

UN Special

Disarmament

A SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE TASK

N°780 – JUNE 2018

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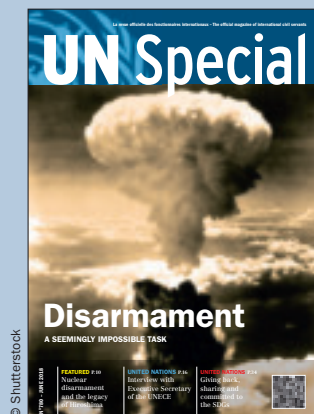
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3 After many years of political hindrance, the Conference on Disarmament is back at work in full force in 2018. This is an issue close to our hearts as we have many colleagues working at this venerable institution at the Palais and its Secretary General is the UNOG Director General. In this edition we offer you an overview of the institution, the process and several perspectives on the future of disarmament. After all, this has been, it certainly is, and it will continue to be, one of humanity's highest aspirations. On this subject, you will hear from Hiroshima's Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki about the role of Hiroshima to promote a world free from nuclear weapons and from Ambassador and permanent representative of Sri Lanka Mr. A.L.A. Azeez.

16 In this edition you will also find an interview of UNECE Executive Secretary Ms. Olga Algayerova, who shares her views and the projects of this important regional Commission. You will also read about the Republic of Tajikistan's contributions to International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development".

22 Additionally, you will read about the extraordinary life of Polish General Kosciuszko who fought for freedom and human rights.

22 Several other articles are relevant to UN staff, including an exploration of the value and constraints of job descriptions, the issue of monitoring and the future of work. Other topics include various initiatives, such as the 'End Polio Now' tulips, the Geneva bike2work and Greycells, an association UN retirees for development.

28 Finally, we hope our readers will enjoy the first installment of travel stories about volcanos, as well as a glimpse of 1816, the so called "Year Without a Summer".

38 Happy reading! ■

Après de nombreuses années d'obstacles politiques, la Conférence du désarmement est de retour en 2018. C'est un sujet qui nous tient à cœur, vu les nombreux collègues qui travaillent dans cette vénérable institution du Palais et dont le Secrétaire général est le Directeur général de l'ONUG. Dans cette édition, nous vous offrons une vue d'ensemble de l'institution et de plusieurs perspectives sur l'avenir du désarmement. Après tout, cela a été, est et continuera d'être l'une des aspirations les plus élevées de l'humanité. Sur le même sujet, vous pourrez lire sur le rôle d'Hiroshima dans la promotion d'un monde sans armes nucléaires, ainsi qu'une contribution de l'ambassadeur et représentant permanent du Sri Lanka M. A.L.A. Azeez.

Dans cette édition, vous trouverez également une interview de la Secrétaire exécutive de la CEE-ONU, M^{me} Olga Algayerova, qui parle des projets de cette importante commission. Vous lirez aussi sur la contribution de la République du Tadjikistan à la Décennie internationale d'action «L'eau au service du développement durable».

De plus, vous lirez sur la vie du général polonais Kosciuszko, défenseur de la liberté et les droits de l'homme.

Plusieurs autres articles sont d'intérêt pour le personnel de l'ONU, tel que celui sur la valeur et contraintes des descriptions d'emploi et l'avenir du travail.

D'autres sujets incluent diverses initiatives, telles que les tulipes 'End Polio Now', le Geneva bike2work et Greycells, une association de retraités de l'ONU pour le développement.

Enfin, nous espérons que nos lecteurs apprécieront le récit de voyage sur les volcans, ainsi qu'un aperçu de 1816, «l'année sans été».

Bonne lecture! ■

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

La revue officielle des fonctionnaires internationaux des Nations Unies à Genève et de l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé



Ramin et Leili
Varembé





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A race to peace

Disarmament, the act of reducing, limiting, or abolishing weapons, is a cornerstone for human development as enshrined in the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations (UN).

Consequently, our organization has long been at the forefront of attempting this seemingly impossible task. It is time to reflect on the socio-economic burden of armament, what we are doing against it today, and what keeps the scales tilted towards peace, rather than nuclear devastation.

SEBASTIAN HOFBAUER, UNITAR

A costly burden

The world spent US\$1.69 trillion on military expenditures in 2016, or the equivalent of US\$227 per person that year. To put this in perspective, US\$227 is one third of the annual income a poor person in the developing world needs to receive to merely eat, if you consider that since 2015 the World Bank defines the international extreme poverty line at US\$1.90 per day. Another way to understand how offensive this amount is, relates to the ongoing discussion on the financing for the Agenda 2030. According to The Guardian, it is estimated that US\$1,4 trillion per year are needed to pay for all the projects, programmes, and initiatives involved in national development plans and the like. So, in the hypothetical, utopian, unrealistic, and highly unlikely scenario in which the world governments would decide to embrace peace

and disarmament, we should be able to pay in full for the global fight against poverty and actually keep some change. I am an optimist but I am doubtful that many of us will see this in their lifetime.

Strength in the 21st century

Why is that? The answer is rather simple. Armament remains the most tangible tool of power of short-sighted political leaders, in both the developed and the developing world. Armies and their weapons are still seen as a means to project power to the world, to your neighbours, and perhaps more importantly, to the citizens that you govern. It takes a lot of guts to get rid of your military power if you are a progressive leader. And even if you attempt to do that, you would always be accused of a lack of patriotism and of being irresponsible towards the future of your nation. It is a natural reaction of societies to feel protected by the ability to use force and the capacity to



Topol-M, an intercontinental ballistic missile in preparation for Victory Parade in Moscow

deploy a traditional army. So is this changing in the 21st Century? Perhaps it is, as more and more citizens are waking up to the new reality of terrorism and (lack of) cybersecurity. The concept of a traditional army is changing rapidly but the financial requirements remain the same. Now the strength of an army is not measured in number of men, airplanes, tanks, or naval destroyers. Instead, it is assessed based on the capacity to protect a country against a cyberattack, a terrorist act, technological espionage, or unlawful surveillance. To keep you safe, defence ministries are now focusing on mastering asymmetric warfare and embracing new tactics and weapons to fight a non-traditional enemy.

A necessary effort

And so, while change seems to be the only constant in this admittedly still young 21st century, it is rather safe to say that the importance of disarmament will not be diminished. On the contrary, the emergence of new technologies, empowered actors and the threat of a new nuclear arms race serve as a reminder. We must pursue global disarmament as a foundation for international security, as agreed in the UN

Charter. Indeed, our Secretary-General recently reiterated that “the current international security situation underscores the vital need to restore disarmament as an integral component of our collective efforts to prevent armed conflict and to maintain international peace and security.” Yet, while the need for effective disarmament is clear, advancing towards it – let alone achieving it – remains a challenge that often seems overwhelming. Let us take a closer look at the global instruments in place that aim to take this challenge on.

A truly complicated agenda

It is a sad reality that we are reminded all too often of the dire necessity of disarmament. Should we simply accept that illegal arms flows undermine our fragile sustainable development efforts by feeding into conflict and diverting resources? Our organization already maintains an active role, tackling the issue of disarmament on several fronts. Indeed, the UN created what amounts to an extensive list of milestone frameworks on disarmament. The next article takes a closer look at one of them, as it was put back in the spotlight in recent weeks: the Conference on Disarmament.

While tremendous progress has been made, the Conference’s mission, as you will see, is not a simple one. The fact that its members represent all regions of the world also means that different positions, opinions, and interests are bound to collide. This makes reaching compromise sometimes difficult and renders progress susceptible to vetoing, when not all interests can be met. In the field of nuclear non-proliferation, for example, nuclear-armed states are resolved on remaining in their position indefinitely. On the other side, a majority of countries are determined to achieve prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons sooner than later.

In recent years, this has limited the progress of the Conference. In what has been termed an “unexpected achievement” by members of the disarmament community, recent weeks however have seen progress towards revitalizing the work of the Conference and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations. After intensive consultations, the current President of the Conference, Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha of Sri Lanka, announced the decision of the Conference to re-start its substantive work. In

the current international context of tensions and renewed risk of use of nuclear weapons, tangible progress is a much-needed signal. The revitalized work of the Conference gives us reason to be optimistic. Now, to say it with the words of our Secretary-General, “the most difficult part lies ahead: [...] the resumption of negotiations”.

Nuclear peace

The fear of a nuclear conflict reached its peak during the Cold War when the conflict between two nuclear superpowers threatened to escalate. That it didn’t, ironically, can be attributed at least in part to nuclear weapons themselves. Both the United States and the Soviet Union developed and deployed hard-to-defend ballistic missiles. The emphasis of their military strategy hence became deterrence based on nuclear retaliation. If one of the adversaries launched a nuclear attack, the other one was sure to respond with an equally devastating counter-measure. This stand-off played a significant role in keeping the war cold. While various nuclear arms control measures designed to maintain crisis stability also contributed to this, the most important reason was the fear of mutually assured

destruction (MAD). Thus, it may be argued that nuclear weapons, if equipped with a reliable retaliatory capability, can function to prevent war. Unsurprisingly, things are not that simple.

Without delving too far into this issue, it must be noted that the unique characteristic of nuclear weapons had another effect with detrimental consequences: a nuclear arms race. Each country's nuclear deterrence relied on the credible threat of deadly counter-attacks, thus requiring the building of a credible retaliatory capability. A vicious circle resulted, where each country came under pressure to increase the number of their nuclear warheads in anticipation of the other country doing the same. Thankfully, direct conflict was ultimately avoided. The fruits of the arms race, however, are still with us today: an estimated

14,175 nuclear weapons worldwide, with the United States and Russia accounting for 92 percent of them.

A threatened balance

While 14,175 nuclear weapons certainly sound chilling to anyone, if they have an intrinsic characteristic to never be used, why then should we get rid of them? The short answer is that they are simply too dangerous to allow them to spread. Their effects, if used, are far too cruel to be acceptable, as the world witnessed first-hand when the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. More than that, the balance MAD brings is indeed a fragile one. For the nuclear threat to remain cold, mutually deterrent relationships are necessary and these are hard to attain. We cannot hope to establish this fragile balance between a larger and larger group of countries. What's more, disruptive new technologies,

in the realms of cyber, space, missile-defense, or autonomous systems, threaten to completely change the rules of the game.

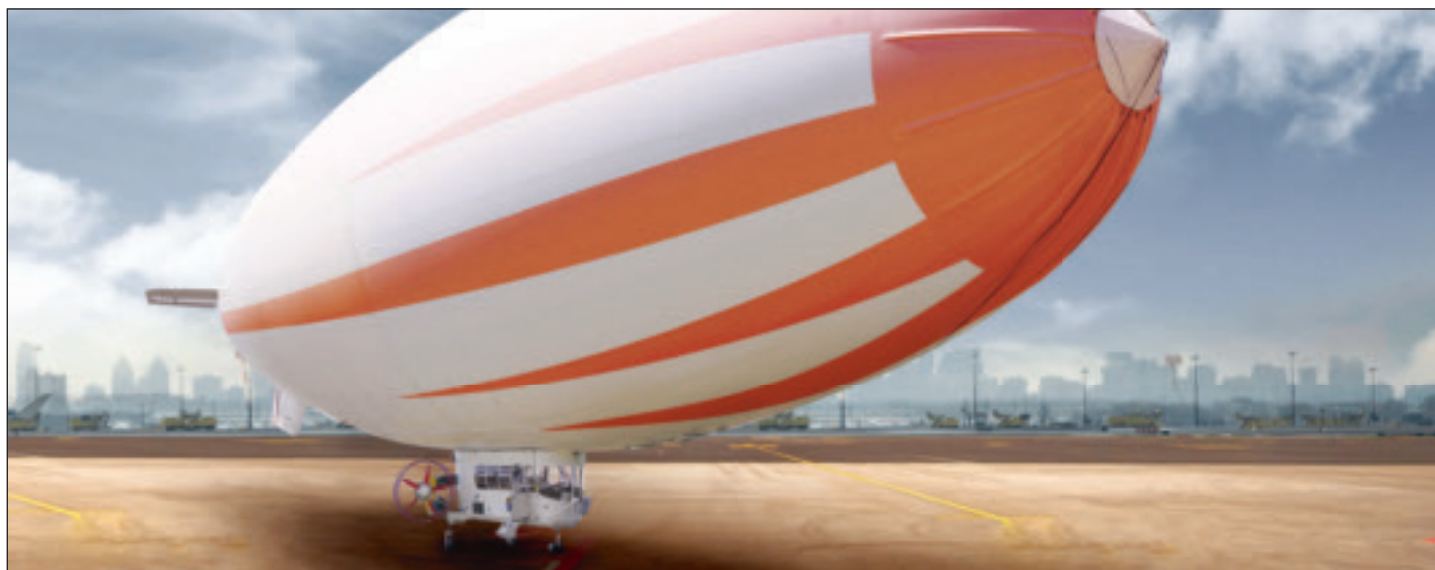
On the other hand, some argue that nuclear weapons are losing strategic importance. Current money-flows, unfortunately, speak another language. As you read this, global nuclear powers are investing immense sums into the modernization of their nuclear capabilities. At the same time, other states are hard at work to join the coveted club. The numbers are clear: even in today's world, nuclear weapons retain a unique military and political merit that other weapons cannot provide.

Tilting the scales

This brings us back to disarmament and to current events in Geneva. The Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons (NPT) is currently holding its second session in our city. The NPT stipulates both the prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear arms reduction. It has been under severe strain for some time, largely due to the tension between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapons states. Nonetheless, the effect on stability of negotiations and treaties, such as the NPT, should not be overlooked. Recent events in Geneva give us reason to be hopeful.

During the Cold War, the world narrowly escaped what would have been a global nuclear disaster. Then, MAD served as the ultimate deterrent but one thing is now certain: the balance this entails is indeed a fragile one. Today, after two World Wars and one barely avoided nuclear catastrophe, the scales can tilt in either direction. It is in our hands. ■



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Can Geneva become again the city of disarmament?

As the ‘city of peace’, Geneva has been after World War I and World War II the place where the most important disarmament agreements have been negotiated.



Overview of the Conference on Disarmament at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland May 16, 2017. Picture taken with a fisheye lens.

MARC FINAUD¹, GCSP

In the last two decades, however, the paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has led the international community to find alternative venues for new initiatives in this area. Will the new plan launched by Secretary-General António Guterres revitalise this crucial role for Geneva? Such an opportunity should not be missed.

After the first devastating world conflict, one of the pillars of the League of Nations was disarmament as a means of making new wars impossible. Article 8 of the League's Covenant outlined the goal of reducing armaments “to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations”. The Geneva Protocol was adopted in 1925, prohibiting the use in war of chemical and bacteriological weapons. But the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments that took place between 1932 and 1937 was unable to agree on the differences between defensive and offensive weapons and failed to stop Hitler's militarism that caused a new cataclysm.

With the establishment of the United Nations, efforts were continued although disarmament was considered not as an end in itself but a means of increasing security. In the Cold war system of balance of terror, both superpowers realized that they needed to work with the rest of the international community to reduce armaments while preserving strategic stability. With France and the United Kingdom, they initiated the Geneva-based Ten-Nation Disarmament Committee in 1960, expanded to the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee in 1962 and then to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in 1968. The current Conference on Disarmament (CD) was formally established in 1978 and enlarged to 65 members in 1995.

