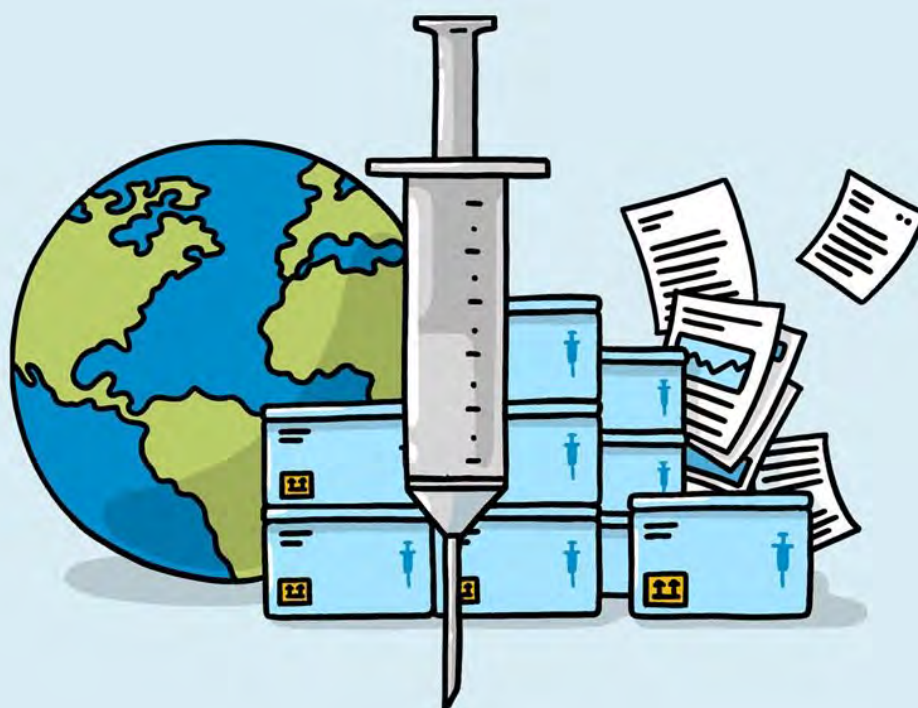




QUARTERLY News

The magazine of the Association of Former WHO Staff Members (AFSM)

Supporting former staff and helping them to stay in touch and informed



As the flu season approaches for many of us, thoughts will turn to getting vaccinated. The WHO web pages "*Vaccines Explained*" present a series of articles describing how vaccines work, are developed and distributed, and how their safety is monitored.

<https://www.who.int/teams/immunization-vaccines-and-biologicals/diseases/explainers>

AFSM SOCIAL EVENTS**Photos of the AFSM lunch held on 3 September 2025**

The participants (in alphabetical order) at the lunch were: Félie Bayenga Dupont, Robert Bos, Patricia Brice, Neda Damachi, Diana De Peic, Carolyn Doucelin, Monique Eid, Howard Engers, Richard Helmer, Helena Mbele Mbong, Geneviève Mermin Martinez, Norman Sartorius, Coby Sikkens, Elsa Vitry.



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EDITORIAL

Our thanks to the many members who have already agreed to read the *Quarterly News* online from now on. The Executive Committee decided to provide a printed copy of this issue to our more reluctant members. During the General Assembly on 6 October, we will seek approval for online reading of our magazine as the only option for those members who have access to e-mail.

To reduce the cost to WHO for printing and despatching this issue, the printed edition is somewhat shorter than usual, though it does contain all the important subjects covered. The online edition carries the full complement of articles.

The article about the *Health for All Film Festival* (HAFF) in the online edition highlights the crisis facing WHO. Despite being a worthwhile concept that promotes public health globally at minimum cost to WHO, the 2025 edition has been paused because of budget uncertainties. If you have any thoughts on how sponsorship of this project might be obtained, please contact Gilles Reboux, the HAFF concept designer and leader at rebouxg@who.int. He would be delighted to hear from you.

Keith Wynn

EDITORIAL BOARD

Keith Wynn, *Editor-in-Chief and layout*,
Sue Block Tyrrell,
Catherine d'Arcangues,
Barbara Fontaine, Lindsay Martinez,
JP 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
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We very gratefully acknowledge the invaluable support of the Printing, Distribution, and Mailing Services.

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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 in office L 3 is open, by appointment only, on Tuesdays, 10.00–12.00 and 14.00–16.00.

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/fr/contact-us/>. **Visitors: Geneva:** Palais des Nations, Client Support Centre, Building H, 1st floor, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, from 10:00 to 13:00. **New York:** 4th floor, 1 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza (DHP), Corner of 48th Street and 2nd Avenue, New York, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, from 12:00 to 16:00. **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/fr/contact-us/>. 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.

News from your Association

During the past three months, we have been following closely the efforts of the Director-General and his team to restructure WHO programmes following the decision of the President of the United States of America to withdraw from our Organization.

This restructuring has already resulted in the elimination of numerous positions at all levels. We can but regret this, however we believe it is our duty to contribute, in our modest way, to reducing expenditure.

In the previous issue, we explained at length the measures we are taking to limit the number of printed copies of this magazine, and subsequent postage costs, to an absolute minimum.

The Director-General addressed representatives of the seven associations of former WHO Staff at the 8th AFSM Global Council meeting, held on 16 June. He invited them to submit ideas to help WHO on a voluntary basis during this difficult time.

In this regard, you will find in the *News from the Global AFSMs* section (page 25) some very interesting initiatives developed by our colleagues at AFSM-EUR. We congratulate them on this, and we are also working on initiatives in Geneva.

Your ideas are welcome. For example, if you have expertise in organizing meetings, could you consider sharing this with WHO again? This is, of course, just one example. Let your imagination run wild and share your ideas with us.

We are also working to offer our Association's services to our serving colleagues whose positions will be abolished.

Finally, we are publishing an article about AFSMs activities in the October issue of *NewSpecial*, a magazine published by the WHO Staff Association and distributed to Headquarters staff, as well as many other organizations. As usual, the issue will be sent to you by e-mail.

Finally, we hope many of you will participate, in person or online, in our General Assembly on 6 October. Dr Tedros will open the meeting and brief us on the latest developments within the Organization.

The AFSM Executive Committee and the Editorial Board of the Quarterly News

PENSION NEWS

WHO Staff Pension Committee (SPC)

Each member organization of the UNJSPF houses a Staff Pension Committee (SPC) composed of the respective organization's tripartite representation to the Pension Board. In the case of WHO, this includes three Member State representatives and three alternates, three representatives of the Director-General and three alternates, three elected staff member representatives and three alternates, and two retiree representatives with observer status.

Important in the overall functioning of the UNJSPF, the SPC is responsible mainly for the award of disability benefits and for organising WHO's presence at the Pension Board and its input to the Board discussions. Its Secretariat is the organization-based Pension Office which provides the UNJSPF interface for serving staff at WHO, UNAIDS, UNICC, UNITAID, and IARC and is tasked with processing staff members' separation from the organization, notably for retirement but not exclusively.

At the annual WHO SPC meeting held on 10 June 2025, we learned from the SPC Secretariat's informative presentations that from 2020 to 2024, WHO Pension Fund participants (serving staff at the above listed agencies) increased from 10,183 to 11,400 worldwide, reflecting an 11% increase. During the same period, demographics shifted to an ageing population at these agencies with more than 78% of staff being older than 40 and a several fold increase in the 63+ category.

The WHO Pension Office processed a record number of 1000 separations in 2024 and in 2025. It anticipates again a large number of separations, mainly due to the UNAIDS downsizing impacting 60% of staff (200 to 300 separations) and the WHO reorganization and downsizing starting after the World Health Assembly. Staff with long-term

contracts may need to be reassigned while those who are 55 years and older will receive a package offer to terminate their employment. Many temporary contracts will not be renewed.

As a consequence of the downsizing across the UN system, the burning question on many lips was, and still is, if there are fewer staff paying in contributions, how will this affect the Pension Fund's ability to pay current and future pensions? The short answer is: no problem, according to one DG representative on the Pension Board.

Moreover, the actuarial studies confirm that reduced contributions combined with interest earned on the investments will cover pension payments for years to come without the need to touch the Fund's principal - its assets, its investments. A Member State representative added that a decrease in active staff will reduce future liabilities (i.e. benefit payments), meaning there would be fewer benefits to pay out. This realistic view of the Fund's solvability aligns nicely with the increasing investment portfolio value, now (at the time of writing) US\$ 103.1 billion.

Barbara Fontaine

FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS (FAFICS)

55th Council of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS)

After-service Health Insurance and Long-term Care

I attended the 55th session of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) Council which took place in Vienna from 14 to 18 July 2025 under the Presidency of Mr Jerry Barton. FAFICS is an entity which brings together Associations of retired International Civil Servants from the UN and the Specialized Agencies of the UN. There are currently 64 Member Associations of FAFICS, located in various parts of the world, with a total membership of about 20,000 retirees. The Federation provides a framework for promoting and defending the interests of former civil servants, most notably in pension and health insurance matters. Although some organizations like WHO have their own independent health insurance committees where retirees are represented with full voting rights, all benefit from the advocacy and actions of FAFICS to defend our common interests.

