



AFICS BULLETIN

NEW YORK

ASSOCIATION OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS

Vol. 47 ♦ No. 2 ♦ Fall 2015 / Winter 2016



AFICS/NY
joins all members in
welcoming Spring.
Watch for
upcoming events!

"The mission of AFICS/NY is to support and promote the purposes, principles and programmes of the UN System; to advise and assist former international civil servants and those about to separate from service; to represent the interests of its members within the System; to foster social and personal relationships among members, to promote their well-being and to encourage mutual support of individual members."

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Editor
Mary Lynn Hanley

Design & Layout
Laura Frischeisen

Proofreader
Herminia Roque

Please submit news, views, photos and letters to the Editor by E-mail: MIhanley11@aol.com

AFICS/NY webpage: www.un.org/other/afics

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT



Over these past few months we have endeavoured to keep you informed on the two issues closest to our hearts and minds, pensions and health insurance, by posting information on our website. Let me preface my remarks by saying that while technology enhances our world, it is not always friendly and can create unanticipated problems. In January, AFICS/ NY invited representatives of both the Health Insurance Section and the Pension Fund to a Governing Board Meeting to hear from them directly what has been causing the problems retirees have been experiencing with regard to delays in receipt of both of these benefits. We have learned that the introduction of two new IT systems virtually at the same time, IPAS in the Pension Fund and Umoja in the UN and the interface between them, has created a number of unforeseen problems. We trust that by the time you receive this *Bulletin*, they will have been largely solved. For those who do not have access to the website, this is a very brief summary.

HEALTH INSURANCE

In October 2015, you were informed by the UN Department of Management staff responsible for ASHI that health insurance premiums for Medicare B that were formerly paid through your pension would be reimbursed directly to your bank account by the UN starting November 2015. Unfortunately, it was discovered at the last minute that the new UN IT system, Umoja, was not able to accommodate the new plan, resulting in a delay that lasted through January 2016. And just when we were told that things were back on track, the end of February 2016 brought forth a new glitch, this time affecting a more limited number of retired staff, for the most part those who had returned to work on short-term or WAE contracts. AFICS/NY has been assured that this too has been solved. Although we have been pressing the Health Insurance Section to issue financial statements of ASHI Plan Information as in the past, the aforementioned interface problems with Umoja may be preventing them from doing so. Remember that our office stands ready to assist you and facilitate solutions to any problems you may have in this regard.

On another note, we continue to monitor the outcome of the Fifth Committee's deliberations on the Working Group on ASHI convened under the auspices of the Finance & Budget Network of the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) of the Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB). Through FAFICS, retirees played an active role in this Working Group, stressing that any cost containment measures should not be at the expense of the quality of health care offered and that significant acquired rights exist with regard to the obligation of organizations to provide after-service health insurance to its former staff. For the first time in its history, FAFICS requested and was granted permission to address the Fifth Committee which it did on 4 March. As we go to press, the General Assembly has adopted a draft resolution which mandates a continuation of the Working Group and also endorses a number of the key recommendations made by the Working Group. We shall continue to follow this matter closely and to defend the rights of retirees to after-service health insurance.

Unless otherwise noted, throughout the *Bulletin* the term "AFICS" is used to refer to AFICS/New York.

The views and opinions expressed in the various reports, articles and illustrations in the *Bulletin* do not necessarily represent those of AFICS /NY, its Bureau or Governing Board, nor does the Association accept responsibility for the accuracy of information given. The mention of any product, service, organization or company does not necessarily imply its endorsement by the Association.

PENSIONS

First, you probably know by now that there will be no cost of living increase to pensions this year. Although in past years we have had numerous telephone calls asking whether there would be an increase, most of the queries this year had to do with pension delays. The information I am about to give you does not concern the vast majority of retirees who were already receiving a pension as of August 2015. We know that the introduction of IPAS, the new IT system implemented by the Pension Fund in August 2015, was seamless for retirees already receiving a pension at that time and that you continued to receive it at the end of the month as in the past. However, we were very disturbed to learn that new retirees were experiencing longer than usual delays, and complaints about the lack of action/response by the Pension Fund began to mount rapidly.

Since these delays first came to light, I and other colleagues have met with and made a number of suggestions to Pension Fund staff, including the CEO, on ways to address and overcome them. We were told that before a pension can be paid, both staff and organizations must ensure that they have performed their respective parts *in their entirety*. For retiring staff, this means providing all information required by the Fund; this may entail duplicating forms that are already on file with the organization's HR department or Executive Office and *must include the retiree's election of benefit options and banking instructions*. The Organizations must check to make sure that *all* of the necessary separation forms reach the Fund in a timely manner so that when files are opened by the Fund, they are complete and ready for processing. For its part, the Fund must ensure that once it is in possession of a complete file, it begins to calculate and pay the pension quickly. The Pension Fund does not know in advance who is due to retire and finds out only when the file has been sent by the organization to the Fund. Statistics provided by the Pension Fund show that most organizations have delays of at least two months before submitting all separation documentation to the Fund. For example, the most recent data available show that in the case of UN HQ, in over 62% of cases, it takes more than 2 months for the Organization to submit all separation documents and in 21% of cases, between 4 and 5 months. The average for all UN Funds and Programmes is 58% and 27%, respectively and the average for the specialized agencies is 21% and 13%, respectively. The overall average is 45% and 22%, respectively. For more complete information see the table on the timespan for receipt of separation documents following this article and posted on the AFICS/NY website.

The above does not mean that the Fund is blameless, as delays in UNJSPF processing are real. Aware that the Introduction of IPAS would slow down processing of new payments, the Pension Fund posted a notice on its website on 1 June to inform staff, retirees and prospective retirees about

the forthcoming implementation of IPAS and with it the possible slow-down in processing rates so that prospective retirees could plan, as needed, for their cash-flow requirements. We understand that IPAS processing rates now far exceed the rates for the same period last year and that a number of concrete steps have been taken by the Fund to ensure that the backlog is cleared by the beginning of June at the latest. We deeply regret that some newly retired staff have not received their pensions in a timely manner. AFICS/NY is committed to doing all it can to ensure that pending cases are treated urgently and are accorded the highest priority of the Fund.

OTHER MATTERS

At the end of March, AFICS/NY commemorated the 70th Anniversary of the UN with the participation of former President of Finland, Nobel Laureate, senior UN official and AFICS/NY member, Martti Ahtisaari. President Ahtisaari participated in a Conversation moderated by James Bays, Diplomatic Editor of Al Jazeera on his varied achievements, as well as past UN successes and future challenges. We are grateful to President Ahtisaari and James Bays for accepting our invitation. To view a webcast of the event, which attracted a large crowd, go to <http://webtv.un.org> and search by date: 2016-03-29.

Those of you who visit the DC buildings only occasionally may find that your grounds pass does not admit you. When we first heard about this at the very end of last year, AFICS/NY immediately queried the Safety and Security Division and were told that the passes of those who didn't enter the buildings for more than a month were automatically deactivated. We asked for a meeting with the Director of Safety and Security and were informed that this was a requirement imposed by the management of the DC buildings and that active staff working in other buildings would be subject to the same restriction. So far, we understand that this has not caused major delays and that retirees who show their pass to the UN security guard on duty are immediately admitted.

In closing and in the category that nothing lasts forever, the UN Cafeteria closed its doors for good last year. The closing was the result of a security evaluation which deemed the location, with its many windows next to a ramp exiting the FDR Drive, as vulnerable to attack and therefore unsafe. Though none as extensive as the old cafeteria, new areas to pick up a snack or quick lunch have been created in the north part of the lobby, the basement in the old UN post location and on the fourth floor where the former Staff Café has been expanded to function as a cafeteria. There were rumours that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, located in the fourth story wing in the south side of the building, would also be affected, but so far it remains in place.

You may notice that our usual IN MEMORIAM section in this issue of the *Bulletin* is not included this time as we did

not receive the notices. Please be assured that we will provide you with the data as soon as it comes in.

Also, please remember that readers are always interested in what fellow retirees are up to! Accounts of your interesting

experiences (volunteer activities, courses, travels, etc.) that you'd like to share would be most welcome!

Watch this space for updates in the next *Bulletin*.

**Separation Documentation Submission Period by UN Organization/Agency
(16 month period) January 2014 - April 2015* (data provided by UNJSPF)**

Organization	more than 60 days	more than 180 days
UNICEF Local	92%	87%
ONUCI	97%	37%
UNHCR	76%	36%
UNMISS	52%	33%
WFP / HQ & INT	47%	32%
UNAMID	63%	32%
UNDP/Local	63%	32%
UNRWA	42%	26%
UN Geneva	50%	25%
UNICEF / HQ & INT	54%	24%
UNON	50%	23%
UNMIL	54%	22%
UNMIH/MINUSTAH	49%	21%
UN/HQ	62%	21%
UNICTY	27%	20%
UNOV	38%	18%
ECLAC SANTIAGO	29%	18%
UNECA	63%	15%
UNOHCI/UNAMI	28%	14%
OSGAP/UNAMA	24%	12%
MONUSCO	15%	12%
ESCAP	8%	5%
WFP Local	66%	5%
Average (UN Funds and Programmes)	58%	27%
ICC (International Criminal Court)	42%	32%
WMO	27%	24%
IFAD	47%	22%
IOM	21%	19%
FAO	28%	17%
WHO	24%	17%
UNIDO	26%	15%
IAEA	21%	14%
ITU	16%	11%
WIPO	19%	7%
UNESCO	19%	6%
ILO	6%	2%
ICAO	10%	1%
Average (Specialized Agencies)	21%	13%
Overall Average	45%	22%

*Calendar days used. Organizations/agencies with 29 or more separations only. Excluded transfer out cases, invalid entries (erroneous), deemed deferred and cancelled-no payment instructions).

AFICS/NY ELECTS BUREAU FOR COMING YEAR

At its first regular meeting on 17 September 2015, and consistent with its By-Laws, the newly-elected Governing Board of AFICS/NY elected its Bureau for the coming year as follows: Linda Saputelli, President; Fernando Astete and Debbie Landey, First and Second Vice-Presidents, respectively; and Angel Silva, Treasurer. At its second regular meeting on 20 October 2015 it welcomed Marianne Brzak-Metzler as Secretary and Demetrios Argyriades as Deputy Secretary.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members, who joined AFICS/NY between 1 August 2014 and 30 September 2015. (* Designates Life Member)

Mr. Hassan Bahlouli
UNIDO, Deputy Director

Mrs. Ilze Bahlouli
UNHQ, Admin. Assistant

Mr. Frederic Ballenegger
UNHQ, French Translator/Writer

*Mr. Edoardo Bellando
UNHQ, Information Officer

*Ms. Suzanne Bishopric
UNJSPF, Director, IMD

*Mrs. Maria del Pilar Caceres-Mathur
UNHQ, Language Ref. Assistant

*Mrs. Viviane Cehte
UNHQ, Assistant Supervisor, DGAACM

Ms. Xiaoyu Chen
UNICEF, Senior Advisor

Mr. Md Shafiqur Chowdhury
UNAMID, Field Security Coordination Officer

*Mrs. Barbara Christiani
UNHQ, Chief of Unit

Ms. Sylvie Cohen
UNHQ/DESA, Sr. Tech Advisor

Ms. Sylvie D. Cohen
UNHQ, Information Assistant

*Mr. Michael De Cristofaro
UNHQ, Sr. Accounting Clerk

*Mr. Frank DeTurreis
UNJSPF, Chief of Operations

Mrs. Maria Gabriella De Vita
UNICEF, Project Officer
Gender & Harmful Traditional Practices

*Mr. Moussa Diallo
MONUSCO, Officer-in-Charge,
Public Information Office

*Ms. Yamina Djacta
UN-HABITAT, Director

*Ms. Sonia Dohman
MINUSTA/Haiti, Contracts
Management Assistant

*Mr. George Gaston
UNHQ, HVAC, Forman

*Ms. Alem Tsehay Gebeyehu
UNDP, Programme Assistant

*Ms. Debra Goodridge
UNDP, Executive Associate

*Mr. Wolfgang Grieger
UNHQ/DPA/DPR

Mr. Jacques Gruber
UNHQ, Interpreter

*Ms. Lina Hamadeh-Banerjee
UNDP, Senior Policy Advisor

*Mr. Willard Hass
UNHQ/DPI, Senior Editor

*Mr. Ralph Herring
UNHQ, UN Security, DSS/SSS

Mr. Berold Hinds
UNHQ/SCSL, Senior Security Officer

*Mr. Edward M. Hynes
UNHQ, Officer-in-Charge
UN Postal Administration

Mr. Paul Johnson
UNHQ/DFS/UNNY
Acting Director, Field Personnel Div.