We may sometimes tend to forget it but the overall record of the Geneva-based institution, mandated to negotiate multilateral disarmament agreements on behalf of the global community, is quite impressive. It includes: the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the 1971 treaty prohibiting the deployment of

nuclear weapons on the seabed; the 1977 Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques (ENMOD); the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC); the 1992 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC); and the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

During the same period, both the United States and the Soviet Union and then Russia chose Geneva as the ideal venue for their bilateral negotiations on arms control: the 1985 Reagan-Gorbachev summit paved the way to the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF); the START Treaty signed in 1991 was the outcome of the Nuclear and Space Talks held in Geneva since 1982 and it resulted in a 35%-cut in both countries' strategic arsenals. In 2009 the New START Treaty was also negotiated mostly in Geneva. On another issue, the largest share of the 2015 international agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme (JCPOA) was discussed and formalised in Geneva by the so-called P5+1 group and Iran.

But after adopting the CTBT in 1996, the CD became paralysed by a lack of consensus about the negotiation of new agreements related to items on its agenda: nuclear disarmament, prohibition of production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, assurances of non-attack of non-nuclear weapon states with nuclear weapons, prevention of an arms race in outer space, etc.

In the meantime, civil society organisations initiated new agreements aimed at prohibiting or regulating categories of weapons that cause or may cause mass casualties among civilians in conflict areas. But those new treaties were negotiated and adopted outside Geneva, even if expertise from Geneva contributed to their success: antipersonnel landmines (1997 Ottawa Convention), cluster munitions (2008 Oslo Convention), small arms and light weapons (2001 UN Programme of Action), conventional arms trade (2013 Arms Trade Treaty – ATT), and most recently the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons (negotiated and adopted in New York in 2017).

In order to regain some relevance and credibility, the CD adopted in February 2018 a decision establishing subsidiary bodies to ascertain whether there would be common ground on some of its agenda items lending themselves to new negotiations. To date, no breakthrough took place, in an international context marked by rising tensions and the erosion of the taboo about any use of weapons of mass destruction, especially chemical weapons.

It is true that, in parallel, Geneva remained an active venue for other disarmament-related activities: it hosts regular meetings of states parties of the BTWC and that treaty's Implementation Support Unit (ISU) is based within the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs; the Preparatory Committee of the Review Conference of the NPT just concluded its two-week session in Geneva; expert meetings also work here on the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (or Inhumane Weapons Convention – CCW) and its additional protocols, also discussing possible regulation of the so-called 'Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems'; the ATT Secretariat is also located in Geneva, and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) offers regular training, among others, for officials implementing that treaty while the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian

Demining, another host of the 'Maison de la paix', is the site of the Implementation Support Units of the Ottawa and the Oslo Conventions. To this concentration of expertise, the Geneva-based UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) adds its own recognized authority.

The new comprehensive disarmament plan launched by Secretary-General António Guterres on 24 May 2018 in Geneva is a challenge to all the Geneva-based institutions, and especially the CD. Indeed it re-establishes an important link between disarmament, security, and conflict prevention, one of the key missions of the

UN, and calls for action in all categories of weapons, including new disruptive technologies. Either the Conference seizes this opportunity to give impetus to its work, in partnership with the other relevant institutions in Geneva, and it meets the international demands for a more secure world at a lower level of armaments of all types. Or it sentences itself to irrelevance and oblivion, while solutions will be found elsewhere. ■

1 Marc Finaud is a former French diplomat who has been seconded to the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) from 2004 to 2016 and now works for that foundation, teaching and researching about arms proliferation and the Middle East.



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Nuclear disarmament and the legacy of Hiroshima

The government of Hiroshima has a unique role to play in the nuclear non-proliferation movement and nuclear disarmament.

SARAH BENCHERIF, UNOG

Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki is the current governor of Hiroshima Prefecture in Japan. As governor, he has developed new initiatives in the field of nuclear disarmament. On November 2011, he announced a new plan to formulate a road map for nuclear abolition through the cooperation of former government officials. The project is entitled *Hiroshima for Global Peace*. Prior to being elected governor in 2009, he served in the Ministry of International Trade and Industry of Japan. He earned his MBA from Stanford Graduate School of Business in 1995 and graduated in law from the University of Tokyo in 1990.

UN Special met him when he came to Geneva last April to participate in the 2018 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

Alex Mejia, Editor-in-Chief, *UN Special*: If I can begin by asking you as the Governor of Hiroshima Prefecture, why is disarmament important for you and your prefecture?

Governor Yuzaki: In Hiroshima, we are the first place in human history to have been bombed by this nuclear weapon, and there are so many people who died and who suffered from it. It is our responsibility and our duty as their successors to promote a world free from nuclear weapons.

Thank you. The government of Hiroshima has a unique role to play in the nuclear non-proliferation movement. Please describe some of the specific measures your Prefecture has taken over the years to promote nuclear disarmament.

We formulated the “Hiroshima for Global Peace Plan”, with which Mr. Mejia kindly helped us. In this Plan, Hiroshima’s unique role and mission are clear. We have a comprehensive approach to peace issues: one is to force nuclear disarmament and the other one is to build peace and reconstruction in a comprehensive manner. One initiative that we are taking in the nuclear disarmament field, is to issue a Hiroshima report, which evaluates the country’s actions according to 65 action items. Another one is a “Hiroshima Round Table” where discussions are held mainly on disarmament or deterrence, especially



Mr. Hidehiko Yuzaki governor of Hiroshima Prefecture in Japan at Palais des Nations, April 2018.

in North East Asia, and this is also tracked to meeting with participants from Asia Pacific. We also have a “World Business Conference for World Peace” as an effort to involve business in peace issues. They have a big influence and there are a lot of things that they can do to promote peace. These are some of the concrete initiatives that we are taking.

As the year 1945 unfortunately recedes further into the past, do you worry about the world’s collective memory fading? What can

The atomic nightmare

On August 6, 1945, at approximately 2:00 a.m. an American B-29 bomber named the Enola Gay left the island of Tinian for Hiroshima. This mission was piloted by Colonel Paul Tibbets, who named the bomber after his mother.

After 6:00, the bomb was fully armed on board. Tibbets announced to the crew that the plane was carrying the world’s first atomic bomb.

At 7:25, the Enola Gay was cruising over Hiroshima. By 8:00, Japanese radar detected B-29s heading toward

the city, and radio stations broadcast a warning for people to take shelter, but many ignored it. A T-shaped bridge near downtown Hiroshima was the target.

At 8:15 a.m., the atomic bomb, code-named Little Boy exploded, instantly killing 80,000 to 140,000 people and seriously injuring 100,000 more. Crewmembers of the Enola Gay saw a column of smoke rising fast and intense fires springing up.

In less than one second, the fireball had expanded to 900 feet. The blast wave shattered windows for a distance

of ten miles and was felt as far away as 37 miles. To the crew of the Enola Gay, Hiroshima had disappeared under a thick foam of flames and smoke. The co-pilot, Captain Robert Lewis, commented, “My God, what have we done?”

About 30 minutes after the explosion, a heavy “black rain” began falling, full of dirt, dust, soot and highly radioactive particles.

The survivors, known as hibakusha, sought relief from their injuries, but 90 percent of all medical personnel were killed or disabled.

and must be done to keep the world from forgetting, so people remember?

It is true that the *Hibakusha*¹, the survivors, are aging and they will not be here forever, it is an inevitable thing. So what is important is to pass on those experiences to the next generations. There are many efforts towards that. One is young people and people of the next generation be able to hear testimonies from the actual *Hibakusha* and also conceptually: educating young people regarding the use of nuclear weapons and also how we approach the nuclear disarmament issues, so that people will work on disarmament and towards our final goal of nuclear weapon abolition.

Congratulations on that, engaging youth and children is very important. Another question: How is your national government engaged in disarmament issues at the United Nations, including in the UN Conference on Disarmament? Can you tell us in general terms the role of the Government of Japan?

The Government of Japan is trying to brace between the Nuclear-Weapon States and those who are proponents mainly of the Ban Treaty (UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, editor's note) because there has been a gap between them and the communications have stalled. But we need the involvement of all the countries and the parties to advance on the nuclear issue.

You came to Geneva to participate in the 2018 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. In your opinion, what have been the outcomes so far? What happens next?

Again, regarding the Ban Treaty, the gap between countries has been widening and this is a serious issue. At the last review conference, there was no statement adopted just because of this gap. So through this preparatory process, we would like to create an environment where Nuclear-Weapon States and Non-Nuclear-Weapon States can work together and come up with concrete actions for the 2020 review meeting and move towards nuclear disarmament.

In a few sentences, what is the single most important message you would like to convey to UN diplomats and civil servants about their role to play in nuclear disarmament?

GY: Actually, it is merely a stroke of luck that nuclear detonation has not happened. There could be an accident or misjudgment, or other ways which could lead to

the use of a nuclear weapon. Once they are used, it is a catastrophe for all human beings and for the earth. NGOs and local governments can do a lot of things but it is in the diplomats' hands to save humankind and the earth, so we hope they will work very hard, it is an important message.

One more question: Why have you been investing in Afghanistan for all these years?

At the UN we admire this continuous effort to invest in Afghanistan. Why do you do this?

We are working on disarmament issues and reconstruction and building peace issues, and these two go together. And because having a stable society is a very important element, here I am talking about security.

We went through destruction and reconstruction and we hold a symbolic meaning for people from Afghanistan or other countries in post-conflict situations. We would like to show them how people can work together to build a peaceful society.

Indeed, and on behalf of the UN our gratitude to you and your people for your generosity. Thank you. ■

¹ *Hibakusha* is the Japanese word for the surviving victims of the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The word literally translates as "explosion-affected people" and is used to refer to people who were exposed to radiation from the bombings.



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The liability issues related to the use of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)

With the evolution of technology, new weapons with increasing degrees of autonomy and Artificial Intelligence are making their way to the battlefield, with lower – or no – levels of human control.

GUILLAUME FOURNIER, IHL¹

Their use will raise important accountability issues. Should they malfunction, get hacked, misjudge situations or deliver excessive, or unjustified use of force, will there be a chain of accountability? Can the use of such weapons potentially create accountability gaps?

Those taking part in hostilities must respect the fundamental rules of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). If they willingly and actively commit violations, they can be held accountable under International Criminal Law. But LAWS are only machines, while the ICC (The International Criminal Court) limits its jurisdiction to natural persons.

Would operators controlling LAWS be individually liable? They could be if they willingly use weapons under their control to commit IHL violations. But if LAWS can target and shoot on their own without direct human control, then there is no operator to hold accountable. What about commanders?

Could they be held individually accountable under

International Criminal Law for IHL violations committed by LAWS deployed under their command? If these weapons are truly autonomous commanders would not be able to predict – let alone stop – IHL violations and therefore might not be held accountable for these violations. They cannot be considered subordinates since they are machines with no will.

So, programmers? Obviously, they could be accountable if they willingly programmed LAWS to commit war crimes. Most likely, violations of IHL will be the result of shortcomings in programming, failures, systems breakdown, etc. Programmers could also possibly be held accountable if it can be proven that they did not take all precautionary measures to prevent such events. But in most cases, it will be difficult to hold programmers accountable for violations committed by weapons they programmed.

Would it be possible to hold the weapons manufacturer accountable, under national corporate criminal responsibility, national corporate civil liability or International Criminal Law?

Some countries such as the USA, UK, France, Israel and Canada have corporate criminal responsibility laws under which manufacturers can be held criminally liable for illegal actions committed by their employees. The perpetrator would have to commit an illegal action, with the intent to benefit the company. The company would not be liable if an employee sabotaged some machines that would later malfunction.

Manufacturers could potentially be accountable under civil product liability for violations committed by LAWS that they produced; but only in cases of design or manufacturing defects where there is a causal relationship between the damage and the product. Manufacturers cannot be held accountable for unforeseen outcomes or alteration, modification or use of the LAWS by the military. Any lawsuits would be lengthy, expensive and technical, and would require proving the company's responsibility.

Under International Criminal Law, however, companies as moral entities are not subjected to prosecution. Article 25(1) of the Rome Statute makes it clear that the ICC has only jurisdiction over natural persons. Only employees or agents of a company may be prosecuted, and it must be proven that the individuals assisted in the commission or the attempted commission of the crime. This requirement seems difficult to apply with LAWS as it would

require an employee to purposefully produce a weapon to violate IHL.

What about States? States have the international obligation to ensure that their armed forces respect IHL and can be held liable for violating it. These violations must have been conducted by an "organ" of the state, such as the military. The hacking of LAWS by a State, or by a non-state group that could be proven to have acted on behalf of a State, and that would have resulted in such violations, would most likely fall under the same rules. However, the doctrine of sovereign immunity which gives states immunity from prosecutions in foreign courts, makes things difficult for victims, although some countries have ruled that this immunity cannot apply to international crimes and fundamental human rights violations. This immunity of states is extended to heads of states, heads of governments and government employees while acting within the scope of their functions. Some countries such as the USA even extend this immunity to weapons manufacturer in cases involving government contracts, and to the military for its policy to choose weapons, for wartime combat activities, and for acts committed in foreign countries. The functional immunity of acting heads of states and governments applies even in cases of international crimes. In case of IHL violations committed by LAWS, it would be extremely difficult



Vladivostok, Russia – October 5, 2015: Innovation Day of the Ministry of Defence Russian Federation. Exhibition of military technology.

for victims to pursue heads of states. They could possibly pursue other governmental officials if their participation in an international crime can be established, but since most senior level officials would be

immune from prosecution, victims would have little recourse.

So, it seems that, in the current state of international laws, finding anyone to hold accountable for IHL violations committed by

truly autonomous LAWS, could prove challenging.


As long as humans will remain somewhat involved in the overall process, some form of final accountability may still be found, but as such weapons may become truly autonomous and develop the capacity to learn, adapt and make choices other than those programmed, then it will be increasingly difficult to hold anyone accountable. The potential deployment of weapons the actions of which no longer involve human responsibility, and that no longer create accountability for the people who deploy them, would most likely encourage a feeling of impunity.

As a result of this growing gap in liability issues, NGOs such as the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots have called for a preemptive ban on fully

autonomous LAWS without human control. In a 2013 report Christof Heyns the *UN Special Rapporteur* on extrajudicial killings already argued that if the nature of these weapons renders liability impossible, their use should be considered unethical and unlawful.

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UN SG's Disarmament Agenda: Action Now

**A.L.A. AZEEZ, AMBASSADOR AND
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
SRI LANKA**

Progress in Disarmament has been held up for over 20 years, specially since the UN Conference on Disarmament last adopted a Treaty – CTBT – in 1996. All efforts and initiatives aimed at making the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons possible, including by adopting a programme of work, followed by negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament (CD), have since failed. Procedural wrangling and substantive disorientation have consistently marked the functioning of the CD, making it a testing ground of a different sort. Political will and commitment, which are among the foremost drivers of forward movement, are in short supply, and the inequalities inherent to the nuclear disarmament discourse have only accentuated the differences among its membership. Diverse aspects of national security policies, military concepts and strategic security approaches of states have made consensus building beyond reach.

