



# 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*



Winter scene of a frozen waterway near a Dutch town, with a *koek-en-zopie* (refreshment stall) set up to serve the skaters. From an oil painting by Charles Henri Joseph Leickert (1816–1907)

For hundreds of years in the winter months, these *koek-en-zopie* have been erected on the ice to sell hot food and drink, and one of the traditional foods prepared is a thick, warming, green pea soup.

*AFSM's Dutch Co-President, Robert Bos, shares his recipe for this delicious soup on page 22*

## Message from Dr Tedros, Director-General, to former WHO staff

With the new year approaching, I'm pleased to have the opportunity once again to share some thoughts with you, our former staff members, or as I like to sometimes call you, "*my senior interns*".

2024 was another challenging year for our Organization, responding to many disease outbreaks, and providing support in multiple conflict areas. But there were also reasons to be optimistic: the World Health Assembly adopted historic amendments to the International Health Regulations, and approved the 14<sup>th</sup> General Programme of Work, with an ambitious target to save 40 million lives over the next four years. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Body continues its work to negotiate a new international agreement on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. Our Investment Case 2025–2028 was launched in May, and I had the honour of announcing the results of our first Investment Round alongside His Excellency Lula da Silva during the G20 Leaders' Summit in Brazil. Together with His Excellency Emmanuel Macron, we inaugurated the WHO Academy in Lyon, which will play a major part in delivering lifelong learning for both Member States and WHO staff.

Each of these initiatives and achievements has been shaped by the WHO Transformation, which we have been implementing over the past seven years, and which affects every area of WHO's work. Built on ideas from current and former staff, and guided by our Member States, the Transformation has made WHO more effective, efficient, results-oriented and fit for purpose. Strengthening our relationship with AFSMs has been part of the Transformation, to harness their ideas, experiences and ongoing commitment to the success of our Organization.

In May 2024, just before the World Health Assembly in Geneva, I had the pleasure of addressing the Global Council of AFSMs during the first face-to-face meeting of the presidents of the Associations in each Regional Office and in HQ. Four of our six Regional Directors were also able to attend the opening session with me and convey their support and best wishes to the Associations. I am delighted to learn that there are now three Memoranda of Understanding signed between the Administration and the AFSMs in the Regions of Africa, the Americas and the Western Pacific. I am also pleased that discussions are ongoing in the other regions to finalize their respective MoUs and institutionalize our relationship with the AFSMs. I look forward to our continuing work together. As you know, my slogan is "*once WHO, always WHO*" and former staff are an important part of the WHO family.

The new year brings many uncertainties and challenges, but I remain optimistic. WHO will continue to work with our many partners to promote, provide and protect the health and well-being of the people we serve around the world. I know that we can also count on your support. I wish you all a happy, healthy and successful 2025.



**Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**, WHO Director-General



A still from the video\* especially recorded by Dr Tedros in November 2024, addressing the members of AFSM and former staff and wishing them a healthy 2025.

\*We are delighted that the DG also took the time to record a video message to former staff which can be found on our website at [www.who.int/about/former-staff](http://www.who.int/about/former-staff). Readers may wish to view the video.

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## EDITORIAL

***AFSM wishes a  
very happy and  
healthy New  
Year 2025  
to all of our  
readers***

## EDITORIAL BOARD

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The opinions expressed in this  
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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](mailto: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/contact-us/>. **Visitors: Geneva:** Palais des Nations, Client Support Centre, Building H, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, from 10:00 to 13:00. **New York:** 4<sup>th</sup> floor, 1 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza (DHP), Corner of 48<sup>th</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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, 37<sup>th</sup> 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/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

In the previous issue we informed you of the composition of the Executive Committee for the period October 2024 through to October 2026. At its first meeting, the Committee appointed the following members to the ***Bureau of the Committee***:

Co-Presidents: Sue Block Tyrrell, Robert Bos and Jean-Paul Menu

Treasurer: Anne Yamada

Assistant Treasurer: Keith Wynn

Administrator: Michèle Evans

We thank Dev Ray who served as President, Vice-President and Co-President for many years.

### ***The influenza vaccination campaign***

Organized by the WHO Staff Health and Welfare Service, vaccinations began on 21 October and ended in late November. 116 retirees and 33 dependents were vaccinated. Registration was required online, and a member of the Committee was available to aid those who requested help. We are very grateful to WHO staff for providing this amenity to retirees and their spouses.

### ***Receptions and Lunches***

As previously announced, an e-mail was sent to our members on 5 September to inform them of our decision not to hold an annual reception in 2024. We asked for the members' views on organizing either future receptions or periodic lunches where participants would pay individually. The majority were in favour of participating in occasional lunches, with several adding that they prefer lunches in order to avoid traffic jams and driving at night. A few of our members, aware of the complexity of organizing such lunches, offered to help us with this task. Another e-mail was sent to those members who are in favour of lunches to enquire whether they also would be willing to organize some of the lunches in the Geneva region, be it in Switzerland or in France, and we await their response.

### ***Closure of the Association's bank account with PostFinance***

Given the very small number of contributions paid into this account, significant bank charges are debited monthly. The Executive Committee has decided to close the account as of 1 December 2024. Our annual members have been informed accordingly and asked to pay into our UBS account in the future.

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

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## SHI: STAFF HEALTH INSURANCE MATTERS

### Summary of the main points discussed at the recent meeting of the Global Oversight Committee

We attended the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Staff Health Insurance (SHI) Global Oversight Committee (GOC) on 6 and 7 November 2024, in our capacity as members elected by former staff on this SHI governing body. The GOC deals with all policy matters related to SHI and oversees its administrative and financial operations. The GOC makes recommendations to the Director-General (DG) on revisions to the SHI rules and other matters related to SHI.

Overall, this was a very good and fruitful meeting chaired by the Assistant Director-General of Business Operations, Mr Raul Thomas.

On the financial side, the financing of the actuarial liability of the Fund is very well on track. The consultant (Ernst and Young) projects that we could reach full funding of the liability in a few years' time. We need, however, to be cautious about such projections as many variables are involved – perhaps the most important of which is the discount rate used for such projections. The latter is currently favourable but even a small change in the rate could modify the projections significantly. The GOC agreed that we should be prudent and not rush into any measures to adjust either contributions or benefits although both will be examined over the course of the next two years. Any benefit changes will first be considered by the Global Standing Committee (GSC) before being considered by the GOC. Any changes agreed by DG would come into effect at the earliest in January 2026 but that could change as the financial situation evolves over the next year.

Linked to the above, the Treasurer gave a presentation on investments which confirmed that we were heading in the right direction particularly since the change in investment strategy to increase the share invested in higher yielding assets (equities and real estate). This leads to increased volatility in the short term but, as the fund has sufficient liquidity to meet its current obligations, it can accept some volatility along the way.

The results of the benchmarking study against other health insurances of international organizations were presented by the Consultant who carried out the study. It would seem that SHI is very competitive insofar as some benefit categories are concerned and in particular in its policy for reimbursement of preventive care, whilst in other areas it ranked less favourably. The results of the benchmarking study will be reviewed in more detail by the GSC in the coming months and further studies will be undertaken if required. Depending on its conclusions, recommendations for further changes in the SHI rules may be made to the GOC.