*Ms. Angela Kane
UN, High Rep. for Disarmament

Mr. Alden Ricardo Kinch
UNHQ, Library Clerk

Mr. Dennis Lazaros
UNDP

*Ms. Christa Lex
UNHQ/OIOS, Evaluation Officer

Mr. Joseph Martella
UN/DSS, Security Coordination Officer

Ms. Irma De Brandt Martensson
UN, Chief of the Travel & Visa Unit in Kosovo

Ms. Camille Mathias
UNDP, Senior Statistical Associate

*Mrs. Cecilia McGill
UNAMA, Chief of Admin. Services

Ms. Luz-Myriam Monsalve-Stanbery
UNFPA, Admin. Assistant

*Ms. Peggy Joanne Nelson
WFP, President, Professional Staff Association

*Mr. Peter C. NG
UNHQ/OICT, Computer Assistant

*Mr. James D. O'Neill, Jr.
OIOS, Auditor

*Ms. Marie O'Sullivan-Gurz
UNODA, Staff Assistant

Ms. Maria Paniagua
UNHQ, Librarian

Mr. Douglas Passanisi
UNDP, Chief of Staff, External Relations

*Ms. Sheila Poinessette
UNHQ/DPI, Editorial Assistant

*Ms. Diane Poole-Chessin
UNHQ/DPI, Sales & Marketing Rep.

Ms. Mireille Rabut
UNHQ, Editorial Assistant

*Ms. Michelle Rockcliffe
UNJSPF, Project/Benefit Officer

Mr. Donald J. Rogers
UNHQ/OLSA, Administrative Officer

*Mr. Ashbindu Singh
UNEP, Chief, Early Warning Branch

*Mr. Curling Smith
UNHQ, Chief, Infrastructure
Planning & Engineering Section

Ms. Lynda J. Smith
UNHQ, Admin. Assistant

Mr. Trevor Smith
UNHQ, Supervisor, Printing

*Mr. James Sniffen
UNEP, Programme Officer

Ms. Maritza Struyvenberg
UNHQ, Principal Registrar
UN Office of Administration of Justice

*Ms. Kristen Timothy-Lankester
UNHQ, Director

*Ms. Neeta Tolani
UNHQ/DOM, Director,
Office of USG For Management

Ms. Barbara Van Elsen
UNHQ, Administrative Assistant

Mr. David Walton
MONUSCO, OIC, Finance Section

Ms. Cynthia Williams
MINUSTAH, Administrative Assistant

Ms. Ann Wishart
UNHQ, Accounts Associate

*Mrs. Lin Xu
UNHQ, Translator & Reviser

*Ms. Maria Ycasiano
UN/DM/OICT, Chief,
Strategic Management Service

*Ms. Ying Zang
UNHQ, Interpreter

THE CHARITIES FOUNDATION OF AFICS/NY

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Charities Foundation of AFICS/NY was held on 3 December 2015. Fernando Astete, President of the Foundation, reported that he and the following members of the Board had agreed to stay on for the 2016–2017 period and all were elected by acclamation: Dede Emerson, Anthony Fouracre, Edward Omotoso, Dr. Sudershan Narula, Frank Eppert, Warren Sach.

At a later meeting on that day, the Board of Directors elected the following officers of the Board:

PRESIDENT: J. Fernando Astete

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: Anthony Fouracre

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT: Louise Laheurte

SECRETARY: Mary Lynn Hanley

DEPUTY SECRETARY: Christine Smith-Lemarchand

TREASURER: Angel Silva

During 2015, contributions totaling \$1025 were made to the Foundation while grants amounted to \$4,500. One grant was made to a retiree renting but rarely living in a rent-stabilized apartment whose landlord had successfully taken legal action for eviction. A sum of \$2000 was granted to assist with relocation. The second disbursement, totaling \$2500, was made to UNICEF for rehabilitation efforts in Nepal following the devastating earthquakes.

Board members expressed concern as to why the Foundation was receiving so few requests for assistance. It was felt that most retirees—and especially those in the field—knew little about the Foundation and what it could provide. It was thus determined that there was a need to heighten awareness of the existence and purpose of the Foundation, which is **to assist former international civil servants with unforeseen, short-term financial emergencies**. (The Foundation is not to be seen as a source for supplementing pensions.) For example, past grants have been disbursed to:

- ❖ help people move from apartment buildings being converted to condominiums to less expensive homes.
- ❖ help defray medical expenses where costs have been beyond a retiree's means despite benefits from medical insurance.
- ❖ cover a colleague's mortgage payment when that person encountered heightened, unexpected medical expenses.
- ❖ help a colleague restart her small business after it and her home were destroyed by the Asian tsunami.
- ❖ cover partial education costs for the daughter of a former staff member facing foreclosure of his home and high moving costs.
- ❖ help a former staff member retrieve household effects from storage.
- ❖ contribute to disaster relief in Haiti, Nepal, Syria, the Philippines, Japan and the U.S. (following Hurricane Sandy).
- ❖ See flyer (inserted on page 9) for more information—and if you or a former staff member you know faces an emergency expense that meets our criteria, please do not hesitate to appeal to the Charities Foundation for assistance.



THE CHARITIES FOUNDATION OF AFICS/NY PROVIDES GRANTS TO FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS WHO FACE CRITICAL, UNUSUAL OR EMERGENCY PERSONAL HARDSHIPS OF A TEMPORARY FINANCIAL NATURE THAT CANNOT BE MET FROM OTHER AVAILABLE RESOURCES.

PLEASE CALL:

THE AFICS/NY CHARITIES FOUNDATION AT 212 963-2943

OR

SUBMIT YOUR REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO:

**THE AFICS/NY CHARITIES FOUNDATION
ONE UN Plaza, Room DC-580
New York, NY 10017**

WORLDWIDE REUNIONS

FLORIDA CHAPTER OF AFICS/NY

The Florida Chapter of AFICS/NY had a busy 2015, with reunions as follows:

16 MAY 2015

Attended by 17 members, the luncheon included a seminar by Edward Jones, through Attorney Karl Burgunder, regarding “why we need to create a trust and how to do so.” It was also emphasized that everyone should create the following documents during his/her lifetime: 1. Durable Power of Attorney; 2. Medical Surrogate; 3. Organ Donor’s Card; 4. Last Will (document valid after one dies); 5. Living Will (valid during one’s life time).

All members were reminded of the questionnaire sent by AFICS/NY requesting verification and correction of errors and gaps in their entry on the membership database. It was noted that the efforts of the Florida Chapter in recruiting more members have brought positive results: two new members have joined. Only dues-paying members of AFICS/NY or their immediate family members are entitled to attend the Florida Chapter’s events.

(EDITOR’S NOTE: While we appreciate the desire for hard copies of the Bulletin expressed by members at this meeting, producing and mailing them to all AFICS/NY members is simply not possible given the small office staff. This was a service previously provided by the UN and AFICS/NY regrets that it does not have the capacity to comply with this request. We do manage to send them to all who have reported that they do not use or have any access to computers and suggest that others able to do so print out copies received online and share them with colleagues.

11 JULY 2015

This luncheon meeting was attended by 19 members, who were requested to regularly look at the website of AFICS/NY, where very useful information is published.

Most of them had never seen the AFICS/NY website, nor were they aware of the latest information published there regarding UNJSPF and ASHI. Madan Arora encouraged everyone to go home and study documents on the AFICS/NY website since the answers to many of the questions which were being raised at the meeting were available there.

19 SEPTEMBER 2015

The topic of this luncheon meeting was “ART OF LIVING and Meditation,” referring to an NGO registered with the UN that is doing humanitarian work globally. Two speakers invited for the meeting, Tushar Bhattacharya and Sonal Shankar, briefed the group about themselves and their work. Thereafter, Sonal took all into Pranayama and Meditation mode, explaining the benefits of these exercises, which include physical and mental health. This was a pleasant treat for everyone present.

All the members enjoyed the usual delicacies of the restaurant and left happily looking forward to the anniversary celebration in December.

12 DECEMBER 2015

The Florida Chapter of AFICS/NY celebrated its 9th Anniversary on 12 December, 2015 at BUBBA GUMP SHRIMP restaurant, Universal Studios City Walk, Orlando, with 17 members attending.

As repairs on faulty air conditioning in the room booked for the group had not been completed, members were moved to the restaurant’s main hall where at least fans were working and all decided to make the BEST of the WORST!

After enjoying the food, which was delicious, it was decided to forego BINGO, as the hall was too noisy for that. Instead, everybody drew lots and prizes were given to those with winning numbers.

Mrs. Kiron Arora had brought enough prizes for everyone so, on the first round, all who picked up a lotto ticket had a winning number—so everyone won a prize. On the second round, it was decided that those with odd numbers would be the winners, so some got two prizes.

Then, the following Mission Statement of the Florida Chapter of AFICS/NY, adopted on 9 December, 2006 was read by Dr. Omawale and re-affirmed by everyone:

“The Florida Chapter would serve as an active branch of AFICS/NY. While fully supporting the mission of AFICS/NY the Florida Chapter would focus on the local needs of its members.

“The mission of AFICS/NY is to support and promote the purposes, principles and programmes of the UN System; to advise and assist former international civil servants and those about to separate from service; to represent the interests of its members within the System; to foster social and personal relationships among members, to promote their well-being and to encourage mutual support of individual members.”

Everyone said: **LONG LIVE AFICS/NY**
and LONG LIVE THE FLORIDA CHAPTER
OF AFICS/NY



AFICS/NY LIBRARY ADDS NEW WORKS

BY DAWNE GAUTIER

We would like to thank the following for donating copies of their books to the AFICS/NY Library:

Mrs. Claude and Mr. Robert Kaminker for *And why not Addis Ababa?*

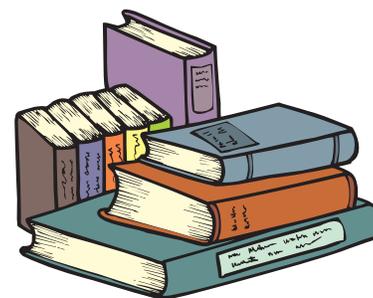
Mr. Roger Geaniton for *Comment devenir millionnaire en trois saisons a Manhattan* (*How to become a millionaire in three seasons in Manhattan*)

Mr. Roy Morey for *The United Nations at work in Africa*

Have others of you written any books lately? Poetry? Short stories? Memoirs? Studies of serious subjects or contemporary issues? Our AFICS/NY members would appreciate your sharing your work with us by donating a copy to our Library.

