On 7 April 2023 – World Health Day – the World Health Organization observes its 75th anniversary. This anniversary year is an opportunity for the Organization to look back at public health successes that have improved the quality of life during the last seven decades, and to continue the journey to achieve Health For All, while motivating action to tackle the health challenges of today and tomorrow.
Looking back to 1948, when WHO was formed

Left: Dr Brock Chisholm (Canada), the first Director-General of the World Health Organization, from 1948 to 1953.


A series of enlargements of this photo are repeated on pages 37 to 42 in the digital edition. Please let us know if you recognize anyone.

The First World Health Assembly opened in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 24 June 1948, with 53 of the Organization’s 55 Member States represented, as well as 9 countries not yet members. In all, 261 persons attended, including observers from the United Nations and five Specialized Agencies. This First World Health Assembly – under its President, Dr Andrija Stampar of Yugoslavia – faced a task without precedent, as the Organization, working on new principles, had been given wider powers than any other agency previously working in the field of health.
EDITORIAL

You will notice from the front cover that WHO’s 75th Anniversary celebration is now under way, the 7th of April being the pivotal date on which our Organization was created in 1948.

In the Important Contacts section, under the Pensions (UNJSPF) heading, we draw attention to a change regarding personal visits to the UN offices, which are again possible in both New York and Geneva, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. However, in Geneva, the UNOG entrance nearest to the H Building, housing the Fund’s offices – the Pregny Gate – is closed for renovation until May 2023. In the meantime, any personal visits involve a lengthy walk in the UNOG campus. Readers who wish to contact the Fund can do so by phone, or wait until the Pregny Gate entrance reopens.

In the electronic edition of this issue, we reproduce enlarged parts of the group photo, shown opposite, of the assembled WHO staff taken in 1948. I have identified my first boss, Louis Porte (WHO staff member 1948 to 1976). Can you help identify any others of those staff members?

Keith Wynn

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. 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.

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: 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/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.
News from your Association

Following the election of our Executive Committee (see QNT 129 – October 2022), we held internal elections to complete our Bureau. None of the members felt that they had sufficient free time to assume the duties of the presidency. After lengthy deliberations in the Committee, it was decided to establish a co-presidency of three people and not to have vice-presidents.

The Bureau of the Committee 2022–2024 is therefore composed of,

- Sue Block Tyrrell, Co-President
- Jean-Paul Menu, Co-President
- Dev Ray, Co-President
- Anne Yamada, Treasurer
- Keith Wynn, Assistant Treasurer
- Michèle Evans, Administrator

The many remaining responsibilities have been divided up among the other members of the Committee. These co-presidencies are not provided for in the Statutes of the Association and will therefore be the subject of a proposal for revision at our next General Assembly, later this year.

We continue to hold our monthly meetings in a hybrid format, with some members attending in the WHO meeting room and others from home via Zoom. This arrangement seems satisfactory to us for the moment, allowing for more extensive participation. It would not have been possible without the generosity of WHO Conference Services. We thank them most sincerely.

The main building is still closed during renovations. In view of the office space situation, many staff continue to work from home and come into the office perhaps once or twice a week. The maximum daily capacity on campus is 60%. The books from the HQ Library remain in storage and the SHI Help Desk for retired staff remains suspended, as does the AFSM permanence.

If a retiree is invited for a meeting with a staff member, the latter needs to inform the security at the reception in the main building to enable the retiree to enter the buildings for the meeting. Proof of Covid vaccination is necessary.

We were honoured by the Director-General’s invitation for the Association to be represented at the WHO Global Management Meeting, held in Geneva from 5 to 9 December 2022. We report on this on the next page.

Finally, as you know, this year WHO is celebrating its 75th anniversary. We have discussed with the organizers of the planned events and all agreed to ensure the maximum participation and involvement of former staff. We will be in contact to keep you informed and ask for contributions and testimonials.

*The AFSM Executive Committee and the Editorial Board of the Quarterly News*
AFSM participation in the WHO Global Management Meeting

The AFSM was delighted to receive an invitation from the Director-General, through the President of the Staff Association, to be represented at the Global Management Meeting (GMM) held at headquarters from 5 to 9 December 2022. Two members of the AFSM Executive Committee shared attendance during the week. Regional Directors, other Regional Office staff and WHO Representatives from all over the world participated, in addition to the DG and other senior staff from headquarters – it was an impressive gathering. In his opening statement, the DG mentioned that the AFSM was represented at the meeting at his request, as we remain part of the WHO Family: he also referred to former staff helping to fill short-term vacancies and taking on the role of mentors.

The discussions were focused on key issues including dialogue on the global context and health: the lessons learned over the past five years since the last GMM held in Nairobi, Kenya; actions for the next five years across the three levels of the Organization including issues and opportunities; WHO’s role at the centre of the global health architecture, notably for health emergency preparedness and response; country-level partnerships; preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment; fostering accountability for results and impact; and agreement and commitment on the way forward.

From the discussions it became very clear, as said many times before, that countries must be at the centre of WHO’s work and the Organization’s country presence needs to be significantly strengthened. This requires a mindset change at all levels. Country offices must be:

- equipped with the financial and human resources required to match country needs
- enabled with capacity building and training
- empowered with more delegation of authority and the ability to create multi-sectoral partnerships
- engaged, with more participation in decision-making, bottom-up prioritization and enhanced visibility.

A team was immediately put together to develop a plan of action for a 100-day challenge. The DG will arrange a meeting after 50 days to evaluate progress and again at the end of the 100 days, after which he proposed a quarterly meeting to follow up on mid- and long-term priorities and to maintain momentum.

From the AFSM perspective, we met with many WHO Representatives (and PAHO/WHO Representatives) and Regional Office staff and discussed the AFSM Associations at HQ and in the Regional Offices, promoting our activities and encouraging collaboration with the Associations and with former staff resident in the countries of the respective (P)WR Offices. Everyone appreciated the efforts of our Associations and many staff with whom we talked already collaborate with former staff in the countries. Events to be organized to celebrate WHO’s 75th anniversary this year represent an excellent opportunity for inviting former staff as part of the WHO Family.

Ann Van Hulle-Colbert and Sue Block Tyrrell

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1 To which the AFSM was also invited and two representatives attended
AFSM encourages you to vote for the Representatives of retirees on the SHI Committees

The process for the election of the Representatives of retirees in the two Management Committees of our Health Insurance (SHI) has started and all retirees affiliated to SHI have been informed by a message and a note in the SHI Newsletter of January 2023.

It is important to vote. More votes, more credibility for the elected representatives.

For your information, the current elected retirees until 31 August 2023 are the following:

**SHI Global Oversight Committee (SHI/GOC):** Ann Van Hulle-Colbert and Thierry Lambrechts (members)

**SHI Global Standing Committee (SHI/GSC):** Marjory Dam and Jean-Paul Menu (members), Carol Collado and Françoise Hery-Persin (alternates)

The SHI Secretariat asked us to insert the following announcement in our Quarterly News.

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**MESSAGE FROM THE SHI SECRETARIAT**

*Have your say in 2023!*  

**The Staff Health Insurance is governed by two Committees:**

1. **The SHI Global Oversight Committee (SHI/GOC)** which oversees the SHI and advises the Director-General on SHI management and operations and meets usually twice a year; and

2. **The SHI Global Standing Committee (SHI/GSC)** which decides on cases referred to it in accordance with the SHI Rules and recommends to the SHI/GOC any proposed amendments to the SHI Rules and practices of the SHI. This committee meets once a month.

**Every 4 years, the SHI Secretariat carries out an election for members and alternate members for these Committees from the retiree insured population at large who are participants in the After-Service-Health-Insurance (ASHI).**

The mandate of the current elected representatives ends on 31 August 2023 and in a few months, retired paying members will be receiving:

1. **A Call for candidates,** with a deadline* to submit candidacies: any former staff member participating in the ASHI on the date of this communication may stand for election.

2. **A Call for voting,** with a deadline to submit your votes, including the profiles of the candidates who have put their names forward and a voting form to submit your votes to us.

