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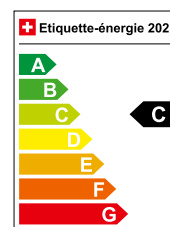
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HUMAN CONNECTIONS AT THE HEART OF A CHANGING UN

As the United Nations undergoes its most significant reforms in decades, the world faces mounting challenges- geopolitical tensions, resource constraints, and a crisis of trust in multilateralism. The UN's future depends not just on structural changes, but on its ability to foster genuine human connection and dialogue.

This spirit is alive in Geneva, where a recent diplomatic chess tournament at the UNOG became a powerful symbol of cooperation. Diplomats, youth, and civil society gathered not just to compete, but to celebrate chess as a universal language – one that bridges divides and promotes peaceful engagement. We also bring you a story of the UN Visitors' Service, adapting to tighter budgets, is doubling down on direct engagement. Its guides are more than narrators; they are bridge-builders, inspiring thousands of visitors – especially students – to believe in the value of international cooperation. On the frontlines, a story of a health leader shows that trust is built one relationship at a time. Her work in rural India, overcoming vaccine hesitancy and mentoring health workers, proves that empathy and presence are as vital as policy.

Enjoy this issue! //

LES LIENS HUMAINS AU CŒUR D'UNE ONU EN MUTATION

Alors que les Nations Unies connaissent leurs réformes les plus importantes depuis des décennies, le monde fait face à des défis croissants: tensions géopolitiques, ressources limitées et crise de confiance dans le multilatéralisme. L'avenir de l'ONU dépend non seulement de changements structurels, mais aussi de sa capacité à favoriser des liens humains authentiques et le dialogue.

Cet esprit est bien vivant à Genève, où un récent tournoi d'échecs diplomatique à l'ONUG est devenu un symbole fort de coopération. Diplomates, jeunes et société civile se sont réunis non seulement pour concourir, mais aussi pour célébrer les échecs comme un langage universel – un langage qui rapproche et encourage l'engagement pacifique. Nous vous proposons également l'histoire du Service des visiteurs de l'ONU, qui, face à des budgets plus serrés, mise plus que jamais sur l'engagement direct. Ses guides sont plus que de simples narrateurs: ce sont des bâtisseurs de ponts, inspirant des milliers de visiteurs – surtout des étudiants – à croire en la valeur de la coopération internationale. Sur le terrain, l'histoire d'une responsable de la santé montre que la confiance se construit relation après relation. Son travail en Inde rurale, pour surmonter l'hésitation vaccinale et encadrer les agents de santé, prouve que l'empathie et la présence sont aussi essentielles que les politiques.

Bonne lecture! //

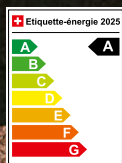
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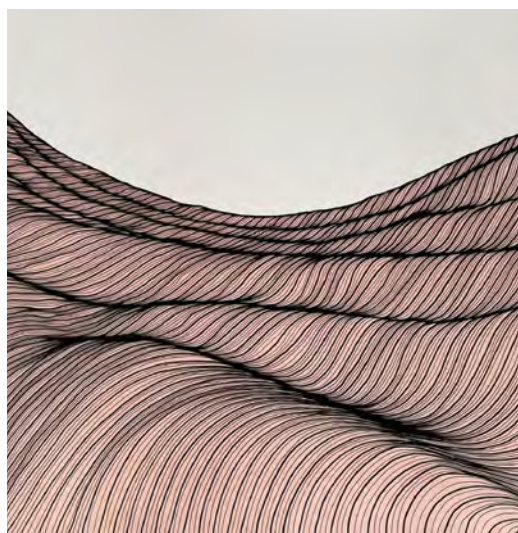


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PHOTO COVER
EDEM LAANOUNI



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Chess and diplomacy: twin arts of strategy

A HISTORIC FIRST DIPLOMATIC CHESS TOURNAMENT WAS HELD AT THE UN OFFICE IN GENEVA AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE UNOG AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.



TEXT ANNA SARGSYAN, SECOND SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF ARMENIA TO THE UN OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN GENEVA
PHOTOS PIERRE ALBOUY

In celebration of World Chess Day, on July 3, 2025 at the United Nations Office in Geneva, an exclusive chess tournament was held at the initiative of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the UNOG and international organizations in Geneva, with the participation of the representatives of diplomatic missions, international organizations as well as civil society operating in Geneva.

The event was organized as a part of a broader celebration of chess as a tool for promoting education, inclusion, respect, and international cooperation. Ahead of International Chess Day, July 20, the inaugural diplomatic chess tournament organized by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia was held under the patronage of the UN Office in Geneva and UNESCO, with the partnership and support of the UN Peace University, Swiss Chess Federation, Armenian Chess Federation and Geneva Chess Federation.

Armenia holds a unique and celebrated place in the world of chess. Armenians' deep-rooted passion for chess has produced the world-renowned grandmasters, including Tigran Petrosyan, known as the "Iron Tigran" for his solid, defensive style, the 9th World Chess Champion, and Levon Aronian, one of the world's top grandmasters. As one of a few countries where chess is an integral part of the school curriculum, Armenia embraces chess as a tool for developing strategic thinking and discipline among the youth.

The tournament, named after the 9th world chess champion Tigran Petrosyan, was attended by diplomats from the permanent missions of China, France, Russia, Germany, Cuba, Panama, North Macedonia, Brazil, Australia, the Order of Malta, Italy, Cyprus, and Armenia, as well as officials from international organizations and civil society.

Opening remarks were delivered by Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General of the UN Office

in Geneva, H.E. Ambassador Hasmik Tolmajian, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the UNOG and Mr. André Vögtlin, President of the Swiss Chess Federation and Chairman of the FIDE Social Commission.

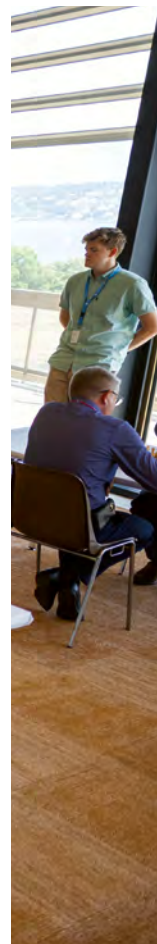
In her speech, the Armenian Ambassador reminded that July 20th was declared International Chess Day by the UN General Assembly in 2019 as a result of a consensus resolution (74/22) proposed by Armenia and co-authored by 53 countries. She mentioned both Armenia's contribution to the development of world chess and the achievements of the Armenian chess players in the field of chess, including the Armenian men's chess team becoming three-time Olympic champions and being recognized by FIDE as the best national team of the century.

The first symbolic step of the tournament was taken by the Director-General of the UN Office in Geneva. In her speech, she expressed a warm gratitude to Armenia for organizing the first such tournament, emphasizing the universal significance of the game in promoting dialogue and peaceful cooperation between the nations. She also highlighted that chess is more than just a game - it is a universal language that transcends borders, cultures, religions and generations. It can be a key tool for education, inclusion and peace.

The rapid tournament, held according to the standards and rules set by the Swiss Chess Federation, was attended by 32 chess players, who played a total of 7 rounds, each lasting 7 minutes. During the four hours of the tournament, more than a hundred chess fans visited the tournament hall, including ambassadors and heads of international organizations. Although the tournament was for amateur players, there were also participants with FIDE international ratings which gave the tournament a more competitive spirit.

From the youngest participant at just 13 years old to seasoned diplomats and professionals, all play-

Participants: representatives of diplomatic missions accredited to the UNOG, international organizations as well as civil society operating in Geneva, participating in the Tigran Petrosyan Chess tournament.



ers enjoyed every round of the tournament. It was more than just a competition, it was a celebration of friendship and shared passion for chess.

The gold medal of the tournament was awarded to Mr. Johannes Kuehn von Burgsdorff, the representative of the Permanent Mission of the Sovereign Order of Malta, the silver medal went to Mr. Rolando Kutirov, the representative of the Permanent Mission of North Macedonia and the bronze medal went to Ms. Greisy Cordero Suárez, the representative of Permanent Mission of Cuba. All participants of the tournament were awarded commemorative medals of the Tigran Petrosyan tournament.

At the end of the tournament Ambassador David Fernandez Puyana, the Permanent Observer of the UN Peace University in Geneva and Ambassador Hasmik Tolmajian delivered closing remarks, congratulating the winners and expressing gratitude to all supporters for the professional and skillful conduct and refereeing of the game.

Special thanks go to the Geneva Chess Club and its President, Mr. Igor Kupalov, for the excellent arbitration of the Tournament, which contributed to the success of the event.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia made it the beginning of a tradition. //



Opening remarks of the Tigran Petrosyan Chess tournament is delivered by H.E. Ambassador Hasmik Tolmajian, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the UNOG.

Global public health: building trust, holding hands, articulating evidence

INTERVIEW WITH SHANTA GHATAK: A SURVEILLANCE MEDICAL OFFICER WITH WHO IN BALLIA, UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA.

How did you start out in public health?

During my post graduate trainings at the Christian Medical College, Vellore I was inspired by my Professors, Dr Jayaprakash Muliyl (Christian Medical College Vellore) and Dr Nirupama Prakash (Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, Rajasthan) to pursue public health. What drove me to this field was the opportunity to contribute to change for the good of the community. So, I shifted from a purely clinical role towards disease control programs, infection control, and then primary health care and emergency response.

What led you to your current role with WHO?

I had worked with IOM in West Africa to deliver the emergency response during the Ebola outbreak, also as a clinical specialist with Save the Children in Cox's Bazar during the Rohingya refugee crisis, and as an infection control lead in Central Asia, as well as various advisory roles with international organisations. During the COVID-19 pandemic I was working in East Africa and after that I returned to India and jumped at the chance when offered the role of WHO Surveillance Medical Officer in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh, (without enquiring about the district or the living conditions)!

Tell us more about this role.

The most interesting part of my current position is the clinical components that are embedded in the programme and percolate to the community through the leadership, administrators, medics, and front-line workers. I verify patients, check records and confirm diagnoses, follow-up as necessary or if any adverse events are reported after immunisation, bring in quality skills during training sessions of health care workers about correct vaccine storage and dosage and age-appropriate vaccinations for all 12 vaccine preventable diseases, including measles, rubella, diphtheria, and so on through the UIP. The data and evidence we generate are translated into actions to improve the programme.

What do you enjoy most about it?

So, the journey over two years in this role has been backbreaking but never boring. The rural amenities and transient electricity availability have been challenging but I have also learned the local language and speak it during trainings and field work. Local doctors touch my heart when they greet me with a warm Namaste or Pranam.

I enjoy the interactions with the community, including local influencers, schoolteachers, ASHA workers, and Anganwadi workers who mobilise children and the ANMs during the immunisation sessions. I find the opportunity to supervise, coach and mentor very rewarding, particularly sharing details of injection dosage, the correct route, correct site, and correct age-appropriate vaccinations. When initially hesitant parents agree to vaccinate their infants or when parents admit to having concerns around myths that I have helped to bust, I feel my work is complete.

More generally, we have cleared an area especially for our team to engage in indoor and outdoor activities, including board games, badminton, volleyball, darts and carroms, and local children also join in.

Has anything surprised you while working in community settings?

Many young children attending a mobile outreach clinic in a village in Liberia presented with corneal ulcerations due to complications from measles infection. We had never seen such large numbers of corneal ulcers at once. It took some time for the diagnosis to sink in after we learned that routine immunisation had been stopped during the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak. In Ballia, while none of the mothers I interviewed could tell me the birth dose vaccinations given to their infants, the warm welcome offered by the community has touched me, for example when I went to investigate cases of AEFI (adverse events following immunisation),

TEXT MANDIP AUJLA, WHO CONSULTANT
PHOTOS SHANTA GHATAK



an older lady offered me fresh jaggery in winter. I remember driving for the first time in the rural areas of Uzbekistan and seeing what I thought was snow over the rocks only to later find out that it was salt. The folk art – paintings, head dresses, cloth, masks, dolls – in Central Asia and Africa are unique and truly inspiring. In West Africa, I can never forget the poverty stricken young and old females who made designs all over the upper part of their bodies and legs and sold things in the local markets – now I see these coming up as expensive body art in India.

Looking back at your 35-year career, what have been the highlights?

I was born in Varanasi but never went back and when I reached Varanasi airport to start my current WHO role, I was unable to control my tears. When I reached the office, I still had watery eyes. Given the opportunity to be near the place where I spent the very early years of my life, I realised how much had changed. I couldn't find the winding alleys near Bhuteswar Galli. Until the end of his life, my father had wanted to be back in Varanasi but unfortunately, he could never return. Our family property has been sold – interestingly, the Mughal Sarai railway station stands on what was once my great grandfather's mango orchard.

What challenges lie ahead for global health?

There is so much to do, and sustainable financing is essential to tackle problems such as non-communicable diseases (including mental health), the health of migrants and displaced people, palliative care, climate change, maternal and newborn care. Improving logistics and primary health care quality is also very important in terms of delivering health care. Continuous building and enhancing of skills remain crucial for public health workers. I would like to add that data is not the only way to showcase what is happening with population health, stories matter too.

What do you do to unwind and relax?

I like to scribble, paint, take photographs, read novels and magazines, listen to music, and sing old songs that my grandfather taught me – I never forgot any of those and have many certificates in singing light classical and folk songs. My father and uncles were known sitarists and my grandfather and his father were renowned Sanskrit scholars (known as Pundits in those days) and have written books and scriptures that are still around. Indeed, they used to be chief priests in Kashi Annapurna Temple for many years. I did not believe that I could write or be published but meeting like-minded people and joining the WHO Poetry Garden and going on to share my work with Ex Tempore, New Special, and the WHO Art Gallery, has been a gift that I never imagined – somehow the unkindness in the world melts away when I click on the weekly Teams meeting links. //

Unexpected change of job may lead to a great discovery. Shanta's story shows a marvelous turn from challenges into opportunities. Enjoy reading about the passion of immunization.

Explaining the United Nations

HOW THE UNOG VISITORS' SERVICE BRINGS THE UN TO THE PUBLIC

During each tour, a Visitors' Service guide introduces the mission and work of the United Nations.

Large parts of the public don't know what the United Nations really does and how much it affects our everyday lives: from regulating street, boat or airline traffic to establishing norms for the quality of the food we eat; harmonizing the delivery of letters and packages across continents, or standards in access to essential vaccines and medicines – the UN contributes to every aspect of human life.

Why is the role of the UN Visitors' Service important, especially right now?

We know how far this is from reality. And we also know that multilateralism is currently facing unprecedented challenges: humanitarian operations are increasingly under attack, resources are stretched, and needs are escalating globally.

That's why it is so important to take the time to explain why the UN matters – especially now, when many UN entities are under pressure and communications budgets are shrinking. The dedicated staff and guides in the UN Visitors' Service can help buffer the impact of reduced outreach capacities across the UN system, because we talk about the work of UN agencies every day.

We are in a unique financial position: our operations are being offset by the income we generate through the guided tours, a model established by the General Assembly for all UN Visitors' Services. Certainly, we are affected by budget cuts, but we can continue our operations on a solid, financially sustainable basis. This year alone, more than 40,000 people from all over the world will take a guided tour at the UN in Geneva, and demand exceeds this number by a large margin.