If you would like to do so, please contact me, Dawne Gautier, AFICS (NY) Librarian, by telephone at 212-963-2943; or by e-mail at afics2@un.org. Since I am in the office only once a month, you may also e-mail me at dawnegtr@yahoo.com.

At the same time, we urge you to make use of our AFICS/NY Library. It is open the first Wednesday of each month from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. A deposit of \$10 for each book checked out will be reimbursed once the item has been returned.



UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S YEAR-END MESSAGE TO STAFF

(reprinted from I/Seek)

Dear colleagues,

As we approach the end of 2015, I write to thank you all for making it a momentous year for our United Nations. Together, in its 70th year, we showed the enduring importance of our Organization.

There were many frustrating hours. We felt the outrage of people suffering from conflicts in Syria and elsewhere. We mourned needless deaths from poverty and disease. And we were all alarmed by the spread of extremism, the forced displacement of millions – and by the rise of xenophobia and other forms of discrimination that assault our universal values.

In the face of these challenges, United Nations staff spoke out and worked tirelessly for progress. From translators in conference halls to truck drivers risking their lives to deliver aid in war zones, from statisticians behind the scenes to senior officials carrying out high profile diplomatic assignments, these and so many other United Nations staff make indispensable – and inspiring – contributions.

We can all take heart from the year's breakthroughs, which have offered hope in this time of crisis. The newly adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change are great successes for people and the planet and point the world in a promising new direction.

Along with the year's other advances, they show that multilateralism works and that the United Nations delivers. These plans on paper must now be translated into action – a heavy responsibility for Member States and for the entire United Nations system.

With confidence in our mission and our record, we have to squarely confront and address our shortcomings as an



UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN

Organization. Member States and staff alike must always ask ourselves what more we can do to uphold human rights and advance the cause of peace.

Working at the United Nations carries immense rewards, but also brings risk, especially to those in the field. My thoughts are with the families and loved ones of colleagues who gave their lives this year in the service of peace. My thoughts are also with the world's most vulnerable people, and with young people and children everywhere, who have a special claim on the world's solidarity and on the work of the United Nations.

Let us continue working together to make 2016 a year of accomplishment and truly build lives of dignity for "We the peoples." Please accept my best wishes for the holiday season and for a happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,
BAN Ki-moon

CHANGE IN PAYMENT FOR MEDICARE PART B PREMIUM REIMBURSEMENTS

(The following circular, distributed by ASHI in September, is repeated below in case you missed it!)

To: Medicare Part B Reimbursement Recipients
From: Christophe Monier, Chief, Insurance and Disbursement Service
Subject: Change in payment method for Medicare Part B premium reimbursements

Since the requirement to enroll in Medicare Part B was implemented in 2011 for eligible retirees residing in the United States, the reimbursement has been made by offsetting the Medicare premium with the retiree's ASHI contributions, resulting in a reduction of the amount being deducted from the retiree's monthly pension benefit. Direct payments to retirees were made only in certain limited situations; most often it was done when the monthly ASHI contribution was lower than the monthly Medicare premium.

The offsetting of the Medicare payments against the ASHI contributions has often times resulted in changing amounts of ASHI-related deductions from a retiree's pension, especially when there were retroactive changes in the Medicare premium amounts, and led to confusion.

The Insurance and Disbursement Service (IDS) had been exploring alternative ways for reimbursement that would be simpler and more transparent to the retirees. The upcoming implementation of Umoja, the new information management system of the UN, in November 2015 has provided IDS the opportunity to change the manner in which the Medicare premiums are reimbursed.

Umoja will allow the UN to make monthly direct deposit payments to a retiree's bank account, including any retroactive amounts. This new method will require that retirees who were not in receipt of direct payments thus far provide the United Nations with their bank account information where the payments will be deposited.



If you have received any Medicare Part B payments in your bank accounts over the last year, we will continue using that account. Otherwise, you are requested to provide us your most current banking details using the attached "Medicare Part B Annual Premium Reimbursement Request" form along with a cancelled cheque (or copy of a cancelled cheque) by 15 November 2015. The completed and signed form can be mailed to the above address or a scanned copy sent by email to ashi@un.org. (NB: The form may also be found at ashi@un.org.)

Please note that Medicare Part B reimbursement will only be made in US dollars into a retiree's bank account in the US. No payments to bank accounts outside of the US will be allowed.

When this change is implemented in late December 2015, you may see a reduction in your monthly net pension benefits since the Medicare premiums will no longer be offset from your regular ASHI contributions. However, the Medicare reimbursement will be deposited by the United Nations to your bank account around the same time as the pension payment which should offset this reduction. It will also be your responsibility to provide the UN with any required changes to your banking information to ensure that reimbursements are processed properly.

Thank you.

After-Service Health Insurance Section
304 E-45th St. – Rm. 335
New York, NY 10017 Fax: (917) 367-1670
Website: ashi@un.org

SIXTH WORKING SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP (OEWG) ON AGEING

The sixth working session of OEWG took place at UNHQ in New York from 14 – 16 July 2015.

BACKGROUND:

The General Assembly adopted resolution 69/146—*Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing*—on 18 December 2014. It:

- recognized that “in many parts of the world, awareness of the Madrid Plan of Action remains limited or non-existent, which limits the scope of implementation efforts;”
- welcomed the important opportunity to continue the ongoing dialogue in the context of the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda and the reference to “older persons” contained in the proposal of the Open Working Group on sustainable development;
- recognized that, **by 2050, more than 20% of the world’s population will be 60 years of age or older and that the greatest number and the most rapid increase will be in the developing world.**

It also referenced:

- the World Health Assembly resolutions related to active and healthy ageing, with particular concerns that health systems are not sufficiently prepared to respond to the rapidly ageing population;
- the impact of world financial and economic crises on the situation of older persons;
- the essential contribution that the majority of older men and women can continue to make to the functioning of society if adequate guarantees are in place;
- the fact that older women outnumber older men and the concern that older women often face multiple forms of discrimination resulting from their gender-based roles in society.

The Resolution further:

- requested that the UN system strengthen its capacity for support in an efficient and coordinated manner, national implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, and that the Member States continue to contribute to the work of the OEWG, in particular by presenting concrete proposals, practical measures, best practices and lessons learned that will contribute to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons;

- requested that the relevant UN bodies continue to make contributions to the OEWG;
- invited the Independent Expert to address/engage the GA at its 70th session under the item entitled “Social Development” and the S-G to submit to the 70th Session of the GA a report on the implementation of this resolution. (*Please refer to the GA Resolution A/RES/69/146 for complete details.*)

SIXTH SESSION OF THE OEWG:

The Session dealt with the election of officers, adoption of the Agenda and somewhat protracted discussions concerning the inclusion or exclusion of one of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which finally resulted in a vote for the inclusion of that NGO.

The Session was well attended by representatives of Member States, UN Organizations, Secretariat staff, non-governmental organizations, and panel experts, all with the opportunity to voice their opinions.

The OEWG’s Sixth Session was organized around expert panel discussions.

Panel 1 related to recent policy developments and initiatives concerning the human rights of older persons and covered: Ageing in cities (Panellist: Ms. Tina Buffel, Age Friendly, Manchester, UK); Older persons, humanitarian and disaster emergencies (Panellist: Mr. Edward Gerlock, Coalition of Services for the Elderly, Philippines, & Mr. Marcus Skinner, HelpAge International, UK); Addressing dementia (Panellist: Mr Raymond Jessurun, Seniors and Pensioners Assoc., St Maarten); From Rhetoric to Action: Implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPPA) 2002 (Panellist: Mr. Marvin Formosa, International Institute of Ageing, Malta); National coordinating institutions and the protection of Human Rights of Older Persons (Panellist Ms. Adriana Rovira, National Institute of Older Persons, Uruguay).

Panel 2 concerned recent legislative and legal developments and challenges in the human rights of older persons and covered: Update of research on old-age rights and discrimination (Panellist: Mr. Israel Doron, University of Haifa, Israel); Older women, age and gender discrimination (Panellist: Ms. Sandra Huechuan, ECLAC); Update on the draft protocol to the African Charter on Human Peoples’ Rights of the Rights of Older Persons in Africa (Panellist: Mr. Johan Lodewyk, Strijdom, African Union); Update on the Organization of the American States’ draft convention protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons (Panellist:

Mr. Ivan Chanis, OAS Working Group); Implementation of CRPD with regard to Older Persons (Panellist: Mr. Johan ten Geuzendam, Directorate of Equality, European Commission).

Panel 3 dealt with Older persons and human rights in the post-2015 development agenda and covered: Reflecting human rights issues in indicators ((Panellist: Ms Grace Sanico Steffan, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights); Update on the process of developing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators (Panellist: Ms. Francesca Perucci, United Nations Statistical Services Branch/DESA); Active ageing indicators (Panellist: Mr. Asghar Zaidi, University of Southampton, UK; and Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons (Ms. Rosita Kornfeld-Matte).

Members States gave statements on their existing frameworks of human rights of older persons and identification of existing gaps at the international level. With regard to resolution 69/146 they provided their respective countries' concrete proposals, practical measures, best practices and lessons learned that will contribute to promoting and protecting the rights and dignity of older persons.

The Organization of American States advised that their draft Convention had been finalized and that five countries had ratified it and 10 signed it. It was stated that this is not just a regional document but could be used universally and that it is short and user friendly.

Reference to the changing paradigm, which has been discussed in previous OEWG meetings, was raised by many (i.e., ageing, traditionally seen as an issue of *social protection* has now moved to a paradigm which stresses the *human rights of seniors* (non-discrimination; respect; dignity; autonomy; equality; self-fulfilment and personal development; full and effective participation and inclusion in society; respect for difference and diversity; and accessibility). Older Persons should be considered for what they can contribute to society and not as a burden to society.

However, it was clear from the discussions that there are differing views between developed and developing countries as to how to achieve the new paradigm by ensuring the human rights of older persons. There is a division between those who support a new, binding international Convention to compel governments to follow best practices and to uphold the Human Rights of Older Persons and those who consider that the existing frameworks should be improved, with gaps identified and resolved. It was stated that although "Older Persons" are not specifically named in existing Conventions they are implicitly covered, such as in the "Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities," which 25 out of 28 EU members have ratified. The point being made is that there is a strong correlation between ageing and disability (44% of

persons between 65-74 and 60% of those from 75—84 have a disability).

With regard to the discussion on the **post 2015 development agenda**, the main focus by the panellists was introducing or elaborating on the respective frameworks to better measure the condition of older persons, how well their rights are respected, how much they are integrated into the lives of their communities and allowed to be productive, and how their treatment measures up against certain targets to be established under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Human Rights community relies on statistics to support evidence-based policies. There is a need to standardize a set of human rights indicators, using the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the basis, and to put these in context to make them more relevant to certain population groups, including older persons, to disaggregate the statistics to indicate who are the most deprived, and to measure inequality or discrimination. Data on social protection disaggregated by older persons would make it possible to better understand the phenomenon of poverty in old age and help in designing effective policies to deal with it. The statistics must measure availability, accessibility and quality of rights-related goods and services, as well as use of maximum available resources domestically and internationally to ensure them, including access to justice and freedom from violence. A new approach is required to measure targets and goals so that the priorities of the SDGs are not limited by existing data sources and to ensure that older persons are involved in measuring the data collected in respect of their group.