*For this upcoming election, the election process will be changing to a new hybrid format managed both online (by email) and by paper (letters), for those who do not have an email address.*

**We hope this new format will be more practical for you to submit your votes and we highly encourage you to – have your say!**

**The SHI Secretariat**

*The Call for candidates has already been sent out, with a deadline of 18:00 Geneva time on 18 April 2023*
PENSION FUND UPDATE

Highlights from the 2022 Pension Board meetings

The UNJSPF Board convened three times in 2022. Two virtual short sessions were held early in the year, namely, in February and in April, while the main session, the 72nd to date, was held from 25 to 29 July. The more substantive summer session covered the usual wide array of topics pertaining to the oversight and optimal administrative, financial and investment management of the Fund. What differed this year, however, and subsequent to the implementation of governance reform, is that physical attendance is now restricted to the 33 Board participants, the four General Assembly alternates, FAFICS representatives, and the senior management of the Fund. All others who previously attended Board meetings in person, such as alternates and Staff Pension Committee secretaries, now attend on line. The other main differences with former sessions are that all participants, virtual and physical, must now sign confidentiality and conflict of interest forms before even accessing the meeting documents and the new Ethics Advisor keeps disruptive behaviour at bay, something that had tarnished Board meetings from 2017 until 2020.

Investments

As at 31 December 2021, the Fund held investments in more than 90 countries. The largest concentration of investments was in the United States of America at 66%, followed by China with 4.11%, Japan with 3.48% and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with 3.25%. On a regional level, 67.82% of Fund investments were in North America, 12.15% in Europe and 10.35% in Asia and the Pacific. The investments generated an income of USD 10.1 billion in 2021 as compared to the 2020 earnings of USD 9.53 billion. Subsequent to the market slump in March 2020 when the Fund’s investment portfolio decreased to USD 63 billion, the portfolio then recovered well and by end 2021, had a market value of USD 91.5 billion – an all-time high – with a three-year annualized nominal return of 14.76%, outperforming the benchmark return of 14.74%. The Fund was well above the 3.5% annual rate of return for the 1-, 3-, 10- and 50-year periods, this being the most important criterion for the Fund’s longevity.

The Chair of the Investments Committee commented that the world was experiencing an economic slowdown, high inflation, and supply chain constraints. These economic factors along with geopolitical uncertainty have direly affected financial markets, causing unusually higher-than-normal volatility and a reduction in asset prices.

The volatility of global financial markets is affecting all of us, but none more so than the Fund’s investment management team. We do not make light of the situation; we appreciate their efforts in treading a difficult path through the ups and downs of the markets.
All these have had direct bearing on the Fund’s portfolio value. At the time of the July Board meeting, the value of the assets was down to USD 80.2 billion with a further decline to USD 77.9 billion by the end of December 2022, and then rising up to the current position of USD 81.1 billion (January 2023). This translates into a 10.9% decrease currently from the all-time high of USD 91.5 billion but nonetheless an increase of 28.5% from the March 2020 value. Further, the Chair noted that despite the 13% decrease in value by June 2022, the Fund managed to earn a 3.5% real rate of return over the long-term period. During these turbulent market times, the Investments Committee met monthly with the investment management. The Chair added that the Fund remained extremely strong and that the management team is a very capable, focused group that understands the current market challenges.

Taking a long-term perspective in considering that the 1990 value of the Fund was USD 9.1 billion, the 2000 value was USD 23.9, the 2010 value USD 41.4 billion, and the 2020 value was USD 81.5, it becomes apparent that the Fund’s value continues to grow in spite of highly volatile markets. For this author, the steady growth over 50 years demonstrates solid investment management, particularly over the last three challenging years. The Board noted that the conservative positioning taken by the investment management to increase cash on hand and to reduce exposure to public equities and emerging markets relative to the strategic asset allocation has served the Fund well in comparison with its peers’ performance. All this bodes well for the Fund’s ability to meet its payments, inter alia, our pensions, well into the future. This is also what attracts new organisations wanting to join the UNJSPF.

The request to extend the two-year trial period of using derivatives as a risk management tool (see QNT 125 for details) was tabled and subsequently approved by the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/77/L.14) for another year.

**Actuarial matters**

Every two years, an actuarial valuation is conducted using different sets of actuarial assumptions to assess whether future assets will be sufficient to cover future pension liabilities which are mainly the monthly beneficiary payments. The most recent actuarial valuation undertaken by the Consulting Actuary as of 31 December 2021 showed a surplus of 2.3% of pensionable remuneration and a funded ratio of 117%, thus demonstrating that the Fund remained fully funded and in a sound financial position, as had been the case for the last 16 valuations. A ‘stress test’ analysis was also carried out to see the impact of a lower market value of, i.e. USD 79 billion, as opposed to the then current value of USD 91.5 billion. The funding ratio then became 113%, which was nonetheless higher than the December 2019 ratio of 107.1%. The good performance of the Fund was attributed by the Actuaries to the investment management’s adherence to long-term strategic goals and the tactical decisions to realize profits and build a sizeable position in cash amounting to 6% of the portfolio. These have helped to protect the portfolio against the most recent market turmoil.

The Committee of Actuaries noted that the actuarial projections indicated that, if the investments earned the annual real rate of return of 3.5% over the long-term, the Fund would remain adequately funded during the 50-year projection period. Contributions plus investment return would continue to cover benefit payments and other expenses throughout the period. However, in light of the current macro-economic and geopolitical dynamics, the Committee of Actuaries concluded that meeting the 3.5% rate of return on the short-term could be challenging but acknowledged that the 3.5% rate was a long-term assumption and that there could be significant short-term variations along the way.
The Actuaries also pointed out that retirees and other beneficiaries are living longer, which also increases the number of requests for client services, and that the long-term cost of the two-track benefit system continued to be monitored and any necessary changes would be brought to the Board's attention.

**Governance Issues**

At its February 2022 meeting, the Board established a Plan Review Group tasked to undertake a comprehensive review of the UNJSPF Plan Design and to make recommendations for the simplification of the UNJSPF Regulations, Rules and Pension Adjustment System. The Group’s work includes establishing a document library, holding discussions with the Consulting Actuary, and reviewing and prioritizing proposals submitted by staff pension committees and others.

The Board discussed the first report of the Ethics Adviser and, concluding that ethics issues are important for the Board's well-functioning, renewed the adviser’s one-year contract.

**Administration and Operations**

The *Emergency Fund*, created 20 years ago to assist recipients of small pensions when faced with temporary hardships, provided emergency funding in 2021 to 28 beneficiaries for a total amount of USD 52,234. Most of these requests were to help with funeral or medical expenditures, with a few cases requesting relief for major natural disasters. More on the Emergency Fund can be found at the UNJSPF website – [https://www.unjspf.org/for-clients/emergency-fund/](https://www.unjspf.org/for-clients/emergency-fund/)

By the end of 2021, the number of *Fund participants* increased from 134,632 to 137,261, a 1.9% increase, and the number of *beneficiaries* increased by 2.4% from 80,346 to 82,332. Those in receipt of benefits include: 55,846 retirees, 13,569 widows/widowers, 10,048 children, 1,927 disability recipients, and 33 secondary dependants. Benefits are paid to individuals in some 190 countries.

The total annual pension benefit payments are approximately USD 3.0 billion, paid in 17 different currencies. About half of all beneficiaries officially reside in just 10 countries, with the other half spread across more than 180 countries and territories.

Benefit payments and other expenses amounted to USD 3.1 billion, exceeding contributions by USD 6.5 million.

In recent years, there was a decline in the number of beneficiaries requesting two-track benefits, in part due to the strengthening of the dollar. During the period, 262 new disability benefits were awarded. A total of 340 deaths in service were reported, representing an annual mortality rate of 1.25 per 1,000, an increase from the 0.62 per 1,000 from the previous period. The average age of death in service was 52.

Subsequent to the July Board meeting, the Fifth Committee approved the Fund’s 2023 *budget* estimate of USD 126,336,000 and the amount of USD 8,707,100 chargeable to the United Nations directly for Fund services provided to the United Nations Staff Pension Committee. Also approved were amendments to the Pension Fund Regulations allowing the restoration of all or partial contributory service in the case of deferred retirement benefits, and to allow the use of electronic forms which would carry the same authority as instructions, requests and appeals submitted in writing.

On the operational side, more than 90% of initial separation cases are processed within 15 business days. The cost-of-living adjustment for the dollar track applied as at 1 April 2022 was the highest since 1980. The Fund’s call centre in Valencia, Spain, was experiencing higher workloads than in previous years, and a range of options, including the possible expansion of call centre services to 24 hours/five working days a week, were being considered to address the situation.
The Pension Administration priorities include addressing increasing client service needs and transforming the Fund secretariat into a digital and data-driven organization. More than 11,500 digital certificates of entitlement were received in 2022 and 11 e-learning modules on various aspects of the Fund were launched in May 2022 for Fund clients. FAFICS (retirees’ representative to the Board) stressed the need to continue to provide “human” services, given that at least 25% of the retiree population did not have email.