Apart from the usual statutory items on the agenda, the main topics of interest to us as former staff were the discussions on After-service Health Insurance and Long-term Care (ASHIL) and on UN Joint Staff Pension Fund matters. I will concentrate on ASHIL as the pension discussions focused mainly on the agenda items for the Pension Board session which took place the week after the FAFICS meeting, also in Vienna. The discussions at the Pension Board session will be reported on separately in due course.

I participated in the ASHIL sessions in my capacity as a member of the FAFICS Standing Committee on ASHIL (Committee) and I also had the honour of being invited as a panellist for the session which took place on the last day of the Council which was devoted to celebrating the 50th anniversary of FAFICS.

There were two sessions of ASHIL during the week. The first was an informal discussion on the first day of the Council when many member associations had the opportunity of raising issues of concern related to health insurance. This was very useful

for the Committee as it paved the way for the formal session on ASHIL which was programmed for Wednesday. It allowed the Committee to focus on matters of interest to the FAFICS member associations. At that same session the Chair of the Standing Committee, Jay Karia, reported on the Committee's work over the last twelve months as follows:

- Earlier this year, some of the key issues on which the Committee had focused its attention were brought to the attention of the FAFICS President who in turn wrote to the UN Secretary-General in his capacity as Chair of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). These included a recommendation that all organizations should be urged to have representatives of their former staff participate in their health insurance governance committees as full voting members and not merely as observers. We in WHO are fortunate to have full representation of former staff on both of our health insurance governance committees.

- Another crucial issue raised in the letter to the Secretary-General was the funding of the ASHI liability. It was recommended that all organizations should be urged to take measures to fund the liability so that former staff can rest assured that their health insurance remains viable over their lifetime. In WHO, the most recent actuarial study on our Staff Health Insurance (SHI) projected a level of funding of approximately 80%. Of course, this percentage is volatile as many variables are included in the projection. In addition, the recent financial crisis resulted in significant cuts in budgets which in turn have led to reduced staffing levels. All of this could somewhat affect the level of funding.
- Long-term Care (LTC) was another key topic for the Committee during the year. Having analysed global trends and the current LTC policies in UN system organizations, the Committee concluded that it would be unrealistic to envisage a UN-wide long-term care insurance at least in the short to medium term. The Committee therefore focused on advocating good and timely planning at the individual level. To assist in the planning process, the Committee had prepared guidelines which were distributed to all Associations. They will need to be adapted to suit the situation in individual countries. This will be the responsibility of individual associations at the country level.
- Another key aspect of the Committee's work focused on issues related to retired staff in Africa and other regions where medical evacuation is required when cases cannot be handled locally. The Committee had made some recommendations to the Council on how this problem might be tackled. The Committee will continue to work on this important matter over the coming twelve months.

Many other issues related to ASHI were also discussed. Some were not of direct relevance to the WHO SHI, for instance problems with third-party administrators (TPAs) frequently used for

claims' processing. Apart from SHI claims for North America, SHI claims are processed in-house by WHO so problems encountered with TPAs were not as relevant.

The Council approved the seven recommendations put forward by the Committee and these will guide its work over the coming twelve months.

It is worth noting that FAFICS works closely with FICSA (Federation of International Civil Servants) and other staff federations to advocate for health insurance matters.

The Panel on "*FAFICS: Achievements, Challenges and Opportunities*" (as part of the 50th anniversary of FAFICS celebration) was comprised of the following panellists:

Rosemarie McClean, Chief Executive, Pension Administration, UNJSPF

Pamela Agnone, President and CEO UNFCU

Ann Van Hulle, Member, FAFICS ASHIL Standing Committee

Michael Atchia, President, AFICS Mauritius

Wadzanai Garwe, President FICSA

Moderators: Deborah Landey, former Vice-President FAFICS and Maria Machicado, President AFICS Bolivia

Following a short presentation by each of the panellists focusing on their area of expertise related to FAFICS, there was an interesting discussion which addressed the questions received from the associations.

Other highlights of this event were the keynote speeches of Mr Jerry Barton, FAFICS President, Ms Chhaya Kapilashrami, Deputy Director-General and Director of the Division of Management, UNOV, and Former Secretary-General Mr Ban Ki-Moon (by video)

The Co-Chairs of the FAFICS Commemorative event, Mr Aye Win and Mr Jacques Daoust were congratulated for organizing such a memorable programme.

Ann Van Hulle

NEWS FROM WHO

Highlights of news from WHO

Governing Body meetings

78th World Health Assembly, 19–27 May 2025. This year's theme: *One World for Health*

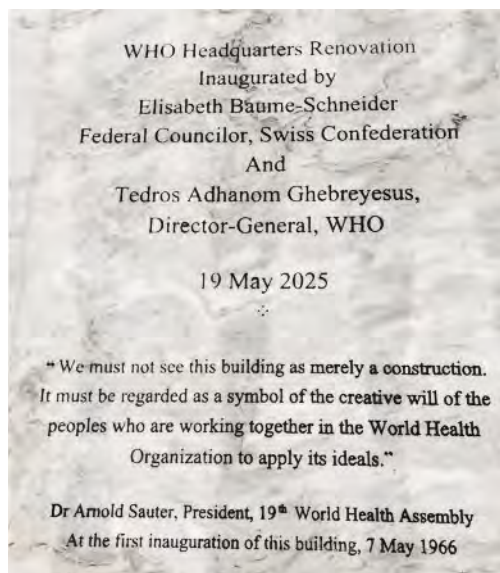
Dr Teodoro Herbosa, Secretary of Health of the Philippines was elected President of the Assembly. As mentioned in *Quarterly News no. 140* in July 2025, the 78th session was an important one in view of the funding cuts following the withdrawal of the United States of America. The AFSM, as previously, was given a name card at the back of the conference rooms and those of us who participated were pleased to note the positive atmosphere. There was no delegation from either the United States of America or Argentina. In contrast, the names of 187 delegates were shown in the list of participants for China.

The report of the Director-General to Member States on 19 May can be found here – <https://www.who.int/news-room/speeches/item/report-of-the-director-general-to-member-states-at-the-seventy-eighth-world-health-assembly-19-may-2025>.



AFSM's reserved place at the WHA provided a full view of the Assembly. Here Dr Herbosa, the President of the Assembly, commences proceedings with the adoption of the Agenda.

Photo: Sue Block Tyrrell



In the afternoon of the 19th May 2025 a small inauguration ceremony was held to mark the completion of the renovation of the old main building, now officially known as Building A. Swiss Federal Councillor Elisabeth Baume-Schneider, Head of the Federal Department of Home Affairs, and Dr Tedros are pictured in front of "Brazil", where a commemorative plaque has been set into the marble floor.

Photo: Sue Block Tyrrell

At the close of the first day of the Assembly, in the presence of Swiss Federal Councillor Elisabeth Baume-Schneider, the President of the State Council of the Republic and Canton of Geneva Nathalie Fontanet, the President of the 78th World Health Assembly and other delegates, the renovated old main building (building A) was inaugurated. However, we have learned that staff moves back to the building have been postponed.



"Shape of Space" a sculpture in commemoration of Dr Andrija Stampar, Croatia, President of the First World Health Assembly.

Photo: Sue Block Tyrrell

A high-level session was held on 20 May. The DG's High-Level Welcome can be found here – <https://www.who.int/news-room/speeches/item/who-director-general-s-high-level-welcome-at-the-seventy-eighth-world-health-assembly---20-may-2025>. Speakers in the room included the President of Angola and Chairperson of the African Union; the Vice-Premier of the People's Republic of China; and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia who paid tribute to Dr Andrija Stampar, a founder of WHO and President of the First World Health Assembly – he later placed artwork entitled *"Shape of Space"* in front of the main building A. Other speakers with messages by video link were the President of France, the President of the Republic of South Africa, the Prime Minister of Thailand, the UN Secretary-General, the President of the Republic of the Philippines, the President of Peru, the President of the Republic of Senegal and the President of Mongolia. Dr Margaret Chan was present in the conference room.

The two main highlights of the Assembly were the landmark adoptions of ***the first global agreement to make the world safer***

from future pandemics (<https://www.who.int/news/item/20-05-2025-world-health-assembly-adopts-historic-pandemic-agreement-to-make-the-world-more-equitable-and-safer-from-future-pandemics>) ***and an increase in financial support to the World Health Organization***

(<https://www.who.int/news/item/20-05-2025-in-historic-move--who-member-states-approve-20--funding-increase-and-2026-27-budget>). In his statement on 30 May, the Director-General remarked that Member States had demonstrated their commitment to WHO and to multilateral action to protect and promote public health *"WHO and many of our Member States and health partners are facing various challenges but the World Health Assembly has sent a clear message: countries want a strong WHO and are committed to working together with WHO to build a healthier, safer and fairer world. These were strong votes of confidence in WHO at this critical time."*

The Pandemic Agreement sets out a range of measures to prevent pandemics and strengthen health system resilience, including through improving the rapid sharing of pathogens; ensuring fair, equitable and timely access to vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics; and strengthening technology transfer, financing and supply chains. However, adoption of the Pandemic Agreement is not the end of the journey, as Member States must negotiate the annex on pathogen access and benefit sharing for adoption at an upcoming Health Assembly. Then the next step would be for 60 countries to ratify the agreement, including the annex, before it enters into force as an instrument of international law.