The Chair of the SHI GSC gave a good presentation on the work of the GSC which is impressive. The GSC reviews individual cases and proposes changes in the SHI rules based on its experience. He furthermore presented proposed changes to the rules. Most changes were aimed at enhancing the clarity of the rules whilst some aimed at bringing the benefits up to date. Most changes were accepted but others were referred back to the GSC for further consideration. We drew attention to certain benefits which are important to former staff, and which deserved special attention. We also requested that the term "ASHI" (after service health insurance) used by some organizations should be reviewed as both WHO staff and former staff participate in the same staff health insurance

and there should be no distinction in the title insofar as their participation is concerned. It was agreed that this would be reviewed further in consultation with the Legal Counsel.

The IT project for a new Digital Platform was discussed. SHI was planning to replace the current system (HIIS) which, after some 25 years of effective service, had reached the end of its life! Both of us participate in the Working Group which has been looking at the planned RFP (Request for Proposal) which will soon be sent to vendors. It was confirmed at the GOC meeting that going ahead with the RFP did not exclude modifications or enhancements to the system after launching.

There was a good discussion on access to healthcare initiatives with lively participation of the regions. The Secretariat presented the pilot projects currently underway. This is an ongoing initiative. A request was made for more active participation of WHO Representatives (WRs) in ensuring agreements with healthcare providers at the country level.

The new Medical Adviser, Dr Berth Atik, gave a presentation outlining her work and observations after her first few weeks on the job having replaced on a temporary basis for the moment the previous Medical Adviser. We recommended that she might consider meeting with cantonal medical authorities in Switzerland to discuss the problem of high fees charged by some health professionals to those

covered by health insurances of international organizations as opposed to the fees charged to those covered under other Swiss insurances.

The Director of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) presented a report on its investigations. They were generally satisfied with SHI's operations but of course identified some areas which could benefit from improvement.

The Long-term Care working group's work was presented. A consultant had evaluated the cost of the long pending recommendations contained in the long-term care report of a WHO consultant written some 10 years ago. Already it was felt that the proposals (particularly in relation to enhancements in the home) would be too costly and this was confirmed. No further recommendations for enhancements were approved. The Administration had also presented an initiative on "Advanced Care Planning". This was presented by the Chief of the unit on healthy ageing. This included end of life healthcare planning. The GOC felt there was no need to introduce specific rules on this as participants are free to consult their physician for guidance on this topic within the current SHI rule provisions.

At least two meetings of the GOC were agreed for next year in addition to meetings of various working groups.

***Alejandro Henning and Ann Van Hulle***

## **A WARNING CONCERNING CERTIFICATES OF ENTITLEMENT**

If you have your mail redirected during absences, upon your return if one of the redirected items is the Certificate of Entitlement (CE) from the Pension Fund (PF), be sure to remove any trace of the redirected address before returning the CE.

Recently, a member overlooked doing this and they had the very unpleasant surprise of being contacted by the PF requiring them to confirm their "new" address, with all of the worry and complications involved in such a request.

It would appear that a diligent mailroom colleague at the PF assumed the "redirected label" was a "change of address label", and this sparked a flurry of activity, now thankfully resolved.

Ensure you return the CE without any extraneous address labels.

## PENSION NEWS

### As the Investment Markets rock'n'roll

Over the last few years, investment markets have been true to their nature – volatile. The good news is that, despite all the geopolitical and economic turbulence affecting financial markets in general, the UNJSPF investment portfolio value has been gradually on an upward swing albeit not in a steady fashion.

After losing USD 10 billion at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 bringing the value down to **USD 63 billion**, the value rose to **USD 81.53 billion** by year end. On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 the portfolio value had increased to **USD 91.48 billion** before getting caught on a downward slide with its value registering at **USD 77.93 billion** on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. Then the climb in value started once again with a 2023 closing at **USD 88.24 billion**.

The year 2024 has been no exception to swinging values. The portfolio closed on 31<sup>st</sup> March at **USD 91.2 billion**. On 30<sup>th</sup> June the value was **USD 92.2 billion**. Then a substantial increase to **USD 97.2 billion** was registered on 30<sup>th</sup> September before a slight dip to **USD 96.66 billion** by middle October before rising again to **USD 96.86 billion** by middle November. Taking an overall view of the value from end 2019 to mid-November 2024, the Fund's investment portfolio has gone from **USD 71.97 billion to USD 96.86 billion, meaning a 35% increase**.

Now that's pretty jazzy rock'n'roll!

**Barbara Fontaine**

## 2025: POSSIBLE DATES FOR COFFEES/LUNCHES/ACTIVITIES IN THE GENEVA AREA

**Ferney-Voltaire:** Lunches are held on the last Monday of the month at the *Café Voltaire (Chez Toni)*, 8 Grand Rue at 12 noon. Wolfgang Schutt maintains an email list of those who usually attend the lunches. If you are not on the list and would like to be informed about when they take place, please contact him at [wolfgang.schutt@orange.fr](mailto:wolfgang.schutt@orange.fr).

### Geneva:

**Cité Seniors:** Please check their website – [www.geneve.ch/fr/cite-seniors](http://www.geneve.ch/fr/cite-seniors) – to find out about their activities. On the first Wednesday of the month, “*International Carrefour*” coffee afternoons are held from 14.00–16.00 at Cité Seniors, 62 rue de Lausanne/28 rue Amat. Cité Seniors offers many activities – their programme can be found on the website or give them a call on 0800 18 19 20. The Cité is open on Tuesdays from 10.00–12.30 and from 13.30–17.00 and from Wednesdays to Fridays from 09.00–12.30 and 13.30–17.00, and on Sundays from 11.30–17.00 as per the programme.

**CAD: Hospice général:** Offers many activities for

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

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

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

**MDA Activités 50+:** Also offers many activities for the over 50s – their programme can be found at [www.mda-geneve.ch](http://www.mda-geneve.ch) or give them a call on 022 329 83 84 on Tuesday to Friday mornings from 09.00–13.00.

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

## OLDER PEOPLES' RIGHTS, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

### United Nations International Day of Older Persons, 1 October 2024

Since 1990, the first of October is celebrated as the International Day of Older Persons (IDOP). On 21 December 2010, the UN General Assembly established the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA), with the mandate to consider the position of older persons in the existing international framework of human rights, and to identify possible gaps and how best to address them.

This Open-Ended Working Group has now delivered its final report and recommendations after its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting in May 2024.

#### Side event to the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council:

#### ***"Geneva Calls: A pivotal moment for older persons' rights"***

The publication of the Open-Ended Working Group report marked a critical juncture in the global discourse on the human rights of older persons. It was therefore decided by the NGO Committee on Ageing in Geneva to organize a session in partnership with Member States and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to mark IDOP in the wings of the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council (HRC). This side-event aimed to analyse these developments and explore actionable pathways for Member States and all stakeholders to further the human rights of older persons, as a next step towards implementation of the OEWGA recommendations.

This one-and-a-half-hour side event was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva and was well-attended. The programme included several opening statements, a panel discussion, spotlight interventions and concluding remarks. *(The programme of the side event can be found on page 38 in the QNT digital edition only).*

In his opening statement, High Commissioner Volker Türk reminded the audience that by 2050 the global population was expected to include 1.6 billion older persons, amounting to 16% of the total world population. With this situation looming on the horizon, and the profound challenges it

represents, the Call to Action by the OEWGA is not only timely with an eye on the future, but also already relevant in today's world. We need meaningful action against ageism and the exclusion of older persons from taking part in decision-making, and from reaping the benefits of technical advances. Therefore, the recommendation of the OEWGA to work towards a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons, an international legally binding instrument to guarantee equality, dignity and respect irrespective of age, is highly pertinent.