In 2021, there were critical banking disruptions in Afghanistan, Mali and the Russian Federation affecting benefit payments. The Fund reacted promptly, securing alternative payment channels through the United Nations Treasury to minimize financial hardship to retirees and beneficiaries.

As it stands, the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund is well-managed and positioned to provide timely benefits payments for decades to come.

*Barbara Fontaine*

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**IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM THE PENSION FUND**

**Participants, Retirees and Beneficiaries: please use newly barcoded UNJSPF forms**

21 November 2022

The Fund has just updated all its forms to include a barcode. The new forms are available on our website [https://www.unjspf.org/resources/forms/](https://www.unjspf.org/resources/forms/) and inside your Member Self-Service account (those also come pre-completed with your name, UID, retirement and pension number as the case may be). Please use the new barcoded forms to speed up the processing of your requests.

These newly barcoded forms are compliant with the new scanning and automated signature verification system of the Fund, which will increase productivity and efficiency of the form processing.

Additionally, to expand the set of proof signature reference documents, two additional signature forms have been created:

- S1 – Participant Signature Specimen Form
- S2 – Guardian Signature Specimen Form

You can use these forms to register your signature with the Fund. Participants should use Form S1 prior to completing their payment instructions form. Guardians should use Form S2 once appointed. Having a signature on file with the Fund may reduce the time necessary to process benefit payments.

Source:
Irritable bowel syndrome

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) or functional colopathy, for a long time considered a diagnosis of exclusion in the absence of organic damage, is now recognized as a disorder in its own right that affects the gastrointestinal tract.

Symptoms

It is a chronic disease. Its symptoms are cramps, abdominal pain, bloating, gas, diarrhoea or constipation, or an alternation of the two.

These disorders are usually mild and can be controlled with proper diet, lifestyle, and stress management.

More serious symptoms can be treated with medication and medical advice.

IBS does not cause changes in the intestinal tissues and does not increase the risk of colorectal cancer; it is a purely functional disorder.

However, a doctor should be consulted if there is a persistent change in bowel habits or the appearance of new symptoms that could indicate a more serious condition, such as colon cancer:

• Weight loss
• Nocturnal diarrhoea
• Rectal bleeding
• Anaemia due to iron deficiency
• Unexplained vomiting
• Pain not relieved by passing gas or stools.

The muscles of the intestine move food from the stomach to the rectum by contracting and relaxing in a gentle rhythm that pushes the food forward. But sometimes the muscles of the intestine present spasms, with longer and stronger contractions. These spasms are painful and disturb the movement of food in the intestines: if they slow down the movement of food, we speak of constipation; if they accelerate it, it is diarrhoea. It is not uncommon for the two to alternate.
In people with IBS, the sensitivity of the nerve endings in the digestive tract is increased. Small gas bubbles, that people without IBS wouldn't notice, can be very painful. This heightened sensitivity can also lead to swelling and bloating.

### Causes
The exact cause of IBS is not known. Factors that appear to play a role include:

- **Muscle contractions.** Stronger and longer muscle contractions in the intestine can cause gas, bloating and diarrhoea. Weak contractions can slow the passage of food and lead to hard, dry stools.
- **Nerves of the digestive system.** These can cause discomfort when the abdomen stretches due to gas or stool. Poorly coordinated signals between the brain and gut cause them to overreact to changes. The digestive tract appears normal, but it is not functioning as it should in the digestive process. This can result in pain, diarrhoea or constipation.
- **Severe infection.** Irritable bowel syndrome can develop after an episode of gastroenteritis. It can also be associated with excessive bacterial growth in the intestines.
- **Early-life stress.** People exposed to stressful events, especially in childhood, tend to have more symptoms.
- **Changes in the microbiota.** Bacteria, fungi, viruses, which reside in the intestines and play a key role in digestion.

### Triggers
- **Certain foods or drinks,** including wheat, dairy products, citrus fruits, beans, cabbage, milk and fizzy soft drinks.
- **Stress aggravates or worsens symptoms,** but is not the cause.

- **IBS is more common in women.**
- **Family history of IBS.** Genes may play a role, as may shared factors in the family environment or a combination of genes and environment.
- **Anxiety, depression or other mental health problems and a history of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse may also play a role.**

### Complications
- **Constipation or chronic diarrhoea can cause haemorrhoids.**
- **The quality of life adversely affected, absenteeism, depression, anxiety.**
- **Abdominal pain, cramps or bloating related to stool evacuation.**
- **Changes in stool appearance.**
- **Change in stool frequency.**
- **Sensation of incomplete evacuation and increased gas or mucus in the stool.**

### Treatment
Try to identify and avoid foods that produce symptoms.

In more serious cases, your doctor may resort to medication: antidiarrhoeal, gastrointestinal antispasmodic, laxative, neurological treatment, antibiotics...

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**Dr David Cohen**

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Sources:

Highlights of news from WHO

Executive Board, 152nd Session, 30 January – 7 February 2023

The session was held in the auditorium of the new B building at HQ (see photo below) under the chairmanship of Dr Kerstin Vesna Petrič, Head of Office of Cooperation with WHO, Ministry of Health of Slovenia. As usual, the Board had a full agenda with almost 50 items to discuss. In his extensive opening statement, the DG first referred to the Covid-19 situation. At the start of this fourth year of the pandemic, the situation is far better than a year ago but since the beginning of December 2022, weekly reported deaths have been increasing and in the past eight weeks, more than 170 000 people have lost their lives to Covid-19. However, that is just reported deaths and the actual number is much higher. Vaccination remains essential, especially of the most at-risk groups.

The five priorities outlined at the 150th session of the Board in January 2022 have been crystallized into what is called the “five Ps” – Promoting, Providing, Protecting, Powering and Performing for health. These five Ps are completely aligned with, and contained in, the 13th General Programme of Work. The DG’s comments on each of the give Ps can be found in his opening speech at https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-remarks-at-the-152nd-session-of-the-executive-board.
Dr Tedros was proud to state that for the first time in WHO’s history, overall gender parity for staff has been reached across all appointment types and categories of positions.

2022 had been a landmark year for WHO, with agreement by Member States to increase assessed contributions to 50% of the base budget over the next decade. The Programme Budget for the next biennium 2024–25, to be considered by the Board, includes the first increase in assessed contributions of USD 200 million, more than half of which will be allocated to Country Offices. The need to strengthen them is a key priority.

At the end of his statement, the DG expressed his gratitude, admiration and respect for all staff in all offices in all parts of the world. WHO’s 75th anniversary this year belongs to all Member States and to all staff who have a lot to be proud of, but it is not the past 75 years which matter, but the next 75 years – not yesterday but tomorrow.

Dr Jarbas Barbosa, a national of Brazil and former Assistant Director at PAHO, was appointed by the Executive Board to serve as Regional Director, AMRO/PAHO. He was elected as Director of PAHO by its Member States in September 2022 and was sworn in as Director of PAHO from 1 February. Dr Barbosa succeeds Dr Carissa F. Etienne of Dominica who led PAHO since 2012.

In his remarks at the end of the EB session (the full text can be found at https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-closing-remarks-at-the-152nd-session-of-the-executive-board), Dr Tedros thanked everyone for their hard work, with approval of more than 30 resolutions and decisions; for their support for the draft Programme Budget 2024–25; for their support for sustainable, flexible and predictable financing, and for the idea of replenishment; for supporting the Secretariat Implementation Plan on Reform; and for engaging in the critical issue of strengthening the global architecture for health emergency preparedness, response and resilience. The Board is sending an agenda to the World Health Assembly which reflects the huge scope of WHO’s work and the scale of health challenges around the world: behavioural sciences; diagnostics; disabilities; drowning; infection prevention and control; medical devices; meningitis; mental health; polio; refugee and migrant health; rehabilitation; substandard and falsified medicines, traditional medicine and more.
A selection of other news

- The Third Global High-Level Ministerial Conference on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) was hosted in Muscat, Oman in November, at which targets to address the global AMR challenge were discussed for the first time. The conference agreed the Muscat Ministerial Manifesto which sets out three global targets which will pave the way for political commitments at the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on AMR in 2024. [https://amrconference2022.om/MuscatManifesto.html].

- On 28 November, following a series of consultations with global experts, WHO started using the new preferred term “mpox” as a synonym for monkeypox. Both names will be used simultaneously for one year while “monkeypox” is phased out.

