A colourful pot of summer flowers to brighten up the January grey in the Northern Hemisphere.

*Still life* by Raoul Dufy, painted in 1941.

This French artist, best known for his colourful, decorative style, is the subject of an important exhibition being held in Rome at present.

We report on this event on page 30.
Message from Dr Tedros, Director-General, to former WHO staff

2022 was another challenging year for our Organization, as we continued to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to multiple overlapping crises around the world, including outbreaks, conflicts, food insecurity, climate-related emergencies and more. As always, I have been incredibly proud of the dedication, professionalism and humanity with which our people have responded.

2022 was also a milestone year, with Member States making a historic commitment at the World Health Assembly to gradually increase assessed contributions to 50% of the base budget over the next decade – or sooner if possible. This paradigm shift in our funding, if implemented, will give WHO a predictable and sustainable funding platform from which to deliver long-term programming in countries, and enable us to attract and retain the experts we need. Ultimately, it will transform our ability to deliver results where it matters most – in the lives of the people we all serve.

2023 will be a landmark year in our Organization’s history, as we mark our 75th anniversary. As former staff, you have all played a part in making WHO what it is today. I thank you for your valuable contributions and I encourage you to continue supporting our Organization. As I have said before, you will always remain part of the WHO family!

WHO’s anniversary provides a unique opportunity to celebrate public health milestones from the past 75 years, to unite the world in tackling the health, development and climate challenges of the 21st century, and to advance our efforts to achieve the goal of health for all.

I hope that many of you will be able to join in the celebrations and I look forward to seeing you. I wish you all a happy, healthy and safe 2023. As always, I am proud to be WHO.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General

AFSM wishes a very happy and healthy New Year 2023 to all of our readers
EDITORIAL

In this issue we are delighted to publish a specially prepared message from Dr Tedros to our members. The DG’s continued support to our Association is highly appreciated. In his message, he notes that 2023 is the 75th anniversary of WHO, about which we will hear more during this year.

The second part of our article on health and the environment, Our Planet – Our Health (Part 1, see QNT 129), originally planned for this January edition, will now appear in a future issue. This is because the author, Dr Maria Neira, Director of Environment, Climate Change & Health, has understandably been fully occupied pre- and post-COP 27 in view of the prominent role played by WHO.

The UN Decade for Healthy Ageing 2021–2030 was the subject of our first webinar, which was held on 6th October. AFSM committee member Robert Bos participated and has prepared a full report for us, starting on page 6 (see also the Global AFSMs report on page 18).

Which just leaves enough room for me to wish every one of our readers a healthy and happy 2023.

Keith Wynn

EDITORIAL BOARD

Keith Wynn, Editor-in-Chief and layout, Yves Beigbeder, Sue Block Tyrrell, David Cohen, Maria Dweggah, Lindsay Martinez, Jean-Paul Menu, Dev Ray, Rosemary Villars.

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The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Editorial Board.

Please send your contributions for publication in QNT to: Keith Wynn wynn@bluewin.ch

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IMPORTANT CONTACTS

AFSM: Office L 71, WHO, CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland. Tel.: +41 (0) 22 791 3192 or e-mail: aoms@who.int or afsm_aoms@who.int. Presently, there is no access for retirees due to Covid restrictions. Alternatively, please leave a message and someone will call you back. Website: https://www.who.int/about/former-staff. Resources for retirement: visit the site, https://www.who.int/about/former-staff/resources, and on this same page click on the 8th item for Formalities concerning the death of a WHO retiree.

Health Insurance (SHI): Tel.: +41 (0) 22 791 18 18; in case of absence please leave a message, someone will call you back, or send an e-mail to: shihq@who.int. The HQ SHI Helpdesk is in office L 3. Presently, there is no access for retirees due to Covid restrictions.

Pensions (UNJSPF): Contact by e-mail no longer possible, to send an electronic message use the contact form on the Fund’s website, https://www.unjspf.org/contact-us/. Visitors: Presently, there is no access for retirees due to Covid restrictions. Documents for NY by post, address to: United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, c/o United Nations, P.O. Box 5036, New York, NY 10163-5036, USA. Documents for NY by courier (DHL, etc.) or registered mail, address to: United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, 37th floor, 1 DHP, 885 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA. Documents for Geneva, address to: UNJSPF, c/o Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Telephone: Geneva: +41 (0) 22 928 88 00 or New York: +1 212 963 6931. See also the list of Toll-Free and local numbers at https://www.unjspf.org/toll-free-numbers/. In the case of non-receipt of the monthly benefit or the death of a beneficiary, visit the website: https://www.unjspf.org/emergency/ for instructions. Remember to always have your Unique ID number handy when contacting UNJSPF.
Summary of main issues reviewed at recent meetings of the Staff Health Insurance Global Oversight Committee

The 23rd meeting of the Global Oversight Committee (Committee) of the Staff Health Insurance (SHI) took place on 29 August 2022 and the 24th meeting took place on 1 November 2022. The Committee oversees the SHI and advises the Director-General on SHI management and operations. The following is a summary of the main points discussed at these meetings both of which were attended by the two members elected by retired staff (Thierry Lambrechts and Ann Van Hulle-Colbert).

The 23rd meeting dealt with the SHI Annual Report, update on External Audit recommendations, update from the Fund Actuaries, SHI PAHO Financial Working Group and changes in Mental Health Benefits.

The Committee received an interesting presentation on the key highlights of the 2021 annual report which included the Fund balance and liabilities, operational results including claims and contributions analyses, administrative costs, investment performance, rate of growth in investment assets by participating entity and age distribution insights regarding claims.

The financial results for the year were good. The assets of the Fund increased by 13% compared to the previous year. Investment return for the year was 3.1%. In this connection, the Director-General recently approved a revision of the investment strategy aimed at better reflecting the long-term nature of the Fund’s liabilities. This would entail an increase in the share of assets invested in equities.

Claims for the year amounted to USD 91.5 million compared to USD 88.4 million in the previous year. This increase was partly due to a catch-up on some non-urgent healthcare which had been postponed during the previous year due to Covid-19.

The size of the Fund is growing as the total number of participants now exceeds 41,000.

The Committee reviewed the recommendations of the SHI Global Standing Committee on mental health related benefits. This followed a detailed study by a working group which included members from that Committee as well as in-house experts. A few rule changes were adopted aimed at facilitating access to mental health care. Details of these rule changes, approved by the Director-General for implementation on 1 January 2023, will be communicated by the SHI Secretariat in due course.

The 24th meeting of the Committee dealt mainly with issues such as Compliance and Risk Management, Case Management and Cost Containment, Governance, update on IT matters and Long-term Care.

The Compliance Officer and Medical Advisor made presentations on their work related to case management and cost containment. The Compliance Officer also presented information related to suspected fraud cases and how these are dealt with. Their work on case management is interlinked. They try to find solutions when faced with excessive estimates/charges. They always aim at achieving a balance between cost control and ensuring access to quality care. They also play an important role in developing and enhancing preferential agreements with selected healthcare providers. This saves money both for the participants and the Fund.
The Chair of the SHI Global Standing Committee presented a summary of the work of that Committee over the past year. Some of the cases reviewed are increasingly complex in nature. As a result of its experience, the Standing Committee recommended some further changes to the SHI rules, most of which were endorsed by the Global Oversight Committee. Other changes were postponed in order to give more time to review the appropriate wording.

The Secretariat provided an update on the status of the study on long-term care. The Secretariat informed the Committee that a Request for Proposal (RFP) has been issued to identify a vendor who will be able to model the cost of any proposed changes to long-term care, as well as any other future rule changes to benefits. We (the members elected by retired staff) urged that priority be given to this matter which had been postponed for some time already. It was agreed that a working group would be established in order to take this work forward.

The next meeting of the Committee will take place in June 2023.

Ann Van Hulle-Colbert

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2023: POSSIBLE DATES FOR COFFEE/LUNCH/ACTIVITIES IN THE GENEVA AREA

**Ferney-Voltaire:** Lunches are held on the last Monday of the month at *Restaurant Voltaire*, 10 Grand’rue at 12 noon. The restaurant is inside the café, opposite the bar, on the left. Carl Freeman maintains an email list of those who usually attend the lunches. If you are not on the list and would like to be informed about when they are to take place, please contact him at carlfreeman33@gmail.com.

**Geneva:**

**Cité Seniors:** Please check their website – [www.geneve.ch/fr/cite-seniors](http://www.geneve.ch/fr/cite-seniors) – to find out about their activities. On the first Wednesday of the month, “International Carrefour” coffee afternoons are held from 14.00–16.00 at Cité Seniors, 62 rue de Lausanne/28 rue Amat. Cité Seniors offers many activities – their programme can be found on the website or give them a free call on 0800 18 19 20, or on 022 418 53 61. The Cité is open on Tuesdays from 10.00–12.30 and from 13.30–17.00, and on Sundays from 11.30–17.00.