In her opening statement Claudia Mahler, the Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons, recalled the diversity and heterogeneity of the older population segment, and the fragmented nature of the human rights framework. The rights of older persons need to be integrated in this framework in order to avoid them carrying a disproportionate burden of inequality and discrimination. She pointed out that it is now up to governments to take these recommendations seriously and to create a framework for the development and formulation of



During the discussions of the Open-Ended Working Group report.



a Convention that addresses inclusion as the missing link towards the realization of older persons' human rights in a broad effort by all stakeholders.

The strong interest of Latin American Governments was reflected during this event by their substantive inputs, with contributions by the Ambassadors and/or Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Office at Geneva from Argentina, Mexico and the Dominican Republic. The audience was reminded that the members of the Organization of American States (OAS) had adopted an Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons, [https://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter\\_american\\_treaties\\_a-70\\_human\\_rights\\_older\\_persons.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter_american_treaties_a-70_human_rights_older_persons.asp). This Convention entered into force on 11 January 2017; it was initially signed by six countries, with so far eight countries depositing instruments of ratification/accession to the OAS Headquarters (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru and Surinam), while the parliaments of Bolivia, Costa Rica and Uruguay have also ratified the Convention.

H.E. Anita Pipan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and Permanent Representative of Slovenia, pointed out the transformative power of anchoring the human rights of older persons with implications for all sectors of society. She emphasized that older people are rights holders and not beneficiaries, and that addressing the rights of older persons is not limited to dealing with needs created by age-related deficiencies. She expressed the commitment of Slovenia to ensure this issue receives the attention it deserves, to



H.E. Francisca Elizabeth Méndez Escobar, Permanent Representative of Mexico, addressing the event.

support the generation of the widest possible consensus and to inspire the mobilization of more action.

H.E. Carlos Mario Foradori, Permanent Representative of Argentina, highlighted the early commitment of his government to this cause: Argentina had chaired the OEWGA from its inception, it had supported the designation of the Independent Expert in 2013, and it had co-sponsored relevant UNGA Resolutions over the period 2018–2023. He now called upon the members of the Human Rights Council and the UN Member States in general to take over the torch from the OEWGA and work towards an international, legally binding instrument for the human rights of older persons. There is urgency in bridging the gaps in the human rights framework with respect to the protection of older people, and in the national policies and programmes addressing these matters.

In the ensuing panel discussion, H.E. Francisca Elizabeth Méndez Escobar, Permanent Representative of Mexico, echoed the earlier speakers on the need to consider the diversity in the group of older persons, and the many forms of discrimination that therefore could affect them. The Government of Mexico has focused on the right to autonomous decision-making by older persons, and therefore supported the initiative for an Inter-American Convention early on. Alana Officer, Unit Head for Demographic Change & Healthy Ageing, WHO, referred to the 2021 UNDESA/WHO/UNFPA/UNHRC report on ageism, which revealed that it is a phenomenon expressed in one way or another by 50% of the surveyed population (which is more than racism or sexism). There are three avenues to combat ageism: through the strengthening of policy and law; through educational interventions; and, through intergenerational solidarity. Of these three, working through policy and law can have the most immediate effects, as it builds on the human rights framework using existing and new instruments. But: enforcement mechanisms need to be strengthened, and intersectional gaps overcome. The evidence base is clear, and the next

steps towards a Convention are in the court of the Member States. Kari Tapiola, Former Deputy Director-General of the ILO, recalled the origin of his organization in 1919, as the international, tripartite agency to establish labour standards and norms. Nowadays, any resolution or declaration will include all interested parties including older persons – the challenge lies in giving follow-up to the adopted resolutions. The original 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not mention age or older people, and standard setting in the context of labour conditions has for a long time focused on youth – but since the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century this void is being filled. And as old age-related stereotypical perceptions are gradually disappearing, we now see a clearer link between the demographic trends towards a growing segment of older people, and the obstacles and opportunities to achieve SDG targets. “*Leaving no one behind*” also applies to older people. Standards will underpin changes in attitudes and are therefore very much needed as social attitudes continue to block older persons’ access to services. Pernille Fenger, Director of the UNFPA Geneva office, returned to the question on how we can make a society without ageism. In her view we need census-based information at the outset, because hard evidence on knowledge, attitudes and practice

in connection with ageism will provide us with the insights to develop strategies to tackle it. Any such strategies will need to be multigenerational, participatory and promote healthy ageing. As long as the level of attention to the rights of older persons continues to be meagre, the tested mechanisms of accountability and redress from the human rights-based approach must be applied. Silvia Perel-Levin, Vice-Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva), emphasized the need to ensure the active engagement of older persons in the now starting conversations and negotiations on a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. We need a consultation process that also gives room to civil society. There are multiple barriers to be crossed, with ageism arguably the most important one. Strong political support will be needed at this stage, to kickstart the process and get the context and contents optimally framed from the start. As already expressed earlier, the ball is now in the court of the Member States.

The spotlight interventions that followed reiterated and re-enforced all the points already made.

The full side event can be viewed at <https://ageingcommitteegeneva.org/idop-2024/>

**Robert Bos**

## The WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities

Longer lives are one of humanity's great achievements. However, we don't just want to add years to our lives. We also want to enjoy good health and well-being in later life. This is the essence of the concept of healthy ageing. Today, too many people around the world experience worse health than they should because of unsupportive environments that prevent them from maximising the quality of their later years.

Age-friendly environments foster healthy and active ageing, enabling older people to: age safely in a place that is right for them; be free from poverty; continue to develop personally; and to contribute to their communities while retaining autonomy, health and dignity. Older people must be at the centre of any effort to create an age-friendly world.

The physical and social environments in our cities and communities, where older people increasingly live, have powerful influences on the experience of ageing, the challenges ageing poses and the opportunities it offers. As numerous cities and communities around the world have shown, an age-friendly world is possible, provided it is built by all of us – community by community, city by city, and region by region. Global population ageing and

rapid urbanization are two key drivers of community health status; there is, therefore, a key role for WHO and its Member States to promote age-friendly cities and communities.

The WHO **Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities** was established in 2010 to connect cities, communities and organizations worldwide which share the vision of making their community a great place to grow old in, through participatory health promotional actions at the local level. It seeks to stimulate this concept by:

- **inspiring** change by showing what can be done and how it can be done;
- **connecting** cities and communities worldwide to facilitate the exchange of information, knowledge and experience; and
- **supporting** cities and communities to find appropriate innovative and evidence-based solutions.

The WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities currently includes over 1700 cities and communities in 55 countries, covering over 330 million people worldwide.

This article aims to bring the objectives, activities and products of the Network to the attention of AFSM members. The Network's first entry point for

more information about the Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities – Age-friendly World is its website:

<https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/who-network/>

The plan is to inform QNT readers with regular updates on the Network.

The website gives access to information, including which cities and communities have engaged with this initiative, what activities they are developing to become more age-friendly, and (for those wishing to engage more directly in their activities) their contact details – for this, check the members' dedicated profile page by clicking on the orange dots on the map or browsing the network list. The Age-friendly World portal will also give you access to the WHO Global Database of Age-friendly Practices, to which you can also contribute.