- A new WHO report Preventing injuries and violence: an overview was released at the 14th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion held in Adelaide from 27 to 30 November. Of the 4.4 million annual injury-related deaths, roughly 1 in 3 result from road traffic crashes, 1 in 6 from suicide, 1 in 9 from homicide and 1 in 61 from war and conflict. [https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240047136].

- Released on 2 December, a new WHO Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities shows evidence of a higher risk of premature death (even up to 20 years earlier) and illness among many persons with disabilities who have an increased risk of developing chronic conditions, with up to double the risk of asthma, depression, diabetes, obesity, oral diseases and stroke, compared to others in society. [https://www.who.int/multi-media/details/launch-of-the-who-global-report-on-health-equity-for-persons-with-disabilities].

- On the same day, the European Commission and WHO agreed to enhance strategic cooperation in global health security and architecture, and to cooperate on the implementation of major initiatives such as the European Union’s Global Health Strategy, the European Health Union and WHO’s priorities for the 2022–2026 period.

- On 3 December, WHO released its first-ever global tax manual, The WHO manual for sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs). Regular consumption of SSBs, including soft drinks, flavoured milks, energy drinks, vitamin waters, fruit juices and sweetened iced teas, is associated with an increased risk of dental cavities, type 2 diabetes, weight gain and obesity, heart disease, stroke and cancer. [https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240056299].

- On 7 December, WHO’s Member States agreed to develop the first draft of a legally binding agreement designed to protect the world from future pandemics. This “zero draft” of the pandemic accord, rooted in the WHO Constitution, was discussed by Member States in February 2023. On the last day of the Executive Board, 7 February, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) Bureau briefed Member States and interested stakeholders on the “zero draft”.

- On 8 December, WHO released new data showing that, despite the impact of Covid-19, malaria cases and deaths remained stable in 2021 with an estimated 619 000 deaths globally, compared to 625 000 in the first year of the pandemic and 568 000 deaths in 2019 before the pandemic struck.

- On 9 December, a new WHO report was issued which signals increasing resistance to antibiotics in bacterial infections in humans and need for better data. [https://www.who.int/news/item/09-12-2022-report-signals-increasing-resistance-to-antibiotics-in-bacterial-infections-in-humans-and-need-for-better-data].

https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240056299.
A new technical brief published by WHO on 12 December on Improving the Lives of People with Epilepsy, sets out actions required to deliver an integrated approach to care and treatment that better meets the multifaceted needs of people with epilepsy which affects over 50 million people across the world, ranking fifth among all neurological causes for disability-adjusted life years (DALYs).

WHO marked Universal Health Coverage Day on 12 December in a few ways, including an event at the FIFA Fan Festival in Doha, Qatar, on the eve of the World Cup semi-finals. WHO and football icons Didier Drogba, WHO Ambassador for Sport and Health, and Alisson Becker, goalkeeper for Brazil and Liverpool, WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Health Promotion, called upon people across the world to move for “Health for All”. A digital knowledge hub for the general public was launched called Your life, your health - Tips and information for health and well-being. At the end of the World Cup, the Director-General thanked all football icons for their support in wearing WHO armbands during the World Cup – see the photo below of Lionel Messi sporting his WHO armband.

On 21 December, WHO posted a short video on 2022 health highlights, which can be found at.

At the end of the year, awards of excellence 2022 were awarded to staff – the DG’s Award for Individuals and Teams at the Global Level, the DG’s Award for an Individual and Team at the HQ Level, the DG’s Award for the LEADS Innovation Team and the Regional Directors’ Awards for Individuals and Teams at the Regional Level. The next opportunity for nominations will be in October 2023.

On 30 December, a high-level meeting took place between WHO and China about the surge in Covid-19 cases, to seek further information on the situation and to offer WHO’s expertise and support. On 14 January, the DG spoke with the Director of China’s National Health Commission. Chinese officials provided information to WHO on a range of topics which allowed for a better understanding of the epidemiological situation and the impact of the then wave in China. WHO requested that such detailed information continue to be shared with the Organization and the general public.

On 13 January, WHO updated its Covid-19 guidelines on masks, treatments and patient care, recommending the continued use of masks by the public in specific situations – following recent exposure to the disease, when someone has or suspects they have Covid-19, when someone is at high-risk of severe Covid-19 and for anyone in a crowded, enclosed, or poorly ventilated space.

At the World Economic Forum in January, the DG addressed the issue of mental health at work, and announced plans to establish a new Tuberculosis Vaccine Accelerator Council to facilitate the licensing and use of effective novel TB vaccines.
On 18 January, the Government of Barbados, WHO and PAHO held a high-level meeting on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), and mental health with Small Island Developing States (SIDS). A data portal on NCDs in SIDS (https://www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/health-highlights-2022) shows that over half of people in SIDS are dying prematurely from NCDs and the rate of hypertension is over 30% in almost all of the countries, with high rates of obesity, diabetes and mental health conditions.

On 23 January, WHO launched its 2023 health emergency appeal for USD 2.54 billion to provide assistance to the millions of people around the world facing health emergencies. Currently, WHO is responding to an unprecedented number of intersecting health emergencies: climate-change related disasters such as flooding in Pakistan and food insecurity across the Sahel and in the greater Horn of Africa; the war in Ukraine; and the health impact of conflict in Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria and northern Ethiopia – all these emergencies overlap with health system disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and outbreaks of measles, cholera and other killers.

On the same day WHO issued a new status report, *Countdown to 2023: WHO Report on global trans-fat elimination 2022* which shows that five billion people remain unprotected from harmful trans-fat, increasing their risk of heart disease and death. Industrially produced trans-fat (also called trans-fatty acids) is commonly found in packaged foods, baked goods, cooking oils and spreads. Trans-fat intake is responsible for up to 500,000 premature deaths from coronary heart disease each year. (https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240067233)


On 27 January, WHO updated its list of medicines that should be stockpiled for radiological and nuclear emergencies, along with policy advice for their appropriate management. (https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240067875)

On the same day, the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR) Emergency Committee regarding the coronavirus 2019 disease (Covid-19) pandemic determined that the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic continues to constitute a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). The DG concurs with the Committee’s advice. (https://www.who.int/groups/covid-19-ihr-emergency-committee)

From 27–30 January, WHO hosted the inaugural meeting of the WHO Youth Council (https://www.who.int/initiatives/who-youth-engagement/who-youth-council) which brought together representatives of 22 diverse youth organizations from health and non-health backgrounds. The Council will work with youth organizations to create a youth movement for health. Through the Council, WHO will develop an inclusive Youth Engagement Strategy across all levels of the Organization. On 11 February, a youth-led roundtable discussion provided a platform for the young people to share their reflections, lessons learned and aspirations to kick off a week of Global Youth Mobilization (GYM) virtual events, supported by WHO and the United Nations Foundation. (https://globalyouthmobilization.org/). The main event was held on 15 February, celebrating two years of youth-led global action, at which the
GYM launched its final impact report, highlighting the reach, impact and investment in young people engaged in addressing the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.


- On 1 February, WHO’s social media team won third place in the international organizations category of the 8th Geneva Engage Awards, organized by the Geneva Internet Platform and DiploFoundation, with support from the Canton of Geneva. (https://www.giplatform.org/geneva-engage/)

- On 3 February, one day before World Cancer Day, WHO released a new *Global Breast Cancer Initiative Framework* which provides a roadmap to attain the targets to save 2.5 million lives from breast cancer by 2040. (https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-ntd-day/2023)

- On 15 March, Bloomberg Philanthropies, WHO and Vital Strategies hosted the inaugural Partnership for Healthy Cities Summit with London Mayor Sadiq Khan, bringing together mayors and other city leaders from the Partnership’s global network to discuss strategies to combat the global burden of noncommunicable diseases and injuries. (https://cities4health.org/)

Further information and documentation can be found on the WHO website – [www.who.int](http://www.who.int).

*Sue Block Tyrrell*
Our colleague and friend Yves Beigbeder has just published his memoirs. What follows is a rather incomplete summary of a full and very interesting life. His first ordeal was the Second World War. When the teenage Yves became aware of events he signed-up in the French Resistance, influenced by a cousin and his rather pro-Petain family. He later regretted not having participated sooner in the Resistance, having joined a maquis in the Auvergne in 1944.

The most significant event in his life, and one which influenced his career and his future research, was undoubtedly the Nuremberg trial, 18 October 1945–1 October 1946, convened by the victors of the Second World War, to put on trial the individuals held responsible for the Nazi war crimes, not Germany.