**CAD – Hospice général:** Offers many activities for seniors, their programme can be found at [www.hospicegeneral.ch/fr/](http://www.hospicegeneral.ch/fr/) or give them a call on 022 420 52 00 from Monday to Friday – 08.30–12.00 and 14.00–17.00.

**Fondation pour la Formation des Aînées et des Aînés de Genève (FAAG):** Organizes lectures on Thursdays – their programme can be found on their website [www.faag-ge.ch](http://www.faag-ge.ch).

**Institut National Genevois:** Also organizes conferences and concerts in Geneva, details of which can be found on their website – [www.inge.ch](http://www.inge.ch), or by telephone 022 310 41 88.

**Nyon:** The monthly coffee dates remain suspended pending a volunteer to organize them. If you would like to take on this satisfying project, kindly send a message to [aoms@who.int](mailto:aoms@who.int).
UN DECADE OF HEALTHY AGEING 2021–2030

Joining forces for Healthy Ageing, a milestone webinar

The Decade

WHO has always paid attention to health issues that are specific to older people and to the ageing process, efforts which have now been greatly enhanced by the official designation of 2021–2030 as the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing. This special Decade provides a framework for global collaboration, bringing together diverse sectors and stakeholders with a view to improving the lives of older people, their families and their communities. WHO has been entrusted with the Secretariat to promote, coordinate and monitor Decade activities, led by the Unit of Demographic Change and Healthy Ageing, with programme implementation supported by healthy ageing focal points in all six WHO Regional Offices.

In early discussions, the value of participation and collaboration with the Decade was recognized by the AFSM Executive Committee in Geneva and by the Regional AFSMs through the AFSM Global Council. There was a consensus that an on-line workshop or webinar would be an appropriate first step to inform AFSM members worldwide, listen to their concerns related to ageing, gauge their interest in participating in Decade initiatives, and discuss specific collaborative activities.

What signifies the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing content?

The intersectoral, interinstitutional and indeed intergenerational collaboration envisaged under the objectives of the Decade focus on four interconnected action areas:

• changing how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing;
• developing communities in ways that foster the abilities of older people;
• delivering person-centred integrated care and primary health services responsive to older people; and
• providing access to long-term care for older people who need it.

The associated activities take place at the local, national, regional, and global levels. They tackle the current challenges that older people face, while anticipating future challenges for those who are still to journey into older age. The activities focus on older adults, while recognising that the environments in which we are born, grow, work, and live strongly influence the opportunities available to each of us as we age.

Leaving no-one behind, a core principle of the Sustainable Development Goals, is also a core principle in designing Decade action.

For more detailed information on the Decade, https://www.decadeofhealthyageing.org/
Preparations

Having decided to organize a global webinar for an audience of AFSM members, a small Taskforce was set up including AFSM Committee members from HQ, PAHO/AMRO and WPRO, and programme staff from Geneva and Washington DC. This group was tasked with formulating the objectives and expected outputs of the webinar and developing a 90-minute programme. They agreed that this webinar should go beyond simply informing the audience about the Decade and its goals and objectives, and highlight on-going AFSM activities related to the Decade (PAHO is in the forefront of this) and explore options and opportunities for further collaborative action between the AFSMs and the programmes.

As there is a great deal of diversity between regions in terms of demography, as well as environmental, social, economic and cultural determinants of health in the context of old age, initiatives for collaborative action should arise at country and Regional levels. Regular global events such as this webinar provide opportunities to exchange and learn from others’ experiences. The webinar was a blend of information dissemination and discussion on engagement and follow-up action.

The Taskforce carried out a rapid survey among those who registered for the webinar, to assess knowledge about the Decade, and expectations and proficiency in participating in webinars. A questionnaire, sent out two weeks prior to the webinar, addressed the respondent’s profile, general awareness of the Decade, and expectations of the webinar. A week before the webinar (the deadline) 28 responses had been received, showing the following:

all respondents were AFSM members, mainly of AFSM Geneva (31%) with substantial representation (>15%) from PAHO/AMRO and WPRO; the age group 60-69 made up almost half of the respondents (48.4%), with 70-79 at 25.8% and 80-89 at 22.6%; results showed a gender balance female/male at 54.8%/45.2%; and 85% of respondents perceived their own health as at least good (48.4% even very good). Only 10% of respondents had never attended a webinar before; and only 25% found webinar technology challenging to handle.

Of the 28 respondents, 18 knew that the UN had declared 2021–2030 Decade of Healthy Ageing (63.3%) and a few more picked WHO as lead agency for the Decade (no other agencies were indicated). Of the 4 Decade enablers, Voice and Engagement scored highest in terms of priority, while Leadership and Capacity Building was no-one’s first priority.

Three of the expected outcomes of the webinar scored well:

- especially with the DG inaugurating the webinar, it would serve as a reminder to all (current and retired) staff of the importance of former staff to WHO current mandates;
- it would serve as an acknowledgement that the Decade is an opportunity to improve the lives of current and future generations;
- it would be a recognition that implementing the policy and practice options outlined in the Decade goals requires collaboration at different levels and across sectors and stakeholders and that older people must be central to all actions.

The number of respondents (28) compared to overall attendance (130) does not allow any broad conclusions to be drawn from this survey, but its outcome did help to direct the focus of the webinar towards further collaboration in the areas of Voice and Engagement, and of Research and Data Collection, which both scored high. For most of respondents this webinar was mainly an awareness creation exercise.

A full report of the Task Force’s work will be submitted to the AFSMs.

The webinar

The webinar opened at 12:30 (CET) on 6 October 2022 with a welcome by Dr Tedros, who stayed for a considerable time to listen to the presentations. In his statement, Dr Tedros thanked the associations of former staff members, in Headquarters and in the Regions, for organizing the webinar and other activities in support of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing. He stressed the
uniqueness of the occasion where current and former staff had met together, involving both the Headquarters and Regional counterparts.

Addressing the retired staff members, he said: “As former WHO Staff members you can play an important role in addressing these challenges of growing older. As older members of the WHO family, your experience can help to guide our work. We invite you to contribute actively to the success of the Decade on Healthy Ageing. We also invite your participation in our mentoring programme”. And he went on: “There is an old African proverb that says: What an old man or woman can see sitting down, youth cannot see standing up. It means that the experience and wisdom that come with age enable older people to look beyond the horizon to see things that other people cannot”. He concluded by again thanking the AFMSs for their support of WHO’s work, in this case linking current and former staff, as well as Headquarters and Regional offices.

Next, a brief video was shown, which can be viewed on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ka3a3X5RRw)

Introducing the Decade, Alana Officer provided an updated perspective, focused on combatting ageism, the central theme addressed by the action areas. In her own words: “Ageism – how we think (stereotypes), feel (prejudice) and act (discrimination) towards either ourselves or others on the basis of age, is absolutely everywhere. One in two people globally are found to have negative attitudes towards older people. But ageism tends to affect people of all age groups and intersects with and exacerbates other forms of disadvantage related to race or gender. It is a big problem. We wouldn’t worry about it so much if it weren’t so harmful with significant impacts on physical and mental health, recovery from disability, increased social isolation, and reducing lifespan by about 7.5 years. It also costs our societies and individuals billions. The good news is: we can combat ageism through our policies and laws, by better education, by having a more realistic understanding of ageing, and by fostering contacts between generations.”

Her colleague Hyobum Jang went into further detail on delivering integrated care and primary health services responsive to older people, long-term care, and the creation of age-friendly communities. He pointed to opportunities for direct involvement,
advocacy, communication and information dissemination, and influencing policy and decision-makers – all activities where AFSM members can join forces towards the Decade goals.

Alana Officer concluded by announcing the web-based knowledge exchange platform and the recently launched global collaboration aimed at mobilizing other sectors in support of Decade activities.

After these stage-setting presentations, the focus of the webinar shifted to action: what is already going on, and how can the collaboration between AFSMs and the WHO programme be strengthened? Contributions from Gloria Coe, Chair of the PAHO/AMRO-AFSM and from Linda Milan, Chair, WPRO AFSM-Manila, showcased examples in those two Regions: what action is already going on and what had motivated people to contribute.

In the Americas the PAHO AFSM’s Healthy Ageing Committee has been building a network since its creation in May 2021, with communication as the main enabler to mobilize members around the theme and to link with the PAHO programme staff. Two webinars (Know how to get what matters most from your health care provider and Is dementia inevitable in old age?) were well received, and the number of AFSM’s Facebook followers has risen by 50%. In WPRO, the focus has been on documenting retirees’ individual experiences in discovering life after WHO, and this paints a highly diverse picture of people following their passions, motivations and inclinations to re-invent themselves, engaging in healthy ageing-relevant activities (often through local NGOs, faith-based organizations, committees of indigenous peoples and others) and combatting in practice the phenomenon of ageism.