We also have a unique opportunity with these visitors: while most communicators are competing for their audience's attention, our tour guides enjoy the privilege of spending an hour or more with their groups. These focused interactions enable us to thoroughly explain the concept of multilateralism and give examples of the work done by both UN agencies on the ground and by delegations during negotiations inside our conference rooms.

Visitors come to us because they are curious. And they are willing to pay for this experience, just so they can better understand the UN and what is happening on the international stage. 70% of our visitors are students, ranging from primary school to university, and we feel a special responsibility in our interactions with these young people. They could be the individuals changing our world for the better, and we could be the ones inspiring them to do so.

Therefore, the power of this direct contact – the human touch that the tour guides add to the “UN experience” and the lasting impressions it creates – cannot be overstated.



TEXT VERENA KINYERA, UNOG AND PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU
PHOTOS GESDA/MARC BADER



Can you tell us more about your dedicated group of guides? Who are they, how are they recruited, and what are their talents and expertise?

Here in Geneva, we currently have 18 guides in our team. Most of them have a background in languages or international relations which are essential for our work. We offer tours in 13 languages, so being multilingual is a must.

Some of our guides have been with us for years, even decades. Over time, they have become incredibly knowledgeable about the UN's work and issues relating to the UN, ranging from humanitarian assistance and development to peace negotiations and the work of agencies, with a particular focus on the entities based in Geneva.

On an average day, each guide usually gives four tours. They bring their own interests and strengths to each visit. Some are experts in international law. Others are passionate about architecture and history and can tell you everything about the Palais des Nations. We always try to match the right guide to the right group, so the tour feels relevant and engaging.

How do you see or hope that the UN Visitors' Service will develop going forward?

We have a wonderful opportunity coming up: a new visitors' centre is currently being constructed on the UN premises in Geneva, thanks to a generous donation from a Swiss foundation. This centre will offer an immersive multimedia experience that will complement our tours and will allow visitors to learn about the UN and its work worldwide. We are currently working out the operational details, but we hope that the exhibition, together with the guided tours, will become a rich and holistic experience for all our guests.

Regarding our tours, one area that we could still develop is our collaboration with other UN entities based in Geneva. It is our job to explain their work, but we could benefit from regularly receiving information about their upcoming projects or latest communications priorities. Through stronger ties, we can bring the content of UN agencies' work into our tours in a much more meaningful way. Tangible and recent examples of their work can result in us sharing an even better understanding of the UN, reaching far beyond the beauty of the Palais des Nations and the impactful meetings that take place here. We work with our partners in the various organizations to make this happen. //

Visitors have the unique opportunity to observe the meetings taking place at the UN and listen in to the discussions.

Bridging the Healthcare Gap: Telemedicine Transforms Rural Health in Georgia

A COLLABORATIVE DIGITAL HEALTH INITIATIVE IS REVOLUTIONIZING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE ACROSS GEORGIA'S RURAL COMMUNITIES.



TEXT MARIAM BERIDZE AND RUSUDAN KHOTIVARI,
WHO COUNTRY OFFICE GEORGIA
PHOTO GVC/WHO CO GEORGIA

A DIGITAL LIFELINE FOR GEORGIA'S REMOTE COMMUNITIES

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Georgia has embarked on a transformative journey to strengthen its healthcare system through digital innovation. Among the most impactful measures was the rollout of a nationwide telemedicine initiative aimed at reaching the country's most underserved populations.

The project, formally titled “*Minimizing the Impact of the COVID-19 Outbreak in Georgia through Telemedicine and Digital Health Solutions*,” officially launched in 2021 by WHO, was funded by the European Union (EU) and co-implemented by the Ministry of Health, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS); and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

It reflected a coordinated response to the critical healthcare access gaps, particularly in rural and remote mountainous regions. At its core, the project sought to ensure that all citizens, regardless of where they lived, could receive timely and quality care.

HURDLES THAT GIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Georgia's geography, with its remote mountainous villages and sparsely populated rural areas, has long posed logistical challenges to delivering equitable healthcare. Over 40% of Georgia's population lives in rural areas. Here, Primary Health Care (PHC) is normally provided by standalone family medicine practices, each with 1 family doctor supported by 1 nurse, but many practices are understaffed, having only one health worker. Furthermore, only 20% of PHC facilities use electronic records, while 80% continue with paper-based records.

The pandemic exacerbated these difficulties, but also prompted the healthcare system to adapt quickly. Telemedicine, already in use in some developed countries, emerged as an effective solution, enabling doctors and patients to connect virtually, reducing the need for long and difficult travel, especially in winter when many mountain roads become impassable.

TECHNOLOGY AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR A RESILIENT SYSTEM

Through this initiative, over 200 rural primary healthcare facilities have been equipped with medical furniture and equipment, along with 9,400 medical supply items, to enhance infrastructure and improve the conditions for delivering primary healthcare services. Among these, 60 facilities received advanced telemedicine equipment, allowing for diagnostic consultations and treatment planning to be conducted remotely. The equipment includes high-resolution cameras, diagnostic devices, digital devices (such as ECGs, otoscopes, ophtalmoscope, and dermatoscopes), and secure software platform that allow realtime consultations with specialists based in Tbilisi. Such technology doesn't just expand access – it also reduces the burden on regional and central specialized services by decentralizing care and empowering local clinics to manage more cases independently.

Equipment alone cannot transform healthcare. Recognizing this, the project has invested heavily in building the digital literacy and clinical capacity of frontline health workers. Over one hundred of healthcare providers across Georgia have undergone training to become proficient in using telemedicine systems, managing patient records digitally, and navigating virtual consultation platforms.



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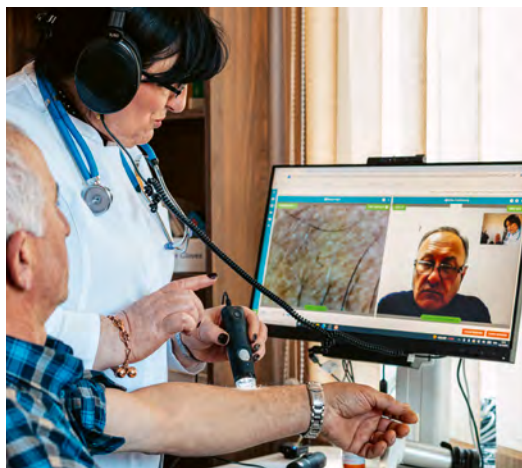


This training includes clinical protocols, privacy and security standards, and communication skills tailored to the telemedicine environment. The result is a growing cadre of healthcare workers who are better equipped not only to deliver care remotely, but also to educate and reassure patients about the benefits and safety of digital health services. Residents have trust in their village doctors, and telemedicine strengthens this relationship by offering more timely and informed care (Source: Village Doctor, BCI Study 2024 – Development of Behavioural and Cultural Insights (BCI) to Understand Population Attitude and Expectation Towards Telemedicine Services, 2024).

Telemedicine and digital health solutions play a vital role in strengthening prevention, early detection, and management of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by expanding access to essential services such as screening, counselling, and health education. NCDs account for more than 94% of the total mortality in Georgia. Solutions include mobile messaging campaigns to promote cervical cancer screening. Additionally telemedicine-supported diabetic retinopathy screening in underserved areas was provided. Digital interventions can close gaps in access to and the quality of NCD and mental health services, and help raise awareness.

Moreover, the initiative has supported the development of national telemedicine guidelines and regulatory frameworks. These provide a legal and ethical foundation for long-term telehealth integration into the public health system. Also the recommendations on payment models for telemedicine services were also developed. Importantly, WHO Country Office in Georgia is working with partners to ensure that telemedicine is sustainably integrated into Georgia's National Digital Health Strategy, currently being finalized and expected to be approved soon.

Telemedicine Consultation
with the Dermatologist at the Rural
Ambulatory.



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Certainly, such a large-scale transformation was not without its hurdles. Connectivity remained a challenge in some remote areas, and sustained investment was needed to maintain digital infrastructure. Additionally, building public trust in telemedicine services – especially among older patients – required continued outreach and education. Healthcare workers also needed ongoing training and technical support to ensure the tools were used to their full potential. Stakeholders acknowledged that success depended on long-term investment, sufficient funding, and collaboration across sectors. But the early results were promising: more patients received timely care, healthcare workers reported improved efficiency and confidence, and community awareness was growing.

BUILDING A HEALTHIER FUTURE BEYOND THE PANDEMIC

This initiative is helping Georgia lay the groundwork for a more resilient, people-centered healthcare system. It aligns with the broader goals of expanding Universal Health Coverage and reducing inequities in access to healthcare laid out in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) ensuring that all Georgians can access care regardless of income, location, or mobility.

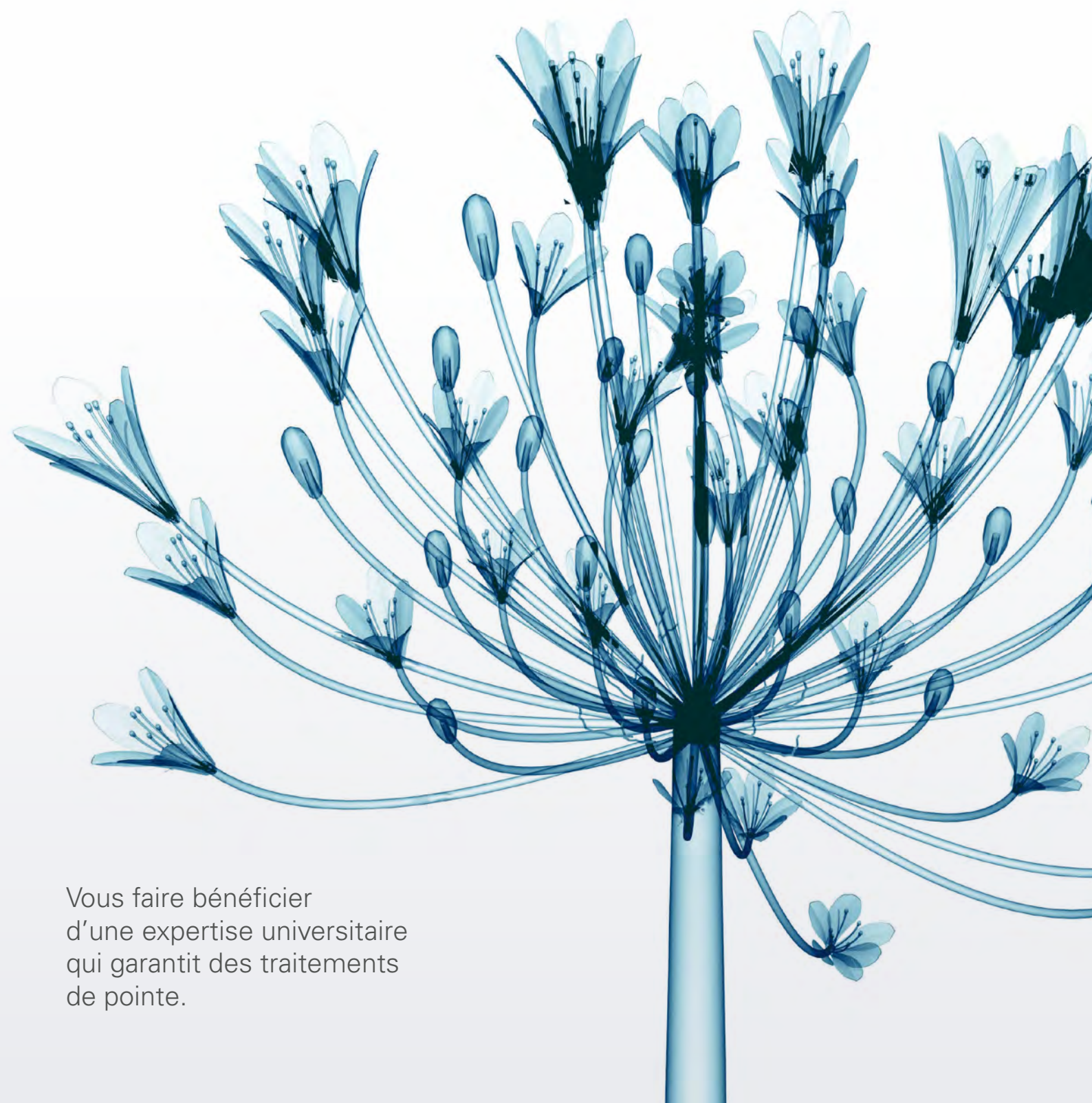
The digital health platform also enables better data collection and monitoring of population health trends, which will support policymaking and resource allocation in the years ahead.

A MODEL FOR THE REGION

Georgia's telemedicine journey offered valuable lessons for other countries seeking to address health disparities through innovation. By combining international expertise and community-level engagement, the country demonstrated that digital health was not just a futuristic ideal – it was a practical, inclusive tool for better healthcare delivery at the time.

As the initiative concluded, its impact continued to resonate in homes and clinics across the country. It stood as a testament to the power of partnership, technology, and human resilience in creating a healthier, more equitable future for all Georgians. //

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Uniting former WHO staff around the world

ONCE WHO, ALWAYS WHO (DR TEDROS. WHO DIRECTOR GENERAL)

Many former staff of the World Health Organization (WHO) take pride in the fact that they belonged to an organization whose objective is to make the world healthier and therefore a better place. Their commitment and attachment to the Organization is so strong that it motivates them to try to continue to feel connected in one way or another after service.

In April 2025 about 5000 retired staff from WHO were receiving a UN pension, most of them remaining insured under the WHO Staff Health Insurance. They are scattered all over the world.

Back in 1989 in Geneva, a small group of committed retired staff decided to create the Association of Former WHO Staff Members (AFSM). Whoever had worked with WHO in any position and in any geographical posting was entitled to be a member for a fee. The possibility was later extended to former staff from UNAIDS, UNICC and UNITAID. The Association is provided with significant logistic support at WHO Headquarters. As of April 2025, there were 911 members living in 74 countries.

While the prime objective of the Association is to defend to the best extent possible the interests (particularly on pension and health insurance matters) of persons formerly employed by WHO, as well as their surviving spouses, an equally important mission from the start has been to facilitate maintaining links with WHO and to support its objectives.

WHO is a very decentralized organization. The six Regional Offices, headed by Regional Directors elected by their respective member states, coordinate the country programmes of their Regions. In most Regions, retired staff who had mostly worked there and live there have also established associations.

Until 2020, there was no significant cooperation between the "HQ" association and the existing regional ones and even less so between the regional associations themselves. The few existing exchanges were on a personal basis.

Two major events led to a complete change.

The first was the election of Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus as Director-General in 2017. He took office in July and three months later, he came in person to our regular General Assembly to address our members. Instead of the benign blessing usually offered by his predecessors on such occasions, he spoke at length, offering to work with the Association and to identify areas of cooperation so that the WHO Administration could make use of its members who remain part of the WHO family. He concluded: Let's make the arrangements to work together, help each other and remain one family. ONCE WHO, ALWAYS WHO has been his motto ever since.