Dr Tedros stressed that *"the Pandemic Agreement will not infringe on national sovereignty, period. And the Pandemic Agreement does not give WHO any powers, period."*

WHO's job is to make recommendations to governments, but what governments do with those recommendations is entirely up to them. WHO is not even a party to the Agreement. This is an agreement between sovereign nations, and it will be ratified and implemented by sovereign nations that choose to do so. The intentional distortion of the Pandemic Agreement as ceding power to WHO must stop."



A view of the Assembly during the debates, from the number of country cards being held aloft it was a hot topic.

Photo: Sue Block Tyrrell

The other major outcome of the Assembly was the approval of WHO's 2026–2027 Programme Budget of USD 4.2 billion based on a 21% reduction from the original proposed budget of USD 5.3 billion under WHO's Fourteenth General Programme of Work and WHO's strategy for global health for 2025–2028. The approved budget includes the next 20% increase in assessed contributions, adding USD 90 million in fully predictable and flexible funds to WHO's income each year. In 2022, Member States had agreed to increase assessed contributions progressively to 50% of the Organization's base budget, from just 16% at the time. WHO also held a pledging event at which Member States and philanthropic donors committed at least USD 210 million in additional funding to the WHO Investment Round.

Many other resolutions were adopted, including/on:

- A new target to halve the health impacts of air pollution by 2040
- A new global strategy for traditional medicine
- Lung and kidney health
- For a lead-free future
- Digital health
- Guinea worm disease
- Health financing
- The health and care workforce
- Medical imaging
- Nursing and midwifery
- Rare diseases
- Sensory impairment
- Skin diseases
- Social connection
- Science-driven norms and standards for health policy and implementation.

The request from Indonesia for reassignment from the South-East Asian Region of WHO to the Western Pacific Region was endorsed by the World Health Assembly.

Details of the six public health champions who received awards at the Assembly can be found at – <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/six-public-health-champions-celebrated-at-the-seventy-eighth-world-health-assembly>.

157th session of the Executive Board, 28–29 May

Mr Blair Comley, Secretary, Department of Health and Aged Care, Australia, was elected as Chair. The Director-General's opening remarks can be found at – <https://www.who.int/news-room/speeches/item/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-157th-session-of-the-executive-board--28-may-2025>.



The Board addressed the outcomes of the World Health Assembly, WHO governance reform, and nominated Professor Mohamed Yakub Janabi from the United Republic of Tanzania as Regional Director for the African Region for five years from 30 June 2025.

28 May 2025. The Executive Board appointed Professor Mohamed Yakub Janabi as Regional Director of WHO African Region. Pictured here being congratulated by Dr Tedros.

Photo: ©WHO

A selection of other News from WHO

- Following the USA withdrawal and the consequent funding cuts, the prioritization and realignment process continues at headquarters and in each Regional Office where decisions on structure, and mapping and matching of staff are being taken.
- On 14 June, an *Open letter* in support of WHO was published in *The Lancet* on behalf of the 479 WHO Collaborating Centres' signatories concerning the abrupt cessation of global health funding which has placed millions of lives at risk. Read the article at, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(25\)01174-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(25)01174-2/fulltext))

On the technical side

- Regarding **disease elimination as a public health problem**: for **trachoma** – on 19 May both **Mauritania** and **Papua New Guinea** were validated, **Burundi** followed on 11 July, and then **Senegal** on 15 July; for **malaria** – on 30 June **Suriname** became the first country in the Amazon region to receive malaria-free certification from WHO, followed by **Timor-Leste** on 24 July; and for **human African trypanosomiasis** elimination **Kenya** received certification on 8 August.
- On 24 May, **WHO and the African Union Commission renewed their longstanding strategic partnership** with the signing of an updated Memorandum of Understanding to reaffirm their joint commitment to **advancing health security, universal health coverage, and sustainable development across the African continent** – <https://www.who.int/news/item/24-05-2025-world-health-organization-and-african-union-renew-strategic-partnership-to-drive-impact-and-strengthen-health-systems-in-africa>
- On 29 May, **WHO, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Koch Institute** announced the expansion of their successful **Health Security Partnership to Strengthen Disease Surveillance in Africa** to seven countries on the continent.
- On 30 May, on **World No Tobacco Day**, **WHO launched a new information sheet** and called on governments to urgently **ban all flavours in tobacco and nicotine products**, including cigarettes, pouches, hookahs and e-cigarettes, **to protect youth from addiction and disease**. <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/information-sheet--flavour-accessories-in-tobacco-products-enhance-attractiveness-and-appeal>. Flavours like menthol, bubble gum and cotton candy are masking the harshness of tobacco and nicotine products turning toxic products into youth-friendly bait. On 23 June, at the **World Conference on Tobacco Control held in Dublin**, WHO released its report on **Global Tobacco Epidemic 2025**, warning that **action is needed** to maintain and accelerate progress in tobacco control as rising industry interference challenges tobacco policies and control efforts. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240112063>
- On 5 June, WHO released new recommendations for **clinical management and infection prevention and control for mpox** which remained a public health emergency of international concern.*
- On 10 June, the **WHO Global initiative on health equity for persons with disabilities** was launched. **Over 1.3 billion people have a disability** worldwide, with many experiencing health inequities such as **earlier deaths and higher disease risks** arising from unfair and avoidable conditions within and beyond the health system. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health>



* On 5 September WHO announced that mpox was no longer a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

- On 13 June, the **Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation** signed a new agreement with WHO and **provided a contribution of €5.25 million to support key WHO initiatives.**
- 15 June is **World Awareness Day on the Abuse of Older Adults.** 1 in 6 people aged 60 years and above have experienced some form of abuse in the past year. The link provides more information on **WHO's work in tackling abuse of older adults.** https://www.who.int/health-topics/abuse-of-older-people#tab=tab_1
- On 17 June, the **WHO Hub in Berlin** published its latest **annual report.** <https://www.who.int/news/item/17-06-2025-the-who-hub-in-berlin-driving-innovation-to-make-the-world-safer-from-health-threats>
- On 25 June, **WHO concluded its participation in a 36-hour nuclear emergency exercise organized by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).** The exercise was part of the



IAEA's Level 3 Convention Exercise (ConvEx-3), the highest and most complex level of its emergency exercises. These **large-scale exercises are conducted every 3–5 years to test emergency preparedness and response capacities and identify areas in need of improvement.** The exercise involved more than 75 countries and 10 international organizations and was based on a simulated accident at a nuclear power plant in Romania, resulting in the release of significant amounts of radioactive material. **Participating countries and organizations exchanged information in real time,** assessed evolving risks, coordinated communications, and decided on appropriate protective actions, including the medical response.

- On 27 June, the **WHO Scientific Advisory Group for the Origins of Novel Pathogens (SAGO),** a panel of 27 independent, international, multidisciplinary experts, **published its report on the origins of SARS-CoV-2,** the virus responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic, <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/independent-assessment-of-the-origins-of-sars-cov-2-from-the-scientific-advisory-group-for-the-origins-of-novel-pathogens/>. **SAGO has advanced the understanding of the origins of COVID-19,** but as they say in their report, much of the **information needed to evaluate fully all hypotheses has not been provided.**
- On 30 June, following the adoption of the **first-ever World Health Assembly resolution on social connection** in May 2025, https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB156/B156_8-en.pdf, the **WHO Commission on Social Connection** <https://www.who.int/groups/commission-on-social-connection> **released its global report** <https://www.who.int/groups/commission-on-social-connection/report> – the first of its kind –



which presents the latest available evidence on **the scale and causes of loneliness and social isolation, their impacts on health, quality of life and economies,** as well as key recommendations for individuals, communities and governments.

- From 1–3 July, **WHO and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** jointly hosted a global consultation **marking the 10th anniversary of the Make Listening Safe Initiative** – a milestone in the fight against hearing loss caused by unsafe listening practices. <https://www.who.int/activities/making-listening-safe>

- On 2 July, **WHO launched a major new initiative urging countries to raise real prices on tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks by at least 50% by 2035** through health taxes in a move designed to curb chronic diseases and generate critical public revenue. **The “3 by 35” Initiative** comes at a time when health systems are under enormous strain from rising noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), shrinking development aid and growing public debt. <https://www.who.int/initiatives/3-by-35>



The consumption of tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks are fuelling the epidemic of NCDs, including heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, which account for over 75% of all deaths worldwide. **A recent report shows that a one-time 50% price increase on these products could prevent 50 million premature deaths over the next 50 years.**

- The first meeting of the **Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG)** on the **WHO Pandemic Agreement** in hybrid format was held on 9–10 July. Tasks of the IGWG include drafting and



negotiating an annex to the **WHO Pandemic Agreement on the Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing (PABS)** system to enable **safe, transparent and accountable access** and benefit-sharing for PABS materials and sequence information.