For the ensuing discussion on potential WHO/AFSM collaborative work, some ideas generated in Regional AFSMs were presented covering the mentoring programme, the framework approach to joint PAHO-AFSM actions, plans to combine knowledge sharing with policy advice, and a survey done on the health status of AFSM members in the African region.

Sue Block Tyrrell introduced the WHO mentoring programme launched in December 2019. The AFSM-Geneva had encouraged its members to volunteer as mentors, and two initiatives had taken off: mentoring support for staff interested in a WR position, and speed-monitoring. AFRO AFSM’s Kalula Kalambay reported on his positive experience as a mentor, in a structured step-wise process. This had shown the importance of retirees sharing their experience and led to the idea of publishing a collective book on experiences supporting the mentoring process.

Patricia Morsch (PAHO RA) and Marta Pelaez (PAHO/AFSM) stressed that the Decade movement is based on collaboration, and for the collaboration between the PAHO programme and PAHO/AFSM a framework has been created which will help channel the professional expertise and the health needs of the 600 AFSM members in support of Decade action. The AFSM’s vision is fully aligned with the four action areas, inspiring social change, health and age equity, and the realization of the human rights of older people. Such frameworks may serve other AFSMs equally well.

Hiromasa Okayasu, Director, Healthy Environment and Populations at WPRO, pointed out that his Region has the largest and fastest growing population of old people, and WPRO has formulated a Regional Action Plan which sets forth a vision for the Healthy Ageing Decade. He identified three areas of WPRO/AFSM collaboration: advocacy, with former staff taking on an ambassador role, knowledge sharing, and policy making, with former staff working as influencers of politicians. The policies for the creation of age-friendly environments in the Philippines set an example.

Angela Benson of the AFSM/AFRO reported on the outcome of a health survey among its AFSM members, which showed most are still able to work, exercise and go about their daily activities. Action developed with her counterpart in AFRO, Irene Yekana, focused on activities for the mental stimulation of older people, provision of nutritional advice and strengthening the health systems in the Region, ensuring UHC pays adequate attention to the community of elderly people.
The webinar concluded with reactions from the audience. In summary: Sharon Miller felt support was needed to establish a EURO chapter of the AFSM and advocated for flexibility in the now mandatory retirement age; David Wheeler asked for attention to be paid to the very old who may gradually end up in social isolation; Marilyn Rice drew attention to the issue of long-term care, and highlighted the importance of documenting active work-life experiences of retired staff as well as their current activities and engagements; Salik Govind from Fiji pleaded for more attention for secondary and tertiary healthcare for old people; and Kanaga Rajan (AFSM SEARO) would like to see induction of staff into the concept of healthy ageing before their retirement.

With this round of comments and a quick exit poll, the webinar came to an end after 1 hour and 40 minutes, with a peak attendance of 130 people.

The support of the WHO videoconference staff in facilitating this webinar, and the services of the interpreters in the French and Spanish booths are gratefully acknowledged.

Robert Bos

NEW MEMBERS

We have pleasure in welcoming the following members into the AFSM family

New Life Members
Catherine Kiener
Levina Lupoli
Veronica Magar
Jill Meloni-Andrews
Ryoko Miyazaki-Krause
Lucy Mshana
Ute Anna Rosskopf

Conversion to Life members

New Annual Members
Metin Gülmezoglu
NEWS FROM WHO

Highlights of news from WHO

• Dr Tedros attended in person the 77th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September – the first in-person format since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The WHO team took part in several events to advocate the importance of ensuring strong pandemic preparedness and response, as well as equitable access to vaccines and other Covid-19 tools in order to end the pandemic and put the world back on the path towards achieving universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

• The Clinton Global Health Initiative was convened alongside the UNGA for the first time since 2016. Dr Tedros joined former President Bill Clinton, Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton and Chelsea Clinton for a conversation on global health.

• On 21 September, WHO released a new report on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and their risk factors “Invisible Numbers: The true scale of noncommunicable diseases” https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/invisible-numbers and a data portal https://ncdportal.org/ at an event co-organized with Bloomberg Philanthropies during the UNGA. NCDs now outnumber infectious diseases as the top killers globally and are one of the greatest health and development challenges of this century. To accelerate action, the DG renewed for the third time the two-year appointment of Michael R. Bloomberg as WHO Global Ambassador for Noncommunicable Diseases and Injuries.

• Dementia is the 7th leading cause of death globally. Following World Alzheimer Day on 21 September, WHO launched its first blueprint for dementia research, https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240058248 designed to provide guidance to policy makers, funders and the dementia research community.

• Convened by the Biden-Harris Administration, the DG attended the first US-WHO Strategic Dialogue on 27 September. Discussions focused on several priority global public health issues and areas of collaboration and partnership, including ongoing efforts to strengthen WHO.

• On 28 September, Dr Barbosa da Silva Jr., a national of Brazil, currently Assistant Director at PAHO, was elected as the new Director of the Pan American Health Organization. He will begin his five-year term on 1 February 2023, succeeding Dr Carissa F. Etienne of Dominica.

• On 29 September, WHO launched a new WHO initiative to stop the spread of an invasive malaria vector – Anopheles stephensi – in Africa where the disease hits hardest, https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-
UCN-GMP-2022.06. Originally native to parts of South Asia and the Arabian Peninsula, the vector has been expanding its range and it thrives in urban settings, unlike the other main mosquito vectors of malaria in Africa.

• The theme of the 2022 UN International Day of Older Persons was Resilience of Older Persons in a Changing World.

• On 3 October, the European Investment Bank and WHO organized an “Investing in health for all” event to discuss global health challenges in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and how to build resilient health systems to protect and promote health in the future.

• Also on 3 October, Dr Tedros was honoured with the Exceptional Leadership in Global Health Award at the GUBA – Grow, Unite, Build, Africa Awards - in Rwanda.

• On 6 October, WHO launched a new report – Playing the Long Game – https://worldhealthorganization.cmail19.com/t/d-l-zldyukt-tthjrdttkl-y/ co-authored with partners of the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), which recommends ways to strengthen mega sport event legacies so that they contribute more effectively to increasing physical activity and to improving the health of populations. Regular physical activity is proven to help prevent and treat many diseases but one in four adults are not active enough. On 19 October, WHO issued the first-ever global report on physical activity – it shows that countries need to accelerate the development and implementation of policies to increase levels of physical activity and thereby help prevent disease and reduce the burden on already overwhelmed health-care systems. https://www.who.int/teams/health-promotion/physical-activity/global-status-report-on-physical-activity-2022.

• 10 October is World Mental Health Day. The pandemic has taken, and continues to take, its toll on mental health. WHO is working with partners around a campaign with the theme of Making Mental Health and Well-Being for All a Global Priority. In conjunction with the Day, the Sport for Health partnership, led by WHO and Qatar’s Ministry of Public Health, announced a new initiative around the World Cup event that aims to demonstrate the importance of mental health and offer advice on ways to promote it through physical activity and sport. https://www.who.int/initiatives/sports-and-health/healthy-2022-world-cup. The initiative is further supported by FIFA, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), https://2022.wish.org.qa/ the Friendship Benches NGO, https://www.friendshipbenchzimbabwe.org/ and the WHO Universal Health Coverage Partnership, https://extranet.who.int/uhcpartnership/. 32 friendship benches – representing each participating FIFA World Cup nation – have been built for installation in prominent Doha locations, to promote mental health. Sir Mo Farah, the most successful male track distance runner ever, inaugurated the England bench, joined by Her Excellency Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani, Vice Chairperson and CEO of the Qatar Foundation. The Walk the Talk: Health for All Challenge series was held for the first time in Doha, Qatar on 19 November, just before the start of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

• 13 October is World Sight Day. More than 2 billion people worldwide have a vision impairment, most of whom are over the age of 50. In the lead up to the Day, WHO released the first Report of the 2030 targets on effective coverage of eye care, https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240058002.
• The **World Health Summit (WHS)** was held in Berlin from 16–18 October. **For the first time, WHO was a co-organizer.** It was opened by the DG, the German Federal Chancellor, the Presidents of France and Senegal, as well as other high-ranking dignitaries. **WHS aims to strengthen exchange, stimulate innovative solutions to health challenges, position global health as a key political issue and promote a global health conversation in the spirit of the UN SDGs.** At the Summit, global leaders confirmed USD 2.6 billion in funding to support overcoming the final hurdles to polio eradication, vaccinate 370 million children annually over the next five years and continue disease surveillance across 50 countries.