**Robert Bos**

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For more information, contact Dr Thiago Hérick de Sá, Age-friendly Environments, Demographic Change and Healthy Ageing Unit in WHO HQ's Department of Social Determinants of Health, e-mail [herickdesat@who.int](mailto:herickdesat@who.int) or the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities Secretariat, e-mail [gnafcc@who.int](mailto:gnafcc@who.int)

## NEW MEMBERS

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

#### New Life Members

Philippe Guislain  
Ramesha Krishnamurthy  
Deborah Leydorf  
Ricardo Obama Nsé Obono  
Marcia Poole  
Catherine Riedweg  
Ian Smith

#### Conversion to Life member

Mark Perkins

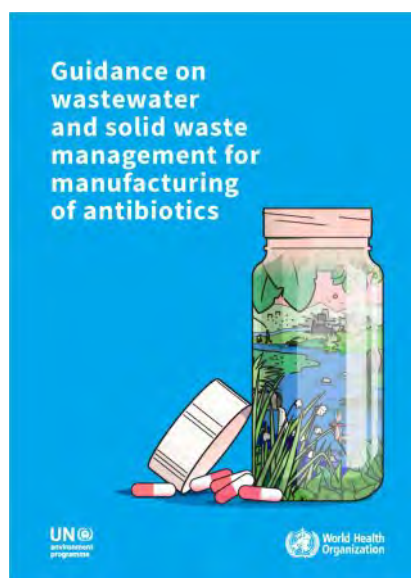
#### New Annual Members

## NEWS FROM WHO

## Highlights of news from WHO

- Following the launch of **WHO's Investment Case 2025–2028** in May, **support for the Organization's first-ever Investment Round has been coming in with commitments made at the launch and subsequently**, at the WHO Regional Committee for Africa in August, the World Health Summit in Berlin in October, and at the G20 meeting held in Brazil in November. **South Africa, the incoming G20 Chair, pledged to maintain focus on sustainably financing WHO in 2025 .**

- On 3 September, WHO published its first-ever guidance on antibiotic pollution. **The new guidance on wastewater and solid waste management for antibiotic manufacturing pollution** sheds light on this important but neglected challenge ahead of the UN General



Assembly High-Level Meeting on antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

(<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240097254>) held on 26 September – *see below*.

- On 4 September, WHO launched a **global framework to help Member States investigate the origins of new and re-emerging pathogens**. (<https://www.who.int/news/item/04-09-2024-who-launches-global-framework-for-understanding-the-origins-of-new-or-re-emerging-pathogens>). While there are a number

of tools available for investigating infectious disease outbreaks, **this is the first unified, structured approach to investigating the origins of a novel pathogen.**

- On 13 September, **WHO prequalified the first vaccine against mpox.**

(<https://www.who.int/news/item/13-09-2024-who-prequalifies-the-first-vaccine-against-mpox>). **This approval is expected to facilitate timely and increased access to this vital product in communities with urgent need, to reduce transmission and help contain the outbreak.**

Also, **WHO and partners established an access and allocation mechanism for mpox vaccines, treatments, and tests.**

(<https://www.who.int/news/item/13-09-2024-who-and-partners-establish-an-access-and-allocation-mechanism-for-mpox-vaccines--treatments--tests>). The Access and Allocation Mechanism for mpox has **allocated an initial 899 000 vaccine doses for 9 countries across the African region** that are hit hard by the current mpox surge. **The first mpox in vitro diagnostic the Alinity m MPXV assay, manufactured by Abbott Molecular Inc. was listed by WHO under its Emergency Use Listing procedure on 3 October.**

([https://extranet.who.int/prequal/sites/default/files/document\\_files/eul-mpxv\\_list-of-mpxv-ivds.pdf](https://extranet.who.int/prequal/sites/default/files/document_files/eul-mpxv_list-of-mpxv-ivds.pdf)).

- On the same day, **WHO updated its influenza care guidelines, including recommendations for viruses with pandemic potential.** (<https://www.who.int/news/item/13-09-2024-who-updates-influenza-care-guidelines--includes-recommendations-for-viruses-with-pandemic-potential>).



- On 18 September, **FIFA and WHO launched a global concussion awareness campaign.**



(<https://www.who.int/news/item/18-09-2024-fifa-and-world-health-organization-launch-global-concussion-awareness-campaign>).

- On 19 September, **Jordan became the first country to receive WHO verification for eliminating leprosy.**
- From 20–28 September, **WHO participated in the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly and its High-level Week 2024**, to advocate the importance of **ensuring strong pandemic preparedness and response, health financing, and equitable access to healthcare, including digital health.** (<https://www.un.org/en/high-level-week-2024>).
- During the UN General Assembly, at an event **hosted by the Government of the Gambia** on 23 September, a new report "*Going digital for noncommunicable diseases: the case for action*" was released jointly by WHO and the ITU. (<https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/378478>). The report emphasizes that an investment today of an additional USD 0.24 per patient per year in digital health interventions, such as telemedicine, mobile messaging and chatbots, can help save more than 2 million lives from noncommunicable diseases over the next decade.
- During the week of 22–29 September, **WHO participated in key events at the Climate Week NYC**, aimed at accelerating the transition to a low-carbon future, with **special focus on the intersection of health and climate.**
- On 23 September, **WHO and Multilateral Development Banks started to execute the new Health Impact Investment Platform** turning the first country health investment plans into operational reality. This landmark **partnership with low- and middle-income countries is addressing the critical need for coordinated efforts to strengthen primary healthcare** in vulnerable and underserved communities to build resilience against pandemic threats like mpox and the climate crisis.
- On 26 September, at the UN General Assembly, **FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOA (World Organization for Animal Health) welcomed the political declaration by global leaders** (<https://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/108/2024/09/FINAL-Text-AMR-to-PGA.pdf>) at the High-Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), **committing to a clear set of targets and actions, including reducing the estimated 4.95 million human deaths associated with bacterial antimicrobial resistance (AMR) annually by 10% by 2030.** (<https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2024/09/26/default-calendar/un-general-assembly-high-level-meeting-on-antimicrobial-resistance-2024>).
- Also on 26 September, **WHO and TikTok, a platform for short-form mobile videos, announced a year-long collaboration aimed at providing people with reliable, science-based health information.** This reflects WHO's commitment to leveraging multiple digital communication platforms to increase outreach to people globally, to promote health literacy, healthy behaviours and actions in an increasingly digitized world.
- On 1 October, **WHO congratulated Brazil for having eliminated lymphatic filariasis as a public health problem.**
- On 3 October, **WHO launched a global strategic plan to fight rising dengue and other Aedes-borne arboviral diseases.**



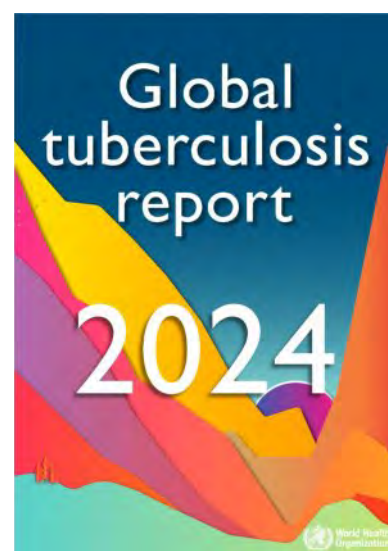
(<https://www.who.int/news/item/03-10-2024-who-launches-global-strategic-plan-to-fight-rising-dengue-and-other-aedes-borne-arboviral-diseases>).