In his address to the students of the University of Geneva launching his disarmament agenda on 24 May 2018, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres graphically captured the dilemma that humanity as a whole faces today, in a language that keepers of the world's conscience have not spoken so resolutely before. He bemoaned the multiple challenges to the survival of humanity, emphatically stating “we are living in a dangerous time” and “the world is going backwards”.

The UN Secretary-General's description of a “world going backwards” meant a lot more than just the reversal of norms,

its centrality being the failure of disarmament-not nuclear alone. His sweep was broader, but it struck at the crux of the problem of insecurity, arising from a lack of progress in disarmament in a broader sense, including lapses in implementation of obligations under the Convention on Chemical Weapons or other treaties. What constituted the core thread running through the fabric of the disarmament agenda was the elimination of all types of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction.

One cannot but hope that the UN Secretary-General's disarmament agenda would be taken seriously and acted upon seriously, as he very pithily put; it not just impacts national security and global security, but human security in particular, calling them “indivisible”. It is evident that the UN Secretary-General has given a new depth to the concept of human security by defining it in terms of both individual and collective survival that faces a potential threat from existing as well as emerging possibilities of the use of WMDs. The dimension of human security, in the disarmament and non-proliferation context, is a refreshing addition to the notion of human security, as thus far known in other areas of UN agenda.

What is the take-home message from the UN Secretary-General's disarmament agenda? How is it going to translate into reality in the most logic-defying and consensus-evasive field of nuclear disarmament?

The use of nuclear weapons, as many have called it in the recent past, is only “a human error away”, even leaving aside other possibilities of their compulsive or impulsive use. But if one would count them in as well, the

impression would be inescapable that humanity is just sitting pretty at the tip of a nuclear volcano waiting to happen anytime, in the absence of a prevention or prohibition regime.

The blurring of lines between familiar arguments advanced by states and the varied understanding of the nature and scope of confidence building measures from one end of the spectrum to the other-one might call them negative security assurances-has befuddled the pursuit of general and complete disarmament.

It is all but clear that the take-home message from the UN Secretary-General's disarmament agenda is “Action Now”. Work on general and complete disarmament cannot be left pending any longer while the reversal of norms has become real. Disarmament to save humanity, disarmament to save lives, and disarmament for future generations is the clarion call that should be heeded to if the world were to survive as one. Meaningful and practical implementation of SDGs calls for such vision in the first place.

The work now has to proceed at multiple levels. The Conference on Disarmament has a mandated role to negotiate and produce an outcome that would have, at its heart, ensuring human security in the form it was articulated in the UN Secretary-General's disarmament agenda. Dialogue needs as well to commence in regions and cross-regions to evolve arms control mechanisms, or more accurately zones of peace free from WMDs, thereby contributing to durable international peace and security while strengthening regional stability. Negative security assurances should be given unambiguous

and unqualified expression as an integral aspect of the goal of eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

Translating all aspects of UN Secretary-General's disarmament agenda into reality calls for the active summoning of the political will, accompanied by a clear “commitment to move forward” – something that is currently in short supply.

In the CD, where inaction had almost become a ‘new normal’, the first reality test has been provided by Decision 2119 adopted in February 2018. Complemented by Decision 2126, this has led to the establishment of 5 Subsidiary Bodies to discuss and build consensus on the varied areas of what could possibly constitute the work programme and agenda, if agreed.

Today is no time to haggle over procedural aspects, specially when we have abandoned substance for far too long, under one pretext or the other. The need for innovative and creative approaches is now pronounced. The call for disarmament is urgent, and the effect of inaction will only be far too exacting.

One certain thing that the inaction or lack of progress in disarmament has achieved over two decades is the loss of a generation of professionals and experts in many countries, who could understand the nuances and subtleties and navigate the CD effectively to achieving negotiated outcomes. This means that the increased availability of disarmament education and fellowship opportunities-a matter that the UN Secretary-General has not spoken of as a part of his disarmament agenda-needs to receive the attention that it deserves. ■



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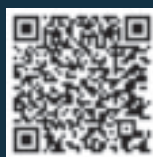
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Road Safety Trust Fund launch. From left to right: Aleksandr V. Gorovoy, First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. Saul Billingsley, Executive Director of the FIA Foundation. Olga Algayerova, UNECE Executive Secretary. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General. Jean Todt, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Road Safety

Interview with Executive Secretary of the UNECE Ms. Olga Algayerova

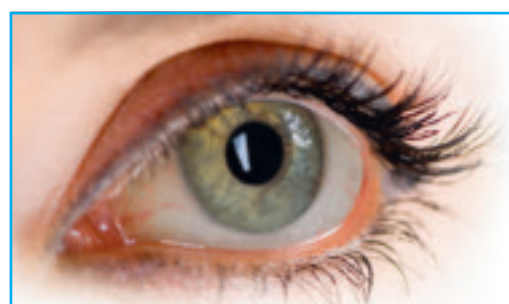
UNECE, a Do-Tank committed to do good things better

Ms. Olga Algayerova of Slovakia is since 1 June 2017 the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

She brings to the position a combination of leadership and diplomatic skills.

SARAH BENCHERIF, UNOG

Before joining the UNECE, Ms. Algayerova served as Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the International Organisations in Vienna, Austria. She has previously worked in the private sector and for the Slovak government as President of the Slovak Millennium Development Goals (2010-2012); and State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2006-2010). *UN Special* Editor-in-chief Alex Mejia sat down with her to hear her opinion and views on UN reform, gender advancement, and private sector engagement to achieve the SDGs.



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Alex Mejia, editor-in-chief, *UN Special*:
We know you have been realigning UNECE's activities with Agenda 2030. In that light, can you give us your views on the strategic importance of UNECE within the UN System?

Olga Algayerova: For seven decades, UNECE has been providing policy advice to its member States as well as developing norms, standards, guidelines in various fields pertaining to sustainable development, such as environment, transport, energy, housing and others.

These outputs, such as our 58 transport agreements, our 5 international environmental conventions or our trade facilitation standards, for instance, help countries to translate global commitments such as the SDGs into practical action. We have a lot to offer, so we need to showcase the strong practical impact and value-added of our work. Today, we are reshaping and improving our organisation and how we collaborate with others to be fit for the purpose of Agenda 2030.

There is new impetus on UN reform that will affect mostly the development pillar. What would be the role of the UN Commissions

in the new fit-for-purpose structure that you mention?

I understand that you discussed this with my dear colleague Alicia Bárcena from ECLAC, and she must have given you the same answers.

We, the five regional Commissions, are quite coordinated in this common approach of what the regional commissions will look like after the reform.

UNECE endorses the proposal of the leadership of the UN Development System by the Deputy Secretary-General, and the separation of the Resident Coordinator system from UNDP. All five Regional Commissions have taken steps to restructure and realign their programme of work to better support Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Secretary General would like to see all regional commission as Think Tanks. I see the UNECE rather as a Do-Tank because our activities have such a practical impact on the people in our region. We gather networks of about 10,000 experts who work to develop our standards, norms and

guidelines. Of course, technical cooperation, in close cooperation with UN country teams, is key to help our member States implement these norms and standards. And this is exactly what the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General who lead the reform of the development pillar want to achieve. In fact, UNECE is well positioned here because we are already very close to our country teams.

We hold twice a year a meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Europe and Central Asia (RCM), which coordinates the work of the organizations of the UN system at the regional level, and we work together on the challenges that our region is facing. The RCM works in close cooperation with the Regional UN Development Group, which focusses on programming, coordination and policy work at the country level. Of course, there is still space for improvement and this is the sense of the reform.

From that perspective, how would a revamped UNECE strengthen its focus on gender empowerment and on the reduction of the pay-gap that still exists in your region?

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The international community has enshrined gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, most prominently in SDG 5. Now we have to strengthen our efforts to achieve this goal.

At UNECE, we promote women's economic empowerment and we mainstream gender equality in all our activities. For instance, we have launched work to look at how gender perspectives can be better integrated into the development of standards; we look at employment access with a gender lens in our sectors of responsibility (trade, forests, energy, transport); we build up capacity for women entrepreneurs in Eastern Europe and Central Asia to improve women's skills and knowledge in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). And to monitor progress, we provide gender-disaggregated statistics for our countries, which allows us to compare and take appropriate policy measures.

But we can do more. For instance, we recently launched the UN Road Safety Trust Fund. It is for us a big responsibility and a challenge we are looking forward to. Women's role in road safety is not stressed enough. Who is educating children in the early age, on how to cross the street for example? Mothers, women. I would like to bring this element into the Road Safety discussion.

It is also my strong personal belief that we need to tackle gender inequalities in all areas, on all levels. This is why I have decided to become an International Gender Champion. This is also why I have committed to raise awareness for equal pay for work of equal value. In March, I organized an event on the Gender Pay Gap, a problem that is still not fully recognised.

In our region, on average, women earn 18,2 per cent less than men! This means that women in our region basically work for free until 26 March every year! This not only translates into large losses of earnings and worse living standards for women. It also means that, compared to men, women retire with far less savings and face a higher risk of poverty in retirement. For instance, the pay-gap is 22% in Germany, 27% in Estonia and 62% in Kyrgyzstan! It is something that we should highlight and pay attention to.

Knowing that 1,3 million people die every year because of traffic incidents, Road Safety remains a critical issue. We admire the work of UNECE in helping set up the new Global Road Safety fund. What is next?

I was very pleased to see so much support for the launch of the UN Road Safety Fund that the Deputy Secretary-General launched on behalf of the Secretary-General on 12 April in New York. There was a lot of engagement from member States, UN and international organizations and NGOs. The first pledges include 2 large corporations active in road transport. We expect that this will be an incentive for more to join and contribute. I am very pleased that our Fund brings together many UN system entities, including all five Regional Commissions. The Fund's bodies will determine its strategy and operations, but it is clear that priorities will have to include those regions/countries with the highest mortality rates. It is no surprise therefore that we have already received enquiries from NGOs from Africa and Latin America.

We are now working hard to make the Fund operational as soon as possible. We plan to convene the first meeting of the steering committee and advisory board at



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the beginning of August. There are expectations, and we are preparing ourselves to deliver, together with the road safety community, to save lives.

As you know, Agenda 2030 calls for increased private sector engagement. Can you give us examples of UNECE's work with industrial sectors in setting standards and fostering harmonization? How can more people know about these efforts? How can we tell people about these efforts?

We cannot be successful with Agenda 2030 without the private sector. It is also our responsibility to bring the private sector closer to our work, not just as a source of funding but because they bring different experiences and are more flexible in many regards.

UNECE has a long tradition of engagement with the private sector though the development of norms, standards and regulations in many sectors (transport, trade facilitation, UN/CEFACT, energy, agricultural standards, housing and land management & smart cities). These normative instruments impose quality, safety and/or environmental requirements while ensuring a level playing field for the respective industries. The economies of scale from these instruments allow these industries to save billions of dollars per year. They also

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Ms. Olga Algayereva, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and Mr. Alex Mejia, UN Special Editor-in-Chief

benefit companies, countries, and people by creating jobs, and increasing safety and security. So, I am convinced it is mutually beneficial for both the private sector and the UNECE to work together.

We also work with the private sector on People-first public-private partnerships (PPPs). This has led in particular to the first standard launched by UNECE on a zero-tolerance approach to corruption in PPP procurement – corruption is of course a key disincentive for private sector investment.

Very interesting and important indeed. Let us talk about the environment: It seems that the Paris Accord on Climate Change

is not advancing as fast as expected in terms of emissions reduction, clean energy, sustainable consumption and energy efficiency. How can UNECE support the acceleration of the agreement's implementation?

The Paris Agreement is very important. The current rate of improvement in energy efficiency of 2.2 per cent per year is lower than the 2.7 per cent per year needed to meet the global target that Countries committed to achieve.

UNECE is very relevant to this agenda and has tools to offer, from our convention to reduce air pollution to our regulations on vehicles' emissions, or on fostering the role of forests as carbon sinks.

I was in New York on 18 April to participate in the presentation of a set of Policy Briefs on SDG7, in support of the SDG7 review at the High-Level Political Forum in July. The conclusion of these briefs is that efforts must be stepped up. Without urgent action, the world will fall short of achievement of SDG 7 and consequently other SDGs. In our region the targets under SDG 7 will not be achieved by 2030, except for the target on 100% access to electricity networks. Challenges remain on access to heating, and on the reliability, affordability and quality of service. UNECE has tools to offer there too, notably on sustainable resource management through the UN Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC); energy efficiency improvements in buildings, industry, and transport and market and systems integration; increasing the uptake of renewable energy; and last but not least on reducing the environmental footprint of fossil energy. Fossil fuels still represent 80% of today's energy mix and will continue to constitute a large share

for many years. It is therefore imperative to reduce their environmental footprint. Our work on this area addresses methane management, carbon capture and storage, and clean electricity production.

Finally, please tell us a little about yourself and your successful career. What would be your message to young UN officers trying to grow professionally and intellectually within the UN system?

I have spent 24 years in the private sector, then 2 years in the non-governmental sector and then 10 years in government, as Deputy Minister and Ambassador. For me, working means always trying to deliver better because if you rely on what you achieved in your younger age, then your career might be flat. The change of working environment gives a more balanced view on many issues.

The UN system offers many opportunities. It is the biggest organisation in the world, the most global and multicultural one. It gives a great opportunity to see the world not from a country perspective but from a global perspective that helps greatly once you can go back home and work on this global common perspective. My advice to young people is to do good things better. ■

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International engagement of the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of water cooperation

On 20-22 June this year, Tajikistan hosts a High-Level International Conference on the International Decade For Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028.



Palace of Nations, Dushanbe.

MR. KHAYRULLO IBODZODA¹

The objectives of the Decade, specified in paragraph 4, include greater focus on: sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for the achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives; the implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects; and the furtherance of cooperation and partnerships at all levels in order to help to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will also highlight the importance of promoting the efficiency of water usage at all levels, taking into account the water, food, energy, environment nexus, and the implementation of national development programmes.

It worth mentioning that this Decade was launched by the United Nations at the initiative of the Republic of Tajikistan. Over the last two decades, Tajikistan has been actively promoting water issues on the global agenda. At the initiative of Tajikistan and a number of other countries, the UNGA launched the International Year of Fresh Water (2003), the International Decade of Action

“Water for Life” (2005-2015) and the International Year of Water Cooperation (2013).

These global events made a significant contribution to a deeper understanding of the importance of water, both for socio-economic growth and environmental sustainability, as well as for ensuring peace, stability and development. We intend to continue our efforts with a view to enhancing progress and achieving new outcomes.

The water agenda is of crucial importance in Tajikistan. Tajikistan has huge water resources, accumulated in numerous glaciers, rivers, lakes and underground water systems. About 60% of Central Asia’s water resources take their sources within the country.

Tajikistan is endowed with rich hydropower resources; indeed, hydro potential is estimated to be 527 billion kWh per year. In technical terms, the waterpower resources of Tajikistan have good development prospects and consist of 317 billion kWh per year, of which only 4-5% has been used so far. Tajikistan’s hydropower potential ranks No.8 after China, Russia, the USA, Brazil, Zaire, India and

Canada. Hydropower provides the basis for energy sources in the country. Tajikistan’s hydropower potential is three times higher than the current electricity consumption throughout the whole region of Central Asia. The effective use of these resources will provide the region with inexpensive and green power.