Also during the Summit, WHO’s engagement with parliaments was strengthened through the signing of a Memorandum with UNITE, Parliamentarians Network for Global Health.

• On the opening day of the WHS, the DG **appointed the Henrietta Lacks’ family as WHO Goodwill Ambassadors for Cervical Cancer Elimination.** Henrietta died from cervical cancer in 1951: without her knowledge or consent, cells were taken from her body, known as *HeLa* cells, and subsequently became the first “immortal” cell line – meaning they are the only cells which have continued to live outside the human body and replicate. The *HeLa* cells have contributed to countless medical breakthroughs, including the development of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, as well as Covid-19 research.

• On 17 October, in a **new and unprecedented collaboration**, four global intergovernmental organizations – the **Food and Agriculture Organization**, the **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**, WHO and the **World Organisation for Animal Health** – committed to **protect the health of humans, animals, plants and the environment** with a **One Health Joint Plan of Action**. With the addition of UNEP, the organizations are sending a clear signal that in times of climate crisis and worsening environmental degradation, the health of all living beings can only be protected holistically, [bit.ly/3XUcSd9](https://bit.ly/3XUcSd9).

• On 18 October, **WHO launched the first global survey** to better understand and address the needs of all **those affected by cancer**, [https://extranet.who.int/dataformv3/index.php/933528?lang=en](https://extranet.who.int/dataformv3/index.php/933528?lang=en).

• On 21 October, **WHO celebrated 70 years of its Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS).** It was established with just 25 countries reporting their influenza surveillance data to WHO and now more than 127 countries, areas and territories contribute to the GISRS network which is set to expand its scope to include other respiratory viruses in the future.

• On 27 October, **WHO released the 2022 edition of its Global Tuberculosis Report.** TB remains one of the top infectious disease killers in the world. The report presents data on an increase in
the number of people falling ill with TB and drug-resistant TB for the first time in many years.

- On 31 October, WHO announced the 4th edition of the Health for All Film Festival (HAFF), calling for short films (up to 8 minutes long) to be submitted before 31 January 2023. The Festival recruits each year a new generation of film and video innovators to champion and promote health issues. Further information can be found on the HAFF website, https://www.who.int/initiatives/the-health-for-all-film-festival.

- From 6-18 November at COP 27, WHO and partners led the strongest ever health presence at a UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP, representing over 45 million health workers from around the world who are calling for stronger climate action, and presenting evidence and guidance on the urgency of addressing the climate crisis to protect health. The programme of the health pavilion at COP27 can be found at, https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/cop27-health-pavilion-events-brochure

- 18–24 November is World Antimicrobial Awareness Week, and focuses on the urgent actions needed to stop antimicrobial resistance (AMR) which contributes to more than 5 million deaths from bacterial infections alone each year. Because AMR threatens humans, animals, plants and the environment, the theme of the campaign for the week was “Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together”. On the preceding day, WHO launched a new strategy to respond to the urgent problem of antimalarial drug resistance in Africa; then the week began with the launch by four partners – the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the UN Environment Programme, WHO and the World Organisation for Animal Health – of a new Antimicrobial Resistance Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform https://www.fao.org/antimicrobial-resistance/quadripartite/the-platform/en/, and concluded with the Third Global High-Level Ministerial Conference on Antimicrobial Resistance, hosted by the Sultanate of Oman, in Muscat, https://amrconference2022.om/index.

- Details on WHO’s support to countries in health crises can be found at https://www.who.int/emergencies/situations; information on the Covid-19 pandemic can be found at https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019; and regarding monkeypox (now named Mpox) at https://www.who.int/emergencies/situations/monkeypox-oubreak-2022.

Further information and documentation can be found on the WHO website – www.who.int.

Sue Block Tyrrell
BOOK REVIEWS

Selected Articles of Anthony Piel

320 pages.
A limited edition has been published privately by Mrs Elizabeth Piel. However, the author has generously provided a copy to AFSM to loan to our members, and we shall post this copy to you at our expense, on a first come, first served basis, and on strict condition that it is returned to us at your expense within a reasonable time.

An elegant, entertaining legacy from a respected colleague

After a long and distinguished career in WHO, Anthony Piel retired in 1996. During his retirement our former colleague wrote a regular column for two US newspapers. He passed away on 3 April 2020 (see the obituary in QNT 120) and in lieu of a funeral, his devoted wife Liz has published a limited edition of his writings.

Selected Articles of Anthony Piel opens with short anecdotes about Tony’s experiences in Geneva and elsewhere as a WHO official, including his successful “carrot and stick” negotiation with Soviet and Mujahideen leaders to release 12 International Red Cross workers held hostage by Afghan warlords. The bulk of the book features Tony’s own cogent writings on everything from health to religion, the law (he was a lawyer) and the environment (a keen ornithologist), first published in various US newspapers, including in Connecticut, USA, where he retired. It includes a lengthy discussion of the rationale for “the right to health” and details of the 1978 Alma-Ata Conference on Primary Health Care, for which Tony served as Secretary and which adopted the declaration of “Health for all by the year 2000”. (In person Tony always stressed that the crucial words were for all.) This section includes interesting follow-up accounts from selected countries.

Politically, Tony argues that in the US today the Democrats are the true “progressive conservatives”, keen to conserve not just the environment but the fundamentals of the US Constitution. He worries about the growing power of the “Radical Right” and its use of dark money to strengthen oligarchy and undermine democracy, and deplores international “free-trade deals” that allow corporations to challenge national anti-tobacco and other pro-health laws if they threaten corporate profits.

While Tony's writings focus on US-specific issues, his vision is typically global. For example, his appeals for a “universal payer” health system hark back to WHO principles and recommendations, while his analyses of legal issues lean heavily on international treaties and conventions.

The book’s insistent emphasis on fairness and justice is no surprise to anyone who worked with Anthony Piel on the Geneva Staff Committee and its Legal Subcommittee. Despite holding the post of technical advisor to Warren Furth, ADG for Administration, Tony's analyses often concluded that staff members’ appeals were justified. Early family encounters with injustice may have coloured his views – e.g. in the 1950s his older brother Mike was rejected for military service and saw his career in banking and insurance derailed by “spooks” claiming he was a subversive person. His uncle Gerard Piel, co-founder of Scientific American, suffered from similar smears.

Tony uses a light touch even on the most serious subjects. Commenting on the US Supreme Court’s decision (Citizens United) allowing corporations unlimited spending on political donations because they are "persons" entitled to free speech, Tony suggests that, logically, these corporate "persons" should be subject to the military draft!

Suzanne Cherney
**READERS’ RECIPES**

*Bœuf Bourguignon*, a traditional French beef stew from Burgundy

(serves 4)

This recipe came from my father, Marcel Vallanjon, who was French. Our family originated in Bourgogne. He is the one who taught me to cook, and we used to prepare this together. My father died 40 years ago, and it is a rare link to my youth and the origins of my family. I think these simple memories are even more significant for a constantly uprooted international.

The dish would normally be prepared for special occasions as it requires planning, although the execution is not particularly complicated. It has the advantage of being suitable for advance preparation as it can be reheated on the day you have visitors, which enhances the flavour, and is also suitable for freezing.

**Recipe**

In a large bowl, place: the cubes of beef; the two onions sliced; the parsley washed and chopped; the thyme and bay leaves; the pepper, oil and wine. Leave to marinate for 24 hours in a cool place (not in the fridge), stirring occasionally.

Put the bacon in a saucepan, cover with cold water, bring slowly to the boil and leave to simmer for 5 minutes; remove excess water with kitchen paper; if you have a complete slice of bacon, cut into small pieces; place in a bowl, cover with the Marc de Bourgogne, leave to marinate until needed.

In a large stewing pot/casserole (“cocotte”), gently heat the lard and add the bacon, leaving to melt gently; then add the meat cubes taken from the marinade (remove excess moisture with kitchen paper to avoid too much liquid, or the meat won’t brown properly); turn the cubes so that they are brown on all sides.

Stir in the flour; add the marinade and peeled garlic cloves; leave to simmer for two hours.

Peel the mini onions, put them in a small saucepan with the butter and heat gently, simmer for 10 minutes; add the sugar; leave to simmer another 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add the mini onions to the stew along with the salt to taste and the mushrooms roughly chopped; leave to simmer for a further one hour.

Serve with plain boiled potatoes.

*Mary Roll-Vallanjon*
Stories from the main building of WHO

Not all WHO staff worked in an annex, and not all of the most interesting stories emanated from an annex, the main building holds its fair share of anecdotes. So, we now invite our readers to send in their stories about life and work in the WHO main building, to be published anonymously unless requested otherwise.

