur nos talons et nous franchirons le Konzke La tous ensemble pour y accrocher des drapeaux à prières. Du haut de ses 4950 mètres, la vue à 360° est phénoménale et l'on aimerait avoir plus de temps pour se régaler du panorama. La descente escarpée jusqu'à Sumdah se fait au milieu des yaks qui s'en donnent à cœur joie sur les rives verdoyantes d'un torrent. Nous devons le traverser à plusieurs reprises avant d'atteindre notre bivouac planté au pied d'une montagne aux couleurs irréelles allant du rouge au noir, en passant par le vert, l'ocre et le gris. Un vrai

paradis pour géologue, et cerise sur le gâteau, le tout illuminé par un inespéré soleil qui nous aura accompagné une bonne partie de la journée.

Les jours se suivent et ne se ressemblent pas. Terminé la belle luminosité, place à la pluie et à la grisaille. Et pour couronner le tout, vent et froid (la neige a même blanchi les sommets) se sont également invités pour effectuer l'ascension qui nous mène jusqu'au camp de base du Dudunchen La, col de 4620 mètres que nous franchirons le lendemain. Nous attendrons une hypothétique éclaircie avant de nous élancer pendant que notre guide Sonam partira en repérage pour s'assurer que nous pourrions traverser en toute sécurité le torrent gonflé par des eaux tempétueuses. En effet, lors des crues exceptionnelles de 2010, plusieurs randonneurs avaient péri dans le secteur.

Pas le choix, il faut y aller, car la neige fraîchement tombée risque encore d'aggraver la situation en fondant. Au final, après quelques bains de

pieds plus ou moins contrôlés, tout se passera au mieux. Microscopique village accroché à flanc de montagne, Sumdo sera une halte idéale avant d'arriver au camp où nous aurons juste le temps d'installer les tentes avant qu'éclate un orage.

Nous devons nous rendre à l'évidence: il ne nous reste plus que quelques kilomètres avant d'atteindre Chilling, terme de notre trek. Au programme de cette dernière journée, une courte ascension jusqu'au Dudunchen La, et un dénivelé négatif de plus de 1000 mètres pour rejoindre les rives de la rivière Zanskar où notre bivouac est installé. Malgré une interminable descente, une étape relativement facile, si ce n'est que cette satanée météo en décidera autrement. Brouillard, pluie et grisaille seront à nouveau nos compagnons durant une bonne partie de la journée, nous privant d'un bel éclairage qui aurait mis en valeur les décors féériques dans lesquels nous évoluons. Dommage pour les photos! Mais le pire nous attendra

tout près du but lorsque nous aurons à traverser une dizaine de fois la rivière Chilling. Trois heures nous seront nécessaires pour parcourir deux kilomètres. Réduit à un sommaire filet d'eau aisément franchissable, le ruisseau, grossi par les intempéries, s'est transformé en quelques secondes en un véritable torrent dévastateur aux eaux tumultueuses et boueuses, détruisant tout sur son passage, y compris notre sentier. Le courant est tellement puissant qu'il nous fait trébucher. Isolés du monde, sans l'aide précieuse du staff venu à notre rescousse, nous aurions pu être emportés par les flots.

Crasseux, trempés et fatigués, et après quelques acrobaties vertigineuses, nous arriverons néanmoins à bon port, la tête pleine de fabuleux souvenirs et prêts à revenir au Ladakh pour vivre de nouvelles aventures. ■

Message du rédacteur en chef

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

N'hésitez plus et écrivez-nous !

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

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

Et maintenant, à vos plumes !

Adressez vos commentaires à:

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

Write to us!

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

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

Now, put pen to paper!

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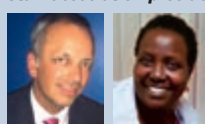
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