In the following years, the Association in Geneva and the WHO Management have been busy translating Dr Tedros's words into action, exploring all sorts of ideas, some of them quite successfully. Still, those changes only affected the Association in Geneva.

Then, In March 2020, came the Covid pandemic. It led to a ban on person-to-person contacts and physical meetings, which also affected our Association. WHO started relying far more extensively than previously on low-cost videoconferencing and generously shared with us those facilities for the monthly meetings of our Executive Committee.

Then, we thought: why not propose virtual meetings to our informal contacts in the Regions? We launched the idea, and it was enthusiastically embraced. We managed to identify interested persons even in those Regions where there was no formal association. We held our first meeting in March 2021 with all six Regions represented. At the second meeting six months later, we officialized our group as the Global Council of Associations of Former WHO Staff Members. Associations would take turns organizing the meeting every six months.

Our first discovery was that the level of understanding on Staff Health insurance (SHI) issues differed widely between HQ and the Regions and of course some of their needs were Region-specific. With the help of the SHI staff and experts

TEXT JEAN-PAUL MENU, CO-PRESIDENT,
ASSOCIATION OF FORMER WHO STAFF MEMBERS, GENEVA
PHOTO WHO CHRISTOPHER BLACK



from within our Committee, we tried to deepen their understanding.

On pension matters, we are able to assist the UN Joint Staff Pension office to chase a number of pensioners who had failed to send their annual proof of life, thus running the risk of having their pension suspended.

In the two Regions where there were no formal associations, enthusiastic volunteers took on the task of trying to create one.

It soon became apparent that the major issue was the lack of recognition by the regional Executive Management. How could we convince them to view the associations as useful partners. Most of the support provided was through personal contacts, liable to vanish with staff changes. There was a perceived need for some sort of institutionalization.

A real breakthrough was achieved at the March 2023 meeting of the Council organized by Geneva. We had invited Dr Tedros. He asked each association to present its concerns and issues and, reiterating the important role expected from the associations, asked them to submit a list of needs that he and the WHO Administration would consider as favorably as possible.

In the following months, associations were busy elaborating their submissions, but it was clear that the commitment of the Regional Directors was essential in their endeavours. The associations therefore asked Dr Tedros to stress the importance of recognition to the Regional Directors.

The next major event was the sixth meeting of the Global Council, the first face-to-face one, organized in Geneva in May 2024 at the time of the World Health Assembly. Dr Tedros invited the Regional Directors, who were present in Geneva, to attend, listen and reaffirm their commitment to their respective association. Four regional directors attended the meeting and expressed their support.

Since then, significant progress has been made in several Regions towards full recognition of their Associations.

In January this year, the decision of the President of the USA to withdraw from WHO has created a severe financial crisis and extensive staff cuts.

Dr Tedros again addressed the eighth meeting organized from Cairo in June 2025. By then the World Health Assembly was over. After having given his views on the achievements of the Assembly and on the budgetary situation, he repeated that the support of former WHO staff was very important. He invited proposals from us all on ways to support the Organization during this difficult time and also on ways to ensure that our partnership will not be reversed with the change of leadership.

The associations are currently preparing proposals that will be submitted to Dr Tedros ahead of the Council next meeting later this year.

We are proud of our achievements so far and deeply grateful for the constant support of Dr. Tedros. At the same time, we realize that there is still work to be done both on our part and on the part of those who will succeed us. //

Meeting of representatives of the HQ and Regional associations of former WHO staff (AFSM) with the Director-General and four Regional Directors (RDs), Geneva, 25 May 2024
 Left to right: Dr Hans Kluge (RD EURO), Dr Saia Ma'u Piukala (RD WPRO), Dr Hanan Balkhy (RDEMO), Dr Matshidiso Moeti (RD AFRO), Dr Tedros (Director-General), Hernan Rosenberg (AFSM PAHO-AMRO), Linda Milan (President AFSM-WPRO), Kalula Kalambay (President AFSM-Africa), M R Kanaga Rajan (President AFSM-SEAR), Sue Block Tyrrell (Co-President AFSM-HQ), Jean-Paul Menu (Co-President AFSM-HQ), Melodie Karlson (Co-President AFSM-EUR in formation); absent from the picture Hanaa Ghoneim (President AFSM-EMRO)

De l'exil à l'hémicycle

AHMED JAMA, PRÉSIDENT DU CONSEIL MUNICIPAL,
VILLE DE GENÈVE

Je suis né à Mogadiscio, en Somalie, en 1984. En 1991, ma vie a basculé avec le déclenchement de la guerre civile. Avec ma famille, nous avons fui les violences et vécu plusieurs années dans des camps de réfugiés avant d'arriver en Suisse, en 1997. J'avais 13 ans. Ce fut le début d'un nouveau chapitre, d'un chemin incertain vers la reconstruction.

UN PARCOURS POSSIBLE

Mon arrivée à Genève a été marquée par une immersion rapide dans la langue et la culture locales. Après une année dans une classe d'accueil, j'ai obtenu le certificat du Cycle d'orientation avec mention, puis intégré l'École de commerce Madame-de-Staël. J'ai rencontré des obstacles, notamment pour trouver une place de stage avec un permis F, mais le soutien de mes enseignants m'a permis d'obtenir un permis B par cas de rigueur – une décision exceptionnelle. En 2005, j'ai été naturalisé. En 2006, j'ai accompli mon service militaire à Payerne. Ce parcours administratif complexe reflète la ténacité qu'exige l'intégration, mais surtout la solidarité que j'ai reçue.

GENÈVE, TERRE DE POSSIBLES

Genève m'a offert des opportunités immenses. Depuis 2007, je travaille comme officier de l'état civil. Mon rôle me place au cœur des grands moments de la vie des habitant-e-s : naissances, reconnaissances, mariages, décès... C'est un métier d'écoute, de rigueur et d'humanité. Je me suis spécialisé dans les aspects internationaux du droit de l'état civil, dans un contexte où la diversité est une richesse quotidienne. La possibilité pour les personnes trans de modifier leur état civil, ou l'ouverture du mariage pour toutes et tous, sont des évolutions que j'ai accompagnées avec engagement.

REQUÉRANT HIER, PRÉSIDENT AUJOURD'HUI

En 2013, je me suis engagé en politique en tant que conseiller municipal socialiste en Ville de Genève. Depuis, j'ai siégé dans de nombreuses commissions, portant sur le logement, la jeunesse, l'aménagement ou encore la cohésion sociale. En 2023-2024, j'ai présidé la commission des finances, puis j'ai été élu premier vice-président du Conseil municipal. En 2025, j'ai été élu président du Conseil municipal de la Ville de Genève. Pour la première fois, une personne d'origine africaine accède à cette fonction. C'est un honneur, mais aussi une responsabilité que j'assume avec humilité et détermination.

TEXT AHMED JAMA, PRÉSIDENT DU CONSEIL MUNICIPAL, VILLE DE GENÈVE
PHOTO RUZANNA TARVERDYAN

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Une histoire inspirante où la démocratie directe, dans la cité de Calvin, éclaire le chemin de chacune et de chacun.

TRACER SA VOIE

Chaque étape de ce parcours a demandé de la persévérance, mais aussi la capacité de croire que les murs pouvaient devenir des portes. Rien n'a été simple, mais rien n'a été impossible non plus. La transformation du regard que l'on porte sur soi et que les autres portent sur vous est un processus lent. J'ai toujours cru qu'un destin ne se subit pas : il se construit, parfois pierre par pierre.

AU-DELÀ DES FRONTIÈRES

Mon histoire n'est pas seulement celle d'un homme qui a fui la guerre. Elle est celle de milliers de personnes déplacées par les conflits, qui aspirent à la paix, à la dignité et à la contribution. Elle démontre que l'exil ne doit pas être un point final, mais peut devenir un nouveau départ. La Suisse, et Genève en particulier, peuvent être des terres de reconstruction, quand elles allient exigence, accueil et équité.

DU SILENCE À LA VOIX

L'exil vous apprend à vous taire, à observer, à espérer en silence. Entrer en politique, c'était revendiquer une voix, pas seulement pour moi, mais pour celles et ceux qu'on n'entend pas. Être chef de groupe, président de commission, puis du Conseil municipal, ce sont autant de tribunes où j'ai tenté de faire résonner des réalités souvent oubliées. La voix d'un ancien requérant d'asile dans une enceinte démocratique n'est pas un symbole : c'est une nécessité.

UN PARCOURS CITOYEN

Je suis aujourd'hui marié, père de quatre enfants. Mon engagement est aussi un héritage que je souhaite leur transmettre : celui de l'engagement civique, de l'égalité et du vivre-ensemble. Être citoyen, c'est participer, c'est défendre des valeurs, c'est croire que l'action locale peut changer des vies. Mon parcours politique est ancré dans cette conviction que la citoyenneté ne se limite pas à un passeport : c'est une pratique quotidienne.

DE LA MARGE AU CENTRE

L'histoire des migrations est trop souvent racontée depuis les marges. J'ai voulu, par mon parcours, rappeler que nous sommes aussi au centre de la société, que nous contribuons à son fonctionnement, à sa diversité, à sa richesse. Que nous avons notre place dans les institutions, non pas malgré notre passé, mais aussi grâce à lui.

LOIN D'ÊTRE IMPOSSIBLE

Mon parcours aurait pu rester un témoignage isolé. Je souhaite qu'il devienne une source d'inspiration pour d'autres. À celles et ceux qui doutent, je veux dire : c'est possible. Pas sans efforts, pas sans obstacles. Mais c'est possible. J'en suis la preuve vivante. Genève m'a vu arriver comme un adolescent déplacé, elle me reconnaît aujourd'hui comme premier citoyen de la Ville. Cela ne doit pas rester une exception. C'est à nous tous de faire en sorte que cela devienne la norme. //

Saving lives with safe water: the work of the 1% for Development Fund

IMPROVING ACCESS TO CRITICAL SANITATION REMAINS A KEY FOCUS FOR THE FUND AS IT APPROACHES A MOMENTOUS MILESTONE.

LEARN +

World
Toilet Day



World Toilet Day, on 19 November, is no joke – it is a call to action to tackle a global sanitation crisis that, in 2025, still affects billions of people worldwide. The Geneva-based 1% for Development Fund has been helping improve access to safe drinking water, basic toilets and good hygiene since its foundation nearly 50 years ago.

For more than a third of the world's population, being able to use a clean, modern toilet in safety is not something taken for granted. A lack of basic facilities in homes and schools is a daily reality, as are the risks of being cut off from clean water and sanitation. These risks can often prove fatal.

A GLOBAL CRISIS, A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL AND A PRIORITY FOR THE FUND

Right now, a staggering 3.5 billion people don't have access to a toilet, while over 670 million people still practise open defecation, according to the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund. To put this in context: more people have a mobile phone than a proper toilet.

This is why sanitation is the focus of Sustainable Development Goal 6, the targets under which are achieving access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and ending open defecation by 2030. It's also why the provision of basic sanitation plays a fundamental role in the work of the 1% for Development Fund.

A recent project in southern Africa is an example of the Fund's work in this area. In January 2025, the organization gave over 18,800 CHF to fund the construction of water and sanitation facilities in a rural girls school in Zambia. Pupils at the school have died as a result of diarrhoea, caused by the lack of a clean water supply. The new facilities will provide important protection for these children against water-borne diseases and illnesses resulting from poor hygiene.

THE 1% FOR DEVELOPMENT FUND: WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT WORKS

The Fund was established in 1976 by international civil servants in Geneva with a mission to fund small development projects in developing countries. The organization is completely financed by its members, who give 1 per cent of their salary every month to fund projects, and its work is focused solely on sustainable development, not humanitarian aid (it funds community-focused income-generating and infrastructure projects, rather than providing cash in response to emergencies).

The approach of the Fund is "*small scale but big impact*" – a position that has remained unchanged over nearly five decades. The projects that the organization funds are often very localized, small community projects – ones passed over by traditional aid providers because of their size. Each application for assistance is rigorously evaluated before a decision on funding is made. The follow-up process is equally as diligent.

The Fund doesn't take part in project implementation: this responsibility is passed to the local NGOs attached to the projects, which fully understand the local context and will see the benefits first hand. The Fund backs, on average, 20 projects a year and there is a funding limit of 20,000 CHF per project. Since it was established, the Fund has funded over 800 projects, giving more than 9.2 million CHF. A significant portion of this funding has helped improve community sanitation.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO CRITICAL SANITATION: THE FUND IN ACTION

Outside of Zambia, the Fund has provided funding for more than half a dozen water, sanitation and hygiene-related projects in Africa since the beginning of 2023. In the Democratic Republic

TEXT JOHN MORGAN, WRITER AND EDITOR, GENEVA
PHOTOS NGO (ÉCOLE PRIMAIRE LES ANGES),
NGO (SOCIETY FOR PEOPLE'S EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC CHANGE (SPEECH))



Project in Democratic Republic of the Congo to construct 10 latrines at a primary school in 2019.



Handwashing training session held in India as part of a 2019 project to drill two boreholes at a primary school to provide clean drinking water and conduct WASH training.

of the Congo, over 16,300 CHF was donated to a project to support the maternity ward at a health centre in Kwilu province, including the installation of a clean water supply and a wastewater disposal system that will help improve efforts to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates.

In the east, more than 18,500 CHF was given to improve access to safe water for 1,600 people in the Sung community in the north of Ghana. The funding has paid for the installation of two mechanised boreholes and an electric pump, which means that women and children from the community no longer have to walk seven miles to collect clean water. The project also included the planting of 4,000 trees at a local school to help to conserve ground water and reduce soil erosion.

In Guinea, almost 18,000 CHF was provided to install a clean drinking water supply for a shelter for survivors of gender-based violence and the surrounding communities in the Pita urban commune in Bendougou district. The area faces chronic water shortages, with a reliance on unsafe water sources having led to outbreaks of malaria and cholera. The new safe water system, including a solar-powered well and a water tower, will help reduce the spread of disease.

Moving west, almost 18,700 CHF was given to drill two wells and install hand-washing facilities in Kenya, while in Uganda, over 17,000 was donated to extend a gravity water pipe to provide water to two villages. Coming back east, more than 12,300 CHF was provided to renovate primary and secondary school toilets in Liberia, and in Cameroon, over 3,700 CHF was allocated to a project that included the repair and restoration of a solar-powered borehole.

Outside of Africa, in India, over 8,200 CHF was spent on providing safe drinking water for 10 rural villages in Tiruvannamalai, located in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. Borewells with hand pumps have been installed in each village, providing clean

water to over 30,000 people. This should help to reduce the incidence of water-related diseases, in particular among children, and decrease community tensions linked to water scarcity.

A COMMITMENT TO CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION AND A QUESTION OF FUNDING

As these project examples illustrate, water, sanitation and hygiene-related projects are a critical focus for the Fund, and they will continue to be, at least for as long as the organization remains able to raise the money necessary to finance such assistance. The ability to keep supporting projects rests on membership and, right now, this means recruiting new members, both within the United Nations community and outside it.