But despite this advantage, Tajikistan still continues to face water-related problems. The processes of climate change and natural disasters are significantly complicating them.

The observations and studies of local experts over the years indicate the unprecedented and growing impact of climate change on nature and the socio-economic situation of Tajikistan and Central Asia. According to studies and estimations, the annual average temperature of air in Tajikistan over the last 60 years has risen by one degree Celsius and the number of days with heavy precipitation resulting in more hydro-meteorological phenomena, has greatly increased.

Destructive natural disasters have become more frequent over the last years in the country. Natural disasters such as

floods, mudslides, avalanches and landslides have caused huge damage to the people and the national economy of the country every year. The natural disaster rate in Tajikistan has increased by approximately 25% over the last 5-6 years. Over this period, different disasters have claimed nearly 200 human lives and disrupted the living conditions of more than 100 thousand people, causing 600 million US dollars of damage. Calamities have been observed, particularly in the mountainous areas of the country, which cover 93% of the whole territory of Tajikistan and where 80% of the population lives.

Moreover, the negative impact of a climate change has reduced the quantity and quality of safe drinking water. Over the last decade, Tajikistan has experienced rapid and unprecedented ice melting. These reserves are a vital source of life for all people and countries in Central Asia. Notable shifts in the hydrological cycle, while posing negative effect on water, energy and food security, provoke and entail the added risk and danger of flooding and heavy drought. The areas and volume of glaciers and snowfields, which are the main



Speech of the President of Tajikistan, H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon at the official launch of the International Decade for Action Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028, March 2018.

sources of the rivers, have reduced significantly over the last decades. Climate change and difficult mountainous relief are the causes of natural disasters and mudslides and floods occur more frequently. They cause huge loss to the economy annually by destroying infrastructure and flooding large areas.

Such a situation requires acting appropriately to protect the country's water sources and the adaptation of existing water use schemes to these changes. The Government of Tajikistan continuously focuses on issues related to the effective use of water resources, water loss reduction, water quality improvement and the reduction of water resources pollution.

To that end, the Water Sector Reform Programme (2016-2025), approved by the Government, includes a comprehensive and integrated approach, which can serve as the core principle to achieve success in this area. This Programme is based on two main principles: a clarification of policy and operational functions and a transition to river basin principles of management.

The introduction of integrated water resources management (IWRM) and other objectives included in the SDGs on water are also part of the 2030 National Development Strategy of Tajikistan.

In this context, it is worth highlighting the dedicated efforts made by the Government of

Tajikistan on the improvement of water cooperation.

It is obvious that without comprehensive cooperation, it is impossible to address water challenges, particularly at the transboundary level. Tajikistan has stated its firm approach to the difficult water and energy issues in the region several times by emphasizing that cooperation is the only reasonable way to find solutions. For this very reason, Tajikistan's Foreign Policy Concept pays particular attention to water diplomacy issues.

The Central Asian region in turn has also been feeling the negative consequences of climate change impact. The countries in the region have been observing more frequent instances of heavy precipitation or drought years, heat waves in summer and longer frosts in winter. As a result, of these abnormal natural phenomena, the countries of the region have experienced huge economic losses and it is obvious that this trend will further continue.

It is worth mentioning that water resources as renewable sources of power generation are of particular importance in the process of ensuring the concept of green development, which foresees a gradual deviation from dependence on hydrocarbon resources.

Tajikistan's huge water resources and its substantive mountain mass provide a great opportunity for the production of environmentally clean power, through which the country will contribute in the implementation of this concept. Mutually rewarding cooperation and coordinated efforts on the sound development of hydropower resources would definitely promote the achievement of the SDGs, not only on water, but also on other goals and objectives.

Motivated by these convictions, Tajikistan stands for comprehensive regional and international cooperation in the water sector and advocates for water issues in the global arena.

The High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028" in Dushanbe intends to mobilize the efforts of governments, UN institutions, international and non-governmental organizations, as well as other stakeholders at all levels for effective implementation of the goals and objectives of the International Water Decade, as well as water-related SDGs.s. ■

1 Head of the Committee on the Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.



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**EDSON CAMPAGNOLO,
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Diversion of resources is compromising the quality of public services and infrastructure, as well as significantly undermining the business environment and the competitiveness of the country's productive sector.

This harmful impact of corruption on economic performance is evident when comparing the results of some international reports. In the Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International, Brazil ranks only 96th out of 180 surveyed nations. At the same time, the Global Competitiveness Report by the World Economic Forum also puts the country far from the top in 80th position among the 137 evaluated. By looking at which countries are the most competitive in the world, they are also among those where corruption rates are considered low.

The depth of this problem in Brazil has become even more evident in recent years, following the launch of Operation Lava Jato – the largest anti-corruption mobilization in the country's history, which continues to unfold to this day. Investigations have shown how political agents used the structure of state-owned companies

and public agencies to direct contracts to large contractors, receiving, in return, bribes that served to supply electoral campaigns and illicit enrichment.

Adding up several other operations underway in the country, which have revealed similar patterns of deviations, Brazilian society has a clear idea of the size of the losses caused by corruption. A survey by the Federal Police's Office of Investigation and Fight against Organized Crime estimates that the damage caused by all corruption cases that have been the target of investigations in the last four years has reached no less than R \$ 123 billion – approximately US \$ 37.2 billion.

If, on one hand, Lava Jato and the other operations have increased society's discontent with the Brazilian class and political system, on the other hand it has become evident that there is a need to increase transparency and supervision over public contracts and expenditures – and to punish all those involved in corruption to set an example. Perhaps for the first time in our history, not only influential politicians, but also businessmen and executives at the helm of the country's largest contractors have been investigated, arrested

and convicted of involvement in corruption.

In this context, there has been awareness that it is necessary to face the misconduct of the private sector with seriousness and without hypocrisy. An important step that the country took in this direction was the so-called Business Anti-Corruption Law, approved in 2013 and regulated in 2015. It establishes the objective civil and administrative responsibility of companies that carry out harmful acts against national or foreign public administrations. Due to the instruments set forth therein, Brazilian companies have awakened to the need to improve their internal control and compliance systems, in order to identify and combat possible corrupt practices.

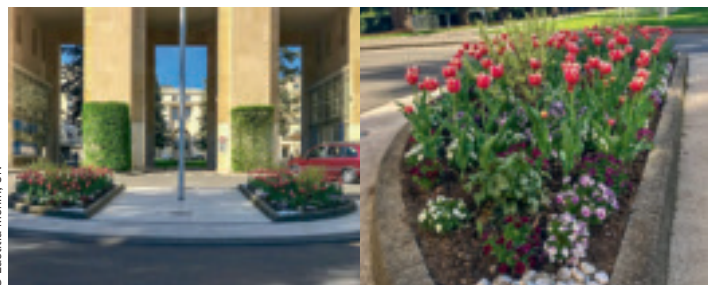
Given this, it has become a necessity to disseminate ethical behaviour among companies, which is a key factor in creating a fairer competition scenario in order to improve the country's business environment. Willing to contribute to this dissemination, the Fiep System, an institution that represents and supports the industries of the state of Paraná, created the Transparency and Competitiveness Forum, which on May 21st will hold its third sitting.

As in previous forums, in 2013 and 2016, the event is held in partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (Unitar) and CIFAL Curitiba. Bringing together businessmen, academics and representatives of national and international entities, as well as public agencies of supervision and control, the intention is to discuss the damage that corruption brings to companies and the economy, the tools that can be used in prevention, and the role of organizations to combat this practice.

For the Fiep System, it is indispensable that the corporate sector understands its high responsibility in this issue of corruption, either by adopting as a basic rule the ethical and correct management of the business, or by pressing the public powers to find appropriate solutions to the problem. Thus, we contribute to the search for efficient mechanisms to minimize the impact of corruption on the competitiveness of the Brazilian economy. After all, if we do not combat this evil efficiently, Brazil will continue to see its wealth and its enormous potential escape from its hands. ■

For more info: <http://www.fiep.org.br/>

The 'End Polio Now' tulips back!



The specially-cultivated 'End Polio Now' tulip, blooming beautifully on the UN Palais des Nations grounds.

**OLIVER ROSENBAUER, ROTARY
NATIONAL POLIOPLUS ADVOCACY
ADVISOR FOR SWITZERLAND/
LIECHTENSTEIN**

Last year, together with the UN's partners Rotary International, a specially-cultivated 'End Polio Now' tulip was available for sale, with proceeds going towards the

UN's polio eradication effort. It was a hugely successful campaign, with people from across Switzerland, including UN colleagues, purchasing more than 26,000 tulips, resulting in almost CHF 70,000 raised, through which more than 110,000 children were

immunized and protected from lifelong polio paralysis. This is a fantastic achievement and thank you to all of you who participated in the campaign last year!

The tulips planted last year are now in full bloom all over Switzerland, including on the grounds of the UN Palais des Nations (see photos) and at the Morges Tulipes Festival.

The campaign is now being launched again, so these beautiful tulips are again on offer at a special price of CHF 40 for a box of 25 tulip bulbs. These bulbs can be ordered between now and end July, and will be delivered by

end September (in time for planting season in October). Beautiful blooming season is again next Spring. With each box sold, CHF 22 go towards the global polio eradication programme, an amount that is subsequently tripled by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to CHF 66, resulting in more than 100 children being vaccinated and protected for life against polio. This makes this tulip even more beautiful!

To order, please contact Oliver Rosenbauer in WHO's polio eradication department, at rosenbauero@who.int.

Thank you! And we hope you enjoy these beautiful tulips! ■

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Milestones in the history *of* sarmament in Geneva

Predecessors to the current UN disarmament organization,
the Conference on Disarmament (CD)

Constitution of The Committee on Disarmament as the single
multilateral disarmament negotiating forum
of the international community



01

1925

Geneva Protocol: The Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, usually called the Geneva Protocol, a treaty prohibiting the use of chemical and biological weapons in international armed conflicts.

02

1946

Establishment of the European headquarters of the United Nations.

03

1955

Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy.

04

1959

Creation of the **Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament**.

05

1962 - 1968

Creation of the **Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENCD)** successor of the short-lived Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament.

05

1963

US-Soviet Memorandum on the “**Hotline**” or “Memorandum of Understanding Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Line”, a system to allow direct communication between the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union to cut the risk of starting a nuclear war unintentionally, established after the events of the Cuban Missile Crisis where they realized that communicating with each other was plagued with certain delay.

06

1965

Beginning of negotiations on the **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**. A landmark international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.

06

1969 - 1978

Establishment of **Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD)** as the successor to the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament. It played a role in the interpretation of the Geneva Protocol.

07

1975

First **NPT** Review Conference and entry into force of the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning the production and use of an entire category of weapons.

08

1977

Signature of the **ENMOD** Convention. The Environmental Modification Convention (ENMOD), formally the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, an international treaty prohibiting the military or other hostile use of environmental modification techniques having widespread, long-lasting or severe effects.

09

1979

Constitution of The **Committee on Disarmament** as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community.

10

1980

Second **NPT** Review Conference and First Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. First Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention.

11

1983

Committee on Disarmament becomes the **Conference on Disarmament (CD)**.

12

1984

First **ENMOD** Review Conference.

13

1985

Third NPT Review Conference.

14

1986

Second Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention.

15

1990

Fourth **NPT** Review Conference.

16

1991

Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention.

17

1992

Second **ENMOD** Review Conference.

18

1994 - 1996

Negotiation and conclusion of the **Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)**. A multilateral treaty that bans all nuclear explosions, for both civilian and military purposes, in all environments.

19

1996

Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention.

20

1999

First Conference of States Parties to Protocol II of the **Convention on Excessively Injurious Weapons**, also known as the Inhumane Weapons Convention. The purpose of the Convention is to ban or restrict the use of specific types of weapons that are considered to cause unnecessary or unjustifiable suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately.

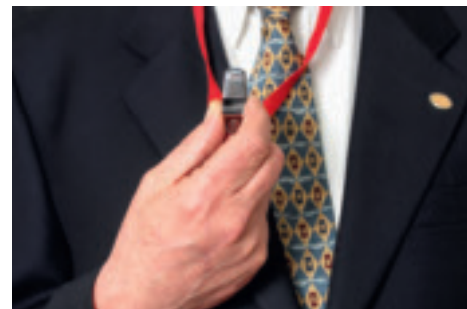
21

1999

Start of the Standing Experts Committees meetings on landmines. To ensure the effective implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty between two formal Meetings of States Parties, informal intersessional meetings are held each year, and are open to governments (States Parties and states not party), relevant international organizations, and NGOs.

Can We Achieve Real Accountability in the UN Common System and Truly Protect Whistleblowers?¹

The UN defines accountability as “the obligation of the Secretariat and its staff members to be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken by them, and to be responsible for honoring their commitments, without qualification or exception.”²



GEMMA VESTAL³, ALEXA TECSON⁴, CAROLINE SOUTHARD⁵ AND BRETT FITZGERALD⁶, FICSA

Following the Secretary General’s bulletin for the “Protection Against Retaliation,” UN staff members are obligated to “blow the whistle” and report any misconduct they observe in their organizations.⁷ Anyone who blows the whistle “in good faith has the right to be protected against retaliation.”⁸ Whistleblowers act as a valuable primary source of information in an investigation of misconduct or abuse allegations: PricewaterhouseCoopers’ 2007 crime survey reports that globally, 8% of fraud incidents had been brought to light thanks to whistleblowing hotlines and 21% reported through tip-offs from internal sources.⁹

Does this reflect reality?

This straightforward approach to reporting misconduct is often complicated by office hierarchy and politics. In theory, anyone who reports injustice or immoral conduct should be commended, or at the very least, protected from those who seek to silence them in order to safeguard the reputations of the guilty parties. Though whistleblowing may bring misconduct to light, it has been repeatedly demonstrated that the policies to protect whistleblowers have seen little success. The level of commitment to accountability fluctuates depending on who is accused, often resulting in whistleblowers becoming targets for retaliation and at the mercy of a high-powered individual who has influence over their careers.

The Secretary General’s bulletin states that this perverse result “violates the fundamental obligation of all staff members to uphold the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity.”¹⁰ Such sections are

founded on the UN Charter itself, which, ideally, is supposed to not only encourage transparency in the organisation, but also to uphold the “highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity” of working conditions.¹¹ Supposedly, this protection extends to all UN staff members, interns and volunteers.¹² But despite the UN claiming otherwise, certain employees, particularly those in powerful positions, easily evade the consequences of their actions by shifting the blame and criticism on whoever sounded the alarm.

Feedback from Staff

The Global Staff Satisfaction Survey conducted by the staff unions of the UN Secretariat in 2017 shows that UN staff are largely dissatisfied with the efficacy of their management, particularly within the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).¹³ The most common complaints include weak leadership, poor communication skills, an overall lack of integrity and commitment to following protocol. Many of the written responses to this survey describe how there is a serious need for enacting increased accountability, rather than rhetoric.¹⁴

What has happened to whistleblowers?