The representative of the DESA Statistical Department explained the process and need for global indicators, which would translate into national and sub-national indicators and facilitate monitoring of specific thematic national issues. The global indicators would inform the global political discussion, provide a structure for the development agenda, and inform communication and advocacy campaigns, including elements of disaggregation and the identification of special groups and inequality issues.

The process of developing a framework of SDG indicators for global, national, and sub-national thematic monitoring has commenced. The key players include Inter-governmental Organizations (IGOs), the UN Statistical Office, and statistical experts from international agencies, regional groups and civil society. Global indicators are crucial for informing global discussions and tracking progress on goals and targets so as to provide a structure of linked targets and advocacy campaigns. Indicators at the global level ensure consistency and collaboration across statistical commissions and offices. A report will be submitted to the Statistical Commission

meeting in March 2016 and the SDG indicators will be submitted to the 71st Session of the GA for consideration.

Work on the **Active Ageing Index (AAI)** has been carried out on behalf of the European 2012 Year of Active Ageing. Active ageing is considered a right of older persons, beneficial not only to them but to the families, communities and societies in which they live. A Convention would help promote healthy ageing and in the process turn longevity into an asset. If ageing is to be a positive experience then the increase in life expectancy must be accompanied by active and healthy years added to life. Active and engaged people contribute to their own health, well-being and autonomy. Active ageing includes both paid and unpaid work.

An analytical framework was presented to measure the status of older persons using data collected in four domains and 22 indicators. The domains are: (1) **Employment**: employment of older persons in different age brackets of five-year increments; (2) **Participation in Society**: voluntary activities, care for children and grandchildren, care for older persons and political participation; (3) **Independent, healthy and secure living**: physical exercise, access to health services, independent living, financial security, physical safety and lifelong learning; and the final domain (4) **Capacity and an enabling environment for active aging**: taking into consideration mental well-being, use of ICT, social connectedness and educational attainment.

The Active Ageing Index does not sufficiently capture all rights for older persons but can offer a framework for a baseline assessment and monitoring of rights of older persons.

One important purpose of the AAI project is to develop a comparative empirical instrument on ageing that highlights the contributions of older persons and identifies the potential that goes untapped. Active Ageing indicators focus on the human capital of older people rather than viewing them as dependent and also reflect their rights and responsibilities.

Some of the key findings of the AA Index in 2014 are that men do better than women especially where employment and income are involved. Active ageing has been increasing in the EU despite the 2009-2012 economic crisis and austerity measures. Active aging strategies empower older persons, helping them to fulfil their full potential and improve their quality of

life. The framework helps to identify specific country priorities. AAI has provided results for 28 EU countries, has done this work for the U.S. and is working in other countries.

The *Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons* report mentioned that one in nine will soon be 60+ with projections of one in five by 2050; that women constitute the majority of the group of older persons; and that old age is the longest of human cycles with the greatest growth in this group. Climate change, urbanization, modernization, changes in family structure, rapid development of information technologies, globalization, and migration all impact older persons. There have been improvements in health, social security, etc., but there still remain significant inequalities. What is needed is to study the realities and rethink the concept of ageing as a complex reality. The Independent Expert is working to help States augment their legislation, advised that the annual thematic report to be presented to OHCHR will refer to autonomy and analysis of international instruments; and said that a study for the Human Rights Council on the problems that older persons encounter in enjoying their rights and the human rights effect of implementation of the MIPAA is underway.

It was stated by many speakers that there has been much discussion over the last several years and collection of data and analysis and that it is now the time to move from *discussion to action*.

There was an interactive dialogue with civil society, a discussion on the way forward and organization for the next working session of the OEWG on Ageing and adoption of the draft Report.

The Chair noted the following points of common understanding:

- the growing age of the population among those who will become key actors;
- the paradigm shift regarding older people not as passive recipients but as active members of society; and
- the fact that current mechanisms on behalf of older people are not adequate due to either deficiencies in implementation and/or normative gaps.

Joan McDonald, Deborah Landey, Gordon Tapper

UNITED NATIONS DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

15 OCTOBER 2015
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

BY DEMETRIOS ARGYRIADES

“My life before democracy was harsh. It was a life with no rights. I was not allowed to go to school, but now I can read and write thanks to the government’s literacy campaign.”

Mama u Mtalane, 93, from Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa

INTRODUCTION

Clearly, “there is life after 60!” At least so does a lady from Kwa Zulu Natal believe at 93. This certainly is good news. However, as this lady’s compatriot and contemporary, Archbishop Desmond Tutu reminded us, there are some strings attached, some *sine qua non* requisites. In a targeted message intended to ensure that all age groups were counted and included in establishing the new global sustainable development goals (SDGs) for post-2015, the Archbishop stated: *As we get older our rights do not change. As we get older, we are not less human and should not become invisible.*”

Of course, the bad news is that, for too long and in several parts of the world, old age has been *invisible* and often remains so. It is as if, in youth and affluence, we forget; we wish to block from sight and from our minds the *other* that old age represents, especially if combined with poverty and ill-health.

ARE OUR PRIORITIES RIGHT?

What the *Day of Older Persons*, celebrated in New York at the United Nations on 15 October 2015, has now brought to the fore is that *invisibility* could soon be a thing

of the past; that is if the new SDGs proclaimed this past September by the UN General Assembly, are taken seriously into account. So far, the record is mixed. Each year, trillions of dollars are spent on wars, and guns and armaments. Approximately half of this amount is spent in the U.S., year after year, according to *The Economist*. A world awash with weapons accounts, to a large extent, for rampant insecurity in large swaths of our Planet and for millions of desperate migrants and refugees, who count among their number many thousands of old people and small defenceless children.

A very small proportion of the expenditure on arms would suffice to ensure for children the essential micro-nutrients, lack of which in the early years (1-4), results in stunted growth. Likewise, a mere fraction of sums earmarked for wars would suffice to make our cities more older-person friendly. Those of us who arrived in New York to work for the UN during the nineteen sixties and seventies will remember how deficient the city appeared, compared to Copenhagen or Stockholm for example, with regard to facilities which make a city inviting to members of the Third Age and people with disabilities: kneeling buses, sidewalks with “curb cuts,”



priority seating on trains, elevators and escalators at subway stations, among other amenities.

Not only has this changed, but a culture of respect for older men and women appears to be returning against all expectations, to all our towns and villages. It is evidenced on buses and trains, where people will defer to an older individual or help disabled persons navigate the city streets.

Such shifts in public attitudes, imperceptible at first but gradually gaining momentum, go far to explain the prominence accorded to old age as an important challenge in the new SDGs proclaimed by the GA on this 70th anniversary of the United Nations. Compared to global targets set in September 2000 by the Millennium Assembly, the current plan put forward disaggregated data and more specific goals addressing growing requirements in new and emerging areas of need, notably in old age.

NEEDS IN OLD AGE REDEFINED: INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION

Remarkably, in this context, the *needs* of older persons are redefined and so is the profile of *wellness* in old age. A *Global Age Watch Index*, which was recently introduced and discussed on 15 October, is a composite of four equally salient factors, by which performance is measured: **Income Security; Health Status; Capability; and Enabling Environment.**

Needless to emphasize that closely tied to security is a pension in retirement. Indeed, it is as critical as public health facilities are to fitness in old age. Of particular significance, however, is the prominence accorded to *autonomy* and *activity* and to an *old-age-friendly environment*, as factors underpinning well-being for the elderly. Quite clearly, gone are the days when societies believed that a pension and social security would adequately cover the full range of requirements in old age.

Increasingly, demands are for much-needed legal frameworks; legislation opening ways for the elderly to lead active and productive lives – to fully *participate* in the life of a community and not simply subsist on the margins, awaiting a sure death. *Inclusion* and *Integration* have become the key objectives of the International Plan of Action on Ageing adopted by the World Assembly on Ageing and endorsed by the General Assembly in Resolution 37/51 of 3 December 1982. Quite clearly, such inclusion has now been redefined, as new considerations on what inclusion calls for have emerged and come into play.

NEED FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

At the recent International Day of Older Persons, on 15 October 2015, the concepts of *sustainability* and an *enabling*

environment loomed large. They represent two areas where still too many countries appear to be deficient, as the Global Age Watch Index 2015 has clearly indicated. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that both sustainability and “*age-environment*” have now been featured prominently in anticipation of the Meeting of Habitat III scheduled for early next year. We must add that this forthcoming conference on global climate change and challenge to the environment comes at a time when nations – and the elderly within them in particular – are called upon to shoulder the cumulative burden of trends from two other sources. Both were invoked repeatedly by several of the speakers featured at the UN on 15 October.

One source of transformation is *urbanization*. This has been gaining ground since the end of World War II. Already 54 per cent of the total world population of 7.2 billion people live in cities. Some 10 per cent are over 60 years of age. It has been estimated that by 2050, fully 900 million elderly will live in urban centres not adequately equipped to accommodate them. In particular, the barriers in public buildings and spaces, as well as lack of safe, affordable, accessible and barrier-free housing and transportation make it extremely difficult for older persons to fully enjoy their rights, particularly to live in dignity and safety in their respective communities.

Innovative housing is needed, as well as innovative transport and other urban amenities that take care of the needs of the elderly. Of course, this would entail new building codes, protocols and regulations, as well as national and sub-national upgraded, proficient and professional administrative services plus greatly improved public-private interface. It is confidently expected that the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), due to be held next year, will afford an opportunity to explore these trends and challenges that greatly impact old age.

SOME TELLING DEMOGRAPHICS

The other salient source of major transformations affecting older persons is the changing *gender balance* and *structure* of the family. Erosion of traditional extended and nuclear families is an observable pattern throughout the world. It is especially pronounced in the industrialized countries. Coupled with a skewed gender balance, this inflicts a growing burden on female household members. Women survive their men and often live much longer. It has also been estimated that, by 2020, the number of older persons will exceed that of children. Thus, in single-parent families, women may be called upon to care for both children and parents. When mothers go to work, grandmothers must replace them in performing household chores and looking after children, a critical responsibility on which so much depends for the “wellness” of communities.

Both speakers representing related UNDESA Divisions and Members of the Panel speaking for NGOs threw light on these developments and overarching trends by placing them in the context of *population growth* coupled with the ageing process. Though common to all regions, the incidence of both showed significant variations among geographical areas as well as within regions. In general, the countries of the developing South displayed more rapid growth and a slower ageing process.

For the planet as a whole, the proportion of the elderly was expected to rise from 12.3 per cent (901 m) in 2015, through 16.5 per cent (1,402 m) in 2030, to 21.5 per cent (2,092 m) in 2050. But nothing less than staggering are national disparities when these figures are disaggregated by countries. Thus, in Asia and the Pacific, Iraq and Afghanistan are at one end of the spectrum while Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) are at the other. Percentage-wise, increases range from 8.8 and 9.0 for Iraq and Afghanistan, to 42.5 and 41.5 for Japan and ROK respectively.