As Fund president Chris O'Connor explains, *"I personally believe that the Fund is even more relevant and useful today than it was when it was first created; however, without membership and the volunteering that members do, the Fund will not be able to continue assisting communities, helping women and children who, due to circumstances beyond their control, are finding it difficult to survive."*

Though it might not seem so at first, World Toilet Day is a serious matter, as is supporting efforts to ensure safe and accessible sanitation for everyone. One way to make a difference, to transform lives, to save lives, is to contribute to the 1% for Development Fund. //

CONTRIBUTE TO THE 1% FOR DEVELOPMENT FUND

To make a one-off donation or to become a member and help support people and communities in need, please get in touch on contact@onepercentfund.net or find out more at www.onepercentfund.net.

Find out more about World Toilet Day at: www.un.org/en/observances/toilet-day

US travel advisories

IT'S TIME TO HAVE A GOOD LAUGH



TEXT SEBASTIAN ZIELINSKI
PHOTO ISTOCK

Travel advisories are important because they provide essential information that helps travelers make informed decisions and stay safe. They don't aim to scare travelers - they provide vital information so you can travel safely, stay healthy, and avoid legal or financial issues. However, recently issued US travel advisories give the impression that Switzerland and other countries are really not that safe - but is this accurate?

In May, the US issued a travel advisory for Switzerland. Yes, that wasn't a mistype - for Switzerland. It advises: review the Country Security Report (there is a security report for Switzerland? Perhaps there really are too many bureaucrats with time to spare in the US government), prepare a plan for emergency situations (Really? A plan? While on holiday?), visit the CDC page for the latest Travelers' Health Information (Yes, you wouldn't want to risk an overdose of clean air. Help, I can breathe). They go on *"we highly recommend that you buy insurance before you travel"* and *"register with the STEP programme to locate you in an emergency"*. An emergency? In Switzerland? Eating too much fondue? Getting an overdose of cows? Being blinded by the beauty?

And Switzerland gets off lightly: France and the UK are ranked higher with the warning *"exercise increased caution"*. For the UK the travel advisory warns *"Terrorist groups continue plotting possible attacks in the United Kingdom."* For France the advisory warns *"Pickpocketing and phone thefts are common, especially in crowded places. Terrorist groups continue to plan possible attacks in France and may attack with little to no warning."*¹. Enjoy your trip!

But seriously, how safe is Switzerland, the UK, France and Europe as a whole and how does this compare with the US? Afterall, presumably, if you were issuing a travel advisory this detailed and alarmist it must be less safe than where you are coming from? Afterall, the US government doesn't issue travel advisories to US citizens travelling to different parts of the US. So the US must be safe, right?

Let's look at the statistics. According to the Global Peace Index², an index that ranks 163 countries according to their level of peacefulness using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators, Switzerland is the 6th safest country in the world. The UK is at 34 and France is 86. And the US? Nestled among African countries and below South Africa, at 132. *"Ah yes", you say, "but perhaps the source is biased in some way... some of the indicators subjective"*. Fair enough. Let's look at objective facts that can't be manipulated.

As I like to say on a sunny weekend morning *"let's start with murder"*. For 2023, the World Population Review³ reported that Switzerland had 53 murders, with a murder rate (murders per 100,000 population) of 0.6. France had 887 murders with a rate of 1.34. The UK is not included but the UK government Office for National Statistics⁴ states there were 570 murders between March 2023 and March 2024, or 0.95 murders per 100,000. And the US? A whopping 19,796 murders and a rate of 5.76 murders per 100,000. As Bart Simpson might say *"Ay Caramba!"*. For every one person that is murdered in Switzerland, a whole field of 373 people are murdered in the US. That means it has nearly 10x the murder rate of Switzerland, 6x the murder rate of the UK and over 4x the murder rate of France. In fact, Eurostat⁵, the statistical office of the European Union, states there were 3 930 homicides across the whole of the EU in 2023. This represents 5 times fewer murders than in the US, despite having 1 and a third more people (449.2 million people vs 334.9 million people in the US).



Alright, so you are 5 times more likely to be murdered in the US than in Europe, but let's look at total crime – after all, you might not be killed on your visit but you could be affected by some other crime. The World Prison Brief⁶, an evidence-based database on prison systems around the world and hosted by Birkbeck College, University of London lists incarceration numbers with rates per 100,000 people. It lists data from 224 countries or territories. It's quite a good yardstick of the amount of crime in a country as it removes all subjectivity. Let's go through our usual 4 countries. Switzerland has 6 994 prisoners, England and Wales 87 864, and France 83 681. And the US? It's another "Ay Caramba" moment: 1.8 million – the highest in the world! And controlling for the population, Switzerland has 77 prisoners per 100,000, England and Wales 142, France 123. And the US? 541. That's 4 times higher than in France or the UK and 7 times higher than in Switzerland. Seems pretty evident that the US has a lot more crime.

So if I was issuing a travel advisory for US travelers to Switzerland, the UK, France, or anywhere else in Europe I'd say "Your chance of being murdered or experiencing crime on holiday is considerably lower than in the US. You do not need to read a 'Country Security Report' that we've had the time to waste on, or prepare a plan for emergency situations (although you may wish to prepare one for when you return to the US). Neither do you need to visit the CDC page for the latest Travelers' Health Information, buy insurance or register with a programme to track you in an emergency. The only emergency you'll face is deciding between a cup of tea or a cup of coffee, the tiramisu or the cheese cake, and the toppings on your pizza. So enjoy your holiday and relax. You'll love it." //

1 For a laugh visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

2 <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/GPI-2024-web.pdf>

3 <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/murder-rate-by-country>

4 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/homicideinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2024>

5 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Crime_statistics

6 <https://www.prisonstudies.org/>

Ready for the airport:
preparing for travel can
be confusing.

Second world summit for Social Development

PART 1 OF A 3-PART ESSAY
4 TO 6 NOVEMBER 2025, DOHA, QATAR



Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 78/261 of 26 February 2024, a “Second World Summit for Social Development” (WSSD2) was launched, to be held in Doha, Qatar on 4 to 6 November 2025¹. This new world platform follows up on the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen², and will similarly aim at advancing social inclusion worldwide, eradicating poverty and giving momentum to job creation and decent labour legislation. It is barely five years to 2030, by which time the world should have achieved the Sustainable Development Goals announced in 2015.

The hopes and expectations associated with the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration and Plan of Action³ adopted at the first World Summit for Social Development were not realized. There are multiple reasons for this failure, notably the increasing militarization of the world, the decreased level of multilateralism in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Iran. While the US and EU give lip service to social development, the astronomical increase in military expenditures tells a different story.

For a few years, a brief window of opportunity lasting from 1989 to 1991, the world actually stood before the possibility of advancing sustainable peace and development for all. The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991 should have been followed by the dissolution of NATO and a recommitment to the pledge of “we the peoples of the United Nations” to save succeeding generations of the scourge of war. The United Nations Charter, which serves as a kind of world constitution, would have provided the necessary structure to enable peace and enhance international cooperation in all fields.

It would have been entirely feasible to gradually convert military-first economies into human security economies⁴ and to redirect toward social development the vast finances wasted on the production of weapons of mass destruction, con-

ventional armaments, and the maintenance of military bases⁵ worldwide. Disarmament for development would have helped to eradicate extreme poverty, eliminate famine, prevent pandemics, advance social justice, and create meaningful employment worldwide.

TO CHANGE THE PARADIGM, THE MINDSET MUST BE CHANGED

Alas, the political mood in Western countries during the decade of the 1990s was impregnated by the fantasies of Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History*⁶, Zbigniew Brzezinski’s *The Grand Chessboard*⁷ and the illusion that “winner takes all”.

Already in 1991, rather than resolving the Kuwait crisis by peaceful means, the United States persuaded the UN Security Council to approve the use of devastating force against the people of Iraq in what became known as “Operation Desert Storm”, resulting in enormous losses among the hapless civilian population of Iraq in a needless war that was primarily a war over oil⁹. A mantle of legality was thrown over the massacre of civilians and the subsequent murderous UN sanctions that devastated the economy of Iraq and killed over one million Iraqis, causing Assistant Secretary General Denis Halliday, the UN humanitarian coordinator in Iraq, to tender his resignation in protest and calling the UN sanctions regime a form of genocide. Halliday was followed in the job by Assistant Secretary-General Hans von Sponeck, who similarly resigned in protest and wrote a book “*A Different Kind of War*”, deploring the destruction of UN values by the UN itself.¹⁰

Through an enormous level of public relations and propaganda, it became possible to confuse the peace-keeping functions of the United Nations with the geopolitics of NATO, which essentially usurped the mandate of the Security Council¹¹. Instead of working for peace and development, the United Nations allowed itself to be instrumentalized to serve US hegemonial interests. NATO itself morphed from a legitimate alliance for defence into a war coalition to impose US interests, capitalism and privatization of social services on

countries that aspired to self-determination and sovereignty. Objectively seen, NATO ceased to be a regional organization within the meaning of article 52 of the UN Charter, pursued its own agenda, which is incompatible with the Purposes and Principles of the UN Charter¹². This prevented any meaningful progress in the advancement of social justice and development.

Cognitive dissonance played a role in this epistemological confusion. While politicians and neo-liberal think tanks continued to invoke the “*rule of law*”, peace and development, these politicians provoked conflicts worldwide with the clear purpose of imposing capitalism by force.

Instead of this scenario, a totally different situation could have emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. This would have necessitated the dissolution of NATO itself. Instead, President Bill Clinton decided in 1997 to expand NATO eastwards, a decision which George F. Kennan decried in a New York Times opinion article as “*A fateful error*”¹³. The focus on military force accompanied by fear-mongering and the propagandistic selling of NATO as a defence alliance upended the priorities of the United Nations, effectively sidelining its social and development mandate and marginalizing the treaty commitments under the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights.

PROSPECTS OF THE SECOND WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The motto of the International Labour Organization “*si vis pacem, cole justitiam*” should guide the deliberations of the Second World Summit for Social Development¹⁴, in which the countries of the Global South, BRICS members and others will doubtless play a more important role than during the 1995 Copenhagen summit.

Indeed, if the world wants peace, every State must cultivate justice, domestically and internationally, in particular promote social justice, ensure a better distribution of wealth, a reduction of the gulf between the super-rich and the abject poor.

It is a disgrace that in the year 2024 the wealth of the billionaires grew three times as fast as in 2023, while at the same time extreme poverty and famine plagued the world. Something is wrong in financial governance, taxation, odious foreign debt, World Bank projects¹⁵, IMF loan conditionalities¹⁶ – and the capitalist economy in general¹⁷. The World Economic Forum¹⁸ in Davos will not reverse this trend, on the contrary.

It is for the United Nations and the World Social Forum¹⁹ to formulate pragmatic decisions and for the countries of the Global South to press for their implementation. The global majority should turn away from what Professor Jean Ziegler of the University of Geneva calls the “*cannibalistic world order*”.²⁰ In my book *Building a Just World Order*, I formulate 25 Principles of International Order²¹ that build on the UN Charter, GA Resolutions, judgments and advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice. My fourteen reports on international order emphasized that social development is an indispensable component of international peace and security, which is the paramount function of the United Nations.

Personally, I do believe in progress and remain optimistic that we can build a better world.²² I recognize that science and technology have enabled us to overcome many of the problems that plagued prior generations, especially in the fields of food security, global health and better labour legislation. However, I would be blind not to see that all over the planet human beings are deprived of the most fundamental things such as proper nourishment, drinking water, sanitation, housing, education, gainful employment.

There has been considerable progress in comprehensive standard-setting and the establishment of monitoring mechanisms. Enforcement, however, has been a disappointment. And over the past 50 years most monitoring mechanisms and judicial and quasi-judicial organs have been hijacked to serve the interests of Washington and Brussels. This may sound shocking to many, but it is the sad reality, which I substantiate in detail in my book *The Human Rights Industry*²³.

What is progress? The Abolition of capital punishment and the gradual improvement of the condition of women, a new consciousness about the rights of disabled persons are highlights. But there are too many other major problems. Of course, what some persons consider “progressive”, other persons may consider a threat to well-established religious beliefs, customs and traditions that also deserve protection. We owe it to ourselves and to future generations to remove those systemic obstacles that make the realization of the human rights to peace, life, food, water, family ever more difficult.

In order to have added value, the Second World Summit for Social Development must go beyond other United Nations summits, such as the World Summit of 2005²⁴ and the Summit of the Future of 2024²⁵. It should not just end with a vague list of desiderata, but formulate concrete proposals how to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals²⁶ and craft mechanisms to enforce relevant United Nations resolutions.

Thus, WSSD2 should reaffirm that the United Nations Charter constitutes our only “norms based international order”, akin to a world constitution. All peoples should observe this world constitution and all States must enforce it. Civilization means the rule of law, due process, transparency, accountability, justice, reparation, reconciliation, inclusion, international solidarity. The survival of mankind depends on good faith implementation of treaties and agreements (*pacta sunt servanda*²⁷), on pro-active cooperation, based on a conviction that we all share the same human dignity, the same needs and aspirations, that we must somehow coexist on this one planet Earth. With good will conflicts can be prevented and grievances can be addressed in a timely fashion and resolved.

Furthering universal development is one of the three pillars of the UN Charter, together with promoting peace and human rights. The United Nations Organization, however, finds itself in a grave crisis of identity, authority and credibility, largely because the permanent members of the Security Council want to instrumentalize the Organization to advance their own geopolitical agendas and not the interests of humanity at large. The WSSD2 should push back and help define new parameters. //

(parts 2 and 3 of this essay will follow)

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27 Article 26 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

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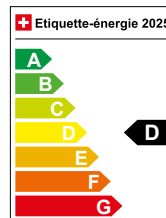
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Année internationale de la préservation des glaciers

FEUILLE SPECIALE DE TIMBRES PERSONNALISÉS

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Pour souligner l'importance de la préservation des glaciers, l'APNU émettra une feuille spéciale de 10 timbres.

L'Assemblée générale a proclamé que 2025 sera l'Année internationale de la préservation des glaciers afin de sensibiliser le public au rôle vital que jouent les glaciers, la neige et la glace dans le système climatique et le cycle de l'eau, ainsi qu'aux conséquences considérables d'une fonte rapide des glaciers.

Les glaciers sont essentiels pour réguler le climat mondial et fournir de l'eau douce à des milliards de personnes. Cependant, en raison du changement climatique, principalement dû aux activités humaines, ces ressources vitales fondent rapidement.

La préservation des glaciers est l'un des défis les plus urgents de l'humanité. Ces anciennes formations glaciaires ne sont pas que de l'eau gelée : elles sont les gardiennes de l'histoire climatique de notre planète, la source de vie de milliards de personnes et des lieux sacrés pour de nombreuses cultures. Leur disparition rapide nous rappelle brutalement que nous devons agir maintenant.

LES DESSINS FIGURANT SUR LA FEUILLE SONT LES SUIVANTS

Colonne de gauche, de haut en bas :

- 1 Le glacier Perito Moreno, Argentine
- 2 Mont Gongga et glacier dans le parc forestier des glaciers de Hailuoguo, Chine
- 3 Vue panoramique des glaciers de l'Alaska depuis la baie de Prince William Sound, États-Unis
- 4 Glacier de Pasterze, Autriche
- 5 Glacier Franz Josef, Nouvelle-Zélande

Colonne de droite de haut en bas :

- 6 Lagon de Jökulsárlón Glacier avec les glaciers et les montagnes du Vatnajökull, Islande
- 7 Eaux glacées et glacier Lambert, Antarctique
- 8 Glacier d'Aletsch, Suisse
- 9 Parc national de Jostedalsglaciären, Norvège
- 10 Grandes tours d'icebergs dans le fjord glaciaire d'Ilulissat, Groenland

L'arrière-plan de la feuille représente les glaciers d'Ilulissat dans la baie de Disko, Groenland.