- On 4 October, WHO announced that a **fourth WHO-prequalified human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine product Cecolin®** was confirmed for use in a single-dose schedule. This will contribute to improving a sustainable supply of HPV vaccines, thereby **allowing more girls to be reached with the vaccines that prevent cervical cancer**.
- Also on 4 October, the **IMF, the World Bank Group and WHO agreed on broad principles for cooperation on pandemic preparedness**, thereby allowing the scaling up of support to countries to **prevent, detect and respond to public health threats through the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust**. (<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/Resilience-and-Sustainability-Trust>).
- On 10 October, a new WHO report *Estimating the impact of vaccines in reducing antimicrobial resistance and antibiotic use* states that **vaccines against 23 pathogens could reduce the number of antibiotics needed by 22% or 2.5 billion defined daily doses globally every year**, supporting worldwide efforts to address antimicrobial resistance. (<https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/379116/9789240098787-eng.pdf?sequence=1>).
- On 16 October, the **State of Qatar and WHO launched a new report providing lessons learned and recommendations for staging healthy and safe mega and grassroots sporting events around the world – *Changing the Game: Strengthening Health and Well-Being through Sport Events***.



(<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240101357>).

- On 20 October, **WHO certified Egypt as malaria-free**. This achievement follows a **nearly 100-year effort by the Egyptian Government and people to end a disease present in the country since ancient times**.
- On 28 October, alongside the **2024 Committee on World Food Security (CFS)** (<https://www.fao.org/cfs/en>) **FAO and WHO issued a joint statement which outlines four key principles of what constitutes a healthy diet**. (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240101876>).
- On 29 October, WHO published the ***Global Tuberculosis Report 2024*** revealing that **approximately 8.2 million people were newly diagnosed with TB in 2023, the highest number recorded since WHO began global TB monitoring in 1995**. This represents a notable increase from 7.5 million reported in 2022, **placing TB again as the leading infectious disease killer in 2023, surpassing Covid-19**. (<https://www.who.int/teams/global-tuberculosis-programme/tb-reports/global-tuberculosis-report-2024>).
- On 5 November, **WHO published a study in *eBioMedicine* which names 17 pathogens that regularly cause diseases in communities as top priorities for new vaccine development**. This study is the **first global effort to systematically prioritize endemic pathogens** based on criteria that include regional disease burden, antimicrobial resistance risk and socioeconomic impact. ([https://www.thelancet.com/journals/ebiom/article/PIIS2352-3964\(24\)00460-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/ebiom/article/PIIS2352-3964(24)00460-2/fulltext)).





- WHO, in collaboration with the Wellcome Trust and the health community hosted a **Health Pavilion at the COP29 UN Climate Conference** in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 11–22 November. Ahead of the conference **WHO issued a special report on climate change and health**,

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/97892>



[40036727](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240036727), and **technical guidance to support countries to better integrate health into their climate policies – Quality criteria for integrating health into Nationally Determined Contributions**. Both documents stress the

**importance of positioning health at the core of all climate negotiations, strategies, policies and action plans, to save lives and secure healthier futures for present and future generations.**

([https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/environment-climate-change-and-health/quality-criteria-for-integrating-health-into-ndcs-7nov2024.pdf?sfvrsn=ccd3e050\\_6](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/environment-climate-change-and-health/quality-criteria-for-integrating-health-into-ndcs-7nov2024.pdf?sfvrsn=ccd3e050_6)).

- As part of its **commitment to the global initiative to build stronger primary health care and health systems resilience**, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) announced on 12 November an **important grant allocation of USD 10 million to WHO to implement the Health Impact Investment Platform (HIIP)**. The contribution, signed on the sidelines of COP29, marks a crucial step towards operationalizing WHO's commitment to climate and health in low- and middle-income countries.
- On 13 November **new data released in *The Lancet* on World Diabetes Day**, from an analysis conducted by the NCD Risk Factor Collaboration (NCD-RisC) with support from WHO, **highlights the scale of the diabetes epidemic and an urgent need for stronger global action to address both rising disease rates and widening treatment gaps**, particularly in low- and middle-

income countries. **The number of adults living with diabetes worldwide has surpassed 800 million, more than quadrupling since 1990.**

- On 14 November, **WHO issued an alert about the surge in measles cases worldwide** – there were an estimated 10.3 million cases of measles in 2023, a 20% increase from 2022, according to new estimates from WHO and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. **Inadequate immunization coverage globally is driving the surge in cases.**
- Meetings of the **Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB)**, which comprises the 194 member governments of WHO (<https://inb.who.int/>)



**continue negotiations for a pandemic agreement to boost global preparedness for future emergencies.** Parliamentarians from across the globe gathered at the UNITE Global Summit in Berlin on 16 October **to sign a statement in support of the pandemic agreement**. Youth delegates at the first in-person **Global Model WHO (GMWHO)** organized by the **World Federation of United Nations Associations and WHO** from 29 October–1 November (<https://wfuna.org/program/global-model-who-2024/>) **adopted a declaration emphasizing the urgent need for a global pandemic agreement to protect the world from future pandemics.** (<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/the-global-model-who-declaration-on-the-pandemic-agreement>).

- **The 156<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board will take place at HQ from 3–11 February.**

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

**Sue Block Tyrrell**

## READERS' LETTERS

### Holland on Ice

Proofreading this issue brought back memories of a long-ago winter in Holland when the waterways froze, offering numerous skating opportunities. We were keen to try the *Meren en Molentocht*, a “lake and windmill” maze of canals and lakes with well-marked circuits of 20 to 50 kms.

On a hazy morning, we started our outing on a ditch, gaining confidence and finding our “*skating legs*” before joining the throngs on the canal. Courage mustered, we followed the first marker, then turned left at a windmill onto the main canal. The canal had become a frozen playground with laughing children and tables and chairs where locals were selling hot – and cold! – refreshments. Skaters plied the ice in the middle of the canal in both directions. We followed the northbound line trying to imitate the best skaters, leaning forward, head up, eyes on the ice, one arm on their back, the other swinging in rhythm. Others, like us, wobbled, unsure of how to swing a leg without catching the blade on the ice. We quickly learnt the challenge of skating on natural ice: no equipment to groom the surface, to level the ripples formed by the wind, or to remove stuck flotsam. Undoubtedly this is the reason why good skaters bend over with eyes fixed on the ice – to avoid frozen surprises that could send one sprawling.

Northwards, traversing a small, windy lake with a corrugated surface, we rattled along in the company of motionless windmills dotting the white landscape. Another marker led us west to our first “*land crossing*” at a pig farm where we “*carpet skated*” to a narrow canal. The scenery then changed. Windmills gave way to greenhouses, then houses. We snaked along the twisting canal, on the lookout for low metal bridges, ending in a wider area where there were more “*ice cafés*”. A marker then led back to the pig farm, the lake and on to a new canal.

Soon we were gliding through farmland with houses linked by low bridges to a road on the other side of the canal. Our skating had become an obstacle course: the only way forward was to hoist oneself up onto the bridge and crawl across. Thankfully, some thoughtful owners covered the bridges with rugs to protect our knees.

Another marker, another land crossing – this time a dirt mound – and another change of scenery. We were skating above the polders. At a junction was a hot chocolate stand and benches. We indulged, with a few moments of rest, before resuming the polders. Now the wind was head-on and tiring. The going was hard, and I was grateful to leave the polders.

Over another drawbridge, we came to more small lakes. The winter sun pierced the haze as we meandered through the crowds, slowing to take in the scenery: gently swaying reeds, children at play, people having a good time. At Kaag Island the traffic was intense. So many skaters were out on that sunny afternoon. The island ferry continued its crossings, breaking up the ice which obliged more “*carpet skating*”.