Recently, the reputation and competency of the UN have been tainted by several cases in which whistleblowers were punished, rather than protected, for bringing to light the misconduct they observed. In perhaps the most controversial, the case of Anders Kompass highlights how in the UN, there is an accepted practice to sweep extreme misconduct under the rug for the sake of keeping scandals hushed, while scapegoating those bringing the misconduct to light. Reporting sexual harassment of young

children by peacekeeping troops in the Central African Republic, Kompass himself was put under investigation “for improperly disclosing confidential information.”⁹ The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights immediately put Kompass under investigation for including the names of victims in his report.¹⁵ Asked to resign but refusing, Kompass faced suspension and defamation by UN senior officials. Though later exonerated, Kompass revealed he never felt “fully accepted back on board as a valuable staff member” and decided that it would be best for him to resign, believing that the UN cannot properly keep its promises of progress and protection without dramatic change towards ethical behavior.¹⁵

Later in 2016, Emma Reilly reported that an Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) senior official had provided the Chinese government the names of Chinese human rights activists applying to attend the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Chinese government subsequently detained them. This act of disclosure completely contradicted the intentions of the OHCHR to protect these activists. Surprisingly, Reilly’s report received no reaction from OHCHR Administration and instead, Reilly suffered from workplace harassment.¹⁶ Seeking the intervention of the Ethics Office in New York, Reilly was denied the support she needed, as the Office did not see any viable evidence of this retaliation.¹⁷

Accountability in the International Civil Service Commission

It has been reported in the press that the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) faces numerous charges of sexual

abuse in its New York Office. Although part of the investigation conducted by the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is apparently still ongoing, and although the charges have allegedly been denied, it is debated whether the Commission is accountable for the "Zero Tolerance Policy" instated by Secretary-General Guterres. As "an independent expert body established by the United Nations General Assembly," the ICSC seems to be an exception to the UN's authority. Its status as an "exception" from policies combating such a grave matter discredits both its capacity to handle its own internal monitoring and its commitment to accountability, as well as the efforts of the UN. This, in addition to the ICSC's neglect in reviewing the 2016 cost-of-living survey results when recommended by consultants, challenge its legitimacy. At the 35th session of the High-Level Committee on Management, FICSA intervened with the idea of having a review of the ICSC and its work on a periodical basis. Operating outside of the UN's realm does not exempt the ICSC from the reality that without accountability, faith and trust in it will be lost.

A Danger to the UN

The lack of accountability and protection for whistleblowers damages the United Nations' reputation. Scandals like these make the United Nations appear as a hypocritical bureaucracy which prioritizes the highly-ranked over those who seek and deserve justice and which turns a blind-eye to the conduct it ostensibly seeks to eradicate. Why would someone trust and respect organizations that promise to help fight injustice and inequality yet prosecute the very people who speak out when they observe violations and exploitations? Saving the reputation of those who have violated ethical standards compromises the reputation of the whole system. The more the public, member states, and other international organizations are aware of how these transgressions were not properly managed, the less trustworthy and legitimate the United Nations' words and actions become.

The cases of Kompass and Reilly seem more of a cautionary tale than inspiration to those who aim to uphold values and policies of the UN. Why would anyone risk the trials and job losses that previous whistleblowers have faced? How can we expect anyone to come forward when there is no guarantee of protection?

Scapegoating whistleblowers instead of holding the perpetrators accountable perpetuates the issues. Misconduct like the sexual exploitation and abuse that occurred in the Central African Republic may be uncovered, but never actually solved, allowing those who have committed the infractions to walk away free.


The disregard for accountability fails the victims of misconduct, as they are cheated out of the safety and justice they deserve. It is hardly encouraging for whistleblowers to speak up if the sacrifice of their careers cannot even help those who were victimized by breaches of policy. Moreover, the lack of protection for whistleblowers deters acting with the integrity required to save the UN's reputation.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The UN common system, as well as any international organization that aims to pursue the common good, needs to take action that enforces accountability and protects whistleblowers, not empty rhetoric. A strict commitment to accountability, regardless of who is being held accountable, is necessary to maintain long-term trust and credibility. Staff should not have to be afraid to act ethically; their jobs should not be a sacrifice for the sake of doing what is right. Accountability can be ensured by conducting audits by a third party in order to preserve unbiasedness in reports and disciplinary actions. In particular, the ICSC should be reviewed once every five years and be accountable for their decisions and recommendations, which affect all staff of the UN common system. Once the precedent is set that no one, regardless of their position, is above accountability in the UN common system, the world at large would regain its respect and be once again fully supportive of the various lofty UN mandates. ■


- 1 NB: Although UN documents are cited in this article and the Secretary General's Bulletin is quoted, the authors want to emphasize that the UN common system organizations specifically and the UN common system as a whole need to address organizational accountability and ensure the protection of whistleblowers.
- 2 United Nations General Assembly. Document A/RES/64/259 Section A, Paragraph 8
- 3 WHO staff currently serving as FICSA General Secretary.
- 4 Former FICSA intern who is currently studying law.
- 5 Boston College student currently serving as a FICSA intern.

- 6 WIPO Staff currently serving as FICSA President.
- 7 Section 1.1 http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1
- 8 Id.
- 9 Page 10, survey based on interviews conducted over 5,400 companies in 40 countries http://www.whistleblowers.org/storage/documents/pwc_survey.pdf
- 10 Section 1.3, ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1
- 11 Article 101, section 3 <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf>
- 12 Section 2, ST/SGB/2017/2: <http://undocs.org/st/sgb/2017/2>
- 13 UN Global Staff Survey 2017 P134-137, <http://www.staffcoordinatingcouncil.org/attachments/article/440/UN%20Global%20Staff%20Satisfaction%20Survey%202017.pdf>
- 14 Id.
- 15 Kompass, Anders. "EXCLUSIVE: The Ethical Failure – Why I Resigned from the UN." IRIN, IRIN Association, 20 June 2016, www.irinnews.org/opinion/2016/06/17/exclusive-ethical-failure-%E2%80%93-why-i-resigned-un.
- 16 Edwards, Bea. "A Third Whistleblower Unsuccessfully Seeks Protection from Retaliation At UN/OHCHR." Government Accountability Project, Government Accountability Project, 1 Feb. 2017, www.whistleblower.org/blog/014301-third-whistleblower-unsuccessfully-seeks-protection-retaliation-unohchr.
- 17 Id.



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Internship at the United Nations: A comparative perspective

For 2014-2015, the United Nations Secretariat engaged 4,475 interns.¹

Among them, 45 Member States were represented and 33 per cent were women.²

FANNY BADACHE³

AND MORINE MABBOUX⁴

Recently, the UN internship system has faced criticism. We aim to offer a comparative perspective on our two experiences conducted in two different but related organizations of the UN, though fully understanding that the content of this article does not reflect on all internship experiences. The first is about the internship experience of Fanny Badache, who was in charge of assisting the Working Group on performance management at the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). The second is about Morine Mabboux's internship with the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA), whereby

she assisted the General Secretary and the Secretariat in the preparation of the 71st FICSA Council which took place at the UNFCCC in Bonn in February 2018. Both entities frequently welcome interns and serve as coordinating institutions; with 27 associations/unions of international civil servants affiliated to FICSA and 31 organizations of the common system for the CEB. It is worth comparing FICSA and the CEB because they both deal with staff matters but from two different angles, i.e., one is from a staff federation's perspective and the other is from a management perspective, respectively. We will highlight the different positive elements that our experiences granted us in terms of

skills and knowledge, the added-value of immersion and the challenges of UN internships.

An internship at the UN provides students with numerous opportunities. First, we were able to develop several soft and transferable skills. Using several working languages also provides an opportunity to improve language and communication skills. In our cases as native French speakers, we improved our English speaking and writing skills. In addition, internships prompt one to develop extensive independence and autonomy. This is particularly true in the UN context, as managers often lack time to supervise the work on a daily basis due to other demands and travel schedules. Second, the university curriculum in Europe is limited to courses that merely describe the different organs of the United Nations, such as the General Assembly and Security Council, rather than courses on UN internal functioning and administration. We have expanded our knowledge of the UN's complexity, as we have learned much about the relationships, links and power dynamics between the different organizations that constitute the UN. Our respective internships enabled us to understand the working culture of the UN as diverse and multicultural. Additionally, the United Nations is a codified environment with many internal formalities and procedures unknown to outsiders, but our positions gave us access to various resources

and organizational documents that are not publicly available, allowing us to enter the institutional memory through the archives.⁵

Our experiences also gave us first-hand experience in observing the UN as insiders by participating in official meetings. At FICSA, Morine Mabboux was the first intern to attend a FICSA Council, which gathers the FICSA members each year. Her role was to set up a platform for sharing documents and schedules in order to modernize the administrative organization of the Council. Throughout the years, FICSA has worked to eliminate all printed documents for distribution to participants. This new and easier approach enabled FICSA members to access Council materials on their tablets, laptops and smartphones, while receiving notifications of any modifications.

At the CEB, Fanny Badache had the opportunity to attend the 30th session of the Human Resources Network in Madrid. The HR Network usually meets twice a year, bringing together HR directors of UN organizations.⁶ Taking part in this meeting was a unique opportunity to discover the pressing human resources management issues currently faced by the UN. From a sociological perspective, it was very interesting to observe how this meeting provided a forum in which HR directors could exchange good practices, leading to *mimetic isomorphism*, meaning that UN

organizations tend to reform their human resources systems in the same direction.

In order to convey a balanced picture, we will include some less positive aspects of our experiences. The short time-frame of internships at the UN, which usually only last three to six months, posed one of the largest challenges we faced. FICSA mostly functions thanks to staff representatives who work on a voluntary basis, requiring them to combine their own job duties with FICSA work, which influences the pace of the Federation. In the case of the CEB, the small team of staff relies on UN organizations to provide their inputs in order to progress on and complete projects. Furthermore, each agency, as well as every organization in the UN, has also its own timing. Linked to that, another challenge is that we were not able to observe the final outputs of our work.

Overall, our internship experiences were very positive: they allowed us to develop several transferable skills and to acquire UN-related knowledge that we would not have been able to access otherwise. We have highlighted the benefits associated with participant observations, a subject that several scholars have already examined and emphasized. In our opinion, we believe that the UN internships system contributes to making the UN more transparent and accessible to general society – in our cases

students and universities – and that this trend of opening up should be encouraged and continued. ■

- 1 Report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: gratis personnel, retired staff and consultant and individual contractors. A/71/360/Add.1. Retrieved from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/360/add.1 (last accessed 23.04.18).
- 2 Ibid, p. 13.
- 3 Fanny Badache is a PhD candidate. She did a nine-month internship within the Human Resources Network of the Chief Executive Board of Coordination (UNCEB) in Geneva.
- 4 Morine Mabboux carried out her internship with the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) in Geneva.
- 5 The UN is in the process of digitalizing all its official documents but a lot of old documents remain only in paper format.
- 6 Reports of the HR Network can be found here: <http://www.unsystem.org/content/reports-human-resources-network#page-title> (last accessed 23.03.18)

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World Bicycle Relief's Bicycles for Educational Empowerment Programme.

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Bicycles and SDGs: Right on Target!

*Spring is the time to
dust off the bicycle,
organize a weekend
ride with the family,
take part in the Geneva
bike2work initiative, run
some weekend errands,
catch a glimpse of the
Tour de Romandie or
even hit the road to
prepare for the annual
Cyclotour du Léman.*

BROOK BOYER, UNITAR¹

Yes, cycling is, and has always been, a means for mobility, for sport and competition or for just having fun with family, friends and co-workers. And for many of us, this is where the bicycle, or cycling, begins and where it usually ends. We ride, we have fun, we enjoy the outdoors, we compete and we get from point A to point B.

Very likely, few of us probably knew that in April of this year, the General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/res/72/272) declaring June 3rd as World Bicycle Day. Could it be, I thought to myself, as I scrolled down the list of resolutions recently adopted by the General Assembly? Reading the resolution, the link between bicycles and the work of the United Nations became immediately apparent. The resolution recognizes the bicycle, invented 201 years ago, as a means for fostering sustainable development; strengthening education; promoting health; preventing disease; promoting tolerance, mutual understanding and respect; and facilitating social inclusion and a culture of peace. The resolution also encourages Member States to devote special attention to the bicycle in cross-cutting development strategies and to include the bicycle in policies and programmes, from the international to local levels.

The resolution was the result of an important campaign led by the World Cycling Alliance (WCA) and the European Cyclist's Federation (ECF). The campaign's rationale included results from a 2015 study by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy and the University of California at Davis, linking the bicycle, including the rapidly increasing use of e-bikes, with energy savings and projected CO₂ reductions, in addition to as much as 24 trillion dollars in cost savings between 2015 and 2050!²

Indeed, the bicycle contributes to improving sustainable consumption and production. But the bicycle is also very much an important tool for achieving development results. In fact, the ECF and WCA have linked the bicycle to contributing to 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and some organizations, such as World Bicycle Relief, have already provided evidence on how the bicycle contributes to helping reduce poverty (SDG1) and hunger (SDG2) and improving health and well-being (SDG3), quality education (SDG4), gender equality (SDG5) and reduced inequalities (SDG10), amongst others. Through World Bicycle Relief's (WBR) Bicycles for Educational Empowerment Programme (BEEP), for example, students living in



© World Bicycle Relief

rural Sub-Saharan Africa have improved attendance by as much as 28 per cent and academic performance by 59 per cent!³ And, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda and reaching the furthest behind first, 70 per cent of BEEP bicycles are distributed to girls, who encounter more many more challenges getting to school than boys and often end up getting married and having children before completing primary or secondary education.

Beyond facilitating access to education, WBR also actively supports rural famers and health care workers, who face mobility challenges to reach markets and patients. Care workers in rural Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, can visit 45 per cent more patients a day with a bicycle than on foot, and one programme has shown that rural farmers have increased deliveries of produce by 25 per cent and income by 23 per cent, with travel time to markets being reduced significantly.⁴ As these and other illustrations can show, the impact footprint of the bicycle extends beyond the student, famer or health care worker and can bring about much benefit to the family and community.

Several UN entities have so far have partnered with WBR, including the Food and

Agriculture Organization, which purchased 4,500 WBR Buffalo Bicycles to contribute to the implementation of an agricultural productivity project in Zambia.

Bicycles have also proven to be effective tool for programme delivery for other UN organizations, including the UN Population Fund-supported Opening Opportunities Programme which, together with the Population Council, the UN Foundation and the Girl Up Campaign, provided bicycles to 250 impoverished indigenous girls in the Chisec district of rural Guatemala.

In addition to using bicycles to help in development programmes, some other organizations, such as UNICEF, are using cycling events to help raise funds for their programming. Now into its third year, UNICEF is organizing on June 9th the public Cycling for Children event in collaboration with the Crans Montana Tourism and Congress to raise funds for children in need.

While the bicycle is not explicitly mentioned in the 2030 Agenda, it is proving to be an important cross-cutting tool contributing to the achievement of number of Goals. Bicycles change lives. Let's unite and celebrate World Bicycle Day! ■

- 1 The views expressed are solely those of the author in his private capacity and do not necessarily reflect those of UNITAR or the United Nations.
- 2 Jacob Mason, Lew Fulton and Zane McDonald. A Global High Shift Cycling Scenario: The Potential for Dramatically Increasing Bicycle and E-bike Use in Cities Around the World, with Estimated Energy, CO2 and Cost Impacts. Institute for Transportation & Development Policy and the University of California, Davis. 12 November 2015.
- 3 World Bicycle Relief. Mobility and the Sustainable Development Goals. 2018.
- 4 Ibid.