In the developed regions of Europe, Australasia and North America, the relevant percentages, though consistently high, also show some marked variations. Remarkably, the countries of Southern Europe are those that age most rapidly, as we move to 2050 (Greece: from 27.0 to 40.8; Italy: from 28.6 to 40.7; Portugal: from 27.1 to 41.2; and Spain: from 24.4 to 41.4). Other than a declining net reproductive rate, which is generally observable, emigration must be a factor, since it deprives these countries of younger men and women of reproductive age. The deep enduring crisis, which since 2008 greatly afflicts these countries, has obviously compounded this ageing trend.

No other country in Europe, including Eastern Europe, approximates the levels observed in Spain and Portugal; and none of the African nations come anywhere as close. Only Mauritius and Morocco show a rapid ageing process, as we move from 2015 to 2050 (from 14.7 to 30.6 and from 96 to 23.4, respectively). Likewise, in Latin America, ageing rates, though higher than Africa's, remain consistently lower than those of Europe and East Asia.

NEED FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING

What, arguably, the Panel more than the speakers highlighted were the substantial disparities that exist among the regions in terms of institutions and public service capacity for dealing with the elderly. Thus, legislative frameworks, public health administration, "assisted living" quarters, pension schemes and other facilities, specifically addressing the needs of Older Persons are, as one might expect, substantially more prevalent and functional in Europe, North America, Japan and countries of East Asia, than in other parts of the world.

In Western Europe, for instance, 99.2 per cent of men and 86.5 per cent of women of retirement age are in receipt of pensions. In Central and Eastern Europe the corresponding figures are 97.2 per cent and 93.8 per cent. By contrast, in Latin America, 62.3 of men and 52.4 per cent of women were in receipt of a pension. With high unemployment rates and a large informal sector, Africa as a whole, has lagged behind (22 per cent). Of course, there are exceptions, with Mauritius and South Africa doing well in this regard. Globally speaking, only 42 per cent of people in retirement age were in receipt of pensions.

It needs to be emphasized that, for the world as a whole, administrative services widely known as "the Administrative or Welfare State," though not exactly new, are neither uniformly uncontroversial nor generally accepted or adequately funded and always performing efficiently. The long dispute surrounding the *Affordable Care Act* in the United States may serve as a reminder of how intensely political this issue can appear in the eyes of many people. Apart from ideology, which still remains a factor, the mounting costs of health care, pensions and social security loom large in the debate, both nationally and internationally.

The Day of Older Persons on 15 October 2015, gave these issues well-deserved attention. Japan was a good case in point. With an ageing population and the highest life expectancy (80+) in the world, the burdens, on the budget of caring for the aged were mounting very rapidly. Furthermore, these mounting costs did not relate exclusively to pensions and health care. As shown by the recent tsunami, which hit its Eastern Coast, three quarters of the victims in Japan had been among the members of its Third Age. Due to rapid climate change, our world may soon be witnessing a growing incidence of such natural disasters and related aftermath.

Against this telling backdrop and related budget burdens of ageing, there is some good news. A growing *critical mass* of people over 60 have proved to be more vocal and assertive of their needs than their counterparts of old. One might well say, accordingly, that unlike in days gone by, the elderly are no longer passive, silent or content to be *invisible*. In an active civil society, their claims are going much further than in the past. Not only do older people call for *recognition* but also make more and more demands to take part in public policy making. Indeed, the elderly may become, at least in some parts of the world, both a political force and an assertive segment of public opinion. This may prompt States to overhaul their structures, reorder their priorities and vastly improve services and infrastructures. This should benefit some people of the Third Age, though their status and condition in large swaths of the world, are likely to still leave much to be desired.

UN ADOPTS NEW GLOBAL GOALS CHARTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET BY 2030

On 25 September, the 193-Member United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with a set of bold new Global Goals, which Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon hailed as a universal, integrated and transformative vision for a better world.

“The new agenda is a promise by leaders to all people everywhere. It is an agenda for people, to end poverty in all its forms—an agenda for the planet, our common home,” declared Mr. Ban as he opened the UN Sustainable Development Summit which kicked off on 25 September and wrapped up on 27 September.

The new framework adopted by the GA, *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, is composed of 17 goals and 169 targets to wipe out poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate change over the next 15 years. The Goals aim to build on the work of the historic Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which, in September 2000, rallied the world around a common 15-year agenda to tackle the indignity of poverty.

The Summit opened with a full programme of events, including a screening of the film *The Earth From Space*, performances by UN Goodwill Ambassadors Shakira and Angelique Kidjo, as well as a call to action by female education advocate and the youngest-ever Nobel Laureate, Malala Yousafzai along with youth representatives as torch bearers to a sustainable future.

Here are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals:



GOAL 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

GOAL 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

GOAL 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

GOAL 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

GOAL 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

GOAL 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

GOAL 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

GOAL 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

GOAL 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

GOAL 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

GOAL 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

GOAL 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

GOAL 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change)

GOAL 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

GOAL 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

GOAL 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

GOAL 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Finance

For more complete information on each of the SDGs—and their 169 targets—go to General Assembly Document A/69/L.85, available online at the United Nations website.

FOOD SAFETY — BACK TO BASIC SANITARY MEASURES

BY FIRDU ZAWIDE

In a world where more than half the population is adversely affected by malnutrition and almost one billion people regularly go to bed hungry every night, according to FAO's estimate, WHO's 7 April dedication of World Health Day 2015 to "Food Safety" was intended to spark global debate on food issues, including food deficit crises, hunger emergencies, lack of nutrition, food loss and environmental sustainability. WHO's wakeup call has come while hunger looms over Africa, driven by drought across the continent caused by El Niño, affecting over 13 million people.

The global burden of foodborne diseases and their impact on trade and development is currently unknown. However it is estimated that there are more than 200 foodborne diseases caused by pathogenic micro-organisms that enter our food chain. The epidemiological data we get from different sources on the mortality and morbidity arising from these pathogens varies significantly. WHO estimates that unsafe food is linked to the deaths of 2 million people annually, the majority of whom are infants, young children, pregnant women, the elderly and the immune – compromised. Other sources estimate that roughly 1.5 billion people are affected every year, resulting in 5 million deaths.

In countries where effective surveillance of foodborne diseases is established and systematic monitoring carried out, there are indications that these diseases are on the increase. Reasons are the emergence of antibiotic resistant bacterial pathogens; a decline in the hygiene and sanitation practices of food production, processing, distribution, storage, preparation and consumption; inefficient inspection and enforcement of existing food laws and mandates by the regulatory authorities; and inadequate public participation and consumer education. The rise in global food trade and the growing threat of deliberate adulteration and fraud are also contributing factors. In developing countries the problem is aggravated by rural to urban migration, increasing over crowdedness, poor housing, sanitation and water supply conditions, as well as an explosion of refugees due to civil strife and natural disasters.

The food supply chain from farm to table is long and complex, stretching from primary production of crops, livestock, poultry, fish, fruits and vegetables in the field, to processed, canned, packaged and frozen products manufactured by industries in large quantity and distributed to places where they are finally prepared and consumed. If during any one of these steps food is exposed to potentially hazardous agents such as pathogenic bacteria, viruses, parasites, moulds, insects, rodents, toxins, or poisonous chemicals there is a risk of an adverse effect on health. Therefore, keeping our fragile food safe is a shared responsibility of farmers, primary producers, processors, distributors, retailers, food service providers, government regulators and individual consumers. Creating awareness among all these stakeholders

about the delicacy of food, and the risk factors of exposure to the hazardous substances in the supply chain remains a huge task that requires adequate resources, effective collaboration and coordination at all levels.

Several studies reveal that most foodborne diseases are caused by foods being improperly prepared and mishandled at household level and food serving

places such as restaurants, fast food shops, salad bars, street vendors and open markets. Hence, poor hygiene and sanitary practices and unsanitary environmental conditions are the key risk factors for foodborne outbreaks.

Intentional adulteration of food and fraudulent activities are also increasing with globalization of the food trade as unethical traders and manufacturers continue to falsify and even poison food produced for human consumption for the sake of quick profit. No country is immune to this dilemma as manifested by some high-profile food safety incidents that have been reported in recent years, such as the melamine scandal in China in 2008 that contaminated milk and infant formula, taking the lives of six babies and horribly sickening 300,000 with kidney problems. Germany's major E. coli outbreak in 2011 infected around 3800 people and killed more than 50 while more than 765 of the patients developed the severe complication of haemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in



2013 one of the largest seafood fraud investigations in the U.S. revealed that 33% of the 1215 seafood samples investigated in a nationwide DNA analysis were mislabelled. The number of food recalls reported globally is on the increase, with the annual cost of over US\$152 billion in the U.S., \$1.92 billion in the UK and \$1.25 billion in Australia, according to a recent study.

Many international organizations and NGOs have been promoting safe food production for many years such as the International Organization for Standards (ISO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Goals are to ensure no harm is caused to human health through the consumption of unsafe food and to provide healthy foods and good nutrition.

The FAO/WHO codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) sets international guidelines, criteria and standards with regard to food safety and quality to help countries set up effective food control systems at the national level. The Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system adopted by CAC is a science-based tool to assess hazards and establish control systems that focus on preventive rather than end product testing. HACCP can be applied throughout the food chain, from farm to fork.

WHO and FAO have also developed several educational and training materials including *Good Hygiene Practices* and *Good Manufacturing Practices* manuals, and conducted training courses to support countries' capacity building. Unfortunately there is no follow up on the implementation of the knowledge gained and the effectiveness of manuals provided locally. It is only in recent years that more developing countries have been able to participate in the elaboration of Codex Standards, codes and guidelines. Increasing the participation of more developing countries in the Codex activities will improve the standards of food safety in neglected countries and create opportunities for their products to gain access to international food trading that leads to rapid economic development.

In the 1970s and 1980s when WHO went straight into battle against infectious diseases, food safety was among the priority programmes executed under basic sanitary measures that included water supply and sanitation. In those days over 150 WHO sanitary engineers were deployed to provide technical support to the developing countries by working side by side with the public health inspectors who received on-the-job training at the same time. As time went by a succession of magic bullets – the antibiotics – gave WHO and its partners

more confidence and inspired them to relax focus on prevention of infectious diseases. Instead WHO shifted its emphasis to the scientific study of exposure assessment, along with risk analysis and management. The posts of sanitary engineers and preventive health workers were significantly diminished. Even today the programme budget of WHO for Food Safety at Headquarters and Regional Offices is limited to a few staff salaries and nominal country support activities. Moreover, today antibiotics are no longer as effective as they used to be, making application of basic sanitary measures the only sustainable approach to preventing foodborne diseases.

On the contrary, the annual budget allocated for food safety in some advanced countries exceeds WHO's budget for all public health programmes it is executing globally. This shows how WHO is constrained in supporting the developing countries in strengthening their food safety programmes even though they have the political will to implement the resolutions passed by the World Health Assembly to advance food safety.

For the great majority of the population in developing countries it is not a matter of catching up with technologically advanced countries that have the means to prevent and control food safety emergencies but being able to achieve basic hygiene standards needed to protect their food from biological, chemical and physical hazards. Once the minimum hygiene and sanitary standard is achieved they can then strive for greater and higher standards. Investing in basic sanitary measures to prevent foodborne outbreaks will bring substantial health and economic benefits, reducing food loss, food recalls and food borne epidemics that cost billions of dollar every year.

Once again the overlooked problem of Food Safety is brought to the attention of national governments, food producers, manufacturers, processors, transnational food traders, international partners and NGOs urging them "From Farm to Plate" to make food safe." The response depends on the efforts that will be made to ensure that this message resonates with stakeholders in the years ahead.