On to another series of lakes. The open spaces had attracted iceboats, and many people lingered where a brass band was playing. We stopped to take in the show and munch on “*frites*” purchased at one of the ice stands. The clear blue winter sky and the openness of the lakes were mesmerizing. I didn’t want to leave, but we still had a way to go.

On to a canal leading to a small lake where the ice was crystal clear. I felt uneasy seeing fish motionless below and air bubbles trapped in the ice, wondering whether the ice was thick enough. The Hollanders knew better: some were spinning their cars on the transparent ice!



The last leg was again above the polders with intense wind. The odd farmhouse dotted the countryside, but I was too tired to appreciate the view. Just one more kilometre, then back to the windmill junction, and over the last wooden bridge. We made it! We had completed the 50 km circuit in a little more than three hours and visited Holland in a truly unique way.

**Barbara Fontaine**

## Keep on Walking

On the first day of October, I was sending AFSM-SEAR greetings to our members and friends, on the **International Day of Older Persons**.



I thought it would be good to share with the Global AFSM community some of the advice sent out that day, concerning the one activity that we should try to continue for as long as we can: WALKING.

Here are some facts about the daily walking activity, which promotes and provides us with good health. So, wherever and whenever possible, let us keep walking.

- Our two legs have 50% of the nerves of the human body, 50% of the blood vessels and 50% of our blood is flowing through them.
- It is the largest part of the circulatory network in our body. So, walk daily.

- Only when our feet are healthy does our blood flow smoothly, so people who have strong leg muscles will have a strong heart.
- Ageing starts from the feet upwards.
- As a person gets older, the accuracy and speed of transmission of instructions between the brain and the legs decreases, unlike a younger person. Please walk.
- Calcium, the so-called “bone-fertilizer”, will sooner or later be lost with the passage of time, making the elderly more prone to bone fractures. Walking helps.
- Bone fractures in the elderly can easily trigger a series of complications, especially fatal diseases such as brain thrombosis.
- Exercising the legs is never too late, even after the age of 60 years.
- Although our feet/legs will gradually age with time, exercising our feet/legs is a life-long task.
- Only by regular strengthening the legs, can one prevent or slow further ageing.
- Please walk for at least 30–40 minutes daily to ensure that your legs receive sufficient exercise and to ensure that your leg muscles remain healthy. KEEP ON WALKING!

**M.R. Kanaga Rajan, President, AFSM-SEAR**

## A GLOBAL HEALTH FUNDING CRUNCH?

### Trends and implications discussed

On 19 September 2024 the Global Health Platform of the Geneva Graduate Institute for International Studies organized a lunchtime event focused on the funding crisis faced by global health. Former WHO staff member David Evans was the key speaker and presented an interesting analysis of the implications of macro-fiscal developments on the prospects for increases in government health spending in low and lower-middle income countries. He made it clear that these categories are so dissimilar that consequently there is a huge diversity in their capacity to deal with the impact of the global budget crunch.

The full session, which included discussants from: the Swiss Development Cooperation, the Ethiopian Mission in Geneva, the UN and its Specialized Agencies, and a Kenyan health NGO, can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/ALbA9pWVDw4>

**Robert Bos**

## ASTRONOMY

### The skies for January–June 2025

Usually there are just one or two planets visible in the evening sky but in early 2025 we have all of them available at a glance, strung out across the sky, and visible wherever you are in the world.

Begin your tour over in the west after sunset with brilliant Venus. For the first two weeks in January the yellowish Saturn is just above it, currently looking fainter than usual because its rings are almost edge-on to us. Take a look through a telescope if you can to see this unusual aspect. Venus moves quickly, and on 18 January the two are side by side. After this, Saturn sinks into the sunset and on 24 February is joined briefly by Mercury, although they are very low down and tricky to see in the twilight. Venus also moves into the twilight and is lost by mid-March.

Much higher in the sky, Jupiter shines brightly. Then move farther around the sky to find Mars, noticeably reddish. Uranus and to start with Neptune are there as well, but you will need a 'phone sky app and binoculars to pick them out.

To help you identify the planets, bear in mind that, unlike stars, planets do not usually twinkle, because they have actual discs. Stars are points of light and their beams can easily be affected by turbulence in our atmosphere.

For more tips on what can be seen in the sky look on the Society for Popular Astronomy's website, [www.popastro.com](http://www.popastro.com).

***Article kindly provided by the British Society for Popular Astronomy***

All articles in this series refer to the global situation unless stated otherwise. Terms such as midnight refer to midnight local solar time. The solar time for your site may differ from the actual clock time.

## AFSM CRUISE 2024

## Report of the AFSM cruise in Andalusia

26 September to 3 October 2024

AFSM organized an 8-day cruise in Andalusia, planned in the Autumn to avoid the intense summer heat. Sadly our cruise organizer, Charles Hager, was unable to be with us due to illness.

**26 September:** our group of eight, Catherine Bouchet, Maryse and Alain Caromel, Ray and Wanda Cheng, Pamela Hindle, Bunty Muller and Linda Voysey, met up at Geneva airport for the flight to Seville. On arrival a bus took us to our boat, the *MS La Belle de Cadix* (pictured on the right), which was moored beside a very pleasant park. We were taken to our comfortable cabins with their large picture windows. We had an information meeting and then dinner.

Our boat was specifically constructed to navigate on rivers as well as up to 3 kilometres offshore in the ocean, and is therefore fitted with two sets of navigation equipment, as explained to us by the Captain on our visit to the bridge.



The cruise participants about to enjoy another delicious meal. From left to right around the table: Alain Caromel, Maryse Caromel, Linda Voysey, Bunty Muller, Catherine Bouchet, Pamela Hindle, Wanda Cheng and Ray Cheng.

Photo : Bunty Muller

**27 September: Cordoba,** after an early buffet breakfast, we left for a full day excursion of the town. This had been an important Roman city, and later became a major Islamic centre in the Middle Ages, best known for *La Mezquita*, an immense mosque dating from 784 AD. Cordoba is located on the north bank of the Guadalquivir river and once



had a population of about one million, being the capital of the Emirs and Caliphs. Some centuries later it was taken over by Catholics who constructed a church within the mosque, and later added a Renaissance-style nave. To this day it is still known as the *mosque/cathedral*. There was a successful harmony between Muslim, Jewish and Catholic communities which is evident in the city's architectural richness.

**28 September: Seville,** we had a short walk from the boat to the magnificent "*Plaza de España*" in the María Luisa Park. This plaza-palace was built in 1928 for the Ibero-American Exposition of 1929. The result was a building, unique in the world, with lavish proportions and covering a total area of 50,000 square meters.

In the afternoon we took a guided tour of Seville, which is a very beautiful city, legendary for its cultural traditions and architectural grandeur. Our tour included the four bridges that cross the canal and represent the four ancient kingdoms of Spain, and we continued to the amazing Alcazar, in the heart of Seville, with its palaces and a lovely garden as well as one of the world's largest gothic cathedrals.

Seville is also famous for its many orange trees that line the streets and squares. Although bitter to eat, they are used for making perfumes, essential oils, cakes, liquors, chocolates and marmalade.

Once back on board, the boat sailed on the Guadalquivir river and the Atlantic Ocean towards

Huelva. After dinner we were entertained by some of the Philippine crew members singing a medley of popular songs. A most enjoyable evening.