La feuille a été conçue par Rorie Katz (Nations unies).

Les feuilles de timbres peuvent être personnalisées en remplaçant le logo des Nations unies par une photographie.

Les clients peuvent se rendre dans les magasins de timbres de l'APNU à New York ou à Vienne pour faire prendre leurs photos en personne, ou ils peuvent téléverser leurs photos directement sur le site web de l'APNU unstamps.org/fr.

Les instructions de commande sont disponibles sur le site web. //

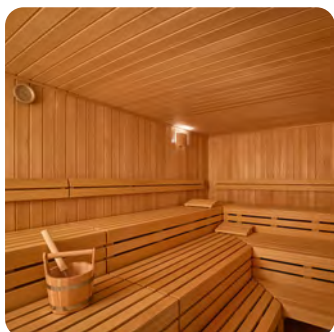




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(1) Fragment. (2) Clinical study: % of satisfaction, 44 volunteers, 18 days.



Prehistory on your Doorstep: the Roche de Solutré

LESS THAN TWO HOURS' DRIVE WEST OF GENEVA
YOU CAN STEP BACK 10,000 YEARS AT A DRAMATIC OUTCROP NESTLED
AMONG ROLLING FRENCH VINEYARDS.



TEXT & PHOTO
KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO

In 1866 archaeological excavations began at the foot of a striking limestone escarpment to the west of the city of Mâcon called the Roche de Solutré. The location (known locally as the Gros du Charnier) had a large number of horse bones sticking out of the ground and the expectation was that these would probably be of medieval origin.

As work began, supervised by the eminent French geologist Henry Testot-Ferry, it soon became clear that the site was a major find dating way back to the Upper Palaeolithic – the period that is the last sub-division of the Stone Age. Structures, tools, animal remains (but curiously no human remains) attested to about 25,000 years of usage by four different civilizations at the site between 35,000 and 10,000 BCE.

The haul of artefacts was so rich that the name of the rock was taken to label the main culture that has been active at the rock – the Solutrean.

France looked radically different 20,000 years ago, of course. This was the period of the last glacial maximum when ice sheets covered most of northern Europe and pushed human hunter gatherers into those ice-free areas of France, Spain, Portugal and Spain that remained habitable.

The Solutrean culture was notable for perfecting new technology for shaping sharper and lighter blades. They created distinctive bay leaf-shaped flints by working the stone to create two sharp edges ideal for arrow heads. Their artefacts have been found all over Western Europe and there was even a (now debunked) theory that they may have crossed the Atlantic and been the progenitors of the Clovis Culture of native Americans!

The eventual consensus was that the Roche de Solutré was a hunting site where meat was butchered and smoked and that a neighbouring outcrop called the Rock of Vergisson was the principal habitation. One fanciful legend, based on the rock's prow-like profile, was that the hunters herded wild horses to the top and drove them over the edge for mass killing but no evidence of this was found. The story seems to date to the 1872 novel *"Solutré"* published in Paris as a fictional account of prehistoric life at the rock and a demonstration of how much the archaeology of the time captured the public imagination.

Today the rock is a protected natural site and a more than worthwhile tourist attraction. The walk to the top takes about an hour and affords sweeping views over the vineyards, source of the Pouilly-Fuissé appellation. There is a museum dedicated to the prehistoric period (tastefully hidden among the vegetation) and mention that the French President, François Mitterrand used to make an annual trip to the location with his family to hike up to the summit.

The most striking views are from the base however where the jutting Sphinx-like profile provides a stark contrast to the gentler hills, and was once the site of a Roman villa, then a medieval fortification and finally drystone walls and pastureland.

Today the environment is a protected site and a prime example of a limestone grassland with active management to stop invasive species such as box trees and the well-marked paths designed to avoid over tourism and trampling of sensitive habitat. It is not possible to visit the Gros du Charnier location however as parts of that area still remain to be fully excavated.

Combined with some local wine tasting, a fresh croissant from the nearby town of Leynes, or a tour around the equally interesting city of Mâcon, this lesser-known corner of the Saône-et-Loire department is an ideal day trip or Geneva week-end getaway. //



The dramatic profile
of the rock.

Topographies de l'intime

INTERVIEW DE LUIS MARQUES
PAR SONIA JEBSEN

SAVOIR +

Expositions



Instagram



Alors que le monde est secoué par des bouleversements divers et variés, certains artistes ont cette capacité d'apaiser nos esprits visuellement par la fluidité et la clarté de leur expression artistique. Luis Marques en est la preuve avec ses œuvres sur papier où le cercle et la ligne ont une place récurrente.

Vos œuvres sont le fruit de la répétition du geste avec patience et maîtrise, Vous dessinez à main levée sur le papier des cercles/disques. Cette forme géométrique s'est elle imposée à vous ?

Cette forme est venue de façon instinctive. Trop longtemps j'ai dessiné ou projeté des murs droits, des détails constructifs pleins de règles techniques et d'orthogonalités. Le cercle contient cette idée de continuité. De début et fin qui se confondent. Le disque quant à lui, évoque un centre, un parcours vers l'intérieur à travers la répétition du geste. Intuitivement il devient symbole de ce retour vers l'intérieur et l'écoute de soi.

Le cercle renvoie symboliquement au cosmos (les planètes, étoiles), à l'harmonie, l'infini (mouvement perpétuel) et la perfection contrairement à d'autres formes géométriques anguleuses... Vous reconnaissez-vous dans ces concepts portés par le cercle ?

Le cercle est une forme que l'on retrouve partout dans la nature. Il est pour moi une source d'inspiration inépuisable. J'aimerais que mes traits puissent porter les mêmes variations subtiles et infinies que celles qu'on observe dans les formes naturelles, comme les ondulations d'une feuille, le contour d'un coquillage, ou les vagues créées par un caillou jeté à l'eau. Mais la nature est toujours plus inventive. Toujours plus libre, plus changeante. L'homme, lui, tend à se répéter. À figer.

Vous affirmez que l'acte créateur émane en partie d'un besoin de méditation, de cette nécessité de faire le vide dans votre esprit, (ai-je bien compris ?) Pouvez-vous décrire vos ressentis physiques et psychiques lorsque vous dessinez ?

L'acte de dessiner est pour moi essentiel. Je cherche à créer une poétique de la ligne. Et pendant l'exercice je crée une relation individuelle avec chacune

de ces lignes. Comme si chaque ligne avait un parcours particulier auquel je donne toute mon attention. Physiquement et psychologiquement je suis entièrement présent et concentré. J'habite véritablement le dessin. Je le contrôle mais je suis aussi à l'écoute de ce qu'il devient, comme s'il évoluait en dehors de moi, avec sa propre logique, sa propre vie.

Alors que vous dessinez principalement sur des feuilles blanches, d'autres matériaux recyclés servent de support pour certaines œuvres, tels que le carton ou le papier d'emballage. Au-delà d'un message écologique très en vogue chez certains artistes, que cherchez-vous à exprimer de particulier ?

Je voulais questionner l'importance de la rigueur technique et de la « noblesse » des matériaux dans le monde de l'art. Je voulais comprendre si un dessin sur des matériaux dit « pauvres » pouvait créer le même impact sur le spectateur qu'une œuvre dessinée sur un papier coûteux et bien encadrée. Aussi de questionner sur l'accident pendant le dessin, le caractère d'ébauche, le temporaire. Peut-être une œuvre être juste imparfaite, inachevée ou fragile, et tout de même avoir sa place dans une galerie ? Et peut-on poser le même questionnement pour un être humain sur notre planète ?

Si le cercle a votre prédilection en tant qu'artiste, pour l'architecte que vous êtes, ce n'est pas une forme courante. Pouvons-nous comprendre une complémentarité essentielle à vos yeux avec ces deux approches ?

Je cherche dans l'art cette liberté infinie et interminable que je ne peux pas retrouver dans l'architecture. Aujourd'hui, je dessine pour m'échapper de ce monde plus monotone, plus cadré, où chaque décision est soumise à des normes, des contraintes, des validations. Le dessin m'offre un espace où je peux me libérer de ces cadres. Un espace sans justification à donner, sans logique à prouver. Un espace où l'instinct prime, où le geste peut exister pour lui-même. Dans ce geste libre, je retrouve une forme de vérité plus intime. C'est dans cette pratique que je me reconnecte à quelque chose de plus vivant, plus mouvant — quelque chose qui m'échappe parfois, mais qui me parle profondément.

TEXT SONIA JEBSEN
PHOTOS MEZPHOTOGRAPHIE



BIO

Artiste et architecte d'origine portugaise, Luis (1984) est basé à Genève, en Suisse. Il partage sa pratique entre son travail au Département du territoire et une démarche artistique ancrée dans le dessin.

Son univers plastique explore la ligne comme un langage méditatif et introspectif. Son processus, à la fois rigoureux et instinctif, s'appuie sur des médiums variés tels que le stylo, les marqueurs ou le fil à coudre, appliqués sur des supports allant du papier au carton, souvent déchirés, récupérés ou recyclés.

Ses œuvres naissent d'une tension entre contrôle et lâcher-prise, où la précision graphique dialogue avec l'aléatoire et l'accident. Cette dualité reflète une quête d'équilibre entre structure et spontanéité par le biais du trait, donnant lieu à ce qu'il nomme des « territoires intérieurs » ou des « topographies de l'intime ».

Les œuvres de Luis « gardent en elles la trace d'un va-et-vient profondément humain entre l'ordre et le chaos, entre le visible et l'invisible, le tangible et l'abstraction. Il y a dans ces dessins des formes archétypales et des compositions graphiques dont les lois semblent les mêmes que celles du monde végétal, animal ou minéral », Céline Muzelle, historienne d'art, 2025.

Ses dessins invitent à une contemplation silencieuse, à une immersion dans le rythme intérieur du geste – une pratique où le trait devient pensée en mouvement, et le dessin, un paysage mental. //



Coming Full Circle

A WHO ARTIST'S FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION

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Between now and the start of 2026, a series of colourful paintings will be hanging in the corridors of a clinic in Gland and brightening the lives of the inpatients. The exhibition features work by WHO's very own Ritu Sadana and for the story of how she started painting and why this location is of particular importance read on...

In early September a terrific thunderstorm raged over Geneva with the sort of apocalyptic black skies and enormous raindrops that lets you know that the weather means serious business. The kind of downpour that won't be satisfied until the drains are full and the motorway is equally clogged.

I was driving from work out to Gland battling the traffic to attend a rather special event – the first solo art exhibition of one of our colleagues – and my misgivings about queueing in the hideous traffic soon gave way as I pulled into the elegant tree-lined avenue of a lakeside Swiss clinic, La Lignière.



If you visited any of the WHO Art Gallery's exhibitions in headquarters over the last few years then you may have been lucky enough to have seen some of the striking portraits and landscapes by our colleague Ritu Sadana. Ritu works in the Life course health and research area connecting optimal development of children and adolescents, with healthy ageing of adults and older people. Ritu specialises in oils on canvas and uses a limited colour palette that makes her work distinctive and satisfyingly harmonious.

Some fifteen works will hang in the corridors of the clinic between now and the start of next year and I caught up with Ritu at the launch event/vernissage hosted by the clinic to kick off what they hope will be an ongoing collaboration with local artists as they celebrate their 120th birthday.

My first question was how the link with La Lignière came about and it turned out that the place had particular importance in Ritu's creative life as she explained in her welcoming speech to the guests.

"In 2013, I was hit by a car while cycling and after a long spell in the HUG, I was transferred to La Lignière for recuperation and rehabilitation. It was during my stay here, walking these same corridors that I saw some inspiring paintings and made up my mind that I also wanted to learn to paint."

Working in Geneva yet with a pied-à-terre in Vaucluse, Provence, Ritu fulfilled the promise to her new self and from 2015 onwards began studying under two artists and getting involved with a group of painters located around Mont Ventoux. Her bold style and technical expertise advanced as she produced, based on my rough calculation, on average a painting every three weeks between then and now, often overpainting earlier works as she strived to improve and evolve.

From a body of some one hundred canvasses, Ritu had selected some of her favourites for the exhibition in Gland. Portraiture, and landscapes developed en plein air in Provence feature strongly along with still life and floral studies.

One canvas of the view near Audabiac depicts a semi abstract view of the village, nestled within a basket of hills and trees.

TEXT KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO

*"Silver Hair", 2022, Oil on canvas, 38 x 46
Painted in the artist's courtyard
in Provence - model, Jacques Bury.*



"When I painted that," Ritu explained, "I felt cocooned by the rolling hills, and I wanted to capture the sense of the town cradled in its surrounding landscape." She added, "It's the only one of my Nabis-inspired paintings in this exhibition."

Although Ritu has exhibited before with other artists at the WHO Art Gallery and in shows in the South of France, this is her first solo collection. It is deeply resonant for her to bring her paintings back to the very place, a centre for well-being, that had started her creative journey and inspired her to pick up her brushes after the crash twelve years ago.

The clinic was also well chosen for its long history of association with artists. I met the communications director, Johnny Ainsworth, and he explained that the original building on the property was rented by Voltaire in 1775 when he was determined to finish his life outside of France and shun the fanaticism of the age that he condemned in his countrymen. His wishes were not to be however, and he died in Paris.

It was not difficult to see why the philosopher was attracted; with some seventy hectares of parkland and woods giving on to the lake, it is a beautiful location to seek a quiet and refreshing retreat and enjoy Ritu's calming paintings.

As if to emphasise this point further, just as Ritu finished her thank you speech and the exhibition was officially opened, the storm broke and we all wandered outside to admire a shining rainbow, an almost complete arc that terminated in Lac Léman and echoed some of the vibrant colours of Ritu's palette. //

*"Vacqueyras", 2021. Oil on canvas, 46 x 38
Painted with the artist's community
of painters on a Tuesday afternoon.*

Le col Du Saint-Gothard

COLS ROUTIERS DE SUISSE (19)

SAVOIR +

Dictionnaire
historique
de la Suisse



Fondazione
Sasso San
Gottardo



Gastro San
Gottardo



Le col du Saint-Gothard, situé à 2108 mètres d'altitude, fut considéré au 19^e et encore au 20^e siècle comme le col le plus important de Suisse. Il forme la frontière entre les cantons d'Uri et du Tessin, et dans le massif du Saint-Gothard se rencontrent les vallées de la Reuss et de la Levantine (axe nord-sud) ainsi que celles du Rhin antérieur et du Rhône (est-ouest). Comme carrefour des régions linguistiques et culturelles, proche de la Suisse centrale où la Confédération est née, le col a une signification mythique pour la Suisse, même si la plupart des gens prennent de nos jours le tunnel routier, en dépit des embouteillages gigantesques les week-ends de vacances.