Useful links

General Assembly resolution (A/res/72/272)
http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/72/272

Bike to Work
www.biketowork.ch/en

Cycling for Children
www.unicef.ch/en/cycling-for-children


European Cycling Federation
<https://ecf.com/>

Girl Up Campaign
<https://girlup.org>

Institute for Transportation & Development Policy
www.itdp.org

World Bicycle Relief
www.worldbicyclerelief.org

World Cycling Alliance
<https://ecf.com>





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The future of work

*It is a hot topic in most societies.
This reflects existing issues such as
unemployment, inequality and – in Europe
and US – stagnant living standards.*

MATTHEW TAYLOR¹

It is also a response to the emergence of new business models often based on platforms such as Uber or Upwork. Beyond this there is the debate about the potential impact new technologies such as AI and robotics will have on employment.

Media outlets are drawn to big number predictions about the impact of technology. But while prophesying mass unemployment may make for guaranteed headlines, there is a wide range of varying predictions, even for the same sector or the same technology. A recent MIT Technology Review overview of the research is surely right:

There is one meaningful conclusion: we have no idea how many jobs will actually be lost to the march of technological progress.

Yet perhaps there is a prediction we can make, namely that the process of technological change now unfolding, referred to by some as 'the fourth industrial revolution', will follow a similar pattern to previous changes obeying what is known as Amara's Law (after Roy Amara, cofounder of the Institute for the Future). This states that:

We tend to overestimate the effect of a technology in the short run and underestimate the effect in the long run.

This is indeed the conclusion of one of the more convincing surveys of the research, undertaken by consulting firm PWC. This predicts three waves of automation – the 'algorithm wave' over roughly the next five years, 'the augmentation wave' across the 2020s and the 'autonomy wave', which will fully impact by the mid-2030s. The challenge is that each wave will be bigger than the last; the comfort is that this gives plenty of time for economies and societies to adapt.

One of the inherent problems with prediction is uncertainty about business models. We can be sure that, like IBM and Nokia before them, many companies will respond to technological change by radically rethinking how they seek to create value. Some will succeed and most will fail, while one aspect of today's economics of technology seems to be the trend towards market domination seen in companies like Google, Amazon and Facebook.

Indeed whole sectors will shift business model in ways we can't yet predict. This is, after all, what has happened to the music industry. A decade ago, with the advent of streaming and the ubiquity of pirating, it was widely assumed that it would become almost impossible to make money by creating and selling music. Not factored in was the growth in live music – even in a country with the unreliable climate of the UK the number of major summer music festivals as gone from single figures to several hundred – or the increase in listening through mobile devices. The industry has changed; some – for example, CD disk manufacturers – have lost out while others – like streaming service Spotify – have won, but as a whole the music business is thriving. But there is a broader problem with prediction as well as a lesson to be learnt.

We are seeing a growing backlash among the public and some politicians against globalisation. It wasn't supposed to be this way. Before the 2008 financial crisis its champions of globalisation had a self-confident and strident message with a number of elements:

- Globalisation (particularly financial globalisation) is unstoppable – don't even try



Matthew Taylor@RSAMatthew is the Chief Executive of the RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) and was the Chair of the UK Government Review of Modern Employment Practices.

- Globalisation will make us aggregately richer, so the losers need to accept their fate and adapt.
- The price of globalisation will include things we might once have valued – like aspects of national sovereignty – but this is inevitable and ultimately to be welcomed.
- Although globalisation seems complicated and sometimes perverse, ordinary folk don't need to worry because, not only is it guided by the hidden hand of free markets, but it is being overseen by clever finance experts.

Things have certainly changed. Indeed, there is a serious debate about whether globalisation has even been benign at the aggregate level. From the IMF to the OECD, most experts



and observers see now that the case for globalisation has to be made in more humane and less hubristic terms. Yet listen to today's evangelists for the transformative power of technologies like social media, machine learning and robotics and you may recognise the tune:

- Technological change is unstoppable – don't even try.
- There will be victims of change like those in outdated jobs but they must accept the inevitable because things will be better in the end.
- The price of technological progress may involve giving up things we care about – like professions, privacy, protection of our children, the capacity to raise taxes – but this is a price we have to pay.

- Technology is very complex but ordinary folk don't need to worry because it has its own logic and its implementation is being overseen by clever Californians who wear jeans and care about the future.

Is it surprising that the popular discourse about technological change is so often couched in terms of threat and disruption?

This is why in my recent report on future employment commissioned by UK Prime Minister Theresa May I argued strongly that our starting point needs to be a commitment to 'good work' as part of the good society. In that report I offered five reasons for a national commitment to good work;

renewing the social contract, promoting health and well-being, boosting productivity, encouraging active citizenship and managing the impact of technological change.

The Government has responded positively to the report and has, among other measures, committed for the first time to being accountable for the quality of work in the UK economy as well as its quantity. As chief executive of the RSA – an independent global organisation which is a platform for ideas, a think tank and social movement of change makers – I am continuing to focus on the future of work. This is about exploring the implications of automation for jobs and places but it is also about developing the kind of

policies we need to help people cope and thrive in a world of fast change and new types of work; policies like universal basic income on which the RSA is part of growing global network of advocates.

It may not happen as quickly as some are saying and it certainly won't happen in precisely the way anyone is describing, but over the next generation the world of work and the work of the world will change dramatically. In responding to that change we need to spend less time trying to predict the future and more time shaping that future, using progressive values and innovative policies to ensure that change is in the interests of humanity as a whole. ■

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Giving back, sharing and committed to the SDGs

*Passionate? Addicted? “Locos?”,
“Enfoirés?” or all of the above?
How would you describe a group of
retirees who, after an international
career, are still infected by the
virus of development and the will to
share and give back?*

**ALEJANDRO BONILLA GARCÍA,
GREYCELLS**

Ten years ago, a group of former international officials, mostly retired from the United Nations (UN) system and other international bodies in Geneva, created GREYCELLS, the Association of Former International Civil Servants for Development. Its membership has been enlarged to include former officials of the host country Switzerland and the Canton and City of Geneva. Greycells was granted ECOSOC Special Consultative Status in 2017.

These enthusiasts of the principles, values and objectives of the United Nations and sustainable development, were actors in and witnesses to the processes that led to the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, and later to the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They have experienced success and failure in every corner of the world, many times in difficult or even dramatic conditions, and have accumulated a wealth of experience, knowledge and practice that can be used by current and future development thinkers and practitioners to improve the lives of future generations.

Greycells members consider that it has been a privilege to be able to accumulate such experience, which they believe they have a moral duty to share. That is why Greycells is a not-for-profit NGO and the participation of its members is on a pro bono basis.

Building bridges, opening spaces and promoting dialogue

Through its 10 years of existence, Greycells has developed “bridges” between its members and current and future civil servants, mainly students interested in pursuing an international career, as well as bridges between the international community and the Swiss and Geneva communities. This has taken the form of dialogues, round tables, seminars, courses, workshops, interviews and mentoring activities.

In the course of building bridges and opening spaces for dialogue and the exchange of experiences and ideas, Greycells has contributed to and supported the activities of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), including the numerous activities led by its NGO LIAISON, its Perception Change Project (PCP) and the UNOG Centre for Learning



A group of Greycells

and Multilingualism (at UNOG's Pre-Retirement Seminar).

With the support of the Swiss Permanent Mission in Geneva, Greycells has developed a set of briefing materials for the permanent missions of of Less Developed Countries (LDCs). Greycells has received most valuable support from the Geneva Welcome Center (CAGI) and collaborates closely with the Eduki Foundation in promoting education and awareness among children and young people about the work of international organizations, through their flagship activities #Kidswannaknow and the annual Eduki Competition.

Based on its members' fields of specialization, preferences, linguistic abilities and availability (taking into account the joys and constraints of grandchildren!), Greycells has collaborated with and/or supported the University of St. Gallen,

the University of Geneva, the University of Neuchâtel, the Geneva International Model United Nations (GIMUN), the "Mosaïque" Association of the University of Lausanne, the 1% for Development Fund, the Swiss Forum on Foreign Policy (FSPI), Africa21, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, the SYNI programme of the Employment Office of the City of Lausanne, NORHLA and its sister organization Centre for Women in the Himalayas (CWH), the Global Social Observatory (GSO), the United Nations Orchestra, Rotary Geneva International, and Rotaract Geneva International.

Seniors and Millennials walking together for the SDGs

On October 10th, 2018, at the Palais des Nations, as a follow-up to the International Day of Elderly People and on its 10th anniversary, Greycells will organize a dialogue between

representatives of seniors and the Millennial generation, entitled: "Seniors and Millennials walking together for the SDGs".

The views of the generations will be exchanged and compared: on the one hand, the seniors' experience and advice, on the other hand, the young people's vision, future projects and hopes. What are the views of the Millennials on the legacy and responsibilities of the older generation regarding the SDGs? How do the Millennials see their own older years, and what are their expectations? How do the seniors view the opinions they had when they were young compared to the Millennials' views now? How can both the young and old generations learn and benefit from each other in achieving the SDGs?

During the 17 days prior to the Dialogue, state of the art methodology will allow the gathering of the views, questions and comments of the young generation on the role of seniors, through a worldwide campaign on Facebook and Twitter.

Greycells, in consultation with all partners in the commemorative event, will prepare key inputs on the role of seniors in each SDG, with a view to launching and stimulating this

campaign. A selection of these questions and comments will be the basis of the dialogue. The results of both the campaign and the debate will be disseminated all over the world through social media, as well as by specialized journalists.

The Dialogue will include high-level international, Swiss and Genevan personalities, leaders and thinkers as well as representatives of seniors and Millennials. The preliminary consultations and the dialogue between seniors and Millennials will define the basis for the creation of a follow-up mechanism, particularly in Geneva.

A great deal has been achieved but much still has to be done

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Monitoring, evaluating... and then what?

The world of development occupied by United Nations bodies is one where expectations of impact are high.

MIKE ELDON¹

Indeed it is for this reason that first the Millennium Development Goals and more recently the Sustainable Development Goals were defined. They spell out very clearly how the UN justifies its existence and so is able to obtain financial and other support for its work. What can be observed however is that defining suitable indicators of ultimate impact is several steps too far for many whose job it is to do so.

The discipline within which performance indicators are identified and tracked is Monitoring and Evaluation, M&E. Yet too much of what is being M&E'd is far from meaningful. It's what one might call safe and lazy M&E. Take building the capacity of those involved in a project to deliver its success, and assume they must attend a two-day workshop to do so. A safe – and very common – measure is to ask if the workshop activity took place, and then maybe also to identify how many of those who should have attended did so. (An experienced UN evaluator told me that few UN training projects do count how many people actually attended such events.)

In M&E jargon the event having taken place, even the percentage graduating, merely constitute “output” measures, where the best that can be said is that something did happen, something that was easy to measure. But what about the consequences of having attended? Did the participants indeed develop the needed knowledge, skills and attitudes? It is only if the answer is positive that M&E professionals would say that an acceptable “outcome” was achieved.

But there is a further step. For they may have acquired what was needed but still not applied it to deliver the intended “impact”. And the more M&E systems evolve from assessing mere outputs to studying outcomes and impacts, the more challenging it is to come up with suitable measures of what has been achieved as a result. The business of defining properly “SMART” (Specific, Measurable, Accountable, Realistic, Time-bound) objectives is not for the faint-hearted. Nor is wading through dense instruments such as Logical Frameworks too helpful, as matrices replace clear text. It also requires clear-headedness to figure out

the particularly significant activities and indicators one should disproportionately focus on, and the extent to which impact can indeed be attributed to the activities in question.

Those who make good use of the M&E discipline keep calmly focused on its proper purpose. It is not merely to have complied with some externally imposed system. And it must avoid being perceived as just a way to hammer poor performers, or to show how much weaker they are than others. Rather, having assessed where there has been good and less good performance, it is to work towards strengthening it over time through regular evaluations.

When the spirit of M&E (or, as I prefer to call it, performance management) is performance improvement, then the buy-in will be radically different. Here the focus will be on learning and sharing best practice, on celebrating successes and seeing how to do even better – including through continuous improvement and getting better at getting better.

The problem is that such a healthy M&E culture is far less common than one would wish. And even if the intention of the promoters is actually constructive, the reception may well continue to be skeptical. It is through seeing the system work well, so that those of goodwill and good intent do benefit, that others will gain the confidence and the boldness to participate wholeheartedly.

At its best M&E sits at the center not only of effective implementation but it also deeply influences planning and budgeting. Whether top-down or bottom-up, by working back from the impact you are seeking to desired outcomes and needed outputs and initial inputs, you are indulging in strategic thinking. And it is why we see reference to this kind of performance management as “managing for results”, and why the term “transformative M&E” has been coined.

Today, following many years where too many paid little more than lip-service to M&E, a serious appetite has been developing to have it achieve its intended purpose. Increasingly, leaders everywhere are being held accountable, knowing they must deliver on development and service delivery commitments they have made.

They know they must take their initiatives to the desired conclusions. Having monitored and evaluated progress, they will therefore intervene where indicators show elements are off-track to try and ensure that the desired results are still delivered on time, to budget and of the right quality.

Having said that, M&E will remain a tough sell, even at a basic level. The resistance to it has been for one obvious reason: no one likes to be monitored or evaluated. And no one relishes the transparency and accountability that accompany it. Almost everyone – ironically including the best performers – fears they will be found wanting, and that their supervisors will condemn them for falling short. More so if they are ranked and the ranking is made public. What if they emerge near the bottom? Not to mention that such fears have sometimes led those being evaluated working to set themselves unambitious targets that they are more likely to be able to achieve.

Even before we get to such emotional issues, M&E involves much effort in deciding what data to collect, and then gathering and processing it all. It also requires discipline to enter what's being monitored accurately and on time, increasingly with the support of technology.

So carrying out effective M&E is much less straightforward than many imagine, requiring both significant technical skills and very disciplined, positive and purposeful attitudes. Above all it requires responsible and responsive leaders who truly expect to make a difference. But if M&E is taken seriously so as to achieve its full potential, the intended results are much more likely to follow. Not least the fulfillment of the SDGs. ■

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It is in your interest to regularly update your post description

As staff members occupy their posts for an extensive period of time, the realm and complexity of their work inevitably evolve.



GEMMA VESTAL,¹ CAROLINE SOUTHARD,²
AND BRETT FITZGERALD³

Introduction

Staff members may take on new responsibilities or broaden their area of work in ways that exceed their original post descriptions. An individual's characteristics, aptitude, and skill set, especially if a staff member possesses a diverse educational and professional background, may supplement and facilitate post requirements in a way that expands the scope and level of their work.

The UN common system aims to foster a culture of continuous learning by allocating 80 paid study hours for professional development each year. From these programs, staff may obtain new skills, interests, or methods of completing their tasks and potentially rerouting the direction of their posts' development. If a post evolves even in small increments, over time the changes may be drastic enough to invalidate the original post description accuracy and relevance. Job classifications should not be stagnant as staff grow in capabilities and responsibilities that exceed their original posts. To ensure fairness and to reflect the value of staff members, job classifications and, further, salaries must catch up to reflect the dynamic nature of positions within the UN common system.