I have very much enjoyed the anecdotes from the old days in WHO’s annexes in the Quarterly News and I note that you are now requesting anecdotes from the main building. I have worked in the WHO main building, many of the annexes, a country office and even in the WHO/EPI outpost on the 11th floor of the ILO building. I am attaching a copy of a 1975 memorandum from personnel which was written about me before I even got into any building at all. I was recruited by the then Director CDS, who had met me in Nairobi and knew that my post there was coming to an end. However, it would seem that the HQ Personnel Department really did not want me! Recruiting a Dutch secretary was clearly not on their books! No one would write such a letter today! How times have changed. I knew nothing about this memo at the time and came and stayed for well over 30 years!

_Coby Sikkens_

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MEMORANDUM

From: Chief, Personnel
To: CDS
Attention: CDS Date: 12 June 1975

Our ref.

Subject: Miss J. W. Sikkens

Your ref.

We note that you have already approached Miss Sikkens regarding her possible assignment to the position of stenographer/secretary in the Expanded Programme on Immunization (Post No 1.2362, grade G.3).

May we draw your attention to our normal recruitment policy which is to recruit secretarial staff locally, it being understood that English mother tongue staff can be recruited from the UK or nearby, and Spanish staff from Spain.

Whilst it would seem that Miss Sikkens’ knowledge of English is good, her secretarial skills are not entirely satisfactory. She has not done shorthand for a long time, and judging from her file her typing is not very accurate. We doubt that she would have passed our test.

There is also some doubt that she will adjust to a junior position after holding supervisory and more responsible positions in the last four years.

If, in spite of these reservations, you still wish to maintain your selection, we will proceed with Miss Sikkens’ recruitment.
News from around the world

Meeting of the Global Council of Associations of Former WHO Staff Members, 9 September 2022

This was the fourth virtual meeting of all the AFSMs and the third meeting of the Global Council. The main role of the Council is to improve coordination among the associations in solving problems affecting former staff and thus provide them with better services wherever they are in the world. It is chaired by rotation among the associations and has no secretariat.

This time, our colleagues in the AFSM-Africa organized the meeting – they did a great job, and the meeting was ably chaired by Kalula Kalambay – see also AFSM-Africa’s comments in the Regional reports. The meeting was well attended by representatives (about 30) from all Regions and HQ.

Following opening remarks by the outgoing Chair – Hanaa Ghoneim from AFSM-EMR – Regional Director AFRO, Dr Matshidiso Moeti addressed the Council in person, pledging her support to and collaboration with the AFSM-Africa. Like the DG, Dr Moeti considers that former staff remain part of the WHO family.

Each Association gave an update on its activities during the past six months since the last meeting, and highlighted remaining challenges. Progress has been made in many areas, but more work remains to be done to strengthen collaboration with the WHO Administrations, including at country level, and the Staff Associations. As readers will have read from the October QNT 129, our focal point for Scandinavia – Jill Conway-Fell – has sadly passed away, and we thank Jenny Madsen for stepping in as acting focal point and for her successful efforts in promoting AFSM among former staff in Denmark. We have just learned with much pleasure that two former staff have agreed to become our contacts and set up an AFSM-EURO. We wish Melodie Karlson and Sharon Miller every success and thank Jenny for her support to them.

The participants received an update on the arrangements for the webinar on the Decade of Healthy Ageing – subsequently held on 6 October. We hope that many readers participated.

(See report on page 6)

Regarding Staff Health Insurance, a planned presentation on long-term care was postponed to the next meeting, in order to allow for time to discuss problems on the submission and processing of claims experienced by some retirees in the South-East Asian Region.

Other issues discussed include the functioning of the Global Council – to be further discussed at a future meeting; electronic mechanisms to share information among the AFSMs; and planned activities for WHO’s 75th anniversary in 2023.

The next meeting, scheduled for March 2023, will be hosted by the AFSM at HQ.

Sue Block Tyrrell and Jean-Paul Menu

Regional reports

AFSM-SEAR: Greetings from AFSM-SEAR. On 29 October AFSM-SEAR attended the UN Day Celebrations, organized by the UN Pensioners’ Association of India (UNPAI), held on the UNDP Lawns, Lodhi Estate. The celebrations were attended by the UN Resident Coordinator and other dignitaries. Many of our former WHO colleagues, who also are members of UNPAI, participated. It was like a family reunion with
many senior colleagues and former colleagues attending.

I had been invited by the President of UNPAI to make a presentation, unfortunately I could not be present, so my colleague Mr Ashok Mitra made the AFSM-SEAR presentation, he is also an Executive Committee member of the UNPAI. I was happy to learn that the presentation was well received, and hopefully heightened the profile of AFSM-SEAR.

The full text of the AFSM-SEAR presentation is available on page 33 of this Quarterly News (in English only, in the electronic edition only) for your information. It is set in a vibrant, cooperative tone, with a deep underlying message about former WHO staff involvement in UNPAI right from its inception.

We are very pleased to have made the presence of AFSM-SEAR known to such a wide audience, taking the occasion to emphasize the long collaboration between AFAM and UNPAI and the synergy that allows us to support and advise former colleagues on their welfare and common interests. We shall continue with renewed strength the close collaboration with UNPAI.

M.R. Kanaga Rajan (President, AFSM-SEAR)

AFSM-Africa: AFRO Retired but Not Tired: During the three months leading up to early September the major activity of AFSM-Africa has been the preparation and hosting of the 4th Meeting of the Global AFSMs and the 3rd Global Council, which was held on 9 September 2022, via Zoom. Sixteen members, representing the AFSMs of all six Regions, were present.

The meeting was opened by the WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr Tshidi Moeti, who in her welcome address gave an informative report on the health situation of the African continent, including the new health challenges, such as the Covid pandemic, which have exacerbated the existing ones such as Ebola, Monkeypox etc. She emphasized the need for mobilization and partnership of public and private actors on the continent, and also the collaboration with the Association of Former WHO staff, to meet these challenges.

Subsequently, the members of the Global Council examined the various points that could help improve the services offered to former staff and their families;

- **Collaboration with WHO:**
  The recognition of, and support to, the AFSMs by WHO headquarters, Regional Offices and Country Offices was seen as a priority to facilitate support to former staff and their families on pension and health insurance matters. Furthermore, it was deemed appropriate to create working groups on relevant topics such as the identification and follow-up of former staff, the celebration of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing, and providing technical expertise to the Decade where necessary, such as management tools (premises, IT support, documentation management, website management, development of membership cards, production of a directory of members at the national level) etc...

- **Collaboration with the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS):**
  The collaboration with FAFICS was considered essential for the follow-up of pension issues through
the appointment of representatives of retirees to FAFICS meetings. This will involve following up on issues of identification and monitoring of retirees at the country level. Other important points are the formal participation of AFSMs in pre-retirement seminars, training in the use of Digital Certificates of Entitlement (DCEs) and other support to retirees and families for the timely submission of CEs, including formalities to be completed in the event of death etc.

- **Actions on Staff Health Insurance issues:**
  Strengthening collaboration with the SHI offices remains a major concern for AFSM. The mechanisms for electing retiree representatives to health insurance management committees were discussed and explained. The difficulties associated with the new procedures for submitting claims should be better identified. The presentation project on long-term care, should be treated diligently, as well as the formalities in the event of death of retirees.

- **Other points discussed:**
  Among the other points covered were the need to,
  - continue the discussions on the proposal for a permanent AFSM representation in Geneva, independent of the AFSM-HQ, as proposed by AFSM-SEAR and supported by AFSM-PAHO/AMRO;
  - to celebrate the 75th anniversary of WHO by publishing a joint book combining contributions from each Region, which will ultimately serve as an educational tool for young international civil servants and also as a feedback mechanism for the Organization. This project proposed by AFSM-AFRICA had the support of AFSM-PAHO/AMRO and HQ.

*Kalula Kalambay* (AFSM-AFRICA Coordinator and current President of the AFSM Global Council)

*Solange Kouo Epa* (AFSM-AFRICA Secretary)

**AFSM-EMR: Walk the Talk, 10 October, Cairo:** The Association of Former Staff, Eastern Mediterranean Region was invited to participate in this activity organized by the Eastern Mediterranean Region as part of the 69th Regional Committee, held 10–13 October. The event took place in the children’s park opposite the Regional Office building.

Delegates to the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean took part in the Walk the Talk event. Led by senior health officials, the event kickstarted the session of the Regional Committee. A gentle stroll was then followed by more energetic kicking of footballs.

Guest of honour was Sir Magdy Yaccoub, prominent heart surgeon and founder of the Magdy Yaccoub Heart Foundation.

Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, Regional Director, in his opening address, emphasized that it is important that when we gather to discuss the health of people and of future generations our discussions must then be converted into action. We must Walk the Talk.