Des fouilles montrent que le col fut déjà fréquenté à l'âge de bronze, mais il ne semble quand-même pas avoir été très populaire, ni pendant l'époque romaine, probablement à cause de l'obstacle que formaient les gorges de Schoellenen vers Hospental au nord. Au bas Moyen Âge, le col jouait un rôle secondaire et servait surtout le trafic local et régional. C'est seulement après l'ouverture du défilé de Schoellenen au trafic muletier, vers le début du 13^e siècle, que le col a commencé à prendre l'importance qu'on lui connaît aujourd'hui.

Ce sont probablement les Walser, arrivés dans la vallée d'Urseren par la Furka au 12^e siècle, qui ont joué un rôle clé dans l'ouverture de la route par les gorges ; il paraît que leurs connaissances techniques acquises en construisant des bisses, des routes et des ponts au Valais leur ont permis de construire le célèbre pont connu sous le nom « pont du Diable » au-dessus du Reuss, qui ouvrit enfin la route vers le col du Saint-Gothard. Cette ouverture a contribué à la genèse de la Confédération suisse à cause de la situation politique et économique nouvelle créée par le développement du trafic. Des formes d'autogestion coopérative par les associations de muletiers, de nouvelles structures juridiques et le fait que la population locale avait désormais un revenu régulier sont tous des éléments qui ont contribué à la création de la Confédération en 1291.

À la fin du Moyen Âge, le col du Saint-Gothard avait toujours moins d'importance pour le transport international des marchandises que d'autres cols. Néanmoins, le col joua un rôle important dans le

développement économique des régions et villes situées à proximité : vers l'an 1300 il existait ainsi au moins une vingtaine d'entreprises commerciales lucernoises qui traitaient avec des partenaires à Milan et à Côme.

Les associations de muletiers organisaient le transport des marchandises. La route était divisée en plusieurs tronçons où les muletiers du coin se chargeaient du transport. Cela signifiait qu'entre Uri et Milan il fallait décharger et recharger les marchandises sept fois ! Comme cela causait des retards importants, le système fut progressivement remplacé dès le 14^e siècle par un convoi direct, où le paiement d'une taxe servait à dédommager les muletiers locaux.

Dès 1653 il existait un service hebdomadaire postal entre Lucerne et Milan, qui prenait 4 jours, et en 1696 Zurich établit un service de courrier à cheval deux fois par semaine. À partir de 1810, Uri et Tessin commençaient à développer des routes carrossables à travers du col et le transport des voyageurs et du courrier se faisait par diligence à partir du 1835 ; en hiver le service fut effectué par des traîneaux postaux. À partir de 1842, des diligences quotidiennes empruntaient la route du col. Vers 1870, environ 70 000 voyageurs et entre 10 000 et 20 000 tonnes de marchandises transitaient chaque année par le col du Saint-Gothard.

Le col attirait aussi des pèlerins qui venaient en été des 4 vallées environnantes en hommage au St. Gothard, vénéré comme guérisseur. Après, c'était à des hommes de lettres, des artistes et des naturalistes de traverser le col, comme Horace Benedict de Saussure qui y étudiait la géologie des lieux pendant ses visites en 1775 et 1783. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe visitait le col trois fois, sa première visite fut en juin 1775 depuis Hospental, et après en novembre 1779 et octobre 1797. À ces occasions il a dormi à l'hospice, mais il n'a jamais franchi le col pour descendre vers le sud !

Côté militaire, le col fut utilisé par des troupes espagnoles entre 1604 et 1625 pour rejoindre les Pays-Bas, à l'époque leur possession, depuis Milan sans s'approcher de leur rivale, la France. En 1799, pendant la deuxième guerre de coalition contre Napoléon, les troupes du général russe Souvorov traversèrent le col pour chasser les troupes françaises dans de sanglantes batailles pendant lesquelles l'hospice du col fut détruit. Pendant





La Tremola,
l'ancienne route vers le col.

la guerre du Sonderbund en novembre 1847, les troupes uranaises occupèrent le col pour ensuite descendre en Levantine. À partir de la fin de 19^e siècle, la Confédération commença à construire des fortifications, et pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale, le Saint-Gothard devint le plus important élément du système défensif de la Suisse. Le fort militaire sur le col est maintenant un musée au cœur de la montagne et donne l'occasion de voir comment était organisée une forteresse militaire, avec des dortoirs des troupes, le poste de commandement et le dépôt de munitions. Ce qui surprend le plus est l'exposition sur les visites de Goethe en Suisse et un spectacle de lumière sur la ligne de partage des eaux (la Mer du Nord via le Rhin, et l'Adriatique via le Pô).

L'importance du col déclina avec la construction du tunnel ferroviaire, mis en service en 1882. Entre 1936 et 1941, des travaux adaptaient la route aux exigences des voitures modernes. La route raide depuis Airolo vers le col, la Tremola, fut remplacée par une nouvelle route entre 1967 et 1977. L'ancienne route reste une attraction touristique et est populaire auprès des cyclistes, malgré les pavés irréguliers. Sur les 4 derniers kilomètres spectaculaires vers le col, 24 lacets aident à surmonter le dénivelé de 300 mètres. Depuis la construction du tunnel routier du Saint-Gothard en septembre 1980 la route du col reste fermée pendant l'hiver.

Début octobre, nous profitons donc du dernier week-end de la saison des cars postaux sur le col

du Saint-Gothard pour y monter depuis Hospental. Depuis le car, nous voyons déjà des éoliennes du col. Le parc, construit en 2020, produit 15 % de l'énergie éolienne en Suisse, et livre l'équivalent d'énergie pour 4000 à 5000 ménages. Nous apprenons que 25 % du parc éolien appartient aux Services industriels de Genève.

Le matin se montre frais et, quand nous arrivons au col vers midi, il y a toujours du givre partout à l'ombre. Le car postal nous dépose à côté de l'ancien dépôt de l'hospice où se situe le musée national du Saint-Gothard, qui montre l'histoire du col, de sa route et de ses tunnels. L'hospice, reconstruit après les guerres napoléoniennes, fonctionne maintenant comme hôtel et est inscrit sur la liste du patrimoine culturel européen. La chapelle à côté nous semble abandonnée.

Sur le col se trouvent plusieurs monuments, comme le monument en mémoire de l'aviateur militaire Adrien Guex, qui s'écrasa ici avec son avion le 7 août 1927, au tout début de l'histoire des forces aériennes suisses. Le long de la route moderne, se dresse une statue du général Souvorov et de son guide. En direction de l'ancienne forteresse du Gothard, nous voyons encore une statue représentant un voyageur, pour honorer tous ceux et celles qui ont traversé le col, souvent dans les circonstances éprouvantes. Et sans surprise, il y a la statue de la Vierge, qui protège tous ceux et celles qui passent par le chemin.

Nous nous dirigeons vers la Tremola, et passons devant la chapelle des morts, où étaient inhumées les victimes d'avalanche et d'autres accidents. De là, nous montons vers un petit lac pour chercher une plaque qui reproduit en bronze le dessin fait par Goethe en juin 1775 montrant la vue vers l'Italie. C'est un joli endroit, tranquille, loin de l'animation du col offrant des panoramas spectaculaires. Mais pas de temps à perdre, le dernier car postal de la saison va quitter le col, et nous nous dépêchons – comme Goethe, nous descendons vers Hospental sans passer vers le sud. Mais, comme lui, un autre jour, nous partirons vers « *le pays où les citronniers fleurissent* »¹ //

1 « *Kennst Du das Land wo die Zitronen blühen* », l'un des poèmes les plus célèbres de Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, mis en musique maintes fois, entre autres par Beethoven, Schumann et Schubert.

Cambodge

AU FIL DU MÉKONG 1/3

SAVOIR +

Altaï Travel



Le Cambodge regorge de sites exceptionnels, comme bien entendu le complexe d'Angkor Wat à Siem Reap. Le royaume khmer ne se limite cependant pas à ce monument. Il possède de nombreux atouts, entre temples et autres sites sublimes, dont ses villages flottants sur le Tonlé Sap, sa campagne, tout comme sa côte qui en font une destination riche en Asie du Sud-est.

Une fois franchies les chutes de Khone Phapheng et de Li Phi situées à l'extrême sud du Laos (voir le précédent numéro du *NewSpecial*), le Mékong poursuit sa course vers le Vietnam où il se jette dans la mer de Chine. Au préalable, il aura parcouru le Cambodge du nord au sud sur une distance de 480 km, traversant au passage la capitale Phnom Penh. La ville, connue comme la « Perle de l'Asie », ne devint le siège permanent du gouvernement du pays qu'en 1866, sous le règne de Norodom I^{er}.

La préhistoire du Cambodge demeure mal connue. Le pays semble avoir été occupé à l'origine par des peuplades de type australoïde puis, au cours du Néolithique, par des peuples de type indonésien. Vers 3000 av. J.-C., des tribus mûns, auxquelles vont se mêler des Khmers, colonisent la région. L'ère après J.-C. voit se développer le royaume Founan principalement peuplé de Khmers avec de profondes influences hindouistes. Relativement prospère, le royaume s'étendait entre la Chine et l'océan indien. Au VI^e siècle s'ensuit le royaume de Tchen-la dont le roi Jayavarman I^{er} établira sa capitale à Angkor Borei, au sud de Phnom Penh. Deux siècles plus tard, le royaume éclate en plusieurs principautés et les Khmers doivent accepter la suzeraineté de Java (dans l'actuelle Indonésie). Proclamé roi en 802, Jayavarman II - prince khmer élevé à Java - réussit à unifier les différentes principautés khmères après s'être libéré des Javanais et installe sa capitale au nord du lac Tonlé.

UN PASSÉ TUMULTUEUX

C'est le début de l'âge d'or de la civilisation khmère et dès 1010, sous le règne de Suryavarman I^{er}, de nombreux temples sont construits, dont Angkor Vat dédié au dieu Vishnu. Mais 75 ans plus tard, après la mort du roi Jayavarman VII, le Cambodge plonge dans une forme de déclin et vit une longue décadence politique sous domination siamoise. Angkor sera assiégée et pillée à plusieurs reprises avant d'être finalement abandonnée.

Au XVII^e siècle, le Vietnam commence à apparaître comme une puissance montante que les Khmers utilisent d'abord comme contrepoids pour réduire la domination siamoise. Le Cambodge fut alors disputé entre les Siamois et les Vietnamiens jusqu'au XIX^e siècle, avec la colonisation du pays par Napoléon III. En 1953, le Cambodge obtient son indépendance. Une monarchie constitutionnelle est mise en place, gouvernera jusqu'en 1970 quand elle sera renversée puis remplacée par la République khmère. Parallèlement, les Khmers rouges, un groupe de communistes, envahissent le pays et en contrôlent 60 % de sa superficie. En 1975 ils s'emparent du pouvoir; le pays est transformé en un gigantesque camp de travail forcé et les forces de Pol Pot - chef des Khmers rouges - tuent plus d'un million d'habitants. En 1979 les vietnamiens envahissent le territoire et instaurent la République populaire du Cambodge. Ils se retireront 10 années plus tard et la signature du traité de paix de Paris ratifié en 1991 marquera la fin de la guerre. La République devient l'État du Cambodge qui se déclare neutre et garantit de respecter les droits de l'homme. En 1993, l'ONU prend provisoirement le contrôle du pouvoir et organise des élections qui propulsent Norodom Sihanouk à la tête du pays. Depuis 2004, après son abdication, c'est son fils Norodom Sihamoni qui exerce la royauté au Cambodge.

Aujourd'hui, pour les 17 millions de Cambodgiens, les défis sont ceux d'une éducation qu'il faut remettre à niveau, ceux d'une jeunesse qui doit apprendre à conjurer son passé pour se tourner plus sereinement vers l'avenir, ceux d'une économie qui doit se développer au profit de tous.

KOH TRONG, UNE ÎLE AU MILIEU DU MÉKONG

Poste-frontière de Nong Nok Khiene, on laisse derrière nous le Laos; notre chauffeur Rong et notre guide Nara (Altaï Travel) nous attendent pour nous faire vivre une nouvelle aventure en terre cambodgienne. Le Mékong est en vue; large et majestueux, il semble calme mais son débit est colossal. Nous le traversons à Stung Treng avant de rejoindre Kratie qui sera notre première escale. Port fluvial, la petite ville aux allures provinciales est une halte idéale pour découvrir la campagne alentour, pour observer les dauphins de l'Irrawaddy - les derniers au monde vivant en eau douce - ou pour s'attacher au charme de Koh Trong, une île hors du temps.

TEXT & PHOTOS
CLAUDE MAILLARD

Sur l'île de Koh Trong baignée par les eaux du Mékong, les modes de vie ruraux et les traditions ancestrales se perpétuent.



Assurant l'irrigation indispensable à la culture du riz, le Mékong et aussi une voie navigable très fréquentée.



A l'ombre des manguiers et des bosquets de bambous géants, l'île se visite à vélo sous des « hello » lancés par les enfants. Vrais, toujours souriants, les habitants nous accueillent chaleureusement. Pédalant entre les rizières, les champs de tomates ou de pastèques et les plantations de pamplemoussiers, on y croise quelques scooters et charrettes à cheval ou à bœuf; un aperçu d'un Cambodge rural et traditionnel, dépaysement garanti. Trois modestes pagodes, dont une vietnamienne, rythment la vie des hameaux et des champs. Au sud de l'île, un village flottant abrite une petite communauté cham, groupe ethnique qui vit de la pêche au carrel et du tressage de paniers et de nasses.

Accueil chaleureux dans le village de Cheung Kok où les habitants invitent les visiteurs à venir découvrir la vie rurale et l'artisanat local.

Retour sur la terre ferme pour rejoindre Phnom Penh. Sillonnant la province de Kampong Cham, la route qui mène à la capitale traverse quelques villages - essentiellement musulmans et bouddhistes - regroupant une poignée de maisons faites en bois et construites sur pilotis. Pagodes et mosquées sont disséminées parmi les rizières qui donnent trois récoltes par an. La moindre parcelle de terre est cultivée, peu d'engins pour la travailler; issues de zébus, les vaches brahmanes sont utilisées pour la traction de chariots ou de charrues. Omniprésent, le Mékong fournit l'eau en abondance pour irriguer plantations et cultures, donnant naissance notamment à de splendides étendues couvertes de lotus. Allant du rose vif au blanc, passant par le jaune et le bleu, chaque couleur de la fleur sacrée a une signification. Le lotus, qui joue un rôle essentiel dans le bouddhisme, représente généralement l'éveil spirituel, la pureté et la fidélité.