<https://www.who.int/news/item/10-07-2025-who-member-states-hold-first-meeting--agree-on-next-steps-to-take-forward-key-elements-of-the-who-pandemic-agreement>

- On 10 July, **WHO formally recognized the pivotal role of a number of heads of state and government in securing the adoption of the WHO Pandemic Agreement** by the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly in May 2025.

https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA78/A78_R1-en.pdf. At a special event at

Headquarters **plaques were presented to the representatives of two countries whose former and current presidents, His Excellency Sebastián Piñera, former President of Chile, and His Excellency Kais Saied, President of Tunisia, advocated for the Agreement from the outset. Countries whose current or former presidents or prime ministers were also recognized include Albania, Costa Rica, Croatia, Fiji, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.**

- On 11 July, a joint WHO – International Telecommunication Union – World Intellectual Property Organization technical brief was launched at the **AI for Good Global Summit 2025** held in Geneva: **mapping the application of artificial intelligence in traditional medicine.**

<https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2025/07/11/default-calendar/launch-of-a-joint-who-itu-wipo-technical-brief-at-the-ai-for-good-global-summit-2025--mapping-the-application-of-artificial-intelligence-in-traditional-medicine>

- From 14–23 July, WHO participated in the **High-Level Political Forum 2025** held in New York under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. The theme of the Forum was **“Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind.”**

More information is available at,

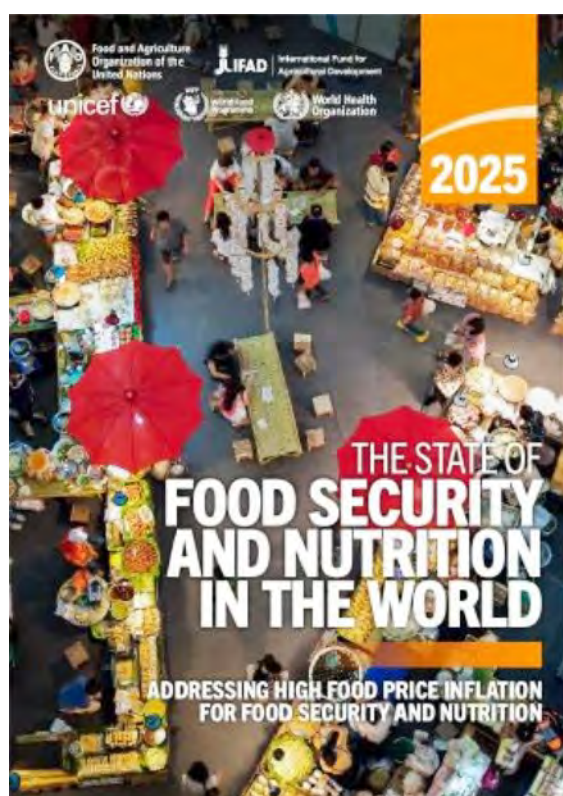
<https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2025/07/14/default->

[calendar/who-at-the-high-level-political-forum-2025](#). A virtual side event was held on 15 July to celebrate **20 years of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**.

- On 24 July, **WHO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** jointly released a landmark **report on contaminated medicines, urging action to protect patients from preventable harm**.

[https://www.who.int/news/item/24-07-2025-who-and-unodc-release-landmark-report-on-contaminated-medicines--urging-action-to-protect-patients-from-preventable-harm#:~:text=The%20World%20Health%20Organization%20\(WHO,health%20of%20countless%20patients%2C%20predominantly](https://www.who.int/news/item/24-07-2025-who-and-unodc-release-landmark-report-on-contaminated-medicines--urging-action-to-protect-patients-from-preventable-harm#:~:text=The%20World%20Health%20Organization%20(WHO,health%20of%20countless%20patients%2C%20predominantly)

- On 28 July, **WHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, UNICEF and the World Food Programme** published this year's *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* (SOFI 2025) report which shows that **global hunger has declined but risen in Africa and Western Asia**. The report also examines the causes and consequences of recent food inflation. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e612e779-ec47-44c2-a3e0-499569c3422d/content>



- On 7 August, WHO designated **Health Canada; the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare/Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency of Japan; and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency of the United Kingdom as WHO-Listed Authorities (WLAs)**, a status granted to national authorities that meet the highest international regulatory standards for medical products. <https://www.who.int/news/item/07-08-2025-who-designates-new-who-listed-authorities--strengthening-global-access-to-quality-assured-medical-products/>

Regional Committee Meetings

- 25–27 August:** Lusaka, Zambia - **Regional Committee for Africa:** Seventy-fifth session
- 29 September – 3 October:** Washington D.C., United States of America - **Regional Committee for the Americas:** Seventy-seventh session
- 14–17 October:** Colombo, Sri Lanka - **Regional Committee for South-East Asia:** Seventy-eighth session
- 15–17 October:** Cairo, Egypt - **Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean:** Seventy-second session
- 20–24 October:** Nadi, Fiji - **Regional Committee for the Western Pacific:** Seventy-sixth session
- 28–30 October:** Copenhagen, Denmark - **Regional Committee for Europe:** Seventy-fifth session

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

Sue Block Tyrrell

READERS' RECIPES**Forgotten-vegetables recipe:****Parsnip and butternut squash gratin with ham** (Serves 4)**Ingredients**

1 kg parsnips
1 butternut squash
60 cl single cream
2 star aniseed pods
1 large piece of cooked ham
Salt and pepper

Recipe

Preheat the oven to 180 degrees (Gas mark 5).
Peel the parsnips with a vegetable peeler and cut them into 1 cm slices.
Cut the butternut squash in half lengthwise, remove the seeds and fibres, peel it and cut it into 1 cm thick slices.
Cut the ham into small cubes.
In a high-sided gratin dish, alternate slices of parsnip and butternut squash until the dish is full.
Sprinkle with diced ham and star aniseed, cover with cream, and season with salt and pepper.
Bake for 40 minutes and serve immediately.

Michèle Evans

IN MEMORIAM

Recent deaths¹ of former WHO staff members as reported to AFSM

Adomako	Martin Sarpong	16 May 25	Jimmy	Monday Udoh	06 May 25
Appleton	Caesar Edward	08 Apr 25	Kozinski	Juliusz	03 Oct 23
Arevshatian	Leva A	11 Mar 25	Luelsdorff	Margarita Rid	01 Aug 23
Bartlewski	Justus	21 Mar 25	Mabwire	Emmanuel	05 Mar 25
Belemgoabga	Paul Richard	26 Dec 24	Mapieta	Joseph	22 Mar 25
Belete	Negusie	08 Nov 21	Massala	Alphonse	21 Dec 21
Boko	Albert	12 Oct 24	Modabber	Farrokh	30 May 25
Brice	Max	06 Apr 25	Mokbel Genequand	Mirella G	20 Mar 25
Butu	Andreea	23 Jun 25	Moret	Andrée-Claude	13 May 25
Constandse	Robert P	10 Apr 25	Ossolo	Daniel	13 Apr 25
Cuboni	Giuseppe G O	16 Apr 25	Petroff	Serge A	16 May 25
Dhillon	Harwant Singh	07 May 25	Rubiano-Lisiewski	Clara Ines	19 Feb 25
Dorros	George L	06 Dec 24	Sobo	Abayoni O	14 Apr 25
D'Sa	Isabella	22 Mar 25	Solban	Flavie Nicolas	28 Mar 25
Evans	Maureen Carole	17 Jun 25	Traore	Adama	19 Apr 25
Gautreau	Huberte M	27 Mar 25	Valabregue	Nora A	19 May 25
Glele	Parfaite	26 Apr 24	Viedma	Christiane C	28 Mar 25
Glenn	Clark L	07 Apr 25	Wieniawski	Witold T	14 May 25
Grandin	Beniamino	22 Apr 25	Yates	Sylvia S	27 Mar 25
Ives	J	14 Feb 24			

The deaths were also announced of the survivors of former staff members: Badiane, Adama; Bassoumba Mboueya, Pauline; Brugada, Miguela Verdeflor; Chaman Lal, Vimla Devi; Chauhan, Rajani; Dagandan, Susie; De Silva, Indrani Kamala; Drame, Binta; El Tawil, Adlette; Gbary, Essis Esmel; Lambert, Laure; Leone De Magistris, Rodolfo; Lopez, Therese; Melloni, Leon Rene Joseph; Mora Bermeo, Mercedes; Okoro, Roseline; Ouattara, Tene; Paula, Zeni Berbat; Pou Howley, Helena Maria Soares; Pugay, Ester; Ramillano, Ruben; Rickman, Shirley Patricia; Thys, Anna Magdalena; Vaidya, Kamla; Venkatesan, Kalavathi; Vogel, Gisela; Walia, Aanya.

¹ The present notification of deaths was gratefully received from UNJSPF and covers Q2 2025. 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. List includes former staff of *IARC, **ICC, ***PAHO, ****UNAIDS, *****UNITAID.

**Farrokh Modabber, born 27 February 1940 in Rasht, Iran,
died 29 May 2025 in San Francisco, USA**



Dr Farrokh Modabber, a brilliant mind with a kind and playful heart. Farrokh, a pioneering Iranian-American immunologist and global leader in leishmaniasis research, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his wife and children, in his home in Point Richmond, San Francisco.

Born in Iran in 1940, he dedicated his life to advancing cellular immunology and developing vaccines for neglected tropical diseases.

After earning his PhD in Microbiology and Immunology from UCLA in 1968, he conducted groundbreaking research at Harvard Medical School under Professor Albert Hewett Coons, inventor of immunofluorescence technology. His early work on cellular receptors for antigens, published in *Science*, established him as a rising star in immunology.