Dr Tedros, Director-General, reminded participants that health does not begin in hospitals and clinics but starts in our homes, streets, communities, schools, and workplaces. Health promotion and disease prevention should be every country and person’s priority. Dr Tedros also added that the upcoming World Cup, the first to be held in the Region, will inspire millions of fans to get up from their couch and become more active.
Young people participating in the event shared their own hopes for the future, echoing the slogan of this year’s Regional Committee “Together for a healthier and sustainable tomorrow”.

The President of AFSM-EMR (for these past few years) participated in the activity and met the Regional Director and the Director-General. She also met with active WHO staff with whom she had worked, younger in age but they all had real fun. Lot of memories and jokes were shared, photos were taken, some of them attached.

Upon his return to HQ, Dr Tedros, through Ms Shenaaz El-Halabi, Director of the DG’s Office, sent a wonderfully encouraging email to AFSM-EMR, “…Dr Tedros is very much impressed about your leadership as President of AFSM-EMR as well as the commitment of the members in maintaining a sense of belonging to the family of WHO. The enthusiasm of the members to stay in tune with the public health innovations and global efforts being led by WHO is also very encouraging. Please convey Dr Tedros best wishes in all facets to the entire members of AFSM-EMR”

**Hanaa Ghoneim**

From left to right: Dr Tedros, DG; Ms Hanaa Ghoneim, Ms Elena Panova, Resident Coordinator of UNDP, Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, RD.

Sir Magdy Yaccoub, Dr Naeema Al Gaseer WR Egypt (on the left, in the Walk the Talk t-shirt), and to the right a group of journalists.

Dr Tedros and Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, setting off on Walk the Talk, Cairo 2022.

Three generations of WHO/EMRO staff. Left to right: Rania Sultan, Travel (TRV)
Hanaa Ghoneim (now AFSM-EMR)
Randa El Saadany, Health Insurance (SHI).

The warm-up session.
AFSM-PAHO/AMRO: The Newsletter of September 2022 has been published, a full issue with articles of interest to all of us.

The Editorial was prepared by Hernán Rosenberg during a visit to Chile, his home country, just as the nation was holding a plebiscite on their new Constitution, which attracted a 90% turnout. It prompted Hernán to reflect on the low turnout/level of interest in AFSM-PAHO/AMRO affairs. This may sound familiar.

This is followed by the Health Insurance and Pension Update by Carol Collado. Under SHI news, Carol starts with information that Covid-19 cases are again on the rise, and that now we must also consider the monkeypox (now Mpox) outbreak. For those in the USA, Carol provides important news about the WHO-issued blue SHI card, and for those not in the USA she mentions the simpler claim form on SHI-online. Pension news carries a reminder about Certificates of Entitlement; despite the many previous messages, it still seems necessary to mention this.

Which Vaccines do Old Adults Need? reminds readers that in addition to the vaccines they received as children, they might want to consider, after consultation with their physicians, vaccines to protect them from the seasonal Flu, Shingles, Whooping Cough, Pneumococcal Disease, and of course the Corona Virus.

Keeping a Healthy Weight as You Age by Maria Teresa Cerqueira is an extremely useful read for those of us who struggle to maintain a healthy weight. It comprises four pages of good, sound advice and tips, written in plain language, without lecturing or fad diets.

Next, Jorge Prosperi presents Take Advantage of My Experience Since I Have a Lot to Offer. The author is not setting himself up as guru, but instead makes the plea, and expands on it, that more people should take advantage of the wisdom of their elders, as our parents and grandparents often advised us to do. Leading this into the Decade for Healthy Ageing he proffers the pearl, “We have wisdom, experience, and common sense. We are the ones who have produced the capital and everything that society has today”.

The Magic of Puno by Gloria Briceño recounts her story, from being hired by PAHO in 1976 to work in Peru, in the coastal town of Piura, with fine beaches and summer temperatures. She was soon transferred to Puno, cold and dry, at 3800 metres of altitude. She recounts with affection the colleagues, the peoples she served, and the incredible landscapes and customs of Puno. A fascinating story.

This is followed by a tribute to an exceptional “ordinary” man. Do you remember Bob? A touching story about the life of Bob Ridenour who, from 1984 to 2017 could turn his hand to any maintenance task in PAHO, and even to playing Santa Claus at holiday parties. Now retired from PAHO, but still working at 83, the Newsletter caught up with him.

The Newsletter continues with an article by Marilyn Rice (Editor-in-Chief), The Joy of Traveling with Old Friends recounting her long awaited return to Switzerland (further delayed during the Covid years) to hold reunions with many of her friends from this area and farther afield, and she describes her journey across the country illustrated with many photos of the beautiful mountain and lake scenes.

Yvette Holder continues with the sixth, and as amusing as always, instalment of her series, Musings of an Ageing Woman. Trust Yvette to make more of her peeves as entertaining as this.

Healthy Ageing Committee (HAC): News and Updates, by Martha Peláez. The article details the activities and collaboration undertaken by HAC to advance the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing.

An interesting and informative edition; we recommend that you access it online. The newsletters can be read in English at https://www.afsmpaho.com/newsletters and in Spanish at https://www.afsmpaho.com/newsletters-spanish

Keith Wynn
WHO Retirees’ Acting Representative in Scandinavia: It has been my honour to act as the WHO retirees’ representative since the death of Jill Conway-Fell. However, I am now proud to present two former EURO staff who are going to take on the task of creating an AFSM-EUR.

Please meet Melodie Karlson (former EURO staff member in HR and Documentation), and Sharon Miller (former EURO staff member in technical units) who both worked closely with me (Jenny Madsen former EURO staff member in technical units and the WHO European Region Staff Association – EURSA).

During their terms on the EURSA Staff Committee, Melodie served as a staff representative on the UN City Planning Committee and the Fitness Centre Committee.

Both Sharon and Melodie are committed to establishing an AFSM-EUR to support former staff in the European Region and we all wish them every success.

Jennifer Madsen

AFSM-Manila: 2022 – A Productive Year for AFSM-Manila. We actively participated in the Global AFSM Meetings hosted by AFSM-EMRO in March and the 4th Global AFSM Meeting hosted by AFSM-AFRICA on 9 September 2022.

AFSM-Manila welcomed the WHO/HQ initiative to engage and collaborate with the AFSMs in the launch of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030 with the Global Webinar. AFSM-Manila President (Dr Linda Milan) was one of three representatives of AFSMs in the Task Force created by WHO/HQ to plan this first ever joint event by WHO and the AFSMs. We welcome the UN Decade as this puts the spotlight on the oft forgotten but still very significant sector of the population – Older Persons.

A consultant with Healthy Ageing/Director, Healthy Environments and Populations (AGE/DHP) explored areas of collaboration which the WPRO Technical Office will be presenting. During the Global Webinar the DG addressed the retirees and former staff, and AFSM-Manila gave a presentation, “Former WHO/WPRO Staff Members: Life After WHO, In Pursuit of Health Ageing”. The presentation emphasized the nurturing and inspiring life of former WHO staff members after separation/retirement from WHO.

AFSM-Manila has also been an active partner and developed good working relations with AFICS Philippines. Mr Henry Cardenas represented the Association in the AFICS-Philippines delegation to the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) Meeting held in Vienna on 18–21 July 2022.
As an ex-officio member of the AFICS-Philippines Executive Committee, Linda Milan attended EXECOM Meetings and participated in initiatives and activities that are of common interest to members. Linda made a short presentation to introduce the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing at the 19 September EXECOM Meeting after which a number of collaborative activities was initiated including a series of short feature stories on retirees showcasing healthy/smart ageing. The series was launched on 1 October, International Day of Older Persons, also featuring Linda.

The work of the Association and challenges faced in supporting and addressing needs of former WHO staff members/retirees were raised at the highest level. On 29 September 2022, Linda Milan, paid a courtesy call on Deputy Director-General Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab, Officer-in-Charge/Regional Director (OIC/RD) for WHO/WPRO during which the collaboration between WHO and AFSMs on activities for the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing was discussed. She also briefed the DDG on the work and activities of the Association which the DDG appreciated very much, given that she too is retiring soon.

The limitations of AFSM-Manila are partly because it is not an official Regional Association, amendments to the Association’s Statutes were proposed and circulated to the Executive Committee members on 10 October 2022 for comments, additions before this is finalized.

As a former WPRO Director, a Senior Official and DOH Advisor, Linda Milan was invited to make a presentation at the DHP Division Meeting on 9 November 2022 as part of the Office’s pre-retreat activities which include discussions on WHO values, and Member States’ perspectives on WHO.

Linda Milan

On 25 October 2022, Dr Linda Milan had a private meeting with Dr Tedros, the DG, in Manila for the 73rd Session of the Regional Committee, again to discuss matters and concerns of retirees/former Staff Members and to thank the DG for recognizing, the value of, and looking after, the needs of former staff members.