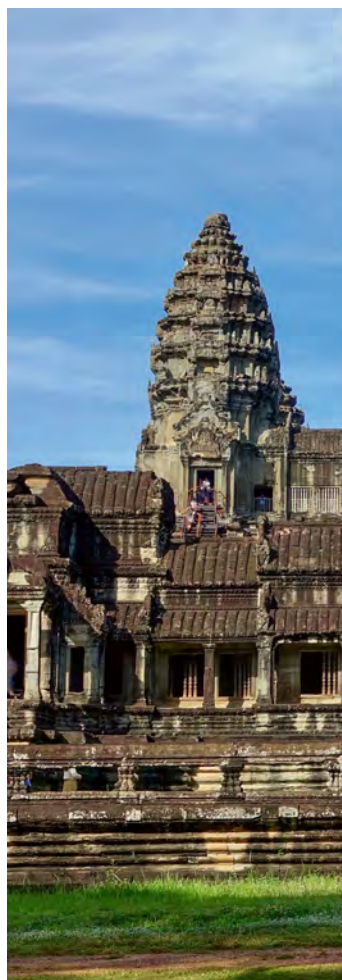
CHEUNG KOK, AUTHENTICITÉ ET CONVIVIALITÉ

Proche de Kampong Cham, à une centaine de kilomètres au nord de Phnom Penh, Cheung Kok est un village pittoresque profondément ancré dans la vie traditionnelle khmère. Longtemps tournée vers la riziculture, cette localité de 600 âmes ne parvenait plus à vivre, faute de propriétés cultivables. Accompagné par l'ONG AMICA - Assistance Médiation International pour le Cambodge -, un projet écotouristique et artisanal solidaire a vu le jour et permet aujourd'hui aux villageois de faire face aux carences économiques et alimentaires liées à la précarité de leur agriculture. Ayant réussi à trouver un juste équilibre entre respect, authenticité, ouverture et amitié, les habitants offrent aux visiteurs une expérience unique et inoubliable. De maison en maison, accompagné par les enfants, on peut ainsi partir à la rencontre des villageois pour découvrir leur culture, leur vie quotidienne et leurs traditions avant de partager un repas en famille au sein de la communauté. Gérés par un comité local, tous les profits récoltés permettent notamment de soutenir de nouveaux projets de développement comme des cours de khmer et d'anglais pour les jeunes, des micro-crédits pour les agriculteurs et des aides pour rénover les maisons ainsi que les infrastructures collectives.

Suite de l'aventure en direction de la capitale Phnom Penh à vivre dans le prochain numéro du *NewSpecial*. //



Au Cambodge, comme ici à Kampong Cham, la meilleure façon de commencer la journée est de visiter le marché local.



Temple le plus emblématique du Cambodge construit au XII^e siècle, Angkor Vat est inscrit au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO.

Poems from WHO Poetry Garden



NEW WINDS AT WHO?

It speaks to the emotional weight of change, especially in environments where people dedicate themselves to service, public health, and humanitarian work. In such spaces, work is more than a job – it becomes a calling. The poem acknowledges that reality while offering reassurance, reflection, and hope.

While farewells may be inevitable, the impact everyone has made – the lives touched, the wisdom shared, the nights sacrificed – remains imprinted in the mission and the walls of the institution. The poem encourages those moving forward to see change not as an end, but as an expansion of their journey – carrying the values and purpose of WHO wherever they go.

In corridors where purpose grows,
Where healing flows and wisdom shows,
The winds of change now softly stir,
A quiet hum, a gentle blur.
The work we've done, the nights we gave,
To lift the lost, to heal, to save
Still echo in these missioned walls,
Though change now knocks, and duty calls.
A shift may come, as seasons do,
And bid farewell to what we knew.
But endings here are not the end,
They're simply turning where paths extend.
For every role we've come to know
Is but a seed from which we grow.
And what seems loss may just be space
For purpose new to take its place.
Look not in fear, nor steep in doubt,
This change is not to cast you out
But rather, guide with open hand
To wider skies, to firmer land.
A chance to learn, to lead, to teach,
To stretch your dreams beyond your reach.
With every door that softly shuts,
Another opens stronger, just.
So, hold your head, and know your worth,
You've shaped the health of all this Earth.
Wherever next your journey starts,
You carry WHO within your heart.

NATURE'S GIFT

Nature's gift is a reminder for the hustling and bustling world to pause and smell the roses; how the small yet meaningful things in life pass by us. And if you just breathe, look outside, you'll hear a voice saying... *"you'll be fine"*.

There is a quote that says *"And still, after all this time, the sun never says to the earth 'you owe me.' Look what happens with a love like that, it lights the whole sky"*. The Sun gives us daylight; the moon brightens the night sky. We could all capture a little light and share it with those around us. After all, there's never ending supply!

PARADISE

As the rainbow crowned the big blue sky,
beautiful birds spread wide their wings to fly.
Little children were out playing by the riverside,
just watching nature's gift made
me feel like paradise.

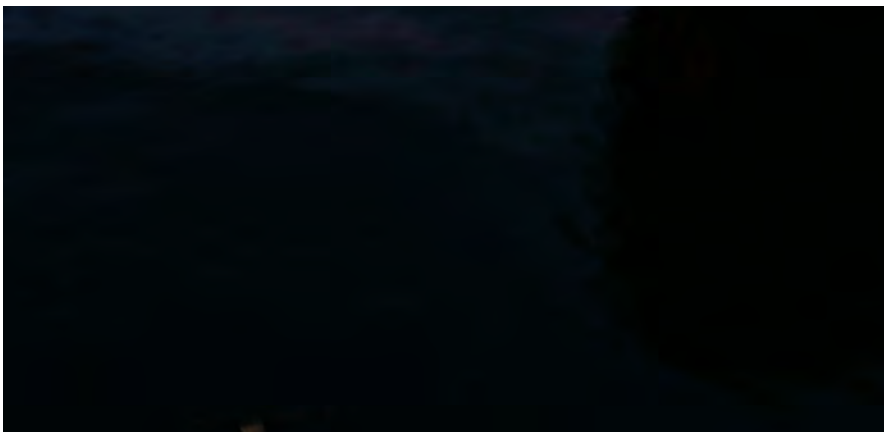
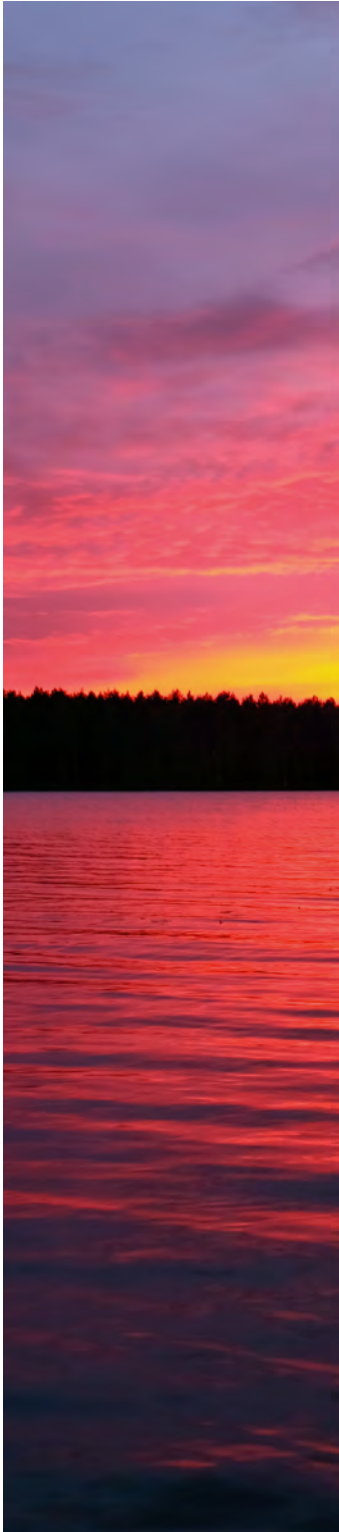
THE LIGHT

Come dawn he shines gold and bright
come dusk she shimmers full and white.
With every step you take, they give
you clear sight
selfless, pure, never fail to shed light.

They give in abundance wherever you are
let us too give wherever we are.
Join your palms and say a prayer
Thank the lord this gift so rare.

In this era every being will age,
time is life so cherish this age.
There comes a time you close your eyes,
little did you know, they never die.

So keep this light in you in this life,
take it with you to afterlife.
Reach out high and fill your heart,
may you glow glorious in the dark.



Poetic encouragement to WHO staff:
Strong hearts carry Health for All.
Gratitude to those who served with devotion.
May new journeys bring light and joy.

LE MENTAL

Le poème « Le Mental » évoque les fragilités et les tourments de l'esprit humain, tout en célébrant sa capacité à se relever, à puiser dans la sagesse, la simplicité et le moment présent pour transformer le chaos en harmonie et retrouver la paix intérieure.

Le mental, fragile citadelle, vacille,
Sous le tumulte, il vacille et scintille.
Prisonnier du chaos, il frôle l'abîme,
Fuyant les pensées, il s'enfonce dans l'abîme.
Les jours s'étirent, échos du doute,
L'âme se perd, errant sans route.
Sous la pression du monde, il cherche la clarté,
Chaque souffle devient une prière,
une rareté sacrée.
Le poids du stress menace d'engloutir,
Mais l'art de se protéger réside
dans l'art de fleurir.
Élève-toi au-dessus des vents tumultueux,
Tisse l'harmonie là où le chaos prend vie.
Fais-en une couronne de volonté,
Car l'équilibre n'est jamais fragile, en vérité.
C'est un royaume forgé au nom de la sagesse,
La patience et le calme en sont la flamme
sans faiblesse.
Nourris ton âme d'un souffle vital,
Comme une rivière, pure sous le voile du fatal.
Accueille un geste loyal et apaisant,
Laisse ton cœur trouver la paix, grandissant.
Dans le silence, cherche ta flamme intérieure,
Elle brille plus fort dans l'obscurité de la nuit.
Elle guide tes pas, éclaire ton chemin,
Dans le doute, elle devient ta lumière de matin.
Cultive la force née de l'essentiel,
Car la vraie puissance réside
dans la simplicité, l'essentiel.
La sagesse se trouve
dans les actions quotidiennes,
Dans la beauté d'un moment suspendu,
elle tienne.
Danse, avance, léger comme l'air,
Libère ton mental des chaînes
du jugement amer.
Trouve la liberté dans l'instant,
ici et maintenant,
Car en lui réside le vœu éternel
de ton âme, pleinement.
Lorsque la fatigue appelle, écoute sa voix,
Le repos n'est pas un luxe,
mais un sol sacré, vois.
Il transforme le chaos en douce harmonie,
Et voit la lumière, même dans l'obscurité infini-
nie.
Garde ton optimisme, même dans l'incertitude,
Ton mental voyage, endurent l'obscurité.
Il défie le temps, affronte chaque épreuve,
Dans chaque défi, il trouve son épreuve.

THE MENTAL

The poem "Le Mental" explores the inner struggles and resilience of the human mind, portraying it as a fragile yet powerful force that, through patience, simplicity, and inner peace, can transform chaos into harmony and find strength in the present moment

The mental, a fragile citadel, wavers,
Under the turmoil, it flickers and shimmers.
A prisoner of chaos, it nears the abyss,
Fleeing thoughts, it sinks into the mist.
The days stretch long, echoes of doubt,
The soul gets lost, wandering about.
Under the world's pressure, it seeks clarity,
Each breath becomes a prayer, a sacred rarity.
The weight of stress threatens to consume,
But the art of protection lies
in learning to bloom.
Rise above the tumultuous winds,
Weave harmony where chaos begins.
Make it a crown of willpower,
For balance is never fragility's hour.
It is a kingdom forged in wisdom's name,
Patience and calm, its eternal flame.
Feed your soul with vital breath,
Like a river flowing beneath, pure as death.
Welcome a loyal, soothing touch,
Let your heart find peace, and rise as such.
In silence, seek your inner flame,
It shines brighter in the night's dark frame.
It guides your steps, illuminates your way,
In doubt, it becomes your light of day.
Cultivate strength from the essential core,
For true power lies in simplicity, and more.
Wisdom is found in deeds day by day,
In the beauty of stillness, it finds its way.
Dance, move forward, light as the air,
Free your mental from judgment's snare.
Find freedom in the present, right now,
For in it lies the soul's eternal vow.
When tiredness calls, heed its sound,
Rest is not luxury, but sacred ground.
It transforms chaos into soft harmony,
And sees the light, even in obscurity.
Keep your optimism, even when unsure,
Your mental travels, enduring the obscure.
It defies time, confronts every test,
In each challenge, it finds its quest.

NID DANS LES NUAGES

Ce poème est dédié aux collègues de l'OMS qui quittent notre organisation mais qui feront toujours partie du merveilleux réseau de personnes qui ont donné le meilleur d'elles-mêmes pour la santé publique mondiale. La version originale du poème a été écrite en février 2024 pour la fête d'adieu de notre cher collègue et ami, le Dr Mohammed Alali. Un an et demi plus tard, elle a été légèrement modifiée pour exprimer le souhait de réunir les collègues de l'OMS, où qu'ils se trouvent. Ceux qui ont travaillé dur et sacrifié leur vie pour le bien du monde entier restera toujours dans mon cœur, dans mes pensées et dans mes prières. Une fois OMS, toujours OMS!

Ne pars pas loin
Mon ami!
Si tu dois partir,
Atteins les nuages,
Trouve un pays merveilleux,
Et assure-toi
Que l'arc-en-ciel
Dans nos yeux
Ne s'éteigne jamais.

Oui, je sais,
Tu dois partir
Mais ne pars pas loin
Mon ami.
Installe-toi dans les nuages,
Fais ton nid dans tes pensées,
Reste à proximité dans l'espoir
Que je puisse te voir
Dans le bleu clair.

Rencontrons-nous à nouveau
De temps en temps
Sur la terrasse ensoleillée
Pour un café ou un déjeuner
Où nous pouvons rêver
D'un monde meilleur
Avec la santé pour tous,
Un idéal commun inspirant
Qui a toujours été
Notre objectif commun.

Quand tu partiras, mon ami,
Ne dis pas au revoir!
Souris simplement et vole
Avec un souhait dans les yeux
Que nous nous retrouverons
Quelque part dans le monde,
De manière inattendue, surprenante,
Comme lorsque nous nous sommes rencontrés
pour la première fois,
Avec nos pensées et nos sentiments,
Main dans la main,
Pieds nus dans le sable,
Dans la capitale du pays des rêves.

NEST IN THE CLOUDS

This poem is devoted to WHO colleagues who leave our organization but will always remain part of the wonderful network of people who gave their best to global public health. The original version of the poem was written in February 2024 for the farewell party of dear colleague and friend Dr Mohammed Alali. A year and a half later, it was slightly modified to express a wish for gathering of WHO colleagues wherever they are. Those who worked hard and sacrificed their lives for the benefit of the whole world will always be in my heart, on my mind and in my prayers. Once WHO - forever WHO!

Don't go far
My friend!
If you have to go,
reach the clouds,
Find a wonderland,
And make sure
That the rainbow
in our eyes
never ends.

Yes, I know,
You have to go
But don't go far
My friend.
Settle in the clouds,
Make a nest in the thoughts,
Stay nearby in the hopes
that I may see you
In the light blue.

Let us meet again
Every now and then
At the sunny terrace
For a coffee or lunch
Where we can dream
About a better world
With health for all,
Inspiring shared ideal
Which has always been
Our common goal.

When you go my friend,
Don't say Goodbye!
Just smile and fly
With a wish in your eye
That we'll gather again
Somewhere in the world,
Unexpectedly, surprisingly
As we met for the first time
With thoughts and feelings
hand in hand,
Barefooted in the sand
In the capital of Dreamland.