Farrokh bridged global scientific communities with both intellect and warmth. He served as Associate Professor at Pahlavi University in Shiraz and later as Head of the Pathobiology Department at Tehran University School of Public Health, where he co-founded the influential Tehran/Harvard joint M.Sc. program in Immunology. As Director-General of the Pasteur Institute of Iran, he led international collaborations and expanded scientific infrastructure.

His most impactful contributions came during his 16-year tenure at the World Health Organization's Tropical Disease Research programme (TDR), where he championed research and training in leishmaniasis around the world. He established the first clinical trials for leishmaniasis vaccines and introduced live challenge protocols that transformed vaccine development. His work helped develop combination therapies that dramatically improved outcomes in resource-limited settings.

His legacy lives on not only in science, but in the joy, kindness, and boundless generosity he shared with everyone around him.

Farrokh lit up every room he entered, and if he saw you admiring his shirt, he might take it off and give it to you without a second thought.

He is survived by his loving wife, Marlies; sons Zia and wife Trish, Ramin and wife Monica; daughter Yalda and her husband Matthew, and son Nader; six grandchildren — Samantha, Josh, Benjamin, Isaac, Kian, and Manu — beloved nieces and nephews, and dear friends and colleagues across the globe.

A brilliant scientist, dedicated mentor, and tireless advocate for neglected diseases and global health equity, Farrokh's impact lives on through the many researchers he mentored and the countless patients worldwide whose lives were improved by his work.

Marlies Modabber

David Nabarro, born 26 August 1949 in London, United Kingdom, died 25 July 2025 in Ferney-Voltaire, France



Information from *The Guardian* newspaper states that “Aged 17, David was the subject of a 1967 BBC documentary on volunteering when he spent a year as organizer of Youth Action, leading a group of 400 volunteers in York, between leaving Oundle public school, Northamptonshire, and

going to Worcester College at Oxford University to study medicine. That experience – coordinating efforts for maximum impact – presaged a life in public service spent urging, cajoling and commanding others to work together.” Many of those of us who knew David would concur with these comments.

During his impressive career, David had many roles and wore many hats which reflected his expertise, energy and readiness to help across a wide range of sectors, including health, nutrition and climate change. Many of his numerous roles are shown below:

- 1982–1985: Lecturer in Nutrition and Public Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- 1985–1989: Senior Lecturer in Health Systems at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
- 1989–1990: Senior Health Adviser for East Africa, United Kingdom Overseas Development Administration (ODA)
- 1990–1997: Chief Health and Population Advisor, ODA
- 1997–1999: Director for Human Development, UK Department for International Development (DFID)
- In 1999 David moved into the UN system, initially at WHO in charge of Roll Back Malaria, and later as Executive Director in the Office of the Director-General
- 2002–2005: Special Representative of the Director-General for Health Action in Crises and, very fortunately, in 2003 David survived the bombing at the UN headquarters in Baghdad
- 2005–2014: UN System Senior Coordinator for Avian and Pandemic Influenza
- 2008–2014: UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Food Security and Nutrition
- 2011–2014: Coordinator of the Movement for Scaling Up Nutrition
- 2014–2015: Assistant Secretary-General, UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the West Africa Ebola Outbreak Response
- 2015: Appointed by the WHO Director-General as chair of the expert group on the reform of WHO’s work on outbreaks and emergencies
- 2016–2017: UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Climate Change
- 2017: David founded the Swiss-based social enterprise 4SD (Skills, Systems, and Synergies for Sustainable Development) Foundation of which he was the Strategic Director training and mentoring leaders for sustainable development
- 2018: Awarded the World Food Prize together with Lawrence Haddad for leadership on nutrition
- Since June 2018, David curated the Food Systems Dialogues as a contribution to the transformation of food systems and he was the first Coordinator of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement
- 2019: Co-Director and Chair of Global Health at the Institute of Global Health Innovation, Imperial College, London
- 2020: WHO Special Envoy on Covid-19
- 2023: Knighted by King Charles III for his contributions to global health

Several Executive Committee members have special memories of working with David. He was an amazing, dynamic, larger-than-life, and talented colleague. He had a charismatic personality and the ability to relate to everyone and make them feel important. He worked all hours and could juggle many balls in the air at the same time, e.g. listen to all the interventions at a meeting and concurrently weave them into a succinct summary on screen, or maintain two conversations at the same time with a mobile phone at each ear! When necessary, he called a spade, a spade, and he made many thought-provoking, out of the box, statements at meetings. He could also sum up all the discussions, find a compromise and propose a solution. David believed in health equity and was a good leader and brought people together.

Some of his comments remain in our minds, such as *“the core of the health sector is well-defined but*

its boundaries are nebulous” (when asked about the intersectoral dimensions of Roll Back Malaria); *“we need to develop a culture of standby”* (with regard to emergencies); and *“we must all become professional silo-breakers”* (at an Agriculture and Health conference in Delhi in 2011). The SHOC (Strategic Health Operations Centre) room at headquarters was used for the first time for coordination during the Tsunami by David and his team.

David remained so active all his life. His sudden and unexpected death at his home is a great loss to public health and to his family, colleagues and friends. He will be greatly missed. David is survived by his wife, five children and seven grandchildren.

AFSM Executive Committee members

Judith Alyson Munzinger, born 7 August 1939 in Solihull, United Kingdom, died 2 July 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland



Judith's early childhood was in wartime Britain. Although living in the countryside, the family did not escape the fears and insecurities of that time, since Solihull was a centre of armament manufacture. Her strength and resilience in later life may have

been nurtured in this environment.

At 18 Judith turned down a full university scholarship – a decision she later regretted – to see something of the world. In her early twenties, lust for adventure somewhat abated, she joined WHO. This was the start of a 30 year

illustrious career in which Judith's many skills led to increasingly responsible posts in administrative management, staff training, data processing, and her final post, of Management Officer in the office of Administrative Management and Evaluation. Judith was always closely involved in strengthening access to career promotion and conditions of work for women, a subject very close to her heart.

From the moment she stepped off the plane Judith fell in love with Geneva and Geneva loved her back. She met and married John Munzinger, and together they had three children. One died as a baby, and a son, Charles, died unexpectedly in his thirties. Judith would comment wryly that she had been unfortunate to lose two children, her very English way to describe this tragedy. When asked how she had coped with such pain she would comment that

you just had to get on with life. Happily, her much loved daughter Joëlle returned to Geneva to live with her three years before she died.

Judith retired early from WHO, very critical of management at that time. Later, a new administration, invited her to return at a higher post. She declined because she was enjoying a very happy retirement full of travel, bridge (a new love), entertainment, contributing to the work of the Holy Trinity Church and other good causes.

Judith's many friends loved her dearly and saddened by her loss, they packed the church at her funeral. They spoke of her poise, grace, intelligence, charm, culture, humour, kindness, generosity, friendship, efficiency, and organization. She was one of a kind and will be greatly missed.

Daphne Fresle

Bernadette Cownridge Rivett, born 11 August 1924 in London, UK, died 4 September 2025 in Ascot, UK



Bernadette was our 4th known centenarian and she passed away peacefully in the home where she lived at the grand age of 101 years and 3 weeks. An article to celebrate Bernadette's 100th birthday was published in *Quarterly News* 137 in October 2024. We

understand from colleagues in the UK who visited Bernadette that she was joining in with activities in the home until almost the very end.

Bernadette began her career at WHO headquarters in April 1955, providing secretarial support to the teams working in administrative management, finance and personnel, public health administration, dental health, health protection and promotion before becoming the Personal Assistant to Dr F. Grundy, Assistant Director-General in October 1963. In December 1975, Bernadette took on the role of Administrative Officer in staff development and training, before moving to the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific from mid-January 1980 to end July 1983 as Technical Officer in staff development and training. Judith Munzinger, whose obituary sadly

also appears in this edition of the *Quarterly News*, replaced Bernadette in staff development and training at headquarters in July 1980.

Bernadette retired on 1 August 1983 but returned as a Consultant for staff development and training workshops and activities between December 1983 and September 1989, most probably working with Judith. Bernadette retired to the UK and became a member of the British Association of Former UN Civil Servants (BAFUNCS) and she enjoyed attending many of their annual reunions

The photograph is taken from the 80th birthday party of Pat Brown in 2012, as is the photograph of Judith Munzinger on the previous page.

The HQ Communications Team posted on the global WHO intranet the congratulatory message for Bernadette on her 100th birthday. This was noticed by Jenny Chia in the Finance Unit at WPRO who kindly shared it with her retired friends and one of Bernadette's former secretaries Wilhelmina "Willie" Basa, and Willie was able to get in touch with Bernadette. Indeed, we are all one WHO family! Bernadette's colleagues in WPRO sorely missed her when she left and well remember how kind-hearted and generous she was and an excellent mentor.