**29 September: Huelva**, where we started with an excursion of this port city in southwestern Spain, at the mouth of the Odiel and Tinto rivers. The coast reaches the boundaries of the Doñana National Park, where the Guadalquivir river flows into the sea and the Park covers 50,000 hectares, has three eco-systems and over 150 species of birds. The province is well-known as the town Christopher Columbus sailed from on his first voyage of exploration to the New World in 1492. We visited the Caravel Park where there are life-size replicas of the three ships of the Christopher Columbus expedition, namely Pinta, Niña and Santa Maria.



Two of the three full-size replicas of the ships used by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Pictured are the Santa Maria and the Niña.

Photo: Ray Cheng

**More of Ray's photos can be found on the next page**

We also visited the famous Franciscan monastery La Rabida which was built as a mosque between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and later turned into a monastery. After lunch we set sail for Cadiz so spent the afternoon navigating on the Atlantic Ocean.

After a Spanish themed dinner consisting of Iberique produce and an excellent paella, we went to watch flamenco dancing in Cadiz.

**30 September: Jerez de la Frontera** where we had a guided tour and also watched an impressive dressage show performed by magnificent Andalusian horses.

In the afternoon there was a panoramic tour along the coast of Cadiz, which is surrounded by water on three sides, giving it a distinctly maritime character, followed by a walking tour of the city

including a visit to the Cathedral. The city is very attractive with superb baroque churches and elegant mansions, many of which are adorned with facades painted in delicate pastel colours. Cadiz is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in Western Europe, founded by the Phoenicians around 1100 BC. It's often called "*The Silver Teapot*" due to its unique shape and position on a narrow strip of land. On our return we cruised towards El Puerto de Santa Maria.

**1 October:** we strolled from the boat to the small town of El Puerto de Santa Maria and visited the famous Osborne wine cellar which was started by an Englishman and a Scotsman in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is very famous for the Osborne bull logo, and silhouettes of the *Toro Negro* are seen everywhere in Spain. They are well-known for the production of sherry and we were invited to a tasting of several types. After lunch onboard, we cruised to Isla Minima and visited an authentic Andalusian hacienda, situated on the edge of the Guadalquivir, where the owner had created a model farm. We watched an unusual equestrian show with a flamenco dancer and an Andalusian horse and rider, and were then offered refreshments and watched flamenco dancing. Later in the day we cruised back to Seville and we had a delicious gala dinner in the evening.

**2 October:** we had a very early start for our trip to **Granada**, which is situated in southern Spain, at the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains. We spent the morning visiting the city, a great example of medieval architecture dating back to the Moorish occupation, especially the renowned Alhambra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

After lunch we did a walking tour of the sprawling hilltop fortress complex of Alhambra, which encompasses royal palaces, serene patios, and reflecting pools from the Nasrid dynasty, as well as the fountains and orchards of the Generalife gardens. It was a very long but exceptional day with so much to see. A group of three singers and guitarists animated our last dinner onboard.

**3 October: our last day**, which we spent at the "*Plaza de España*" before being taken by coach to the airport at midday. We returned to Geneva on time after a really wonderful holiday.

**Bunt Muller**



## More photos taken during the AFSM cruise in Andalusia

*All photos on this page by Ray Cheng*



Left to right: Maryse Caromel, Linda Voysey, Alain Caromel, Wanda Cheng, Catherine Bouchet and Bunty Muller



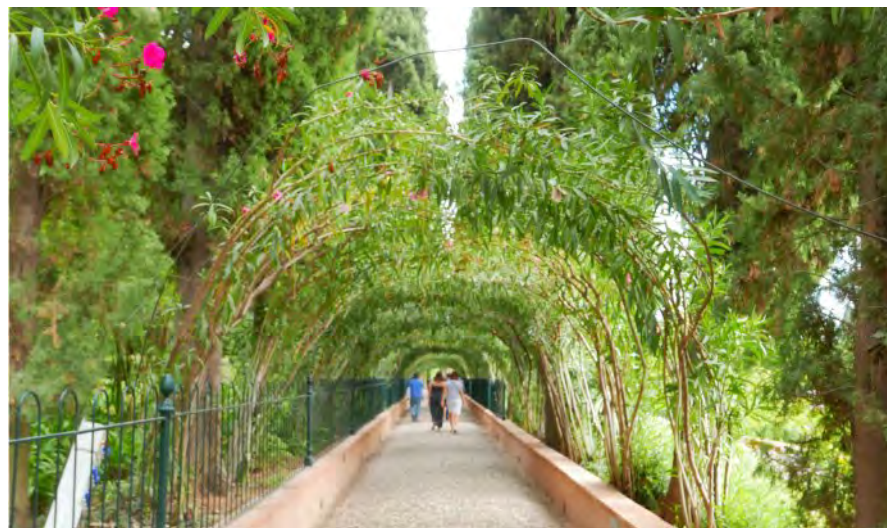
A sherry cask at the Osborne winery signed by champion tennis player Rafa Nadal



Roman bridge in Cordoba



Plaza de España, Seville



Gardens in Alhambra



Queen Isabella of Castile and Christopher Columbus, Granada



## READERS' RECIPES

**Erwtensoep – Dutch green split pea soup (Serves 8)**

Alas, with relentless climate change, the famous Dutch winters are fading into the mists of time. In my youth I remember skaters on the Amsterdam canals, the gruelling 200km skating competition and the inevitable “*koek-en-zopie*” – temporary food-outlets – on the ice. So, what did these outlets serve to warm up the skating crowd? Hot chocolate of course. But also, that most Dutch of all dishes, a bowl of “*erwtensoep met worst*” or “*snert*” for short, green split pea soup with slices of smoked sausage. The freezing winters may have gone, but the Dutch pea soup can still be savoured on dark, but not-as-cold-as-before, winter nights. Here’s my recipe.

**Ingredients**

500 g green split peas (must be green, not yellow, available in supermarkets on the lentil and dried pea shelves)  
 2 leeks, sliced into 0.5-1 cm rings  
 2 litres of water  
 2 beef bouillon cubes  
 250 g celeriac (or more, as it adds a great flavour) diced into 1 cm cubes  
 1 carrot (ideally the traditional huge Dutch “winter carrot”, but in any case, choose the largest you can find, or use several small ones)  
 1 medium sized, hard onion  
 250 g potatoes (also diced)  
 300 g smoked bacon  
 275 g smoked sausage (ideally the Dutch smoked sausage, but unless you have Dutch connections who can supply it, use local smoked sausage)  
 500 g shoulder pork chops  
 2 bay leaves  
 5–10 peppercorns  
 Mace (dried nutmeg skin)  
 Salt to taste  
 A few sprigs of celery, and chopped parsley leaves

**Recipe**

Soak the green split peas overnight in 2 litres of cold water. Then drain off one litre, discard and replenish with 1 litre of fresh cold water. Salt and pepper to taste, add the bay leaves, bouillon cubes, and the mace. Bring very slowly to the boil – this is true “slow cooking” to avoid a crust of burnt peas in the bottom of the pan, it also needs very regular stirring! Froth may form on the surface and can be discarded.

Add the pork chops once it starts boiling and leave simmering gently on a low heat for at least 2 hours. Then, remove the pork chops and set aside.

Meanwhile, peel the celeriac, carrot and potatoes, and cut into 1 cm cubes. Chop the onion in coarse slices. Cut the leeks into 0.5–1 cm rings (using only the white part) and rinse with cold water.

Add the chopped vegetables and peppercorns and simmer the soup over low heat for a further 2 hours. The peas should liquefy (some pass the soup through a blender, but if boiled slowly for long enough the peas don’t need it). Stir frequently.