*Firdu Zawide, a member of AFICS/NY, is a former WHO Regional Advisor on Environmental Health, which includes food safety, and in retirement an active researcher in this area. He has written several articles on the subject that have been published in the **Journal of Environmental Epidemiology** and is presently writing a textbook on the subject.*

FAFICS COUNCIL MEETS IN GENEVA

The 44th Session of the Council of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) was held in Geneva, 27 – 29 July 2015. A full report is available on the FAFICS Website. (Go to FAFICS on the Internet and click on the link to the 44th Council Session in the upper left hand corner.) AFICS/NY President Linda Saputelli is also President of FAFICS, which now has 58 member Associations.

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF UN AND 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF SPAIN IN UN

Spain, like other countries around the world, celebrated 24 October 2015, the 70th anniversary of the UN, with flags and blue lights in emblematic buildings. Under the leadership of UNICEF Spain, and Madrid City Hall, representatives of 19 UN agencies in Spain, led by the World Tourism Organization (WTO), with national authorities, and a large representation of civil society, gathered for a celebration and show, which was a first in the history of Spain's relations with the UN System.

A week later, on 29 October, while Spain had the rotating presidency of the UN Security Council, UN S-G Ban-Ki-moon participated, in Madrid, with the Spanish national authorities in the celebration of the 60th anniversary of Spain in the UN. Spain organized an exhibit of its many contribution to the UN, being the 9th largest contributor, and in particular its operational facilities in Valencia for UN peace-keeping operations around the world.

Former Spanish UN officials and many civil society organizations also spoke of the support and large contributions of the UN Secretariat and ECOSOC to the democratic and economic evolution of Spain in the last 60 years.

UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki-moon, while visiting Madrid, also made the closing remarks at the Club de Madrid conference, "Madrid+10 Policy Dialogue on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremist," which brings together the World Leadership Alliance Club, comprised of former democratic presidents and prime ministers of member states of the UN.

José M. Aguilar de Ben, AFICS/NY correspondent in Spain and member of the United Nations Association of Spain (ANUE) and its former representative in WFUNA

MEL SILVERMAN: MY UN CAREER

Interview by Liz Scaffidi and Donna Cusumano
(Adapted from *I Seek*)

Beginning a long, exciting career: Signing on to the UN

Having been discharged from the U.S. army, 23-year-old Mel Silverman returned to the U.S. with “a million or more” former soldiers looking for work. As an original 1946 UN staff member—also known as a “Mohican (a nod to a character in the James Fennimore Cooper novel *The Last of the Mohicans*)—Mel spoke about how his 33-year-long career began at a new international organization called the United Nations.

“In an interview with the U.S. employment office – against an interviewer’s advice – I accepted a bookkeeping job with KLM. At the same time, my childhood friend, Murray Chase, answered a local newspaper ad for work at the United Nations. Soon after, he began screening applicants in human resources. Each night in our Bensonhurst neighbourhood in Brooklyn, he’d urge me to join him.”

Mr. Chase persuaded Mr. Silverman to go for an interview at what is today Lehman College in the Bronx, which back in 1946 was Hunter College, where from March to August the UN set up shop. “I went to the personnel office at Hunter College and was offered a level four job,” Mr. Silverman remembers. “In those days the trip from Brooklyn to the Bronx was like traveling from New York to Hawaii and beyond. But I notified KLM that I would not be reporting to work, and that same day, reported to my new office at the UN.”

Looking back, Mel is grateful to still be enjoying life at age 92. “Many former colleagues haven’t made it this far. I am thrilled to have reasonably good health and delighted to be able to walk around on my own and continue activities, including the Thursday night Bridge Club at the UN,” he said with a smile. “The UN gave me an awareness of the world’s people, differences in personalities and work attitudes. It had a tremendous impact on me, like no other experience that I could have imagined. Knowing where this path has led, I would not choose any differently if I had to do it again.”

The UN environment: earliest days

“There was a great deal of excitement about the new organization and about working for peace, especially for those

of us who had spent three years slogging through Europe in the war. There was a great sense of comradeship,” Mel said. “It was very exciting to be working in the same environment in which the Security Council was meeting and thrilling to be near the hub of world activities.”

Just as many staff members today tread lightly on temporary contracts, Mel pointed out that there was also a sense of anxiety back then as each one hired was working on a provisional basis, waiting to be replaced by international recruits once that system was up and functioning.

“Every week we would wait for a list of staff whose services would no longer be required,” he explained. “By the time I had completed my Master’s, many of my colleagues had been separated and replaced by international recruits. I had survived all the cuts and was there when permanent contracts began being offered. When I was accorded one, I felt a sense of security and justification for my decision to stay on with the organization. I did not have expectations at the UN because I never anticipated that there would even be such a thing and certainly never expected it to open shop in my backyard! I was happy to have a job, especially during the competitive environment of the time, and it was delightful to be working with people of different nationalities. I felt that in my small way I was making a contribution towards peace, which is what we had been fighting for.”

Ring one on the career ladder

“In the first of many, many restructuring exercises, within one month the UN began reorganizing and revising job titles,” Mel said. “Based on the British system, the UN used a central registry mail system whereby all correspondence was sent to one location. The grades at that time were General Service, Special Service and Professional. Starting as a General Service research analyst, I found that within three weeks my title had been changed to classifier, in the Special Service category. As one of six classifiers, I read incoming mail and catalogued it within the nine Departments before indexers recorded and dispatched all correspondence accordingly. Every three weeks experts would come in to do an analysis of the system.”

One expert proposal was to set up each Department with its own correspondence registry. Shortly thereafter, the registry was reorganized and Mel was assigned to lead

a “flying squad” to establish branch registries in each of the Departments. “We were told that we may have to work weekends, and indeed, we did, putting in plenty of hours – and without pay. But it was an exciting experience,” Mel remembers. “For a year I went from Department to Department to review and transfer relevant files from our central registry.”

Job levels then morphed into the General Service and Professional categories we know today – albeit without an exam to move from GS to P. “I became the Head of the Administrative and Finance Office branch registrar, which became a P-1 job,” Mel recalls.

UN clubs: making everyone feel at home

The UN was initially concerned about bringing in from so many parts of the world, staff who were new to the U.S. and would be working in a different environment. “Clubs were organized early on to give staff members the opportunity to socialize and get to know each other in a non-work-related environment,” Mel explained. “I was a bridge player and saw in the *Secretariat News* publication, an invitation for bridge players to meet periodically in a colleague’s residence. The response was so great that we played at the Lake Success campus. While the Bridge Club began about 1947, I joined it in 1948, after concluding my Master’s degree, which freed up my evenings. To this day, I continue to play there regularly and am happy to say that after we speak, I will be going to the DC-2 building to play bridge at the UN Club!”

NEWS YOU CAN USE

DO-IT-YOURSELF CPR

How to Survive a Heart Attack when Alone

Let’s say it is 7:25 pm and you’re going home (alone) after an unusually hard day on the job. You’re really tired, upset and frustrated.

Suddenly you start experiencing severe pain in your chest that starts to drag down into your arm and up into your jaw. You are only about three miles from the hospital nearest your home but don’t know if you’ll be able to make it that far.

You have been trained in CPR, but the guy that taught the course did not tell you how to perform it on yourself! Since many people are alone when they suffer a heart attack, without help, those whose heart is beating improperly and

Life after the UN: the adventure continues

As retirement today teeters on the brink of changing to age 65, back in 1983 it was mandatory at age 60. “While working at the United Nations was an unforgettable experience, I really wasn’t ready to throw in the towel,” said Mel. “During the war I had been stationed in London for three months. Despite the blitz, GI soldiers were always welcomed at the theatres. It was there, during the army, that I became something of a theatre buff. Upon retirement, looking through the *Village Voice*, I happened upon an ad for an acting course in Manhattan’s Union Square. The class led to me auditing acting sessions at other schools. At one point, I asked the instructor whether he would accept someone my age as a student. He told me to look around the room. I saw no one over 30. ‘In every play,’ he said, ‘there is a father and a grandfather and we would welcome you if you wanted to come.’ That started me on taking courses.”

After some time, Mel began auditioning, which led him into an off-Broadway play, and then into Actors Equity. “I was thrilled to join!” he enthused. “Subsequently, I managed to enter the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) and had joined the Actors Television Union. So I was elated to be a member of three unions and a working actor. I did off-Broadway in the early years, when I was in Equity, and then was an extra in SAG. I also acted on TV when soap operas were being produced in New York. When people ask me if they have seen me in anything, I say yes—if you have a pause on your VCR!”

who begin to feel faint have only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness.

However, these victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously. A deep breath should be taken before each cough, and the cough must also be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest. A breath and a cough must be repeated about every two seconds without let-up until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again.

Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm, making it possible for the heart attack victim to get to a hospital.

Tell as many other people as possible about this. It could save their lives! A cardiologist says that if everyone who gets this message sends it on to 10 people, you can bet that it will save at least one life.

Adapted from the Internet

PREVENTING FALLS FOR SENIORS

By Joanna Leefer, Senior Care Advisor/Advocate
www.joannaleefer.com

A recent study by the National Council on Aging reveals that a senior is seen in a hospital emergency room every 13 seconds. This study underscores the importance of teaching seniors about fall prevention.



To increase awareness of this scary statistic the National Council on Aging declared 23 September as *National Fall Prevention Day*.

Here are six tips for preventing falls:

- 1 Work out regularly and include balance-strengthening exercise.
- 2 Wear sensible shoes that offer support and balance.
- 3 Review your medications periodically. Many drugs have side effects that might cause dizziness, weakness and falls.
- 4 Get your vision checked annually to insure you can see obstacles.
- 5 Keep your home safe and fall proof—remove items lying on the floor and make sure you have non-slip carpets.
- 6 Make your bathroom fall proof.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INPATIENT VS. OUTPATIENT HOSPITAL STAYS

By Joanna Leefer, Senior Care Advisor/Advocate
(As seen in the *Courier Life* newspaper, 1 September 2015)

A patient can stay in a hospital in a semi-private room, receive meals and general nursing, and even have surgery. However, those with inpatient vs. those with outpatient hospital stays will get different medical services and probably pay different amounts.

When is a hospital stay not a hospital stay? Does this sound like a trick question? Unfortunately it is not and the answer can be costly and impact your medical care.

Many seniors are unaware that there are two kinds of hospital stays; a person can stay in a hospital as an inpatient or as an outpatient. In both cases you may stay in a semi-private hospital room, receive meals and general nursing, and even have surgery, however an inpatient will be offered different medical services and will probably pay less than an outpatient.

A hospital inpatient is someone who is formally admitted to a hospital through a doctor's written order. The doctor writes an admission order if she/he feels a hospital stay is essential for the patient's recovery.

A hospital outpatient is someone who enters the hospital, usually through the emergency room, and is considered under observation only. An outpatient can receive lab tests, X-rays and other hospital services but these services are administered to determine if he/she needs to be formally admitted.

Inpatient vs. Outpatient Hospital Stay

Despite the similarities in services, your status as a patient can make big differences in what you pay and what services you can receive. Here are the biggest ones.

Seniors admitted to a hospital as inpatients are covered under Medicare Part A, the U.S. Government's *hospital* insurance plan. After an initial deductible of \$1260, Medicare Part A pays the cost of a semi-private room, all meals, general nursing care, and miscellaneous hospital services and supplies for up to 60 days.