Sue Block Tyrrell with input from **Jenny Chia** and **Wilhelmina Basa**

BAFUNCS BENEVOLENT FUND

AFSM members with a connection to the United Kingdom are eligible to enquire about financial assistance from BAFUNCS

Our colleagues at the **British Association of Former UN Civil Servants (BAFUNCS)** are most fortunate to have received generous bequests to set up a Benevolent Fund. BAFUNCS have kindly suggested that AFSM publicize this Benevolent Fund in the *Quarterly News*. The Fund is open to AFSM applicants with a connection to the UK. *The flyer below explains more.*

FINANCIAL HELP FOR FORMER UK/UN STAFF THROUGH THE BAFUNCS BENEVOLENT FUND

(Reg. Charity No 297524)



September 2025, UN Worldwide Retirees

The Benevolent Fund of the British Association of Former UN Civil Servants (BAFUNCS) has provided invaluable support for former UN employees and their dependents for almost forty years. Set up from generous bequests, the Fund offers financial assistance to anyone who has worked within the UN system, has a connection to the UK, and is in financial need, hardship or distress. Applicants are required to explain why the specific support requested cannot be met from other sources.

The Trustees meet at least quarterly to discuss applications and award either grants (one-off payments) or loans to qualifying beneficiaries.

Assistance falls broadly into the following categories:

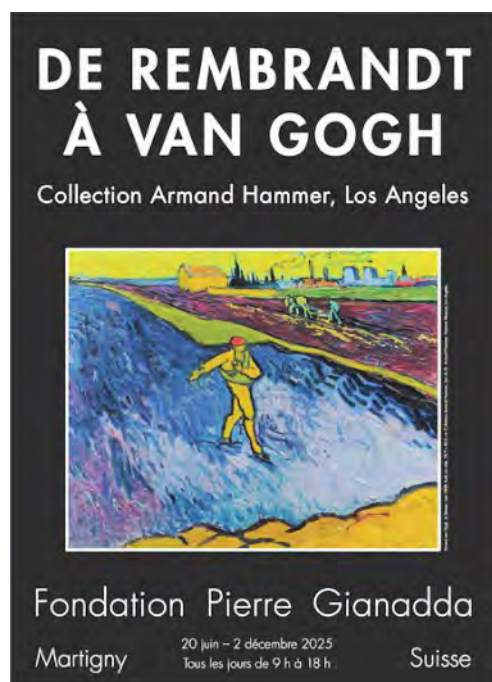
- A. Medical and surgical care.
- B. Respite care.
- C. Convalescence, including short-term home help.
- D. Disability aids: mobility equipment such as special wheelchairs, stair lifts, bathing hoists, specialised vision and hearing aids etc.
- E. Household aids for the ill, disabled or frail: "Bleep" warning systems; controlled entrance door locks, rising chairs and bed lifts, walk-in baths or showers.
- F. Assistance towards transport costs for hospital out-patient visits, or visits by family or a BAFUNCS member to a hospitalised patient.
- G. Convalescent visits to family and convalescent holidays.
- H. Loans or grants to meet short-term emergencies.
- I. Grants on compassionate grounds.

Recurrent claims are not awarded although second applications will be considered. Loans are interest-free, but to be repaid within one year.

For full details on the Fund, information on how to apply plus an application form, visit the Benevolent Fund's webpage: <https://bafuncs.org/bafuncs-benevolent-fund-bbf-rev>. Alternatively, candidates should email the Fund directly: benevolent.fund@bafuncs.org.

All applications are treated in strictest confidence.

ART EXHIBITION IN MARTIGNY, SWITZERLAND



From Rembrandt to Van Gogh

Armand Hammer Collection, Los Angeles

Pierre Gianadda Foundation, Martigny, Switzerland

20 June – 2 December 2025

Daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Fondation Pierre Gianadda
Rue du Forum 59
1920 Martigny
Switzerland

Phone: +41 (0) 27 722 39 78
Website: <http://www.gianadda.ch/>
E-mail: info@gianadda.ch
Tarifs: Seniors (60 +) : CHF 18 € 18

This autumn, the Gianadda Foundation in Martigny offers us the unique opportunity to view some of the magnificent paintings from the Armand Hammer Collection, on loan from the *Hammer Museum* at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). This collection, which brings together European works from the 16th to the 19th centuries, also includes works by Daumier, one of the greatest French satirists.

The Collection is normally exhibited at the Hammer Museum, built in Los Angeles in 1990 after the owner's death. Armand Hammer was an extraordinary man. He was born in New York in 1898 to a Russian mother and a first-generation Russian-American father. A physician, businessman, art lover, and gallery owner, he acquired his works from the best Parisian and New York gallerists. For Armand Hammer, his collection expresses "*an attempt to bring together some of the representations of the human condition, pleasures, and dreams,*" and he said, "*I feel a deep need to share with others the magnificent spectacle, the enthusiasm, and the joy that these works of art have given me.*" There are some forty works by famous painters that have crossed the Atlantic, some for the first time, with an impressive array of paintings ranging from Rembrandt to Van Gogh.

The great artists of French painting are brilliantly represented in this collection, works by Fragonard, Chardin, Corot, Boudin, Manet, Degas, Renoir, Monet, Sisley, Bonnard, Vuillard, along with many other artists, notably American. The broad spectrum and variety of the works presented bear witness to Armand Hammer's very personal quest and the nature of his tastes. Indeed, the collection spans four centuries, from the Renaissance to the beginning of the 20th century, with a predominance of French art, especially that of the 19th century.

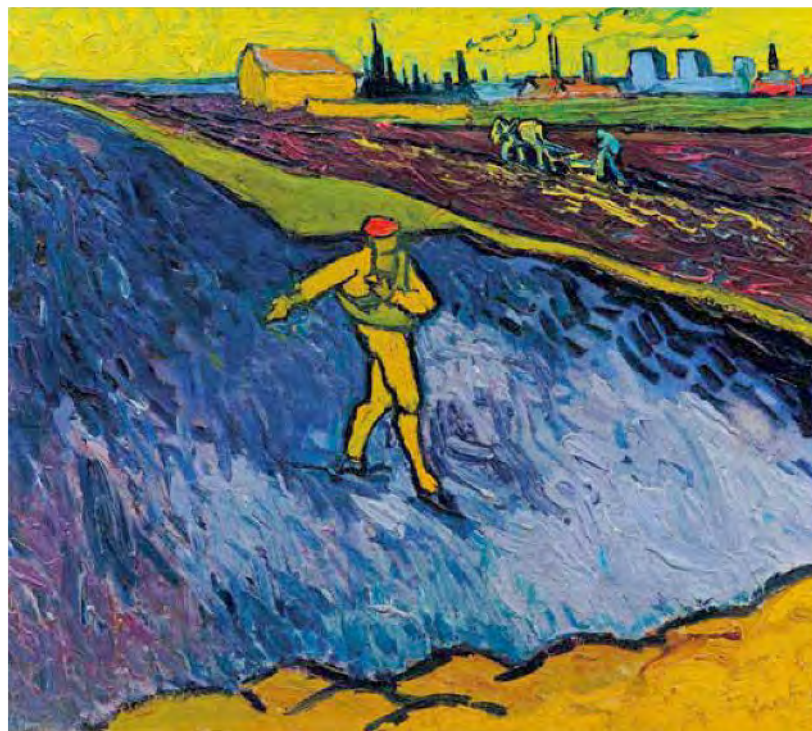
Remarkable American artists and old masters such as Titian (1488–1576), Rembrandt (1606–1659), Chardin (1699–1779), Fragonard (1732–1806) and Goya (1746–1828) complete the Collection. We must



Rembrandt van Rijn, *Juno*, between 1662 and 1665
 Oil on canvas, 127 × 123.8 cm
 Armand Hammer Collection, Hammer Museum, UCLA
 © Hammer Museum, Los Angeles

limit ourselves to mentioning only a few paintings in this breathtaking journey. Rembrandt's *Juno*. The Roman goddess Juno, wife of Jupiter, and protector of marriage, is painted majestically by Rembrandt, imposing, dressed and crowned in the manner of a 17th century Dutch princess, holding her sceptre, a symbol of her authority as queen of the gods and, in Rembrandt's time, a symbol of wealth (along with the peacock). This almost square, oil on canvas is dated around 1662–1665.

We continue with Van Gogh, whose admiration for Rembrandt's rendering of light is well known. In his painting *The Sower*, Van Gogh interprets Millet's eponymous painting. In action, a silhouette brushed with a dynamic and elliptical line sows, with a broad gesture, on a soil in blue tones drawn with energetic brushstrokes. The horizon is placed very high, with smoking chimneys that bear witness to industrialization, in contrast to the humility of the sower at one with his field.



Vincent Van Gogh, *The Sower*, circa 1888
 Armand Hammer Collection, Gift of the Armand Hammer Foundation
 © Hammer Museum, Los Angeles

The Foundation also presents a selection of works from the Daumier Collection and those of his contemporaries. This collection explores the major movements in Western art from the Renaissance to the early 20th century. All these works bear witness to their era, the social, economic, and political context, as well as the major innovations and discoveries, and thus help us better understand them.

Laura Ciaffei



Paul Gauguin, *Bonjour Monsieur Gauguin*, 1889,
The Armand Hammer Collection,
Gift of the Armand Hammer Foundation
© Hammer Museum, Los Angeles

NEWS FROM FORMER WHO STAFF MEMBERS' ASSOCIATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

News from the Global AFSMs

The DG's challenge to the AFSMs: How can we help the Organization?