Yves had just obtained his law degree when the French judge at the Nuremberg trial – his uncle, the jurist Henri Donnedieu de Vabres – invited him to be his assistant during the trial. He remained in Nuremberg from March to August 1946; Yves found himself face to face with criminals such as Goering, Hans Frank, and other Nazi leaders, some of whom were sentenced to death and executed, others to prison terms. The trial marked him for the rest of his life. It provided him with a window to the outside world and gave him the desire to travel. Thanks to a scholarship from Indiana University, he travelled to the United States, where he stayed for two years, first in Bloomington, then in Chicago. Doing odd jobs while studying, he passed his master's degree in psychology and pedagogy which proved to be an asset later on when beginning an international career.

Yves had returned to France by August 1948, and was recruited by the FAO in Rome in the Personnel Department, when an American staff member, McIntyre, was wrongly accused of "un-American activities" (this was in the period of McCarthyism) and was threatened with termination of his contract with FAO. McIntyre appealed to the ILO administrative tribunal and won. He was awarded compensation but not reinstated. Yves became aware that this event was a serious attack on the principle of the independence of international civil servants in relation to their country of origin. This was the beginning of his interest, leading on from his participation in the Nuremberg trial, for international justice.

With a feeling that his career at the FAO was a dead-end, he applied for a position as Chief Personnel Officer in the WHO Regional Office for Africa in Brazzaville where he spent three years. During this time, he travelled to South Africa, then under apartheid, and recruited three English-speaking secretaries. He took advantage of his time in Brazzaville to visit Dr Schweitzer in Lambaréné in

Le temps de la paix (Time for Peace)
(Autobiography – available only in French)
Yves Beigbeder
In collaboration with Pascale Casbi

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Le temps de la paix
Souvenirs d’un siècle de justice internationale
Extrait de l’histoire de Yves Beigbeder

Our colleague and friend Yves Beigbeder has just published his memoirs. What follows is a rather incomplete summary of a full and very interesting life. His first ordeal was the Second World War. When the teenage Yves became aware of events he signed-up in the French Resistance, influenced by a cousin and his rather pro-Petain family. He later regretted not having participated sooner in the Resistance, having joined a maquis in the Auvergne in 1944.

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Gabon. He requested a transfer to Europe and became Chief Personnel Officer at the WHO Regional Office for Europe, in Copenhagen.

Three years later, to his great satisfaction, he was transferred to Geneva in the Personnel department, under the Chief, Jean Brouland. He remained there until his retirement in 1984.

A time for authorship

In the Personnel department in Geneva, Yves was responsible for staff training in management and languages, and also handled sensitive cases. The status of the international civil servant should, in theory, be independent of the Member States, but this did not prevent the super-powers – the United States and the USSR in particular – from interfering and possibly demanding the dismissal of civil servants.

Yves was taking an interest in the administrative management of international organizations and completed his doctorate in law in Grenoble in 1973, with his thesis on Staff representation at the World Health Organization. He first taught at the Geneva branch of Webster University, then in the United States, in Saint-Louis and Boston, as well as in Vancouver in Canada. In Boston, an American teacher gave him advice: “publish or perish”, which Yves actively applied.

International administration became the focus of his research and the subject of numerous books and articles, especially in English, French and even German. International administrations, normally independent of Member States, are not completely so, as they are subject to pressure from countries and private industry.

Yves welcomed the existence of the European Union which brought peace to Europe, and other regional organizations, and the fact that these organizations accepted the status of administrative courts to settle their internal disputes.

Following his retirement in 1984, Yves began writing several books: World Health Organization, published by PUF Que sais-je? 1997; The World Health Organization and Peacekeeping, 1998; The Health for All strategy according to WHO, Bordeaux, 1999…

He examined the pressures WHO found itself under, in particular from the tobacco industry and pharmaceutical groups. Directors-General Dr Mahler and Dr Brundtland were at the origin of public/private partnerships, initially in the proportion of 80%:20% in relation to the budget financed by the Member States, currently this proportion is inversed at 20%:80%, risking interference from private industry. The tobacco industry had even succeeded in infiltrating the ranks of WHO. Yves also wrote several books on international criminal trials and a book in English about WHO in 2018.

Yves later turned his attention to legal issues relating to periods of conflict: Vichy and emergency laws, decolonization, the wars in Indochina and Algeria, and the prosecution of war criminals in France or Germany.

The conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, the Rwandan genocide and the conflict in Sierra Leone, the crimes of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, saw the revival of Nuremberg-style international criminal trials for the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. For Cambodia it was less satisfactory, because the majority of judges were Cambodian.

The International Criminal Court, a permanent institution, was created in 1998 and ratified by 123 countries: it sits in The Hague, Netherlands. Neither the United States, nor Russia, nor China have recognized it. It has jurisdiction to try those responsible for crimes against international humanitarian law, war crimes or crimes against humanity. Unfortunately, it has no power to make arrests and criminals just stay away from countries that might extradite them.

The existence of these international courts unfortunately does not prevent aggression of one country against another and criminals do not fear them.

In spite of that, Yves remains optimistic because progress has been made in international humanitarian law, and the creation of international criminal courts.

David Cohen
Times and Travels
Annual Letters, 1992-2020

Coby Sikkens

Times and Travels is a very interesting and easy-to-read book in which Coby has bravely assembled her annual newsletters to friends and family spanning almost 30 years, many of which cover her various assignments at WHO. It is a “warts and all” account of her personal and professional life containing a plethora of amusing anecdotes and an impressive travelogue covering much of our planet.

She recounts her (un)fair share of health issues, which failed to suppress her wanderlust and her desire to experience as much culture as possible. WHO staff, particularly, will be interested to follow her experiences at headquarters, regional and country levels of the Organization, many of which we have encountered as well and can identify with.

Coby has very acute powers of observation and the descriptions of her trips can be a useful guide for anyone travelling to the many places she has visited and re-visited. One gets the impression that little time was spent relaxing in a comfortable chair, as she has an insatiable hunger to explore cultural sites and activities, as well as sampling the local cuisine as much as possible.

This is an exceptionally eloquent account of the life of an international civil servant, interspersed with humorous and witty stories, many of which were experienced with family, friends and work colleagues.

The Contents pages are particularly useful as they list many of the destinations that Coby has visited and explored.

Carol and Richard Saynor
READERS’ RECIPES

Navarin of lamb and spring vegetables (stew) (serves 6)

Recipe
Peel the carrots, onions and turnips. Shell the peas. Peel the potatoes.

Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a casserole dish and fry the lamb pieces for 5 minutes, turning them over.

In a large frying pan, heat 1 tablespoon of oil over medium heat, add all the vegetables except the potatoes. Sprinkle the vegetables with sugar and fry for about 5 minutes, stirring.

Put the vegetables in the pot and add the potatoes. Mix well, then pour in 50 cl of boiling water containing the crumbled stock cube*. Add the bouquet garni and season with salt and pepper.

Cover the casserole dish and leave to simmer for 1h30. Remove the bouquet garni and serve the navarin in a heated deep dish, surround with the vegetables and sprinkle with the cooking juice.

*Personally, I do not use a stock cube (to be avoided).

Michèle Evans

NEW MEMBERS

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

New Life Members
Caren Hillevi Maia Andersson
Merlyn Cadag
Asa Kristina Cuzin Kihl
Annette Christiane Kuesel
Joseph Kutzin
Ignatius Nwaokomah
Michel Zaffran

Conversion to Life members
John Ehrenberg

New Annual Members
MEMORIES FROM THE MAIN

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.

A few memories and incidents come to mind when I think of my years spent in the main building:

The service by Mme Henri with the tea/coffee trolley which came round each office on my floor every morning – if you wanted a croissant or something else to eat, and your office was at the end of her round (as mine was), you had to go and find her at the start of her tour to buy it or beg her to reserve it for you…

Getting stuck in the lifts on a few occasions – once where the lift overshot the 8th floor – fortunately I could get the doors to open and managed to jump out without falling into the lift shaft!

Our restaurant on the 8th floor with its beautiful view and the events we held there, including the party for DA Henderson when he left, with our parade of Miss Poxes and awarding him the “low-bell prize” of a cowbell slung around his hips…

Witnessing another side of my rather strict office colleague who was a dog lover: from our window on the 6th floor we noticed a couple of mating dogs outside – the male being rather larger than the female - without hesitation my colleague jumped up, took the lift and ran out to try to separate the dogs, thereby ripping her posh skirt and certainly not caring who was watching from the many windows…

And finally, riding up in the lift with Dr Mahler, our then DG: just the two of us from sous-sol 1 up to the 6th floor – me with my coffee and croissant on a tray, listening to Dr Mahler’s preference for a good Scandinavian breakfast with herring etc., thereby putting me right off my “boring” breakfast…

UNIAG – UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY GAMES – 2023

48th UN Inter-Agency Games

The next United Nations Inter-Agency Games (UNIAG 2023) will be hosted by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) based in Vienna.