Seniors who stay in a hospital for observation are classified as outpatients and are covered under Medicare Part B, the government's *medical* insurance plan. Outpatients must pay an annual deductible of \$147, and are then responsible for 20% copayments for every medical service received. These expenses often total more than the Medicare Part A deductible.

The cost of medicine is different for inpatients and outpatients. Inpatients have their medications paid through Medicare Part A. Outpatients must pay for medications



out of pocket or through a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan. There is one more catch – if the Part D plan does not cover the drugs that

are prescribed, the patient is required to pay for them him/herself.

A final difference between inpatients and outpatients is in the follow-up service. An inpatient who stays in the hospital for at least three days is eligible for rehabilitation services such as physical, occupational, and speech therapy in a skilled nursing facility (SNF). The first 20 days of rehab in a SNF are covered completely by Medicare Part A. After 20 days the patient is responsible for 20% of the cost for up to an additional 80 days. During that stay, the patient receives two therapy sessions every day except weekends, is provided with three meals a day and gets care from certified nursing assistants, nurses and dietary staff.

Hospital outpatients are not eligible for rehabilitation services in a nursing home facility without paying for the stay. An outpatient could be eligible to receive some rehab services at home or in a clinic through Medicare Part B, but the rehab is less intense. The patient may see a therapist one to three times a week, but will not receive other services such as meals, housekeeping, or attendant services.

How to Determine an Inpatient vs. an Outpatient Hospital Stay

A rule of thumb in determining your patient status depends on how you enter the hospital. If you enter the hospital through the emergency room you are probably classified

as an outpatient, at least until a doctor officially admits you or sends you home.

You are also not an inpatient if you enter the hospital for outpatient surgery. You might be told you can stay in the hospital overnight and still not be admitted. The best way to determine your status is to ask questions. Every time you receive a treatment be sure that you know how it will be billed, through Medicare Part A or Part B.

Fortunately a solution to this confusion is in sight. On 6 August, 2015 President Obama signed a new law called the Notice of Observation Treatment and Implication for Care Eligibility (NOTICE) Act. The new law will go into effect in August 2016. It requires that hospitals notify patients who are under observation for more than 24 hours of their outpatient status.

NOTICE is intended to prevent Medicare beneficiaries from spending days in a hospital only to find that they have not been admitted to the hospital at all but were only under observation. This is particularly valuable for people who need rehabilitation therapy after their hospital stay.

Hospital stays are never pleasant and are often filled with concerns. The added confusion of not understanding your medical status or care options can make your stay seem even more overwhelming. By asking the right questions and understanding your rights, you can help improve the outcome.

OBITUARIES

FORMER UN SECRETARY-GENERAL BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI 1922–2016



Statement By UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

I am deeply saddened to learn of the death of my predecessor, Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

The late Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, was a respected statesman in the service of his country, Egypt. He was a well-known scholar of international law and brought

formidable experience and intellectual power to the task of piloting the United Nations through one of the most

tumultuous and challenging periods in its history, and guiding the Organization of the Francophonie in subsequent years.

As Secretary-General, he presided over a dramatic rise in UN peacekeeping. He also presided over a time when the world increasingly turned to the United Nations for solutions to its problems, in the immediate aftermath of the cold war.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali did much to shape the Organization's response to this new era, in particular through his landmark report "An Agenda for Peace" and the subsequent agendas for development and democratization.

He showed courage in posing difficult questions to the Member States, and rightly insisted on the independence of his office and of the Secretariat as a whole. His commitment to the United Nations—its mission and its staff—was unmistakable, and the mark he has left on the Organization is indelible.

I extend my deepest condolences to Mrs. Boutros-Ghali, as well as to the rest of the family, to the Egyptian people, and to the late Secretary-General's many friends and admirers around the world.

The United Nations community will mourn a memorable leader who rendered invaluable services to world peace and international order.

New York, 16 February 2016

JEAN GAZARIAN (1922 – 2016)



UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon honors Jean Gazarian during 50th Anniversary of UNITAR, December 2013.

It is with great sadness that we announce the unexpected passing of our beloved brother Jean Gazarian on 18 January, 2016. Our brother Jean was a mentor to so many, a true diplomat and humanitarian, loving and kind, a gentle man, highly respected for his integrity, his devotion to the United Nations and world peace.

Jean joined the United Nations in 1946 at the age of 24. As one of the “Mohicans” he worked under every Secretary-General, and witnessed many world events. After serving for 18 years as Director of the Division of General Assembly Affairs, he became a Senior Fellow of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), where, for 25 years, he taught a large number of diplomats through training programs and seminars. He was one of the pioneers of the Model UN Program, spoke to large assemblies of students from all over the world, and was an instrumental figure of the “UN Semester” co-organized by Drew University. He received honors from many governments and universities, among them:

- Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Légion d'honneur, France (1984)
- Grand Officier de l'Ordre de Vasco Núñez de Balboa, Panama (1984)
- Doctor *Honoris Causa*, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia (1986)
- Doctor *Honoris Causa*, Bentley College, Waltham, Massachusetts (1996)
- Doctor *Honoris Causa*, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey (2007)

On 4 December 2013, Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations, honored him during the 50th anniversary of UNITAR.

Jean Gazarian also played an important part in establishing and maintaining the Bibliotheque de Langue Franaise. He was a real gentleman, always ready and willing to help others. His contributions to the UN were invaluable and he was a Life Member of AFICS/NY.

A Prayer Service for Jean Gazarian was held at the Church of the Holy Family near the UN on the afternoon of 29 January. Many who knew him attended and spoke of his career and qualities: his learning, humility, dedication to service, humanity, and wit. He was a great role model to both international staff and UN diplomats. His memory is a blessing to all who knew him.

Pierre and Marie-Lise Gazarian
Demetrios Argyriades

For more information about Jean Gazarian's UN career visit the UN News Service:
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsId=53113#>.
VqOQ8WfSnIV

JACK GOLDEN (1934 – 2015)



Jack Golden, 81, passed away peacefully on 29 September, 2015, in Savannah, Georgia.

A native of Georgia, Jack graduated from Vanderbilt University and also studied at Columbia University, the Sorbonne, and the School for Oriental and Asian Studies (SOAS) in London.

Jack initially served with the U.S. Army in Japan in the early sixties as a slim, mustachioed MP in khaki, with hair! And yes, some of us have seen the photograph! After language training in Taiwan, Jack was assigned to Songkla, Thailand in 1962-63 with the United States Information Service before being stationed as Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer in Jakarta, Indonesia. In the late sixties and early seventies Jack brought his well-developed interest in Asia and his understanding of economic development, to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), initially as an Information Officer in the Division of Information at Headquarters, and subsequently to the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific as an Area Officer. After some years he extended his professional life to duty stations as UNDP Assistant Resident Representative (1980-84) in Seoul, Korea, and later as UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Jack returned to Headquarters in New York City a few years prior to his retirement. He continued to visit familiar areas all over Asia. He expressed a deep love for, and understanding of Asian cultures. Before being stationed to a new country, he familiarized himself with the language and society. His community of friends grew during each of his assignments, missions, and visits, and soon he had good close friends all over Asia as well as in the United States, particularly in New York.

Jack loved New York's rich culture, theater, and classical music, especially opera. He was an honorary member of the Adam family and a regular fixture at their musical soirees hosted by Eleanor and her husband cellist, Claus, of the Juilliard String Quartet (whose father Tassilo was a famous ethnographer in Sumatra). While working with UNDP, Jack also enjoyed weekends in the Berkshires with a cadre of colleagues and joined in group preparation of feast-sized dinners, regaling all with his humorous anecdotes and repartee. Jack was erudite and amazingly well read. His loyalty to his friends, his generosity, and his grace, were ever-present. His commitment to the United Nations ran deep; he was truly a citizen of the world. His friends cherish the elegant gifts he brought them from far-flung places.

He traveled extensively after his retirement, both in the U.S. and overseas, spending time with friends he had maintained from various assignments. His wit, keen intelligence, and loyalty kept friends close and dear. Jack's friendly energy, exuberance and curiosity were boundless. Later in life, his courage in dealing with his infirmities carried him in good spirits to visit and keep in touch with his friends and former colleagues from the United States Foreign Service and the United Nations. Following his retirement, Jack's birthdays occasioned generous get-togethers. The celebrations spread over several days, inter alia in New York City, Montreal in North Carolina, and Savannah. Jack had a unique way of calculating his age for each birthday: by days, weeks, or other calendars. Only a week or so before his death, Jack was still thinking of organizing another visit to New York for next summer, or even a shipboard cruise with his close friends, whom he referred to as the UN-Usual Suspects!

His parents and his older brother preceded Jack in death. Survivors include family in Kansas, Georgia, South Carolina, and other southern states, and his many close friends in NYC and Asia. The funeral service was held in Savanna on 2 October at the graveside.

Jack's family and close friends are all very grateful for the many years of caring and service by Florence Daily, and for the professional attention and kindness given by his caregivers from Coastal Home Care in Savannah over the last months of his life.

Jack Golden's friends and former UN and U.S. Foreign Service colleagues

WILLEM MARBUS **1924 – 2015**



Willem Marbus and his family in 1961 as they were about to leave for Geneva on a UN plane following his transfer from an assignment in Gaza.

Willem Marbus, who served in the United Nations from 1955 to 1980, passed away suddenly at his home in the village of Mickfield, in the county of Suffolk, United Kingdom, on 20 September 2015.

Mr. Marbus was born in Schiedam, the Netherlands, on 5 July, 1924. He was brought up and lived in Schiedam until the end of the Second World War. During the war he served in the Dutch Underground as a Radio Operator, communicating with the United Kingdom. After the war he joined the Dutch merchant navy and served as a Chief Radio Officer.

1955 was a significant year for Mr. Marbus. He joined the United Nations as a Radio Operator and was immediately assigned to Kashmir with the UN Military Observer Group (UNMOGIP). Shortly after arriving, Willem married Ella Smith from Suffolk, United Kingdom. They and their three daughters (Sally, born 1956), (Jennifer, 1958), and (Elizabeth, 1962) dauntlessly shared in many of Willem's adventures throughout his career.

Willem Marbus's career positions included Radio Operator, Radio Supervisor and, from 1973 until his retirement in 1980, Chief Communications Officer. His assignments, besides Kashmir, included the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Palestine, the United Nations Office in Geneva, the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK), the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Ethiopia.

Willem truly served on the "front lines" for the UN. He was stationed in East Jerusalem during the 1967 Six Days War. His unit was fired on in the Sinai when that area was under occupation. He served in Nicosia during the Turkish invasion of 1974, and was stationed in Addis Ababa during revolutionary violence there.

After his distinguished career, Willem and Ella retired to their farmhouse in Suffolk, where they lived the rest of

their lives tending their garden, enjoying their children and their grandchildren, and taking several trips to Holland. In 2012 Ella, his dearly beloved wife of 56 years, passed away. Willem continued to live in his home, welcoming the arrival of a great-grandson, who was very fond of him.

Mr. Marbus was buried in the Creeting St. Mary churchyard in Suffolk beside Ella. He will be sadly missed by his children and their husbands, Sally and Fred Dinsmore, Jennifer and Martin Edmonds, and Elizabeth and Ian Miles; his grandchildren and their spouses Oka and Robert Last, Paul and Josie Russell; and his great-grandson Ashton Last.