AFSM-HQ: The 8th Global Council meeting was organized from Cairo on 16 June by our friend Hanaa Ghoneim, President of AFSM-EMR. It was devoted almost entirely to health insurance issues. But above all, Dr Tedros in his address issued us with a challenge: how can we help the Organization in these difficult times, and how can we continue the process of institutionalizing our associations?

Hanaa Ghoneim's report below provides a more detailed account of the Director-General's speech.

The seven associations, six regional and the Headquarters association, are currently preparing concrete proposals to be submitted to the Director-General in advance of the 9th Council meeting, to be held in Geneva on November 4th.

You can read the very interesting AFSM-EUR proposals presented in the report by Melodie Karlson, Sharon Miller, and Jenny Madsen, the Associations' coordinators.

Congratulations to our colleagues in Manila on the publication of the first issue of their magazine and a retirement guide.

Health insurance issues continue to be a central concern.

Jean-Paul Menu and Sue Block Tyrrell

Regional reports

AFSM-EMR: Values and Perseverance: The AFSM of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, together with the Regional Office of EMR, hosted the 8th Global Council of AFSMs on Monday 16 June.

The programme was short yet intense, and concentrated on important issues, mainly Health Insurance, the highlights of the WHA, and the initiative by EURO regarding institutionalization.

The Director-General, recognizing the role of former staff in the success of the Organization, was keen – despite his busy schedule – to attend the meeting virtually.

Dr Tedros shared with the former staff of the Global Council the highlights and results of the WHA, especially as it was considered to have been one of the most successful World Health Assemblies. The subjects he included were:

- The approval of the Pandemic Treaty
- Approval to increase the assessed contributions of the Organization, as this would allow WHO to have more flexible funding
- The present difficult time of the Organization
- The withdrawal of the US from WHO; the DG explained that he considered the reasons given by the US for their withdrawal are also the very same reasons that would make them remain as members. It is a lose-lose scenario
- The Organization is presently undergoing the biggest transformation in its history
- The new structure of WHO will align with the Regional and country levels

Dr Tedros informed us that there is a positive future for the Organization. He requested:

- to receive proposals from the former staff and their anticipated role to assist WHO
- how to institutionalize the Associations



Standing: please note the name order is from right to left:

Randa El Saadany, John Mikhail, Adham Ismail (DPM), Mohamed Nour, Christine Youssef (in black), Dina Osman (in red), Rita Meimari, Sonia Miskjian, Hala Rizk, Hoda Shenouda, Rania Sultan, Fatma Moussa.

Seated: please note the name order is from right to left: Nada Zahra, Nevine Fouad, Hala Sakr, Hanaa Ghoneim, Mervat Habib, Mary Ibrahim.



Please note the name order is from right to left:

Randa El Saadany, Nada Zahra, Nevine Fouad, Hala Rizk, Hanaa Ghoneim, Sussan Bassiri (BOS) in black and blue scarf, Sonia Miskjian, Mervat Habib, Mohamed Nour, Christine Youssef, Dina Osman, Hoda Shenouda.

Dr Tedros informed the meeting that he will support and assure the implementation of the recommendations and decisions when he receives them.

Dr H. Al Balkhy, Regional Director, welcomed the meeting. The RD commended the efforts made by AFSM-EMR and all the Associations especially regarding SHI and the Pensions of retirees. The RD also

honoured the legacy to strengthen the future of the Organization and the continued engagement with WHO.

Dr Al Balkhy also emphasised the importance of institutionalizing the Associations.

AFSM-EMR with the aim of underlining the concept of One WHO, organized a gathering, which took place on 12 August, where serving staff and former staff had the opportunity to get together. BOS and DPM assisted in organizing the gathering. *Photos of the gathering are shown on the previous page.*

This event was an opportunity to respond to queries of staff approaching retirement, to explain the Pension procedures and help them to choose the most suitable pension options. This was undertaken on an individual basis between the staff member and the President of AFSM.

In view of the success of this gathering it was agreed that such gatherings be repeated at the Regional Office.

Hanaa Ghoneim President AFSM-EMR



The June AFSM-EUR Monthly Meet-up included a guided tour of St Alban's Church in Copenhagen.

Back row, left to right: Melodie Karlson, Rosemary Bohr, Gill Nissen, Ellie Hald.

Front row, left to right: Karen Taksøe-Vester, Sharon Miller, Elena Nivaro, Christine Rosenberg, Jenny Madsen, Mary Stewart Burgher, Mavis Osei, Franka Edwards.

Association of Former Staff Members in the WHO European Region (AFSM-EUR): Our new official title; and a progress report.

In mid-August, three AFSM-EUR representatives (Mr Manfred Huber, Ms Melodie Karlson, Ms Sharon Miller) met with Ms Susan Ahrenst, Senior Executive Officer, Office of the Regional Director, and Ms Janina Ziesche, Operations Officer, Administrative Services and Conferences, to discuss potential opportunities for collaboration between AFSM-EUR and the Regional Office for Europe in Copenhagen. Talking points included:

- Meeting support to be provided by a volunteer pool of retirees,
- Educational outreach about WHO and its 75-year history of achievements to members of the public, including nursing students,
- Collaboration on technical projects involving retirees, for example, documenting experiences of ageing across Member States as a regional project for the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing, and
- Support from the Regional Office, including access to UN City meeting facilities, a webpage on the WHO/Europe public website, a link to the AFSM-EUR website on the WHO/Europe intranet, and possible inclusion on the exit form

submitted by staff at separation. Ms Ziesche, the focal point for all meeting-related requests from AFSM-EUR, will draft a proposal for a pilot project involving retiree volunteers to support a conference hosted by the Regional Office in November 2025.

AFSM-EUR continues to work closely with the regional Staff Association (EURSA), with a special focus on current reductions in active staff.

The AFSM-EUR website – its primary source of communication with former staff – is under construction.

In addition to the Monthly Meet-up for former staff on the first Wednesday of every month, plans are being made for the annual retirees' Christmas lunch.

Melodie Karlson, Sharon Miller, Jenny Madsen Coordinators AFSM-EUR

AFSM-PAHO/AMR: News from the Americas. As expected during the summer, local activities tend to take a well-deserved break. Factoring in the much-discussed level of uncertainties and the reduction in force of certain federal agencies, Washington has been quieter than usual this summer.

Many variables are still in the air, although the US Department of State did take action regarding the case of Cuban doctors deployed in Brazil and in other countries, facilitated by PAHO, classified however as human trafficking by the Department of State. The trial is not over but the visas of several Brazilians involved with the case (including a former PAHO/WHO staff member) were revoked. This action (which includes several other external cooperation items) will probably be questioned in court. But meanwhile it obviously affects PAHO's ability to function properly.

The White House has since announced that as a result of the PAHO involvement in the above, US\$ 45 million that was due to PAHO will not be paid.

AFSM has continued with its regular meetings. We are also hosting a meeting of the Association of Retirees of Associations of International Organizations (ARAIO). These include IMF, the World Bank and several Regional Banks, OAS, AFICS, OECD, etc. All Associations are facing uncertainty in these times. We will report after the meeting.

However, our AFSM mandate also extends to the Southern hemisphere, where it is winter and many activities are still taking place.

From the outset we made a point to include members living outside of Metropolitan Washington, or even outside of the USA, in our activities.

Several things have motivated this:

- Easier and cheap communications
- Many more members returning to their original countries or in places other than the USA, who do not find it easy or convenient to participate in the Association
- AFSM has become more involved in substantive issues of interest to our group, mainly healthy long life (healthy aging may be seen as having a negative connotation).

While we encourage countries to form local chapters, only one is effectively working. But we found that having a local Focal Point (FP) makes life easier for members, the WHO country office, and the Board.

Obviously, what works in one country may or may not work in another but can surely serve as inspiration. In that connection, I recount something our AFSM Focal Point (FP) in Chile has successfully launched. He discovered that some colleagues were unable to solve certain issues or even go to the WR for solutions. So, he began to visit them personally, and assist with forms, petitions, and the like. The interesting point is that some of those he assisted wanted to pay the FP for his services, which he naturally and correctly rejected. But our colleagues insisted. We found a “*Solomonic solution*”. The funds so collected will be kept in the country as a collective fund and used for activities for all former staff there. The PWR has been extremely helpful in the management of this, and the former staff are very happy with our solution.

Obviously not every country can or should do the same. But it is a very good example of how with very limited resources it is possible to have a big impact on the life of our less fortunate colleagues. That alone should be a source of satisfaction for all of us.

Hernán Rosenberg President AFSM-PAHO/AMR

AFSM-SEAR: I convey our greetings from New Delhi. We continue to provide support and services to our retiree colleagues, especially in matters of Pensions and SHI.

The new SHI Rules which came into effect as of July 2025 are welcome and reflect many of the issues taken up by AFSMs, e.g. vitamin supplements, removal of medical report requirements, etc. However, in this part of the world we are especially piqued that homeopathy medicines were removed from SHI reimbursements and we hope this decision will be revisited.

In his address and interaction with the Associations of Former Staff Members (AFSMs) during the recent virtual Global Council meeting, Dr Tedros mentioned that the Organization, in responding to the current challenges, has received approval from the World Health Assembly for a 50% increase in Assessed Contributions, and for the Pandemic Treaty. These measures were expected to provide the much-needed financial stability and strengthen the efforts of the Organization to move forward, converting the challenges into opportunities. The DG also outlined the rightsizing of the Organization structure and re-organization to respond to the financial situation.