Massif des Bauges

UN TERRITOIRE D'EXCEPTION

SAVOIR +

Art'Terre



Parc naturel régional du Massif des Bauges



Blotti entre la Savoie et la Haute-Savoie, entouré de villes dynamiques - Chambéry, Annecy, Albertville, Aix-les-Bains -, le Massif des Bauges est un îlot naturel de calcaire gorgé d'eau, d'une grande richesse tant par sa faune et sa flore que par ses espaces agricoles, forestiers et montagneux; sans oublier ses hommes et ses femmes qui le préservent et le font vivre.

Il est parfois des lieux enchanteurs qu'on est loin d'imaginer si près de chez soi. L'endroit est apaisant avec une impression de se retrouver au bon vieux temps. Nul besoin d'aller au bout du monde pour découvrir ce territoire d'exception, loin de cette agitation qui nous entoure au quotidien. Ici, il règne une certaine douceur de vivre emplie de sérénité, idéale pour se ressourcer.

A une heure de Genève, entre les lacs d'Annecy et du Bourget, le Massif des Bauges est une invitation à la découverte et vous accueille pour un séjour à votre rythme, au calme, dans un cadre montagnard préservé. 14 villages constitués de grosses maisons de pierre rassemblées autour de leur église sont dispersés au milieu de ses immensités verdoyantes, entre prairies et forêts. Chacun a sa spécificité à découvrir: École-en-Bauges est un petit bijou situé au pied du Mont Pécloz. Le bourg est traversé par le Chéran, rivière emblématique des Pays de Savoie qui prend sa source sous le versant sud de la Pointe de Chaurionde (2173m). Pour son authenticité et ses grangettes qui servaient à stocker le foin, La Compôte mérite également le détour. Les quelque 250 habitants ont préservé un habitat typique, qui fait la fierté de la commune dont l'activité demeure agricole et liée à la production fromagère. Capitale historique du « Cœur des Bauges », le Châtelard est visible de loin avec son vieux bourg perché sur un verrou glaciaire qui fait office de frontière entre les « Bauges devant » (situées à l'est) et les « Bauges derrière » (à l'ouest). Ici comme dans l'ensemble des villages, la spécialité culinaire locale est bien entendu le fromage, avec notamment la Tome des Bauges, l'unique tomme d'Appellation d'origine protégée, gage de sa qualité. Enfin, Lescheraines dont la base de loisirs vous accueille tout au long de l'année dans un écrin de verdure exceptionnel. Le temps d'un week-end ou d'un séjour, ses plans d'eau aménagés sauront vous combler.

LABEL PARC NATUREL RÉGIONAL

Le label de Parc naturel régional (PNR) remonte à 1967. Il a été mis en place sous le mandat du général De Gaulle avec la volonté de protéger et d'organiser des territoires d'exception. Enfant du cru, André Guerraz, élu maire de Aillon-le-Jeune en 1989, s'était fixé comme objectif de trouver une structure pour protéger ce massif isolé que sont les Bauges. Et c'est ainsi qu'afin de revitaliser ce territoire en voie de désertification tout en préservant et en valorisant son patrimoine remarquable, il a été décidé de créer en 1995 le Parc naturel régional du Massif des Bauges. A l'époque, c'était une vraie idée nouvelle car les PNR n'étaient pas encore si nombreux. Le travail a été long, mais grâce à un élan collectif porté par un grand enthousiasme, il a porté ses fruits.

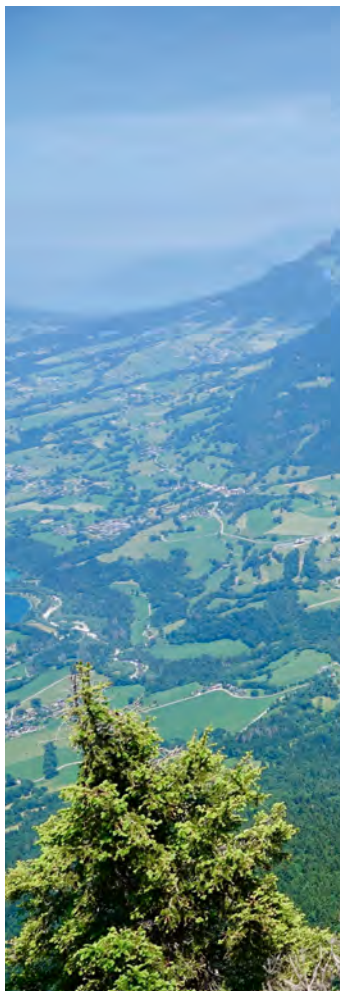
Dix années plus tard, la dynamique du sillon alpin et les premières actions du Parc ont inversé les tendances. Le PNR du Massif des Bauges se dote d'une seconde charte afin de poursuivre le travail de préservation et de mise en valeur du territoire, ainsi que d'en concilier son usage entre les activités agricoles, forestières et touristiques. Véritable outil qui permet de renouveler la labellisation « Parc naturel régional », cette charte permet surtout d'adapter les actions aux enjeux et aux défis grâce à une stratégie de long terme.

Sous la gouvernance de Philippe Gamen et Jean-Luc Desbois, respectivement président et directeur du PNR, une troisième charte est actuellement en cours de signature. Ces objectifs pour les 15 années à venir porteront sur la protection des patrimoines naturel, culturel et paysager, l'aménagement du territoire de manière équilibrée et durable, le développement de l'économie et du lien social, l'accueil, l'éducation et l'information des publics et l'expérimentation des solutions innovantes pour relever les défis environnementaux et sociétaux.

Aujourd'hui, le Parc qui fête son trentième anniversaire regroupe 71 communes et 5 villes portes réparties sur 90 200 hectares. Tutoyant les rives des lacs d'Annecy et du Bourget, il compte une population avoisinant les 90 000 habitants.

TEXT & PHOTOS
CLAUDE MAILLARD

Des 14 sommets du PNR des Bauges dépassant les 2000m, le Colombier d'Aillon offre un panorama exceptionnel sur le Massif et bien au-delà.



Nul besoin d'aller au bout du monde pour découvrir ce territoire d'exception que sont les Bauges.

Espace naturel d'exception, le territoire abrite plus de 2800 espèces animales et plus de 1800 espèces de fleurs. Au cœur du massif, la Réserve nationale de Chasse et de Faune sauvage des Bauges protège chamois, mouflons, lynx, marmottes, téttras-lyres... La préservation de cette biodiversité exceptionnelle est également l'une des priorités du Parc.

GÉOPARC MONDIAL UNESCO

En 2011, le Parc naturel régional du Massif des Bauges obtient le label Géoparc mondial, devenant alors le 3^e situé en France. Ce label soutenu par l'UNESCO reconnaît la richesse géologique exceptionnelle d'une région ainsi que la mise en valeur qui en est faite. Il contribue à son développement durable, qu'il soit touristique ou économique. Habitées depuis le Néolithique, les Bauges révèlent un patrimoine culturel, architectural et géologique remarquable. On peut lire dans ses paysages ou au détour de sites exceptionnels quelques pages de l'histoire des Alpes et de la Terre. Remarqué pour ses grands reliefs calcaires jalonnés de magnifiques synclinaux perchés, le Géoparc du Massif des Bauges se distingue aussi par un patrimoine souterrain et aquatique exceptionnel. Il témoigne aussi d'un riche passé glaciaire qui a modelé ses formes, organisé la circulation de ses eaux souterraines, conditionné les pratiques agricoles. Cet héritage géologique a longtemps orienté toute l'histoire de l'occupation humaine.

Calme, sérénité et beauté des paysages des Bauges ont certainement inspiré bon nombre d'artistes – verriers, sculpteurs, photographes, peintres... – qui ont choisi de s'y installer pour réaliser leurs créations. Au même titre que les artisans et producteurs locaux, leur travail est proposé par le collectif Art'Terre dont la boutique éthique se situe au Châtelard. On y trouve des objets faits main, des pièces uniques, des productions favorisant au mieux les circuits courts et respectueuses de l'environnement. De plus, Art'Terre accepte la monnaie locale ELEF, ce qui ancre un peu plus son activité dans l'économie du Massif des Bauges.

PARADIS DES RANDONNEURS

Les Bauges se présentent comme une citadelle entourée de contreforts montagneux propice aux excursions. Avec 14 sommets à plus de 2000m et près de 400 itinéraires de balade recensés, c'est carrément un petit paradis pour les randonneurs.

Entre alpages, flore variée et vue à 360° depuis le Colombier d'Aillon à la croix du Nivolet et son panorama plongeant sur Chambéry et le lac du Bourget, le Massif des Bauges offre une diversité de randonnées inégalée. L'ascension de la Pointe de l'Arcalod, plus haut sommet du massif qui culmine à 2217 m d'altitude, de la Dent d'Arclusaz qui fait face à la chaîne des Alpes ou encore de la Pointe de la Sambuy qui domine le lac d'Annecy vous laissera également de magnifiques souvenirs.

Entre points de vue sur les lacs, crêtes aériennes et vallées perchées, il y en a pour tous les niveaux et toutes les envies. Que vous soyez marcheur du dimanche ou randonneur aguerri, le massif a de quoi combler votre appétit d'évasion.

Plusieurs sentiers permettent d'appréhender ce territoire riche en fossiles, structures minéralogiques et paysages sculptés par le temps. Une immersion accessible et passionnante dans l'histoire géologique des Préalpes. L'hiver, le grand plateau de La Féclaz et du Revard devient un paradis pour les amateurs de ski de fond. C'est même le premier site de France pour cette pratique, avec plus de 150km de pistes balisées.

Les Baujus – habitants des Bauges – sauront vous faire partager l'amour de leur pays qui vous séduira autant qu'il vous surprendra. A pied, à cheval, avec un âne, à vélo, en parapente, à ski, en raquettes... ce territoire est un formidable terrain de découverte. //

Implantée sur un éperon rocheux surplombant la ville de Chambéry, la Croix du Nivolet culmine à une altitude de 1547 m.



Le village de La Compôte, une pépite à découvrir cachée au cœur du Massif des Bauges.



Call for Applications Appel à candidatures

DEADLINE EXTENDED - DATE LIMITE PROLONGÉE

COMITÉ ÉDITORIAL DU MAGAZINE *NEWSPECIAL*
NEWSPECIAL MAGAZINE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE



The *newSpecial* magazine builds on over 75 years of history of its predecessor publication – the UN Special magazine. Since 2019, *newSpecial* has continued to be a strong voice for civil servants working at international organizations in Geneva.

This call is for members of the Editorial Committee of the magazine, including:

1. **Eight (8)** contributing members who will cover at least two of the areas of the magazine and contribute to at least 10 articles per year). Magazine areas are:

- International Agencies in Geneva
- International Geneva
- Civil servants and staff issues
- Photo and visual essays
- Leisure and hiking
- Health and well-being
- Art and culture
- WHO and related work

2. **Two (2)** copy editors who will edit the content of 10 issues per year in English and French plus have a command of another UN language to occasionally edit articles in another UN language).

This is voluntary engagement and is open **only** to current staff members of international organizations in Geneva. All members selected will serve for a two-year term starting in November 2025.

Please send a short note (a couple of paragraphs), indicating which position you are interested in and the experience you will bring to the editorial board. Please include a short CV.

Your letter should be addressed to Dr Garry Aslanyan, Editor-in-Chief, *newSpecial* magazine and emailed to info@newspecial.org, no later than **30 November 2025**.

newSpecial est le magazine qui, en 2019, a hérité des plus de 75 ans d'Histoire de son prédécesseur UN Special. *newSpecial* reste une voix entendue au sein de la communauté internationale à Genève.

Cet appel à candidatures a pour objet de trouver de nouveaux volontaires qui seraient intéressés à rejoindre notre équipe et contribueront :

1. **Huit (8)** membres contributeurs qui couvriront au moins deux des domaines du magazine et contribueront à au moins 10 articles par an). Les thématiques du magazine abordent :

- Agences internationales à Genève
- Genève Internationale
- Fonctionnaires et problème de personnel
- Essais photographiques et visuels
- Loisirs et randonnées
- Santé et bien être
- Art et culture
- Travail de l'OMS et lié

2. **Deux (2)** relecteurs-correcteurs éditeront le contenu de 10 numéros par an, en anglais et en français et maîtriseront une autre langue de l'ONU. Ils pourront, de manière occasionnelle, éditer des articles dans une autre langue de l'ONU.

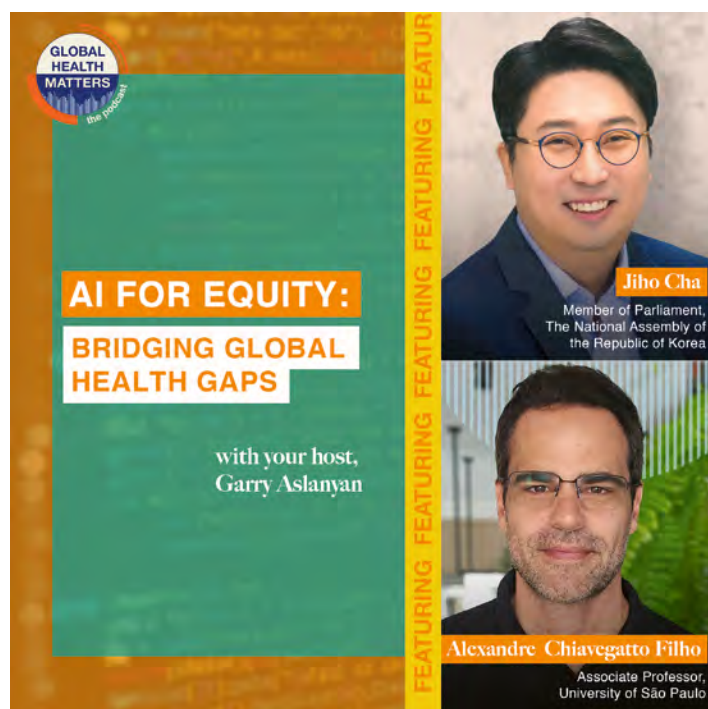
Ce travail est bénévole et est ouvert **uniquement** aux membres du personnel actuels des organisations internationales à Genève. Les membres sélectionnés exerceront un mandat de deux ans à compter de novembre 2025.

Merci de bien vouloir envoyer une courte note (quelques paragraphes), indiquant le poste qui vous intéresse, l'expérience que vous comptez apporter au comité de rédaction et d'inclure un court CV.

Votre lettre devra être adressée par courrier électronique au Dr Garry Aslanyan, rédacteur en chef du magazine et envoyée au plus tard le **30 novembre 2025** à l'adresse suivante : info@newspecial.org.

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MESSAGE DU COMITÉ DE RÉDACTION

Aimeriez-vous partager votre opinion avec nous au sujet de newSpecial et de son contenu ? Nous serons toujours ravis de lire vos réactions. Les réponses intéressantes, parfois même ingénieuses et constructives seront publiées dans le magazine. Souhaitez-vous soumettre un article, un sujet ? Vous pouvez nous contacter quand vous le souhaitez.

Adressez vos commentaires à :
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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Would you like to share your opinion about newSpecial and its contents? 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 or a subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

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