Expanding roles should be encouraged and acknowledged as long as the new realm of work can complement and exist symbiotically with the established post requirements and expectations and benefit the

organizational structure and mandates. A staff member's work becoming more valuable and advanced over time certainly warrants a higher level of pay. UN common system agencies and organizations should not let changes that warrant a job reclassification and salary increase slip through the cracks.⁴ This neither treats staff fairly nor acknowledges that "the biggest asset of the United Nations is the knowledge, skills, experience and enthusiasm of its staff."

For General Service (GS) category jobs, the ICSC's New GS Master Standard, implemented in 2010, defines the Four Factors of job classification as: 1) nature of work; 2) organizational environment; 3) teamwork and relationships; and 4) results.

Examples, but certainly not an exhaustive list, of skills that correspond with these four factors for GS Staff and that would qualify a staff member's job for an upgrade are:

- Increase in scope and difficulty of work, increase in both breadth, or extent, and depth, or level of intricacy
- Increased technical skills and knowledge
- Increased skills and knowledge that justify increasing the empowerment, autonomy, responsibility of an individual
- Improved skills in a working language
- Specialization or niche skills that distinguish a staff member within the organization.

The Revision of the Professional Master Standard includes the Four Factors of job classification for Professional (P) category jobs as: 1) nature of work; 2) enabling environment; 3) partnerships; and 4) results.

A component of nature of work is "reinventing the profession by expanding the boundaries and opening new horizons – acting as a leader in the field/directing the profession." Within the ICSC's definition itself, P staff should focus on broadening the scope and realm of their work, so it is essential that they are fairly compensated for what they are already encouraged to do.

Staff members who believe their skills and abilities have exceeded the original scope of their post descriptions and classifications must advocate for themselves in receiving the treatment and compensation they deserve. Staff members that are unaware of how their day-to-day work has surpassed their original post description are at a great risk of missing out because organizations seldom have an impetus to update descriptions and reclassify existing staff. No one will raise this question for staff, as it's easy and cheaper for management to maintain the status quo.

The value and constraints of job descriptions

Not only does a proper job description bring clarity to the incumbent, outlining how he or she fits into the organization's work plan and competencies, it also provides tools for recruiting the right talent, accurately evaluating performance, and determining compensation and salary. Factors constraining the creation of well-crafted job descriptions include time, budget, organizational structure, an overlap of performance and function within the organization, and conflicting strategic objectives.

Job analysis and evaluation

When examining the evolution of a post, the tasks, projects and assignments that a staff member completes must be considered in relation to the original post description and job classification, and if these changes “affect the key functions of the post” and “justify a higher grade level.” Implementation of the new Master Standard provides a standardized approach to job classification across the UN common system. Even with a thorough classification method, the “starting point” of a job evaluation is “a well-documented post and an understanding of the post and its role.” It is imperative that post descriptions employ the most accurate, up-to-date and precise information and language. For example, if a role includes supervising, then the word “supervise” therefore needs to be in the post description if such is the intention. Otherwise, those completing a desk audit for reclassification may relate their observations to an incorrect benchmark, compromising the accuracy of the process. It is likewise important to note that a desk audit should examine function, rather than performance, further preserving accuracy, as well as objectivity.

When evaluating how a staff member’s post has changed and whether this justifies updating the classification, the managing supervisor must consider not only the new functions that the staff member has assumed, but also the cause of these changes, i.e., a specific context requiring temporary performance above a grade level versus a gradual yet consistent elevation of performance level. This will help indicate whether the changes do justify a grade and salary elevation.

ILOAT Judgments concerning this matter

Several International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) cases demonstrate the critical nuances of dealing with post description and classification issues and precautions to take so that issues will not accelerate to this level.

Judgment Nos. 3834 and 3855 both ruled in favor of complainants whose inaccurate post descriptions impeded the proper completion of audits and resulted in incorrect classifications.

In Judgment No. 3589 the complaint was dismissed due to lack of evidence that his organization had failed to follow protocol. Additionally, many claims he made against his organization’s Human Resource Management Office (HR) were, in fact, decisions completely at the discretion of HR and that the ILOAT could not have challenged in this context. This highlights the authority of HR in reclassification, and had they not followed their own procedures correctly, the complainant may have won. It is HR’s responsibility to follow the procedures fairly and thoroughly while assuring that all descriptions are accurate enough to make a proper evaluation of whether reclassification is necessary. Emphasis should be put on keeping descriptions entirely up to date to avoid any incorrect evaluations.

Several cases demonstrate the time-sensitivity of the issues surrounding post descriptions and classification. The Tribunal ruled that it does not have the authority to require each complainant’s respective organization to retroactively reclassify a position, for cases in which complainants had already retired. Judgment No. 3374 shows how excessively prolonged internal appeal procedures may hurt an organization’s defense: the ILO had to pay the complainant compensation for moral injury because of their delay in acting on an internal appeal. As the time period in which reclassification issues can be adjudicated may elapse, staff members challenging their organization in terms of post classification also must be timely in filing appeals or complaints. In Judgment No. 3839, the complaint of a staff who requested post reclassification was dismissed due in part to not acting within the time frame for his complaint to be valid.

Conclusion and recommendation

It is crucial that staff members understand how their posts have evolved during their

tenure and if these changes justify a reclassification, because their unawareness can cost them significant financial losses and career advancement. Roles don’t stay stagnant over time, and should adapt to the needs and available technology of the present context, which will be mutually beneficial for both staff and their organizations. Post descriptions should be updated at a minimum every five years in order to properly reflect the changing reality of a post. Growth and development within roles will keep organizations fresh, lively, and preeminent. Furthermore, ensuring due compensation based on staff member’s post descriptions and classifications would promote a work culture of respect and sense of fairness. ■

- 1 WHO staff member who is currently released to serve as FICSA’s General Secretary.
- 2 Boston College student currently serving as a FICSA intern.
- 3 WIPO staff member who is currently released to serve as FICSA’s President.
- 4 FICSA regularly offers workshops on job descriptions and classifications for staff representatives.



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General Kosciuszko, a man ahead of his time

A champion of freedom who wanted to end slavery in America and serfdom in Europe, promoted gender equality and universal access to education.

“Few know about Polish General Tadeusz Kosciuszko who fought for freedom on both sides of the Atlantic and gave Thomas Jefferson his fortune to free and educate African slaves.”

ADAM KONIUSZEWSKI, THE BRIDGE FOUNDATION¹, THE GCSP

In March 2018, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) hosted a public discussion on the extraordinary life and deeds of Tadeusz Kosciuszko, Polish by origin and an American and French citizen. A military genius, statesman and human rights campaigner, who not only became a national hero in his own country, but also played a pivotal role in the War of Independence and advocated for the manumission of African slaves in the United States.

Conceived by Adam Koniuszewski from The Bridge Foundation and the Geneva Center for Security Policy (GCSP), and hosted by RTS Switzerland news anchor Dariusz Rochebin, this conference was held in recognition of the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. After the opening remarks of GCSP’s Director,

Ambassador Christian Dussey, Adam Koniuszewski gave a presentation on Kosciuszko’s astonishing life.

History

General Kosciuszko fought for human rights and defended the ideals of freedom, justice and equality for all. “Kosciuszko, one of George Washington’s most important military engineers and strategists in the Revolutionary War, was the architect of the continental army victory against the British at Saratoga. This battle became the turning point of the revolution as it swayed Louis XVI and France to join the American cause against the British,” said Koniuszewski.

Kosciuszko left his entire American fortune for US President, Thomas Jefferson, to free and educate African slaves, including Jefferson’s own slaves. “The Kosciuszko testament had the power to change history but Jefferson would never fulfill



Adam Koniuszewski giving a presentation on Kosciuszko's astonishing life.

the wishes of his Polish friend". Kosciuszko went on to build the strategic fortress of West Point. It would later become the most famous military academy in the world.

The panelists, all with a connection to Gen. Kosciuszko – either through familiar links, work impact or pure interest – included Ambassador Pierre-André Dunbar, Permanent Representative of Haiti to the United Nations, Marguerite Kudelski of Kudelski Group, and Thomas Zeltner, a leading figure in the field of Public Health in Switzerland and beyond.

As a descendent of two US Presidents (John Adams and John Quincy Adams), former US Ambassador to Finland, Charles Adams Jr. provided remarks via video; quoting President Thomas Jefferson who said of Kosciuszko, "He is as pure a son of liberty as ever I have known."

Marguerite Kudelski discovered in her family archives that her grandfather Tadeusz Kudelski had been named in honor of Kosciuszko. But the Kosciuszko-Kudelski parallel does not end here. Her father, Stefan Kudelski, who left Poland because of War World II, revolutionized movie-making in Hollywood by creating the Nagra portable recorder which earned him two Oscars. Both Poles left their homeland because of war, left their mark in America and settled in Switzerland.

For the Zeltner family there is a very personal and emotional connection to this story. Thomas Zeltner explained that when Kosciuszko was in Paris he developed a close friendship with the first Swiss Ambassador to France, Peter Zeltner. Unhappy in a France under Napoleon, he moved to Solothurn in 1815 where he lived and later died in an apartment owned by the Zeltner family. "Already then, Switzerland

was recognized as a haven of freedom in a turbulent Europe. That was one of the reasons Kosciuszko moved there", explained Zeltner.

A truly global citizen, General Kosciuszko is an inspiring and timeless role model for the younger generation. Thus, the Bridge Foundation is sharing his extraordinary story through conferences and events in Poland and beyond – including to over 1,000 young leaders in Poland over 2017/18.

The Bridge Foundation thanks Ambassador Dussey, the GCSP and all who contributed to this conference, including Dariusz Rochebin for his wonderful moderation, our distinguished speakers, and the following partners: The American International Club, The American International Women's Club, Initiatives of Change Switzerland, RadioZones FM93.8 the New Eastern Europe monthly publication.

Special words of appreciation go to Philippe Ekeke and his team at 3E2K for their video support. ■

1 The Bridge Foundation engages youth and opinion leaders on global challenges and sustainable development, including the SDG agenda, in Canada, Switzerland, France, Poland and beyond.



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Gothic Geneva and the year without a summer

If it feels as if the winter has lasted forever this year and that spring has seriously dragged its heels before putting in a long-overdue appearance around Lac Léman then spare a thought for those visiting Geneva in 1816, the so called “Year Without a Summer”.

KEVIN CRAMPTON

In 1816, temperature dipped all across the world, causing persistent fog on the Eastern seaboard of the US, snow to fall as late as June in Massachusetts and hungry crowds to roam the United Kingdom as crop failures occurred across the planet from Europe to Japan. Villagers in Vermont ate hedgehogs and boiled wild nettles and peasants in China sucked on white clay to survive and planted poppy instead of rice, setting the foundations for the opium trade. The inhabitants of New England named the year “Eighteen-Hundred-and-Froze-to-Death” and the Germans called the period the “Year of the Beggar” as malnutrition forced many on to the road with diseases (particularly cholera and typhus) following closely behind.

Switzerland was one of the worst affected countries in Europe, there were 130 days of rain between June and September which raised the level of the lake enough to flood Geneva and an ice cone began to form at the foot of the Giétro Glacier that formed

a natural dam creating a new, 2 km-long lake. Two years later, and despite the work of the Swiss engineer Ignaz Venetz to drill an overflow tunnel for the gradual release of the water, the ice dam catastrophically collapsed releasing an estimated 18 million m³ of water and killing 44 people.

The cause of the global cooling was the eruption in April 1815 of the Tambora stratovolcano on the island of Sumbawa, Indonesia. The most powerful eruption of the last millennia and a half, it ejected some 100 km³ of material sending huge amounts of dust into the upper atmosphere at, unfortunately, the same time as a particularly sluggish period of sunspot activity called the Dalton Minimum. This combination of less incoming solar radiation and more material to block it caused global land temperatures to fall by, on average, 1 °C and set in motion three years of misery.

There are vivid accounts of how the miserable weather affected Geneva because the poet Percy Shelley and his young fiancée



Lord Byron, vintage engraved illustration. *History of France* – 1885

Mary Godwin (soon to be Mary Shelley) had travelled to spend their summer by the lake, visiting Lord Byron in his self-imposed exile from scandal back in England. Mary wrote to her half-sister, Fanny Imlay, in June:

“An almost perpetual rain confines us principally to the house. One night we enjoyed a finer storm than I had ever before beheld. The lake was lit up — the pines on Jura made visible, and all the scene illuminated for an instant, when a pitchy blackness succeeded, and the thunder came in frightful bursts over our heads amid the blackness.”

Byron had planned to spend his summer swimming and sailing the lake and although he ranged as far as Chateau Chillon (where his name can still be seen carved on to a pillar in the dungeon), the poets were confined indoors for almost all of the summer. Byron composed the poem *Darkness* in July 1816 and it can

be read now almost as a consideration of climate change and the profound effects of the abnormal weather and the deprivation of sunlight.

I had a dream, which was not all a dream.

*The bright sun was extinguish'd,
and the stars*

*Did wander darkling in the eternal
space,*

*Rayless, and pathless, and the icy
earth*

*Swung blind and blackening in the
moonless air;*

*Morn came, and went — and
came, and brought no day,*

*And men forgot their passions in
the dread*

*Of this their desolation; and all
hearts*

*Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for
light.*

Trapped in his rented accommodation, the Villa Diodati (which still stands in Cologny), Byron challenged his assembled guests to invent ghost stories, inspired by the gloomy weather. Byron's personal physician, John Polidori, wrote *The Vampyre*, the first story to synthesise the key elements of the vampire genre and an influence on Bram Stoker. The young Mary Shelley (she was 18 in June 1861), perhaps recalling that lightning over the Jura, began *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* which she completed back home in Bath, England.

Mary would later write that the summer spent in Geneva and the inspiration that led to the creation of *Frankenstein* was

“when I first stepped out from childhood into life”. Gloom and tragedy accompanied the work's creation however, and she wrote the first four chapters in the weeks following the suicide of Fanny in October 1816.