AFSM-Manila is an active partner of AFICS Philippines, which sent a delegation to the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) Meeting held in Vienna on 18–21 July 2022. From left to right: Delia Barcelona, Thetis Mangahas, Lydia Ontal and Henry Cardenas representing AFSM-Manila.
**UNIAG — UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY GAMES — 2022**

47th UN Inter-Agency Games, held on 15–18 June 2022 in Copenhagen

The “UN Olympic Games” (UNIAG) happily resumed this year after a hiatus of two years due to the coronavirus pandemic. Despite the problems encountered by the late cancellation of the Games in 2020, the UN City valiantly agreed to again organize the Games at Copenhagen and to build on the 2020 planning in terms of locations for the different events and the mobilization of the different actors.

The Games continue to represent the largest annual reunion of the UN global community, with some 1,250 participants in an ever-increasing range of sport disciplines: athletics, swimming, badminton, football, tennis, volleyball, darts, chess, table tennis, golf, pétanque, etc. Participation of women is steadily increasing with 38% on this occasion.

WHO’s representation was respectable, with 43 participants but including IARC, UNAIDS, UNITAID and UNICC. I believe I was the only retiree participant. With few agencies able today to field a full team in any discipline, hybrid teams have become the norm. WHO was accordingly able to contribute to first place finishes in men’s athletics, badminton and basketball, and to third place finishes in darts, golf and women’s volleyball. Once again, I gathered various agency orphans for my chess team, but the result was to be expected.

It was not all smooth going. Perhaps because of the lack of annual continuity, but also because of the UN City’s relative inexperience in either participation in – or conduct of – the Games, difficulties arose with the clash of dates with other major events taking place in Copenhagen, so that hotel rooms were hard to come by and expensive if found. Numerous participants had to find lodging in Malmö, Sweden, and commute back and forth by train each day. Poorly-worded notifications of the Games led to a flood of registrations before realization that participants had to cover their travel and accommodation costs.

Copenhagen is a fabulous city to visit, but an urban context does not really contribute to the “bonding” experience of the Games. Former Games in small towns of Austria and Italy have proved much more effective.

I was delighted to learn that the Staff Association wished to recognize the Games as part of its 70th anniversary celebration and had invited Dr Tedros to symbolically re-award medals to our successful competitors. This he did, with his usual grace, in September, in a physical and on-line session. I was also excited by his positive response to my suggestion that WHO consider hosting the Games in 2024.

UNIDO, Vienna, has been designated as the host for the 2023 Games, but we have as yet no information on their dates or probable location.

*Derrick Deane*
IN MEMORIAM

Recent deaths\(^1\) of former WHO staff members as reported to AFSM

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The deaths were also announced of the survivors of former staff members: Bustamante Ruth; Calheiros Celia Maria; Davila Gloria; De Freitas Cecilia; De Mosquera Corina Ma; Elneil Faiza; Gisladottir Sigrun; Godoy Margarita; Guyonnet Helen Winifred; Kapur Puja; Lakshmi Venkataraman M R; Matsiona Banata Christine; Parthasarathy Saroja; Paviot Suzanne; Roman Julia; Sankaran Sukanya; Serrano Ligia Velez; Sow Aissatou; Weber Marguerite.

\(^1\) The present notification of deaths was gratefully received from UNJSPF and covers Q3 2022. We have endeavoured to ensure that deaths already published have not been repeated in this list, however we apologize in advance if there are omissions or repeat entries. The editorial policy is to publish, once only, the names on the list of death notices we receive, and this regardless of whether an obituary has already been published; appears in the current issue; or will appear in a future issue.
Tomas Allen, born 30 July 1958 in Roblin, Canada, died 9 September 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland

Tomas grew up in rural Manitoba, Canada, before taking degrees in Modern Languages at the University of Manitoba and in Library Science at McGill University. He specialized in medical librarianship and held positions at the University of Ottawa, the Ottawa Hospital System and Agriculture Canada before joining WHO headquarters in 2002.

At WHO, Tomas’s work in the library supported researchers across the Organization. He developed the Evidence Retrieval Support function and, more recently, the WHO Covid-19 Research Database. In 2021 the latter won the Choice Outstanding Academic Title award from the American Library Association, and it is currently being used as the template for a similar database focusing on monkeypox.

Tomas was passionate about making sure that people have access to the information they need in order to support the public health mission of WHO. This was true both inside the Organization itself, where he led training for WHO HQ employees and visiting researchers from all disciplines, and outside of it. He travelled to each of the WHO’s Regional Offices to conduct workshops on in-depth evidence retrieval to support the production of systematic reviews, and he was an active and beloved member of library organizations around the world. He was also at various times a member of the WHO Research Ethics Committee and its Guidelines Review Committee.

Tomas believed not only in what libraries could do, but also in what kind of spaces they could be. Colleagues remember his office as a meeting point, where ideas were exchanged and puzzles hashed out, and where children, visitors and retirees were always made to feel valued and welcome. Tomas was an innovator in how to use the library space where so many gathered: as a gallery for photography highlighting WHO’s mission; as a training centre; as a place to give interviews to the press.

Tomas’s kindness, generosity and enthusiasm for others touched all who came into contact with him. He will be greatly missed by his wife, Reva, his children Signy and Stefan, his mother Gladys and his brothers, Roy and Randy, as well as friends and colleagues all over the world.

Reva Gutnick

During my time at WHO producing the Organization’s publications I frequently needed to verify background material, and for this Tomas Allen was the “go-to” person in the WHO Library. No efforts were spared to help staff find the information they were seeking.

More recently, when I took over the production of the Quarterly News, it was my immense pleasure to meet Tomas again. This time when I was searching for copies of the very first issues of the long-running WHO periodicals, all of considerable age, and one or two of which even pre-dated WHO. Despite the tremendous demands from WHO staff, Tomas set-to on my behalf, and within a week or so had located the first or a very early copy of every periodical. He will be sorely missed by so many.

Keith Wynn
Elise Guilbert (née Elizabeth Beryl Johnson), born 24 November 1941 in Great Bentley, United Kingdom, died 21 October 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Elizabeth (Elise) grew up in various naval-ports in England (Brightlingsea, Kingston upon Hull, Preston, Dartford, London), her father being commander of HMS LST 3511 during the Second World War and then later of versions of these ships converted into ferry boats after the war.

Having come of age, she worked for two years for the Medici Society, a London company specializing in the reproduction of paintings. Recruited in the early 1960s by Ulrich Cross, she worked for 5 years for the judicial services of recently independent African countries, particularly in Cameroon. In her free time, she loved dancing, walking her dog, and horse-riding. From 1966, she was a secretary at the WHO Regional Office for Africa, then located in Brazzaville, in the People's Republic of Congo. It was there that she met her colleague and future husband, Jean-Jacques Guilbert, whom she married in 1969. They had a son, Patrick, in 1971.

Shortly after, they lived in South Pasadena, California, for a year, before they settled permanently in Geneva in July 1972, Jean-Jacques being employed at WHO headquarters until his retirement in 1988. Elise resumed her professional activities in the 1980s, initially at the office of the diplomatic representative of Iran in Geneva, then for twenty years, until her retirement in 2006, at the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which gave her the opportunity for frequent pleasure trips. On her retirement she acquired an Italian greyhound, and regularly took care of her granddaughters, all the time enjoying the peaceful life offered by Geneva.

Those who knew her remember her calm, her discretion, her professional commitment, her affability, and her kind smile.

Patrick Guilbert

Dilip Mahalanabis, born 12 November 1934 in Kishoreganj (now Dhaka, Bangladesh), died 16 October 2022 in Kolkatta, India

With sadness we report the death of Dr Dilip Mahalanabis, a former WHO staff member. With his passing the world has lost a pioneering public health physician. His contribution to the application of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) at the population level revolutionised the treatment of cholera and acute diarrhoeal diseases, saving thousands of lives, children in particular. Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT) remains the greatest contribution of the Indian subcontinent towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

He served in the Diarrhoeal Diseases Control Programme in WHO Geneva and prior to that in the cholera control programme of WHO and
worked in Afghanistan, Egypt and Yemen. He was also the Director of Clinical Research at the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh, (ICDDR,B).

He nurtured a generation of fine researchers who will continue to carry forward his brilliant legacy. Before his death he donated his life’s savings of 125,000 USD to the Institute of Child Health, Calcutta where he had first begun as a paediatrician.

AFSM-SEAR expresses its deep condolences on the passing away of a dear senior colleague, an international scientist and above all, a great humanitarian. Our prayers are for his soul to rest in eternal peace.