As we go to press, we have been informed that the Games are being postponed to early autumn because UNIDO was unable to conclude an agreement with potential hosts on the venue (not necessarily in Austria) and the dates. Note that participation is open to all active and retired UN system staff. If you are keen to participate, we suggest that you monitor the UNIAG website https://www.interagencygames.org/newsite/?p=3892 for the latest information.

Derrick Deane
News from around the world

**AFSM-HQ:** Communications between our associations (Headquarters and Regions) continue to be an almost daily occurrence. This allows for better coordination of the responses made to our respective members and provides for alerts on problems specific to a given Region.

Our colleagues in Copenhagen have joined the other five Regions and we thank them for their commitment and enthusiasm.

The conclusions of the fourth Council meeting, organized for March 2023 by our Association, will be reported in the next issue of *Quarterly News* (July 2023).

*Jean-Paul Menu*

**Regional reports**

**AFSM-SEAR:** we wish to convey our greetings for the New Year, and wish all well for the AFSM community globally.

We look back at the year that just passed, and note with satisfaction our continued work in the interest and welfare of retired colleagues. AFSM-SEAR is also quite happy with the progress that we made at the global level through the network of AFSMs, and the deliberations and outcomes of the Global Council meetings.

The fact that the Director-General, and the Regional Directors of the Regions where Council meetings had been hosted, all took such a direct interest in the work and affairs of the AFSMs is very encouraging. Their participation goes a long way in recognizing the AFSMs as an entity of retired staff members, but also gave to all of us a sense of belonging and a desire to participate in the work of WHO in whatever manner we could still contribute.

In this regard, AFSM-SEAR is appreciative of the efforts of all AFSMs, especially the HQ-AFSM.

Elections to the AFSM-SEAR were conducted at the end of 2022 for the new Executive Committee for 2023–2024, and we are happy to report that the current president has been re-elected unanimously with new Executive Committee members, a mix of younger and also experienced retired colleagues. We in AFSM look forward to reinvigorated efforts and the work ahead.

As you may recall, our dear colleague Dr Dilip Mahalanabis passed away last year, and his Obituary was published in the January *Quarterly News* (See QNT 130). I am now proud to report that this senior colleague has been posthumously awarded the Government of India’s highest civilian honour of *Padma Vibhushan* (the Lotus Decoration is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service). This award recognized his pioneering work in the field of diarrhoeal diseases control and for which he is globally known as the father of ORS. While regrettting that this great honour was not bestowed during his lifetime, we fondly remember Dr Mahalanabis, with gratitude, not only for his pioneering work but also for the generosity of this great humanitarian.

*M.R. Kanaga Rajan* (President, AFSM-SEAR)
AFSM-PAHO/AMRO: The Newsletter of December 2022 has been published, an interesting issue with articles of value to all of us.

Gloria Coe authored the Editorial and recalls that on 2 December 1902 the Pan American Sanitary Bureau was created. This Bureau was later to become PAHO. Gloria continues with the history of the PAHO AFSM, created in 1990, and notes major achievements. She continues with the formation of the Global Council of AFSMs.

This is followed by the story of Dr Jarbas Barbosa da Silva Jr. of Brazil, the newly-elected PAHO Director and Director of WHO AMRO, extracted from the PAHO website.

The Health Insurance and Pension Update by Carol Collado follows. Under SHI, Covid again leads, but with more encouraging news – that the threat is receding, however precautions are still required. Carol mentions an MIT study which shows that indoor humidity can affect Covid transmission rates. She continues with the risks to older people of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) for which there is presently no treatment. Under Pensions, Carol mentions the rejuvenated UNJSPF website, and the revised Pension Fund forms with barcode (see our note on page 10). The second mailing of Certificates of Entitlement (CE) were sent out in October to those whose CE has not yet been received. If you receive this CE you must return it. Finally, Carol mentions the HQ AFSM endeavour to hold a global webinar on pension matters.

Next, Gloria Coe highlights the Comments made by the AFSM PAHO President during the WHO and AFSM Webinar on Healthy Ageing on 6 October 2022.

Where Are They Now? by Wilma B. Freire, recalls her time in PAHO until 2005 and the return to Ecuador, with a very full “retirement” ever since.

This is followed by the Healthy Ageing Committee News and Updates by Martha Pelaez who reports on this, the newest AFSM Committee. First, she highlights the health challenges faced by the Region, and the four areas of the Decade on which AFSM will focus, and the actions it hopes to take in response. These include areas of potential collaboration between AFSM and PAHO.

Yvette Holder continues with Part 7 of her series Musings of an Ageing Woman, and although not her usual light-hearted musing – the approaching New Year being a time for reflection – she tackles a variety of subjects, including the thorniest of all, whether to go and live with your children.

The Newsletter continues with My Big Fat Trip to Greece, an article by Marilyn Rice (Editor-in-Chief), which tells the story of a group of women friends who have been meeting more-or-less regularly for the past thirty years. When one of them reached 80 she invited the group to celebrate with her in Greece; this is the story of how five of them made the trip. An enthralling article.

Next, Juan Manuel Sotelo tells of his love of Panama in Magical Isthmus. An insider’s view and comments on this fascinating country.

This is followed by Nutrient Needs of Older Adults by Maria Teresa Cerqueira. A useful guide to how our nutritional needs change with age, and which minerals and vitamins are required in different amounts than when we were younger. Plus, other essential dietary information.

The Our Health article Orthopaedic Insoles by Dr David Cohen, first published in QNT 129, is reprinted in this Newsletter.

This edition is completed with a review, prepared by Jorge Luis Prosperi Ramírez and Benigno López Benítez of the Inter-American Development Bank publication, Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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

Keith Wynn
WHO Retirees’ Representatives in Scandinavia: A virtual meeting held on 18 January 2023 provided three former staff members – Jenny Madsen, Sharon Miller, Melodie Karlson – with the opportunity to discuss establishing an AFSM-EUR with Mr Robb Butler (Executive Director of the Regional Director’s Office) and Dr Manfred Huber (Coordinator, Healthy Ageing, Disability and Long-term Care at WHO/Europe).

The proposed main objectives of AFSM-EUR include provision of information, support, a collective voice and an active social network. Anticipated deliverables would consist of a website/social media presence, an e-newsletter, informational meetings and workshops, and social networking activities.

Further dialogue is tentatively planned for April, when issues of mutual interest with the Regional Office and added value for Member States will also be on the agenda. It is anticipated that this next planning meeting will take place after the Global Council of AFSMs meeting in March, so that the outcome of discussions on the official recognition of AFSMs can be taken into consideration. It was agreed that a concrete proposal for establishing an AFSM-EUR should include resource considerations and fiscal reporting.

Former EURO staff Christmas lunch

Despite the snow and cold, the Christmas lunch event on 9 December 2022 was a great success. The organizers appreciated the wonderful turnout. One could feel the warm atmosphere created by many smiling faces and non-stop conversations. The Danish “pakkeleg” (gift exchange) raised the temperature level a few degrees.

Jenny Madsen, Sharon Miller, Melodie Karlson
AFSM-Africa: AFRO Retired but Not Tired: The Executive Committee continues its regular activities and would now also like to focus on the activities of the associations of retirees in the countries. This is a way to stimulate them and to share experiences for mutual reinforcement. We start with a group of dedicated and enthusiastic retirees, based in several countries, who have created a very worthwhile Institute.

So, what’s new? Growing old like a "Balanzan"

Several retirees from WHO and UNICEF have shown courage by creating The Balanzan Institute (TBI).

But what is a Balanzan? It is a magnificent tree whose scientific name is *Acacia Albida*, also known as the "Pearl of the Sahel". Its leaves are green in the dry season, when other trees dry up, and provides food for people, fodder for animals, shade for both, and nectar from its flowers for bees. Furthermore it stores nitrogen from the air in its roots. When the rainy season comes, other trees turn green, the Balanzan loses its leaves, allowing farmers to grow cereals around it thanks to the extra sunlight and also to the nitrogen accumulated in the roots, which serves as a fertilizer.