1816, and an effect that climate scientists in the 1960's would name a “volcanic winter” has much to teach us therefore about the serious consequences of sudden changes in the constitution of the atmosphere. The same cold and perpetual night (Byron complained that he had to light the candles at midday) that caused crop failure, sent food prices rocketing and led to riots also inspired poets, musicians and artists to consider the darker side of the human psyche. Switzerland's suffering in 1816 and, in particular, the storms over Lake Geneva remain then an essential ingredient of the genesis of gothic horror. ■

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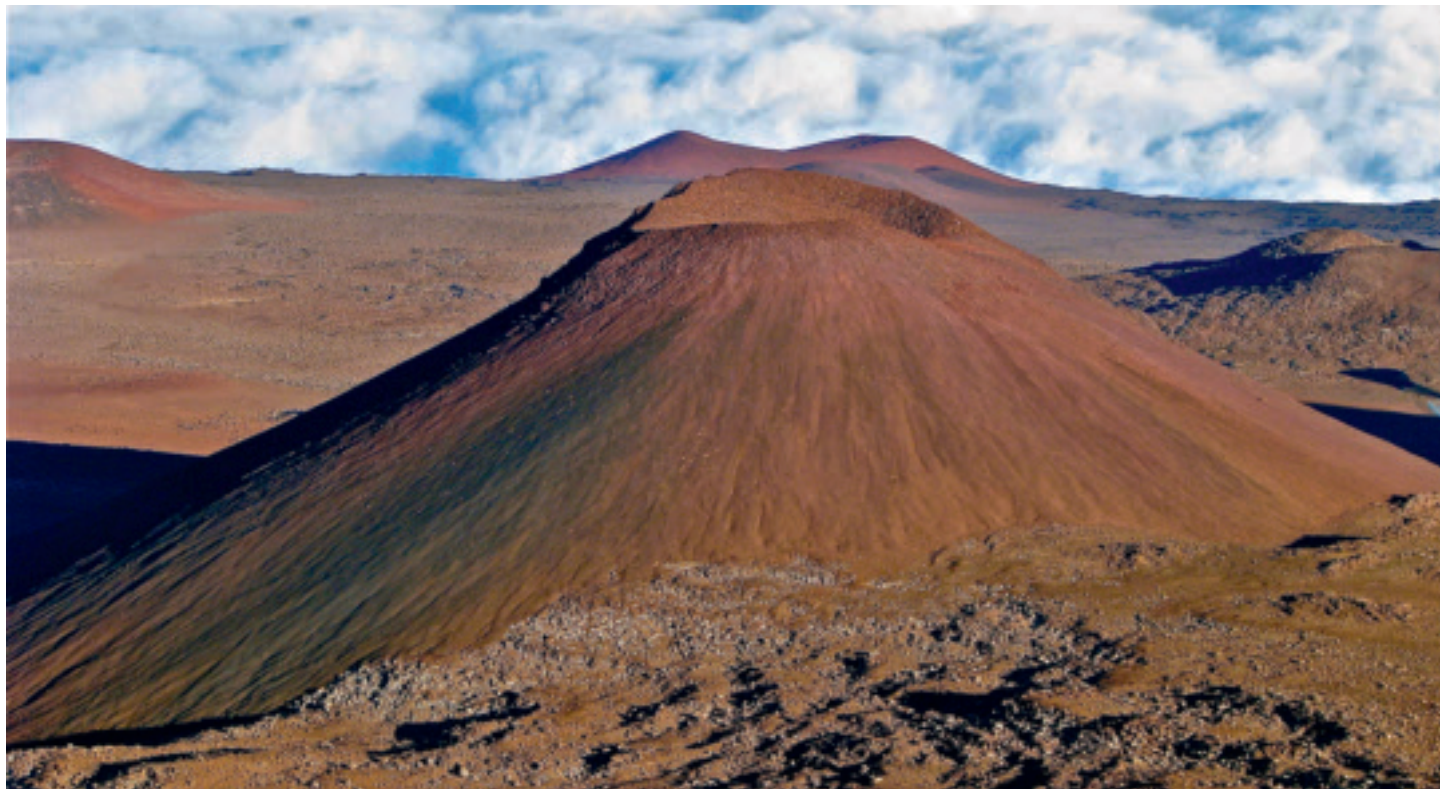
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Paysages lunaires vus depuis le sommet du volcan Mauna Kéa, point culminant d'Hawaï avec ses 4207 m.

© Claude Maillard

Sur les volcans du monde 1/3

On compte environ 1500 volcans actifs dans le monde dont une soixantaine entrent en éruption tous les ans.

Cause de mort et source de vie, ils sont probablement la clé des origines de notre existence sur la planète Terre.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

La nuit tombe sur le Yasur, volcan emblématique de l'île de Tanna dans l'archipel du Vanuatu perdu dans l'océan Pacifique à 1500 kilomètres à l'est de l'Australie. Ce petit pays est situé à l'extrémité de la ceinture de feu du Pacifique, zone volcanique des plus actives de la planète qui compte 452 volcans. Elle s'étend sur plus de 40 000 km entre l'Océanie et la Terre de Feu, longeant l'Asie, le Canada et l'intégralité du continent américain. Accompagné du volcanologue Guy de Saint-Cyr, nous observons les trois bouches du Yasur qui crachent

en alternance de puissants jets de roches incandescentes. Le rougeolement du volcan est probablement ce qui amena le navigateur et explorateur James Cook à Tanna en 1774. Depuis cette date, le Yasur ne cesse d'offrir ce spectacle toutes les cinq minutes environ. Au fond du cratère bouillonne un lac de lave dont la température avoisine les 1200 degrés. Lorsque la gigantesque bulle de gaz accumulée en dessous explose, l'onde de choc propagée est d'une telle intensité que le sol en tremble. Le souffle assourdissant de l'explosion nous fait sursauter. Une gerbe

puissante de feu composée de blocs de magma et de cendres est projetée à près de 700 km/h dans les airs. Après avoir dessiné d'étincelantes paraboles rougeoyantes, les lambeaux de lave redescendent au ralenti, se tordent et s'écrasent en sifflant sur les parois du volcan.

Passion "volcans"

Professionnels ou amateurs, tous ceux qui ont eu l'opportunité de marcher au bord d'un cratère en éruption peuvent en témoigner : les explosions volcaniques, expression même des forces animant le ventre de la Terre, sont incroyablement impressionnantes. Elles attestent de la vitalité de notre planète et des mouvements qui l'animent depuis 4,5 milliards d'années.

Ces montagnes vivantes qui nous fascinent sont des déferlements de forces que nous ne pouvons pas contrôler. A la fois craints et vénérés depuis

des temps immémoriaux, les volcans enseignent à l'homme l'humilité.

Personnage médiatique, Haroun Tazieff (1914-1998) a été l'un des pères de la volcanologie contemporaine et un pionnier de la communication entre les volcanologues et le grand public. Il a démontré la nécessité d'expéditions pluridisciplinaires sur les volcans actifs et les volcans en éruption. Avec les collaborateurs qu'il s'est choisis au long de quarante années d'exploration, il a considérablement participé au développement de la recherche volcanique et à l'observation de la dérive des continents. Il a largement contribué à révolutionner une science qui n'était jusqu'alors guère reconnue et quasiment inconnue.

Après avoir fait ses premières armes auprès d'Haroun Tazieff, Maurice Krafft a également marqué l'histoire de la volcanologie. Avec son épouse Katia,



© Claude Maillard

En Ethiopie, l'environnement extrême du Dallol ressemble à celui où la vie est apparue il y a 3,7 milliards d'années.

Ils nous ont fait rêver au travers de leurs nombreux livres illustrés grâce à leur incroyable banque photographique constituée au fil des années lors de leurs nombreuses expéditions. A la demande de l'UNESCO, les «diables des volcans» comme les surnommaient leurs collègues américains, partiront en mission durant plus de 25 ans sur les plus dangereux volcans de la planète afin d'en étudier les risques pour la population. Malheureusement ils ne pourront pas achever leur travail. Le 3 juin 1991, sur les flancs du volcan Unzen au Japon, les époux Krafft assisteront pour une dernière fois à une explosion volcanique avant qu'une nuée ardente, avalanche de gaz et de cendre portés à très haute température, ne les engloutisse à tout jamais.

Comme Maurice Krafft, Guy de Saint-Cyr assistera à sa première éruption volcanique sur les pentes du Stromboli. C'était en 1958, il avait tout juste 18 ans. Il n'en est jamais vraiment revenu et n'a eu de cesse depuis d'aller côtoyer les

géants ignivomes de la planète, aussi spectaculaires qu'imprévisibles. Désireux de partager le grand frisson qui accompagne inévitablement la fréquentation rapprochée d'un volcan actif, le volcanologue lyonnais crée alors «Aventure & Volcans» (www.aventurevolcans.com). Aujourd'hui, une soixantaine de volcans actifs à travers le monde sont au catalogue de son agence qui permet aux passionnés de se mettre, la durée d'un voyage, dans la peau d'un volcanologue.

Big Bang de la vie

Le mot «volcan» vient de Vulcain, fils de Jupiter et de Junon, le dieu romain du feu qui régnait en maître dans les entrailles de ces montagnes en feu.

Les volcans ont apporté à la surface de la Terre de la chaleur, de l'eau et un puissant cocktail de composés organiques (hydrogène sulfuré, arsenic...) qui sont à l'origine de la vie. En effet les organismes primitifs se sont pendant 2 milliards d'années nourris de cette «soupe», ce qui fait dire aux scientifiques

que les lacs volcaniques sont un berceau possible de la vie. Le dégagement intense de dioxyde de carbone des volcans a permis à la chaleur de la Terre de se fixer durablement dans notre atmosphère. C'est grâce à des cataclysmes volcaniques que notre planète a pu sortir de son état de sphère gelée. En effet il y a environ 600 millions d'années, une période glaciaire intense s'est abattue sur la Terre, les glaciers recouvrant alors toute sa surface. Les éruptions volcaniques ont percé cette calotte glaciaire et lorsque la concentration de dioxyde de carbone et de méthane émis a été suffisante, l'effet de serre amorça la débâcle, libérant ainsi la Terre de son étouffement de glace. Après cette période ce fut le grand dégel, la température passant dans certaines zones de -50° à $+50^{\circ}$ en quelques siècles. Une phénoménale avancée de la diversité biochimique allait se produire à partir d'une poignée de microbes qui ont survécu.

Les stromatolithes sont les premières traces de vie sur Terre.

En grec «Tapis de pierre», ils sont d'origine biologique et façonnent des massifs en forme de chou-fleur. Ils existaient déjà il y a 3,7 milliards d'années comme le montrent des fossiles trouvés dans la ceinture volcanique de roches vertes d'Isua, sur une île au sud-ouest du Groenland, ou plus récemment il y a 3,5 milliards d'années dans l'ouest australien. Ces formations rocheuses calcaires sont surmontées d'une mince couche en surface qui est la partie vivante, constituée de gélatine de filaments de cyanobactéries, sorte d'algues bleues unicellulaires. Viendront ensuite les organismes multicellulaires complexes de formes et de tailles variées. Il y a environ 600 millions d'années apparaissent des organismes à corps mou dans les grès précambriens des collines d'Ediacara situées à 650 km au nord d'Adélaïde. Cette période démarre le «Big Bang de la vie»; c'est l'explosion de la complexité qui amènera tous les organismes à évoluer au rythme des changements climatiques.

Dans ce gigantesque bond en avant de la vie, les volcans ont joué un grand rôle en mettant fin à la glaciation. Leur alliance au monde vivant, notamment le plancton des océans, a ajusté miraculeusement le dioxyde de carbone de l'atmosphère terrestre. Actuellement, les volcans laissent échapper une quantité d'énergie phénoménale contenue dans les profondeurs de la Terre, l'empêchant ainsi de se refroidir et de manquer de dioxyde de carbone, ce qui aurait pour effet de ralentir considérablement l'évolution du vivant.

Suite du récit dans le prochain numéro du UN Special. ■

Fake news, Fake history, Fake law

“Fake news” is a widespread phenomenon – not only in Europe and the United States, but all over the planet.



ALFRED DE ZAYAS

“Fake news” are concocted and disseminated by governments, “independent journalists” with an agenda, private media, social media, gossip... Thus emerges “fragmented truth”, and no one really knows what truth is, everyone clings to his own views, refusing to consider alternative versions of the facts.

Only reluctantly will we acknowledge that “fake news” have always been around, the difference being that in the past only governments were purveyors of fake news, only governments could successfully manipulate public opinion, whereas today anybody with access to the internet can also weigh in.

This in turn has generated “fake history”, which feeds into the steady flow of fake news. But why is no one talking about

“fake law”? Indeed, some politicians and journalists frequently “invent” law, contending that what some lobby or interest group invokes as law actually has legal force, as if law and legal obligations could spontaneously arise, without the drafting, negotiation and adoption of legislation, a treaty, convention, or without a specific legislative act of ratification by Parliament. We must beware of the loose use of legal terms, which undermines the authority and credibility of the law. Not every massacre constitutes “genocide”, not every bombardment of a military objective falls into the category of a “war crime”, not every form of sexual harassment can be considered “rape”. Nor is every jailed politician a “political prisoner”, nor every migrant a “refugee” under the Geneva Refugee Convention. And yet, much hyperbole and political

agitation play out on this pseudo-legal arena, much political blackmail is practiced on the basis of fake “law”, much propaganda is actually believed by average citizens.

All too often we are confronted by a combination of fake news, fake history and fake law, a very toxic cocktail for any democracy. Alas, fake law has become a favourite weapon of demagogues and fake “experts” and “diplomats” who gleefully engage in what may be termed “fake diplomacy”, as the goal is not to reach a reasonable negotiated settlement, but rather to score points on the gladiator arena of power-politics, with the dutiful collusion of a sold-out and capricious media. Thus continues the game of sabre-rattling and many make fortunes in the process, since nothing is as lucrative as the arms business.

Is there a solution? Demagogues would establish an Orwellian “Ministry of Truth”, others would criminalize “fake news” (but only inconvenient “fake news”), others would pretend to filter facts and opinion using self-made tools to determine what is true and what isn’t. No one needs this kind of Inquisition and censorship, because neither governments nor the private sector can be gatekeepers of the truth. The only solution is ensuring access to pluralistic information and open debate. Society must demand greater transparency at all levels and proactively seek the truth by consulting multiple sources and making a new synthesis, which will not be “revealed truth” or “immutable truth”, but a constantly evolving truth that incorporates the complexity and nuances of reality on the ground. ■

Epigram for June 2018

“Getting away with it” does not render blatant aggression any less criminal. The prevailing impunity of the powerful does not legalize their crimes. Fake news and fake law ultimately will not prevail. Geopolitical crimes such as economic sanctions that cause the death of children from malnutrition or of adults from lack of medicines are really crimes against humanity. The intellectually dishonest practice of invoking “humanitarian intervention” as a pretext to impose regime change does not generate any legal precedent – *ex injuria non oritur jus* – nor make the aggression somehow “legitimate”. Of course, the rule of law

and international order are wounded – but they are not killed. Punishment still awaits the offenders whenever the International Criminal Court is prepared to take the Rome statute seriously and to prosecute the big fish and not just defeated enemies or ousted politicians. Neither “exceptionalism” nor “legal black holes” are compatible with the international human rights treaty regime. Aggression remains the ultimate crime, because it leads to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Yet, the merchants of death in the military-industrial-financial complex love war and profits.

Message du rédacteur en chef

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Les plus pertinents, les plus intéressants, les plus originaux seront publiés dans le magazine.

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

Et maintenant, à vos plumes !

Adressez vos commentaires à :

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Write to us!

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

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Now, put pen to paper!

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Imprimé sur du papier certifié FSC.

Tirage: 10 500 exemplaires

La revue officielle des fonctionnaires internationaux des Nations Unies à Genève et de l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé.
The official magazine of the international civil servants of the United Nations at Geneva and of the World Health Organization

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

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

Impression / Printer

Imprimerie du Moléson SA
Route du Nant d'Avril 107 – 1217 Meyrin – T. +41 22 782 50 82
Rue des Mouettes 12 – 1227 Carouge – T. +41 22 307 26 10
www.molesonimpressions.ch

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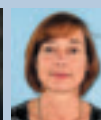
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