Dr Tedros especially declared that the support of AFSMs and retired colleagues is very important to the Organization and requested our suggestions and ideas on ***how the Associations could support the Organization, as part of the family, in this difficult situation.***

Here, we are now thinking aloud and compiling a list of ideas/actions, and solid suggestions by our members on how they could offer, contribute and/or participate in support of the Organization in terms of their ample experience and rich resources of expertise and skills.

Together, we will get through this period, and we stand in solidarity with the Organization.

M.R. Kanaga Rajan President AFSM-SEAR

AFSM-WPR: An update. The excellent collaboration with the Regional Office continued, despite the challenges faced by WHO. During this time, AFSM-WPR contributed to the WHO Foundation for the ***One Dollar, One World campaign*** and finalized two important documents: the ***Retirement Guide*** and the maiden issue of the ***AFSM-WPR Newsletter***.

Advance copies of the *Retirement Guide* and the first issue of the *AFSM-WPR Newsletter* were officially presented to Mr Tamas Landes, Director, Administration and Finance (DAF), our focal point in the Region, on 11 September.

The *Retirement Guide* was received as a good initiative that would be helpful – not only to retirees – but also to soon-to-retire staff.

The first issue of the *AFSM-WPR Newsletter*, with an introductory message from the Regional Director would serve to “introduce” the AFSM-WPR and its mission among retirees. It is hoped that it will encourage non-members, and soon-to-retire staff to join AFSM.

Linda L. Milan President AFSM-WPR



Left: AFSM President Linda L. Milan (right) presenting copies of the two new AFSM-WPR publications, the *Retirement Guide* and the first issue of the *AFSM-WPR Newsletter* to Mr Tamas Landes, Director, Administration and Finance (DAF) and Mr Arpit Aggarwal, Budget and Finance Officer (left).

Below: a group of 10 members, each representing 10 of the ≈100 AFSM-WPR membership, following the US\$2-per-member contribution to the WHO Foundation, for the ***One Dollar, One World campaign***.

Seated, from left to right: Mr Francisco "Henry" Cardenas, Ms Ruth Macapagal, Mrs Marichu Cardenas, Lou Rodriguez, Ms Annie Nanos, Ms Thelma Ballat, and Linda L. Milan.

Standing, from left to right: Ms Ging Sampag, Ms Lydia Manuel, and Ms Edith Esguerra.





Association of Former WHO Staff
Members in the Western Pacific Region

ISSUE 1

September
2025

Newsletter

THE STORY OF OUR ASSOCIATION:

From vision to reality...



"We should respect the past... For, without the past and what those who came before us did, I wouldn't be where I am sitting today".

Dr Saia Ma'u Piukala
WHO Regional Director
for the Western Pacific


6 February 2024
AFSM/WPR Courtesy Call



"The MOU is a momentous step in acknowledging your experience and wisdom and harnessing your potential to contribute to our ongoing work".

Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab
Deputy Director-General and
acting WHO Regional Director
for the Western Pacific

16 November 2023
AFSM/WPR General Assembly



AFSM/WPR

RETIREMENT GUIDE

FOR RETIREES AND SOON-TO-RETIRE STAFF
IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGION

Note: The rules and procedures cited in this Guide are as of July 2025. For any subsequent information on any of the topics herein, please check the UNISPF website (www.unispf.org), the latest edition of the SHI Rules, and/or consult with HR or SHI.

*"To a safe and secure
RETIREMENT"*

AFSM-Africa: AFRO Retired but Not Tired: Highlights of news from AFSM-Africa – September 2025

The 5th General Assembly of AFSM-Africa will be held virtually in October 2025, in the presence of the new WHO/AFRO Regional Director, Dr Mohamed Yakub Janabi. This elective session will allow for the renewal of the Executive Committee.

In addition, the 75th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa took place in Lusaka, Zambia, from 25 to 27 August 2025. At the opening session, President Hakainde Hichilema honoured Dr Jean Kaseya and Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus with the Order of the Eagle of Zambia (3rd Division). Dr Janabi, in his inaugural address, highlighted the persistent challenges facing the region: high disease burden, economic vulnerability, climate impacts, conflict, and population displacement. Discussions focused on accelerating Universal Health Coverage, strengthening data systems, domestic investment, and accountability. Dr Janabi closed the meeting by reaffirming his commitment to supporting Member States. The 76th session will take place in Ethiopia in August 2026.

Two members of AFSM-Africa attended the 55th Session of FAFICS (14–18 July, Vienna). Discussions highlighted the need to increase African expertise within standing committees, simplify health insurance procedures, and ensure better protection for retirees, particularly through retirement planning and mandatory insurance for surviving spouses. The fund remains stable in the short and medium term, but challenges remain for future generations.

Finally, the French version of the collective publication "*Et si la Santé en Afrique m'était contée !*" (*And if Health in Africa were told to me!*) will be published in September. Furthermore, the strategic plan "*Ageing in Health*" has been finalized and will be adopted at the next General Assembly in early October.

Kalula Kalambay President AFSM-Africa

NEW MEMBERS

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

New Life Members

Marion Onesimo Agbayani
Clare Creo
Erlinda Cruz Junod
Pamela Drameh-Avognon
Edwige Gailhac
Catherine Michel-Baussay
Juan Pablo Peña Rosas
Veronica Riemer
Fabienne Sigalotti
João Paulo Toledo
Williamina Wilson

Conversions to Life Members

Caroline Allsopp-Leitner
Giory Niezen
Patricia Rosenfield

New Annual Members

Estrella Clerigo
Christian Gunneberg
Francis Moussy
Alyssa Palmquist
Latif Yektas

THE HEALTH FOR ALL FILM FESTIVAL (HAFF)

The #Film4Health global movement in times of an international public health crisis

My initial concept of the Health for All Film Festival (HAFF) (<https://www.who.int/initiatives/health-for-all-film-festival>) was presented to, and approved by, Dr Tedros in 2019. Over the next five editions of HAFF, WHO staff – with their network of partners – have assembled some 5000 short #Film4Health submissions from more than 110 countries.

The official selection comprises 330 short films in total. The feedback from WHO current and former staff – as well as health campaigners who submitted selected stories – is enthusiastic. I'm thrilled to see that HAFF has generated such a global movement, and still growing, for the health impact of film! (See *LinkedIn pages* <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9011296/>).

Some public health decision-makers may perceive a film festival as a non-essential cultural event, but HAFF's global movement is much more than that.

Is it a dream to hope that the process could become a core function for the promotion of global public health programmes? If so, my dream comes from the main goal of WHO's *Fourteenth General Programme of Work 2025–2028 (GPW14)* in which health promotion is a strong component. <https://www.who.int/about/general-programme-of-work/fourteenth>

We can all learn from the storytelling by health champions working in the field. They are the ones implementing actions which echo the WHO recommendations and UN's support for the health sector. The current crisis could destabilize the multilateral equitable power of the United Nations, that's why I believe that showing the connection of this global multilateral approach with the needs of individual actors and communities in the field becomes even more important than ever.



Melissa Fleming, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Global Communication, was on the HAFF prestigious jury, and summarized so well HAFF's contribution:

"Health is something that we all want, and health guidance is not easy to digest. So, stories have a unique power to educate and also to move us to create change, and films are a really powerful medium for storytelling because they have visuals and they have sounds and they can capture our imagination and broaden our horizons.

So that's why this initiative of the Health for all Film Festival is really innovative and important because it does highlight the real human stories on the front lines of the health impacts that people are experiencing all over the world."

https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/film-festival/jury_2023_archive.pdf?sfvrsn=74746651_8

HAFF's initiative has developed many screening events in various countries during which short films were commented in panel discussions by health specialists together with experts in storytelling: health promotion and health education come from such experts' comments on its catalogue.

(<https://www.who.int/initiatives/health-for-all-film-festival/films-health-impact>)

Several universities are already interested in HAFF's multidisciplinary scientific research on the health impact of film. Students would participate in this research project focusing on the 12–25 age group covering their concerns and behaviours regarding mental health, sexual health, and health

consequences of the climate change crisis. The potential future scientific results would contribute to the overall health promotion and education goals.

Therefore, many aspects of this initiative could benefit from your volunteer input as former WHO staff, depending on which component is of particular interest to you.

Numerous institutions and individuals have been in contact in 2025 to advise that their short film is ready! So, I hope that we will identify funds for the next edition of HAFF in 2026 so that its catalogue will continue to grow. WHO, nor any other public health institution, would ever have the internal capacity to produce such a variety of narrative styles and testimonies on health coming from a great diversity of amateur or professional film makers being champions of health!

Would you like to join, or continue supporting, this great shared global success in favour of HAFF?

With support this initiative will continue for many years to come, with an even stronger global movement despite the present huge international humanitarian funding crisis.

Gilles Reboux WHO staff member, and HAFF concept designer and leader.

To learn more and interact with the HAFF's global movement via LinkedIn or YouTube:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9011296/>

<https://www.who.int/initiatives/health-for-all-film-festival/films-health-impact>

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9S6xGsoqIBWS_JUFdjXpdvLL86R_8VQq