Willem Marbus' legacy is one of the active pursuit of peace throughout the world. Having suffered through the horrors of World War as a civilian, he believed passionately in the protection of innocent civilian populations during conflict. But he didn't just espouse his beliefs but, by joining the UN, actively sought to further the cause of peace. Of the many life's paths he could have chosen, he took "the path less travelled," and for Willem, and for the world he loved, that has made all the difference.

Sally Marbus Dinsmore

ERLINDA C. MOLANO

(6 SEPTEMBER 1935 – 23 NOVEMBER 2015)



A TRIBUTE

During the course of her 32 years as a nurse in the United Nations Medical Service, Linda Molano must have treated thousands of staff members and delegates, indeed probably a considerable number of the readers of this *Bulletin*. It was

her responsibility as Head Nurse to plan, organize and direct the nursing activities of the Service, give first aid, attend to medical emergencies and promote health and immunization programmes among the staff. She could be a tough decision-maker, but always gave kindly and professional assistance to those coming to the Medical Service for help.

Born in the Philippines, Ms. Molano graduated from the College of Nursing of the University of the Philippines in Manila in 1956. After only a few years of nursing practice she was appointed to the United Nations in New York, rising through the hierarchy over the years to become Head Nurse. A respected professional, she was a longstanding member of the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses.

Outside the United Nations, too, Linda was constantly on the go, such that it was sometimes difficult to meet up with her: she would be off at the opera or the ballet, visiting an exhibition, attending a college reunion, at a concert,

meeting with family for special occasions, testing new restaurants, travelling to all corners of the world. I especially remember my first visit to Tanglewood in 1984, just after arriving in New York, where Linda was one of the group of concert-goers and helped me to understand what (then still a foreign language to me on the breakfast menu) were hash browns, grits and brownies. These were not things I had come across in Europe! From then on she became a dear friend and a delightful companion on trips in and around New York, to Florida and New Mexico, and on our many summer visits to New England. She was endlessly curious about the towns and sights we visited and seemed to have a faultless memory for historical facts, not to mention a built-in mental GPS. Many times we were saved from getting lost because of her photographic memory of places she had been to before, even if only once. My last meeting with her was in London, where a group of five "New Yorkers"—actually from four different countries—spent an exhausting but exhilarating few days taking in the British Museum, the National Gallery, Buckingham Palace and much more.

Linda was a devout Catholic, living out her faith in her everyday life and work, in her devotion to friends and family, her commitment to her nursing and to her patients, and her generous support for good causes, including most recently the AFICS/NY Outreach Committee.

Linda's joie de vivre was infectious, as was her hearty laughter. Her family and many friends will miss her bubbly personality and good company, but we will have countless happy memories as consolation.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Church of the Holy Family (315 East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017-2313); for more information, please contact Linda's niece at michele.y.molano@gmail.com.

Stella M. Mc Dowall (with Martha G. Clark)

MAURICE STRONG

ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPION, DIES AT 86

Adapted from *The New York Times*

(With thanks to Lars Hyttinen for sending it for the *Bulletin*)



Maurice Strong, a former industrialist and confessed ecological sinner who was in the vanguard of placing environmentalism on the world's agenda as a high-ranking United Nations official, died on Saturday, December 12, 2015. He was 86.

His death came on the eve of the United Nations negotiations in Paris on global warming,



attended by President Obama and other world leaders. Achim Steiner, United Nations Under Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program, announced the death but did not say where Mr. Strong, a Canadian, died or give the cause. He credited Mr. Strong with making “history by launching a new era of international environmental diplomacy.”

For years Mr. Strong, a self-made oil and gas billionaire, sounded the alarm on climate change and tried to goad the governments of developed countries to take responsibility for the ecological degradation wrought by industrialization. “The environmental crisis is largely of our making,” Mr. Strong said of the industrial nations in 1970, adding that it was therefore incumbent on them to enlist and assist developing nations in addressing the problem. “We cannot expect them to attach the same priority to environmental action as we do,” he said, “confronted as they are with the compelling and immediate pressures of meeting the basic needs of their people for food, shelter, health care, education and employment.”

Mr. Strong helped globalize the environmental movement early on as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, held in 1972. Two decades later he organized the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

After the Stockholm conference, Mr. Strong became the first executive director of the Environment Program. It was one of several leadership posts he held at the United Nations. In the mid-1980s he directed the agency’s Office for Emergency Operations, mobilizing famine relief for drought-ravaged Africa. More than a decade later he served as Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s executive coordinator for bureaucratic reform and as special envoy to North Korea and the Far East. (He stepped aside as the envoy in 2005 after Tongsun Park, a South Korean with a scandalous past, was found to have been an unregistered lobbyist for Iraq in the United Nations oil-for-food program and to have invested \$1 million in a company controlled by Mr. Strong, who was cleared of any involvement in the scandal.)

Maurice (pronounced MORR-iss) Frederick Strong was born on 29 April, 1929, in Oak Lake, a prairie hamlet in southern Manitoba. His father, Frederick, was an unemployed railway telegraph operator. The family was so poor that Maurice would collect lumps of coal that had fallen from passing trains to heat their house.

At 14, he left home to become a merchant mariner and a fur trader and to live briefly among the Eskimos. When the United Nations set up its headquarters early on in Lake Success, N.Y., he wangled a job as a guard.

Returning to Manitoba, he enlisted as a securities analyst in Winnipeg, the capital, and was recruited by the legendary

oilman John E. P. Gallagher, who was known as Smiling Jack, to work for Dome Petroleum in 1951.

Mr. Strong later scouted service station sites for an oil company in the Middle East and started a graphite mine in Tanzania before returning to Dome in 1955. There he profited from stock options, then served as president of the Canadian Industrial Gas and Power Corporation of Canada. He was later chairman of Petro-Canada and of the Canadian Development Investment Corporation. As a tycoon, he confessed to *The New York Times* in 1992, he had been “an environmental sinner.” But he later realized, he said, that “we were running the Earth without a depreciation account, in effect spending our capital.”

In the 1960s, he was appointed to run what became the Canadian International Development Agency by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson. His success in increasing foreign aid brought him to the attention of U Thant, the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the time, who selected him to convene the 1972 Stockholm conference.

The 1992 Rio summit meeting Mr. Strong organized attracted delegates from 178 nations, including 118 heads of state or of government. It produced an acknowledgment that eradicating poverty was necessary to achieve environmentally sustainable development. But it ended without setting specific, tangible goals. And though donor nations agreed to provide \$7 billion in aid to poorer ones, the sum was far short of the \$70 billion that the United Nations said was needed annually.

Mr. Strong was the author in 2000 of *Where on Earth Are We Going?* In which he predicted that in three decades environmental catastrophes could wipe out as much as two-thirds of the world’s population.

He and his Danish-born second wife, Hanne, had seven children from previous marriages and lived, among other places, on a ranch in Colorado. There was no word on survivors.

LUIS TORRES (1929 – 2015)

Luis Torres, a native of Puerto Rico and long-time New Yorker, passed away on 5 October 2015. He was 86 years young and was beloved by many of his colleagues at the United Nations, where his career spanned more than 30 years.

Upon graduating from the University of Puerto Rico with a degree in Education, Luis migrated to the United States and fell in love with everything New York. After working for six months at the U.S. Customs office in Manhattan, Luis joined the United Nations in 1953, where he began a long and fruitful career.

Luis loved working in UN procurement at UN P&T, which later became PTS, and also in UNTCD. He forged life-long friendships serving at UN HQ in New York and during the time he spent in UNIFIL. After returning from the latter, and a self-imposed hiatus in Barcelona, Luis returned to work briefly at the Secretariat in New York. However, the UN Operations in Somalia in 1992, and the UN Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA) in preparation for the country's first democratic elections in 1994 came calling and Luis simply could not say no.

Luis was a member of the UN Singers and travelled with them throughout many European cities, fulfilling his childhood dreams and life-long passion for music and travel.

But Luis had a lighter side that few saw. Many of his colleagues never knew that he had pursued his passion for singing outside the UN and recorded a single with the Mitch Miller Band, or that he once shared dinner on a UN trip to Norway with that country's King. Other highlights of Luis' life included meeting Nelson Mandela and Danny Glover during his UNOMSA mission and, on another occasion, meeting Pearl Bailey, at the time a U.S. delegate to the UN General Assembly, who approached Luis during lunch and asked him if he had already cast his vote, obviously mistaking him for a delegate. His response? "Not yet, but I will right after lunch".

Luis was always ready with a smile and a helping hand to those in need. After retiring, he was called back by the Procurement Section of TCD, where he served for a period of one year during which time he performed many of the functions normally performed by a Procurement Officer.

After his retirement, Luis, a life-member of AFCS/NY, did what he liked the most: travel! His last trip was to Brazil, Puerto Rico and Florida, covering a period of six months in 2012. Unfortunately, in January of 2013, Luis suffered three consecutive strokes which rendered him partially paralyzed on the left side. He was confined to the use of a wheelchair for the remainder of his life and required the 24x7 care of an aide.

Luis was a lovable person who will be dearly missed by many, but probably mostly by me.

Many of you met me through him and know how important he was in my life. He filled the void of a missing father figure, imparting so many of life's wondrous lessons such as an appreciation for the classics, how to tie a Windsor knot and how to shave. He was generous, warm and friendly although, as many of you can attest, quite obstinate at times! However, that hard-headedness came with a healthy dose of good intentions. He is survived by his sister—my mother—a half-brother who just turned 95 years old, and countless nephews.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of his friends at the United Nations whose friendship, good intentions and wishes carried Luis not only through life, but to its end. And thank you to all of those who shared personal experiences they had with my uncle and from which I chose a few to share with you here.

Luis A. Rodriguez

SYLVIA SOLENDER SHAPIRO

Sylvia Solender Shapiro passed away on 30 January 2016. She was the wife of Louis A. Shapiro, who was with the UN since 1947, retired in 1979 and passed away in 1997.

Sylvia worked in personnel at the UN in the late 1940s where the couple met.

Paul Shapiro (son)

LUCILLE FISCHER

Lucille Fischer passed away peacefully at her home on 1 January 2016. She was one of the Mohicans and a long-time advocate of the United Nations.

Jay Fischer (nephew)

IN MEMORIAM

Due to problems with Emoja, AFICS/NY has not received any new information for this section since issuing our last Bulletin. As soon as it arrives we will, of course, convey it to our readers. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

USEFUL INFORMATION

AFICS/NY E-mail: afics@un.org

AFICS/NY telephone: 1-212-963-2943

AFICS/NY website: www.un.org/other/afics

Send us your up-to-date contact information if you move or change your telephone number or E-mail address.

Contact the AFICS/NY Office for advice/information on legal, tax, and medical matters, or assisted living facilities.

Participate more fully in our vibrant and energetic Association by joining one of the **Standing Committees of AFICS/NY: Ageing, Communications/IT, Insurance, Legal, Membership, NGO Relations and Information, Outreach, Pension, Social**. E-mail or call the AFICS/NY Office and your interest will be passed on to the relevant Committee Chair.

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Information on the Charities Foundation

Membership; membership application form

U.S. Tax Booklet

US Social Security } ("2004 version still valid")

Death issues }

PENSION website: www.unjspf.org

PENSION e-mail: unjspf@un.org

PENSION Fund Secretariat telephone: 1-212-963-6931

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ASHI Website: www.un.org/insurance

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