So, it is in recognition of the extraordinary qualities of this tree that our Institute has adopted its name and its beneficial qualities: to serve others (human beings, animals and plants) in all seasons by returning to them a part of what Nature has endowed. The members of TBI also want to serve Africa and the rest of the world by giving back some of the experiences they have accumulated throughout their long professional careers. Created in July 2021, TBI has already accumulated a solid experience: six training projects, one technical assistance project, ten assessments of effective vaccine management in countries, a book on logistics under preparation, coaching of young professionals, etc. Our motto is: "A world where no one lacks health care because of a shortage of products or energy, all in an environmentally friendly manner." Our missions are: technical assistance to countries and partners, capacity building, project management, operational research in the fields of health logistics, energy and environment.

The Honorary Patron of TBI is Dr Antoine Kaboré, former WHO staff. The Secretary General is Dr Adama Sawadogo, former WHO staff and retired from UNICEF. The members of the Institute are working actively from their own countries and regularly communicate virtually. The members meet as and when required, and at least once a year, in the headquarters, which are located in Ouagadougou Secteur 25, Burkina Faso. In July 2023, they will move to their own premises in Ouagadougou-2000 Extension. For further information: Dr.-Ing. Modibo Dicko, Secrétaire à l’Organisation et à l’information, e-mail: dickom@thebalanzan.org or tbi_infos@thebalanzan.org, website: https://thebalanzan.org/index.php/en/home/, WhatsApp: +223 75433441.

Kalula Kalambay (AFSM-AFRICA Coordinator)
Solange Kouo Epa (AFSM-AFRICA Secretary)
Enabling staff to build on their strengths, develop skills and competencies to achieve their full potential

The WHO Mentoring Programme proves to be highly valued by colleagues as a platform for their professional and personal development, expanding their network, and giving back.

The WHO Mentoring Programme was launched in 2019 as part of the Transformation process initiated by our Director-General, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, with the main objectives to enable staff build on their strengths, develop skills and competencies to achieve their full potential. It is worth mentioning that the Association of Former WHO Staff Members (AFSM) duly informed their members of the Mentoring Initiative and made a call for volunteers in 2019 and 2020. As a result, and to our great delight, several retirees came forward to join the Mentoring Programme. A summary of their experience as mentors was given at a seminar during the Decade of Healthy Ageing in October 2022. At an information session held in November 2022, the invitation to which was widely disseminated among both serving and former staff globally, we reiterated our strong interest to engage all colleagues, both serving staff and retirees, into this enriching initiative.

Being focused on career development, the WHO Mentoring Programme is intended to strengthen staff in their professional skills and networking while at the same time it helps to foster and nurture a conducive work environment. The Mentoring Programme is designed as an ongoing activity, where potential mentees reach out to the mentors on the WHO Global List of Mentors at any point in time during the year and together define the details of their work during the mentoring relationship. In addition to the above, in 2023 we have introduced a more structured initiative: the WHO Structured Mentoring Programme.

The WHO Structured Mentoring Programme is scheduled to run for 6 months. It offers workshops, training sessions, and other events to its participants, and is defined by fixed dates, scheduled workshops and complementary events. It was launched on 17 January 2023 and brought together 127 colleagues, who signed up to be mentors and mentees. The participants of the Programme are both administrative and professional WHO staff, including JPOs and NPOs, consultants and WHO retirees. This resulted in 52 mentoring pairs, with some mentors taking on more than one mentee, proving how much colleagues were interested in being mentored by their more senior colleagues. It also showed the engagement and commitment of mentors, willing to support colleagues by devoting their time and energy to mentoring. Former WHO staff members are particularly valuable and are an integral part of the Mentoring Programme.

Among our mentors, former staff members bring a wealth of technical skills which, for some of them, are coupled with leadership and management experience acquired while serving as WRs.
Furthermore, some of our WHO retirees have had rich and versatile careers in different WHO Regions as well as a formal coaching training which represent an additional skills-set to their mentoring offer. And without doubt, all our retirees show their highly professional and passionate approach to mentoring in their mentor profiles.

We applaud all the mentors during the entire journey of the WHO Mentoring Programme for their commitment and generosity in supporting their younger colleagues and are thrilled to hear more from them on their mentoring relationships.

Mentoring is a win-win experience for everyone, as by giving you gain so much more in return, by sharing the knowledge and experience you have gathered you pave the path to the new, to the future. We welcome new retirees to join in the ranks of our valued mentors.

Sara Canna, Alison Osborne Frank, Elena Jorgensen

Career Management and Development, Talent Acquisition and Management Unit
WHO Division of Human Resources and Talent Management

Contact us at: careerdevelopment@who.int; mentoring@who.int
## IN MEMORIAM

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abdulmana Ali</td>
<td>12.06.2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afwerk Yohannes</td>
<td>04.10.2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anderson Ronald J</td>
<td>23.11.2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolay Fatorma Karmo</td>
<td>10.03.2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browne Catherine Soo Sim</td>
<td>02.12.2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cestre Maryse N</td>
<td>18.11.2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chang-Wailing Joseph K</td>
<td>21.11.2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compondu Claudine M</td>
<td>13.10.2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dass Bhagwan</td>
<td>21.09.2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Groulard Michel</td>
<td>07.10.2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>de la Fuente Francisco</td>
<td>20.11.2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diallo Pathe Mamadou</td>
<td>24.10.2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dicko Diaby Aissata</td>
<td>14.01.2022</td>
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<td>Escutia Virgilio</td>
<td>21.09.2022</td>
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<td>Fedrizzi Vigilio</td>
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<td>Gavillet Marie M</td>
<td>24.11.2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ginalska Anna</td>
<td>15.09.2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gunn Sisvan William A</td>
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<td>Guo Paul H M</td>
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<td>Henzelin Gerard Justin</td>
<td>10.10.2022</td>
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<td>Kaspar Anne-Marie</td>
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<td>Khokhar Gloria S</td>
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<td>Kingma Stuart John</td>
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<td>Loretti Alessandro</td>
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<td>Majorossy Kalman</td>
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<td>Maloula Alexandre</td>
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<td>Mananga Jacques</td>
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<td>Moupepe Rene</td>
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<td>Ortiz Jorge</td>
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<td>Pelpola Francis Henry</td>
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<td>Sherman Teresa</td>
<td>20.08.2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simon Francis</td>
<td>21.10.2022</td>
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<td>Subbiah M R V</td>
<td>25.10.2022</td>
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<td>Sundaresan P K</td>
<td>05.09.2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tonn Robert J</td>
<td>19.09.2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tsogbe Koffi</td>
<td>11.08.2022</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The deaths were also announced of the survivors of former staff members: Banchereau, Ginette Louise; Dembele, Djeneba; D’Emidio, Maria Luisa; Dieterich, Charlotte Ruth; Dobrescu, Olga Anastasia; Dos Santos, Janir Sobral; Fraser, Petra Marina; Geindre, Genevieve; Goffman, Benjamin Cyril; Grinling, Magrit; Grunewald, Barbara; Guilbert, Elizabeth Beryl; Gupta, Indira; Joseph, Jacqueline; Martinez Molina, Stella; Pant, Shanti; Puget, Paul; Showalla, Marjorie; Simeonov, Ema; Sorour, Souad Ahmed; Vandekar, Dunja; Waddington, Elspeth; Wanderley, Arcy.

\(^1\) The present notification of deaths was gratefully received from UNJSPF and covers Q4 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.
Stuart Kingma, born 25 June 1935 in Michigan, United States, died 16 December 2022 in Genolier, Switzerland

Eager to learn, Stuart quickly obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Calvin College (Grand Rapids – 1956) and a medical degree from Cornell Medical School (NYC – 1960). He did an internship and surgical residency at Henry Ford Hospital (Detroit – 1970). His first mission abroad in 1961 was with the Christian Reformed Church Board of Foreign Missions as a medical missionary at Mkar Christian Hospital in the Nigeria bush. During his third tour in Nigeria, Stuart as Hospital Administrator designed and oversaw the complete reconstruction of this hospital.

The drive to contribute and relieve suffering allowed him to excel in his work and gain the respect of those around him. The Christian Medical Commission (CMC) of the World Council of Churches (Geneva) heard of his work and in 1975 invited him to join the staff – first as Associate Director and later as Director. His conferences, workshops and publications helped churches around the world reinforce their health programmes. Stuart was in the frontline promoting a new approach to health care, now commonly called Primary Health Care. In 1984, Stuart began working at the World Health Organization (WHO) as a senior professional staff member in various departments, including strengthening national health systems and the Expanded Programme on Immunization. He became a pioneer in the work on HIV/AIDS prevention at WHO and later for UNAIDS (1995–1998). Upon official retirement he co-founded and directed the Civil/Military Alliance to Combat HIV/AIDS. He also taught African Studies at Webster University (Geneva).