M.R. Kanaga Rajan

**SUBMISSION OF OBITUARIES**

**Editorial policy on the submission of obituaries.** As you know the Association publishes the obituaries of former WHO staff members in the Quarterly News. The Editorial Board reviews the obituaries received with a view to suitability for publication. Obituaries should not exceed 300 words and be submitted along with a good quality photo of the subject of the obituary. Unless it follows the wishes of the deceased or their family, consider not revealing the cause of death. The date and country of death are required, and the date of birth if known.

*The Editorial Board*

**ASTRONOMY**

**The skies for January–June 2023**

Watching the movements of the planets is a never-ending source of entertainment to stargazers. This year, Mars and Venus are the ones to follow.

You can always tell a planet from a star because it rarely twinkles, and each planet is distinctive. At the start of the year, Mars is very bright and noticeably reddish, and is high in the sky. Jupiter is also around, slightly cream-coloured, over to the west, but brilliant white Venus is hardly to be seen lower down in the west after sunset. As the year progresses Jupiter moves towards the Sun and Venus moves away from it, and at the start of March these two are less than a degree apart in the twilight sky, a spectacular sight.

Venus then rises higher and higher and becomes a brilliant “evening star”, but then starts to sink back into the western twilight and, by the end of June, Mars, by now much dimmer, has moved to join it as a speck of reddish light. Use binoculars and you will spot it, and also see the beautiful crescent shape of Venus as it moves between us and the Sun.

For more information about what is in the sky, go to the Society for Popular Astronomy’s website, www.popastro.com.

*Article kindly provided by the British Society for Popular Astronomy*
ART EXHIBITION IN ROME

Raoul Dufy, the painter of joy

Palazzo Cipolla, Rome
14 October 2022–26 February 2023

The halls of the Palazzo Cipolla are hosting the first major exhibition ever organized in Italy devoted to one of the masters of modern art: Raoul Dufy (Le Havre, 3 June 1877 – Forcalquier, 23 March 1953).

Dufy is a character who lived through the great changes of the end of the 19th century and then two world wars and their dreadful consequences. He commemorated the former and quickly forgot the latter by celebrating the happy events of his life with very colourful paintings. It is for this reason that he was known as the painter of joy. He travelled a lot in Italy, painting the places he loved. (Following this article we reproduce paintings of the ruins of Taormina Dufy made during his visits, and of one of his beloved Regattas, on display at the exhibition).

Author of monumental works such as La Fée Electricité (1937–1938) – one of the largest paintings in the world, with a total length of 6 meters, composed of 250 panels and commissioned by the “Compagnie parisienne de distribution d’électricité” which was exhibited in the Electricity Pavilion at the 1937 World Fair. Dufy was a great French painter, scenographer and draftsman during the early 1900s who, thanks to his ability to capture atmospheres, colours and intensity of light and transfer them to his canvases, becomes – without doubt – the painter of joy and light. He was born into a family who knew financial hardship; his father was an organist who transmitted his passion for music to Raoul, who cultivated it for the rest of his life, also depicting it in his works.

In 1891 following a family financial crisis, the young Raoul was forced to look for work in Le Havre.

In the extraordinarily stimulating artistic milieu of Paris, he became close to two masters of Impressionism, Monet and Pissarro, but then, in 1905, society’s indignation at Matisse’s avant-garde Fauvism movement awoke in him a modern and "cool" style which drew him closer to Matisse.

1903 was the year of his first participation in the Salon des Indépendants, where he exhibited until 1936. He was also accepted in the Salon d’Automne (exhibiting from 1906 until 1943).

His artistic endeavours continued uninterrupted and, from 1910, he broadened his activity in the field of decorative arts, successfully establishing himself in a wide variety of techniques, from wood engraving, to painting and graphic design, from ceramics to fabrics, from illustrations to scenography. His artistic activity, which did not stop until his death, allowed him to rediscover his luminous palette, on which he superimposed a vibrant and allusive graphic touch. Raoul Dufy's exhibition with more than 160 works including paintings, drawings, ceramics and fabrics from renowned French public and private collections — such as the Museum of Modern Art in Paris which houses one of the richest Dufy collections, and other important museums — recounts the life and work of an artist with an eye always turned towards modernity, imbued with a liveliness that he could adapt to all the decorative arts, contributing to changing the public's taste. Curated by Sophie Krebs, conservator of the patrimonial collection of the Paris Museum, the exhibition is a moving journey through the artist's favourite themes, where visual sensations are reduced to the very essence of reality, the use of composition, light and colour the emblematic elements that characterize his work.
Divided into 14 thematic sections, the exhibition recounts the entire artistic journey of this French painter, through multiple works that embrace various techniques in the different decades of the 20th century. From 1900 to the 1950s, Dufy was seeking new themes, because of the war and ill health that forced him to remain in the south of France. A digression that finds its motif in chromatic clashes, in the magic of this colour which becomes an essential element in the communication of emotions and moods.

An evolution which sees Dufy first pursuing impressionist tradition which germinated with Monet and which he took with him to his native city of Le Havre, and then with the Fauves who, grouped around Matisse, would react to “atmospheric” painting and to painting dominated by feelings.

In the paintings on display we can admire artistic variations that are typical of Dufy. Waves of inverted Vs, clouds and a world of shapes: bathers, birds, horses, landscapes inspired by both modernity and classicism.

Sensitive to the moods of his time, he is captivated by the spectator society, with its races, its regattas, at one and the same time elitist and populist displays, which he depicts with brio and vivacity. An artist in constant search of stimuli and experimentation, capable of making deeply committed but nevertheless apparently "light" art, whose avowed aim was, as the American author Gertrude Stein writes, to please. In these difficult times the exhibition succeeds in making this painter better known for having overcome extreme hardship with his immense love of life. A fine example to follow.

Laura Ciaffei

Theatre in Taormina. Raoul Dufy. 1923
Raoul Dufy, the painter of joy

*Palazzo Cipolla*, Rome

14 October 2022–26 February 2023

Scilian landscape, Taormina. Raoul Dufy, 1923

The Regatta. Raoul Dufy. c.1908-1910
Brief Address by Mr M.R. Kanaga Rajan, President, AFSM/WHO.
(To be read out by Mr Ashok Mitra)

Dear Guest of Honour, Mr Sombhi Sharp,
Dear Chief Guest, Mr D.K. Bose,
Dear Heads of Offices,
UNPAI and dear AFSM/WHO members,

Greetings from the Association of Former WHO Staff Members.

It gives me great pleasure to participate in the celebration of the foundation of the United Nations, and commemorating the UN Charter which was signed on 24 October, way back in 1945.

We, in the World Health Organization, are proud partners, stakeholders, and flesh and bone of the United Nations, as its specialized agency charged with Health and Health-related matters globally. UN Day celebrated every year, thus, offers the opportunity to amplify our common agenda and reaffirm the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, as well as the mandate of each Specialized Agency and Office as per their own Constitutions and in line with the common agreed goals.

We, in the Association and Former WHO Staff Members, are hence quite privileged and proud, as the part and parcel of the United Nations and as WHO retired staff members to join this auspicious occasion to not only commemorate the Day, but proudly recall our own contributions, albeit in various commensurate ways, towards the achievement of the common goals and ideals. I thank the UNPAI for providing us the opportunity and common ground for this.

On this occasion, I wish to mention that AFSM/WHO has all along been an active partner in the UN Pensioners Association’s activities. This may be not only due to the numerical strength of WHO retirees but also many of them also opting to become members of the UN Pensioners’ Association in addition to being that of AFSM. Thus, this adds value and further synergy to the common efforts of both the Organizations towards the welfare and wellbeing of our retiree colleagues.

UNPAI has had, and is having, a good representation of WHO pensioners not only as members, but also serving in the Executive Committee of the UN Pensioners Association. In fact, UNPAI had many founding members from WHO retirees and some of them even serving as President. They contribute usefully their time and efforts in pursuing UNPAI’s activities and goals, especially in helping and supporting our retiree colleagues in whatever way they needed us.
I am proud of the close cooperation and contact that exists between the President of the UNPAI and myself as the President of AFSM/WHO, and the respective EC members, which enable exchange of relevant information and resulting in early solutions of the problems and issues of the pensioners. Our excellent cooperation and work in the matter of the annual CE letter process and certification is a shining example, especially those pensioners whose disbursements are slated for suspension for non-receipt of CEs.

I also appreciate the openness, working together and the camaraderie that exists between UNPAI and AFSM/WHO, towards implementation and fulfillment of common actions and goals, which is the welfare and well-being of UN as well as WHO pensioners. The close cooperation, liaison with individual office-bearers as well as the synergy that is achieved as a result, are excellent and important towards the benefit of retirees.

On this occasion, I would like to place on record, our gratefulness and appreciation to UNPAI and its office-bearers for this and continuing cooperation and collaboration.

I wish all the members of the pensioners and their families a delightful, healthy and enjoyable life.

Thank you.