Stuart was appreciated for his intelligence, keen wit, his eagerness to share, his creativity and his love of life. Stuart passed away peacefully at the age of 87 leaving behind a loving family and a legacy of devoted service to humanity.

Mireille Kingma (Vautravers)

Sisvan William A. Gunn, born 10 February 1926 in Cyprus, died 1 November 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland

Bill (as he was known) was born in Cyprus, then a British Crown colony, where his father was a military physician. After studying medicine in Geneva and specializing in surgery, he became a lecturer in the history of medicine and science at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

He joined WHO in 1967 and successively held several positions, including in External Relations and Personnel. In 1977 he headed the Humanitarian Operations Unit (ERO) of WHO, and remained there until his retirement in 1985. His initiatives and publications greatly improved the response of health personnel in emergency situations.

After his retirement from WHO, he remained very active on the international scene. He founded, co-founded or chaired many learned societies, among
RAPID REVIEW
others: the WHO Medical Society, the European Center for Disaster Medicine, the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine, the International Association for Humanitarian Medicine, etc. He authored or co-authored more than 300 articles and books, including the Dictionary of Disaster Medicine and Humanitarian Relief. He was honored with multiple distinctions including Doctor Honoris Causa degrees from Charles University (Prague) and the University of Palermo. For many years, Bill remained in contact with WHO, particularly with the Division of Humanitarian Action in Health. He was also an active member of our Association.

He leaves his wife Jean, two daughters and several grandchildren to whom we send our condolences.

Jean-Paul Menu

Ronald J. Anderson, born 25 November 1940 in Reno, Nevada, USA, died 23 November 2022 in Ashburton, Devon, UK

After childhood in Nevada and California, Ron graduated in political science at the University of Nevada. A scholarship to study international relations at Neuchâtel was followed by employment at WFUNA, which notably included – at the UNSG’s suggestion! – a tour of some 30 African countries over a period of six months to encourage the creation of national UN Associations.

Ron was recruited in 1967 by UNESCO, Paris, as liaison officer for international affairs, followed by appointment as Executive Assistant to ADG Natural Sciences – at a time of innovation in international scientific cooperation, which suited Ron well. I was then Executive Assistant to ADG Administration and we developed close relations.

At the end of 1974, Ron transferred to WHO to join the external relations department and served therein throughout his WHO career, rising to the post of Chief, External Coordination. This was a complex role, involving coordination with Member States, international organizations, donors, NGOs and the private sector. Ron handled the role with utter respect for the mission and mandate of the Organization and the needs of WHO’s technical departments.

After my departure from a troubled UNESCO in 1986, Ron rapidly recruited me to his office, where I eventually succeeded him. I was guided by his skill in handling a multi-cultural team and in interacting warmly with colleagues at all levels. Ron’s strong sense of justice and integrity, both in his professional and private life, underpinned all his actions.

After retirement in 1999, Ron spent 10 years in Seattle, where his wife Valerie (Val) had a thriving therapeutic practice, before moving to England. He enjoyed life to the fullest, loving to laugh, particularly at his misadventures. His friendships and residences were usually eclectic because he revelled in the varieties that bring us together.

Ron is greatly missed by Val and his children Andrew, Tania and Sean, and their families.

Derrick Deane
Edith Bernard, born 14 September 1954 in Bourg-en-Bresse, France, died 24 January 2023 in Lausanne, Switzerland

Edith joined WHO headquarters in October 1975 at the age of 21. She began as a clerk in the Control of Environmental Pollutants and Hazards Unit. From there she moved to the Veterinary Public Health Unit before accepting a promotion in 1987 as an Administrative Assistant in the Special Programme on AIDS (which became the Global Programme on AIDS, the predecessor of UNAIDS). Following her time in GPA, Edith moved to the Global TB Programme and then on to the Communicable Diseases Management Support Unit. She took early retirement in 2013 after more than 36 years of service with WHO.

With her husband, Alain, family and friends, Edith loved to travel, visiting many fabulous places. One of her passions was hiking. She would spend hours “training” in preparation for the many adventurous holidays that they planned, including the famed Machu Picchu in Peru, Annapurna and Everest in Nepal, the Lofoten Islands in Norway, the Northern Cap, and so many others. She also loved sailing, another passion which took her to many parts of the globe. Having already mastered English during her time as an au pair in England, Edith took Spanish classes at WHO which she had many opportunities to use during the family’s visits to Spain.

Edith was very proud to work for WHO and remained interested in the Organization following her retirement. She was an amazing colleague with so much knowledge that she was always willing to share. Edith will be greatly missed by her husband Alain and their children, Romain and Lorraine and their partners, her grandchildren and her many friends around the world.

Christine Coze, Laurie Ingels and Catalin Iacobescu

Lidia Willis, born 17 December 1935 in Trieste, Italy, died 1 January 2023 in Salisbury, United Kingdom

Lidia started her career with Alitalia, then IATA and ended it working in Information Technology in TDR. Lidia was of Italian origin but her English was so good that you would never have guessed where she came from. However, when she got annoyed, all the passion of an Italian lady came out. She enjoyed helping colleagues, was very generous and had a good sense of humour. She was fond of dogs, cats, the opera and the French language. She had travelled all over the world and enjoyed returning to Venice.

When Lidia and her husband Brian retired, they moved to Wales and then to Salisbury in England. They always regretted leaving Switzerland and Lidia used to say that the best years of her life were those working in TDR.

Christiane Gaberell

Joseph was born in Mauritius to parents belonging to the Chinese community.
In 1954, aged 24, he left Mauritius to continue his studies in London, a destination he reached by freighter after a month of travel. His family being simple traders, he financed his higher education in accounting while working.
In 1960, he moved to Geneva, and first worked for an association, then for a large fiduciary. There he met his wife, Marie Vincent. On the very day of his wedding, he received a letter of engagement from GATT, where he worked from 1963 to 1966, he then moved to WHO as an auditor. Realizing his dream, he remained faithful to this international Organization until retirement.

Elected WHO Ombudsman in 1983, he exercised this function with great commitment, devoting the last seven years of his professional life to the amicable settlement of conflicts. His professional career, as successful as it was exemplary, earned him the entry of his name in the 1989–1990 edition of Who’s Who in the World.
Not satisfied with relaxing in a well-deserved retirement, he then put his skills, voluntarily, at the service of associations defending human rights. His intellectual curiosity was such that he studied all his life, his last diploma "Certificate in Criminal Psychology" having been obtained on January 5, 2018 at the age of 88.
His family and friends unanimously recognized in him a smiling, peaceful, just and benevolent man.

Marie Chang-Wailing

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**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*
ART EXHIBITION IN MARTIGNY, SWITZERLAND

TURNER – The Sun is God

Fondation Pierre Gianadda, Martigny, Switzerland in collaboration with Tate
3 March to 25 June 2023, every day from 10 am to 6 pm

One of the problems when publishing reviews of art exhibitions in a quarterly magazine is that very often our appraisals appear just as the exhibition is about to finish. So, this time we are informing you about an exhibition that will still have several more months to run when this issue of your magazine arrives, though that also means that we will go to press before the exhibition opens.

However, in this particular case the artist, Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851), and his work are probably well-enough known that any critical review of the exhibition on our part would be inappropriate and superfluous.

Turner was an English Romantic painter, watercolourist and printmaker who saw the elements of nature as abstract forces. Landscape painting was at the time dismissed as a minor genre. Turner raised its status to “high art” by defying conventions and incorporating innovative techniques in his depictions of spectacular scenery and environmental conditions.

Today, he is widely recognized as the greatest landscape painter of the Romantic period due to his mastery of light, colour and atmosphere.

From Turner’s early beginnings in the 1790s to his culminating works of the mid to late 1840s, he held a fascination with meteorological and atmospheric phenomena. Storms, clouds, rainbows, fogs, fires and the moon were recurring motifs, but the sun was undoubtedly his most beloved subject.

In the final weeks of his life, Turner famously declared “The Sun is God”, inspiring the title of this exhibition, which is being curated by Tate, London.

Two of Turner’s works on display in the exhibition are illustrated on the back cover.

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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
TURNER – The Sun is God


J.M.W. Turner: The Visit to the Tomb. Oil on canvas. 1840–1845