Remove the bone from the pork chops, cut the meat into small pieces, cut the bacon into 0.5 cm cubes and add the pork and bacon to the soup towards the end of the boiling period. Remove the bay leaves (and mace if used). Heat up the smoked sausage and cut into slices. The soup is ready to serve.

“*Erwtensoep*” is served piping hot in deep bowls. The slices of smoked sausage, the chopped parsley and the celery serve as a garnish on top of the soup.

“*Eet smakelijk*”

**Robert Bos**

## A REMINDER TO ALL MEMBERS

### The death of a retiree is, inevitably, an upsetting, stressful, and busy time for the surviving family

However, we remind you of actions that should be taken without delay.

#### UN Joint Staff Pension Fund

##### **A. Survivors' benefits**

As detailed in the AFSM guide, *Formalities concerning the death of a WHO retiree: A guide for retirees and their survivors to ensure continuity of the UN pension and of the WHO health insurance. Revised edition: 2023*, see <https://www.who.int/about/former-staff/resources>. Click on the 8<sup>th</sup> heading in the section **Retirement resources**.

If you have not already done so, AFSM would urge you:

##### **To send to UNJSPF now:**

- an official copy of your marriage certificate, or if applicable, divorce decree, or the *Livret de Famille* if available;
- an official copy of your spouse's birth certificate;
- an official copy of your birth certificate;
- an official copy of the birth certificate of each child under the age of 21;
- a copy of your spouse's passport page (or identity document) showing their photograph, name, date of birth and signature.

##### **To establish a file to be kept at home containing:**

- photocopies of the documents listed above plus a pre-filled E/2 form – Instructions for payment of death or disability benefits – ready for despatch to UNJSPF by the survivor;
- your Unique ID number (pension number).

##### **B. Bank account**

- Similarly, in order to ensure uninterrupted pension payments, it is advisable to have them paid into a joint bank account which remains in the name of the survivor when the retiree dies.

### WHO Staff Health Insurance (SHI)

After the death of a former staff member, continued participation will be automatic for the surviving spouse and/or children, and/or surviving parent, brother or sister who were insured at the date of the former staff member's death. They may at any time discontinue participation, but may not thereafter resume it. Contributions of the surviving family member(s) of a deceased former staff member will be paid using the same method of payment/deduction elected by the deceased former staff member.

##### **SHI must be informed:**

By email at [shihq@who.int](mailto:shihq@who.int) (recommended)

Or, if not possible, by mail to:

WHO/SHI

20 avenue Appia

1211 Genève 27

Switzerland

Tel: +41 (0) 22 791 18 18

Copies of the death certificate and Form 90.3 (available to download in Word on the SHI Online portal, click on Information, and then Forms and Guides) completed accordingly should be attached to the correspondence.

**NEWS FROM FORMER WHO STAFF MEMBERS' ASSOCIATIONS AROUND THE WORLD****News from the Global AFSMs****The Regional Associations are increasing in strength**

**AFSM-HQ:** The following six reports clearly illustrate the vitality of our Regional Associations. The impetus given by the Director-General at the meeting of the Global Council of the AFSMs last May has borne fruit.

The Regional Associations have recognized that the ball is now in their court and that to achieve full recognition they themselves must now energetically pursue the dialogue with their Regional Directors and their respective administrations.

In the African Region for example, since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the outgoing Regional Director, AFSM-Africa has already contacted the newly designated Regional Director-elect<sup>1</sup>. Also noteworthy is their participation in surveys on issues with the Staff Health Insurance.

In the Americas Region, the Memorandum of Understanding that has just been signed will allow members living in the countries of the Region to receive assistance from the Country Offices in the event of problems, for example for their pensions.

The AFSM-EMR, only in existence for three years, has been invited to address the Member States at the Regional Committee for the second time and is making great progress in ever-better identifying and responding to the needs of retirees in the Region.

Good news also from the European Region where the Association of Former Staff progresses towards officially seeing the light of day, which will open the door to the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Regional Director and his administration. A programme of activities is already underway.

In South-East Asia, the Association is hopeful to present its activities to the new Regional Director and continues to respond to the demands of its members in the areas of pensions and health insurance.

The AFSM-WPR, which was the first to formalize its relations with the Regional Director and the administration by a Memorandum of Understanding, is now in a good position to implement the provisions contained in the Memorandum of Understanding. In its report some of the planned activities are highlighted.

In the next issue of the Quarterly News, we will report on the outcome of the seventh meeting of the Global Council organized by our colleague and friend Linda Milan, President of AFSM-WPR in Manila.

***Jean-Paul Menu and Sue Block Tyrrell***

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<sup>1</sup> As we prepare to go to press, we learn of the death of Dr Faustine Ndugulile on 27 November. He had been nominated by the Regional Committee for Africa for the post of Regional Director. We have sent our condolences to AFSM-Africa.



## Regional reports

**AFSM-EMR: A bird's eye view of the work of the Association.** After three years of serving former staff, the Association felt it was necessary to evaluate its work so far. Some achievements to date:

- Addressing the Regional Committee for the second consecutive year.
- The number of former staff who joined the Association increased during the last four months from 64 to 174. Additional names were received from countries of the region still to be included in the data base.
- Following the request of former staff receiving their pension through one local bank, the Association negotiated with the bank to waive the monthly bank charges. The bank accepted and the charges were reimbursed retroactively for the past three months. Also, on behalf of the former staff we are negotiating reducing or waiving the transfer charges from the New York bank.
- The Committee is working tirelessly looking after the needs of former staff and their beneficiaries.
- The relation with EM Regional Office has been strengthened.
- An HR staff member has been appointed as focal point to facilitate matters related to former staff.
- Working together with HR to organise a Pre-Retirement Workshop.

Following the Director-General's use of the slogan "*Once WHO, Always WHO*" we considered this an ideal moment to look back on our members' work during their years of service with the Organization.

- 1958 was chosen as a start date. Why this year? To base our assessment on living memory, not archives, because we are most fortunate to still have with us a former staff member who joined EMRO in 1958.
- The key point everyone made was working under stress and facing challenges.
- A long list of important programmes and achievements is remembered, such as, Smallpox Eradication, Expanded Programme of Immunization, Health for All, and so many others.
- We concluded that part of WHO's successes are thanks to its dedicated staff who rise to all challenges and are driven to work ceaselessly to improve the health and wellbeing of people around the globe.

We should also appreciate that the Organization reciprocated the role and hard work of former staff,

- Providing Staff Health Insurance to former staff
- Ensuring a Pension is paid to the staff upon retirement
- Creating the Decade of the Health of the Elderly.

And looking ahead,

- Improving Health Insurance Services (a pilot study is underway in EMRO and AFRO).
- Request submitted to the Regional Director to reinstate a Regional SHI Committee at EMRO.
- Request submitted to RC and the Regional Director that AFSM-EMR be officially integrated among the serving infrastructure of EMRO.

**Hanaa Ghoneim** President AFSM-EMR

**WHO Retirees' Representatives in Scandinavia (AFSM-EUR):** We continue to work toward the goal of establishing an AFSM for the WHO European Region (AFSM-EUR). Progress since the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Global Council of AFSMs in May 2024 has focused on setting up a non-profit association in Denmark. After in-depth discussions and deliberations, the founding members of AFSM-EUR have agreed on Statutes and membership fees. The documentation required to register a non-profit association has been submitted through the online portal of the Danish Central Business Register (*Det Centrale Virksomhedsregister*) CVR. We anticipate that the application will be approved, and when this milestone is reached, the CVR will issue a CVR number, which will then pave the way for AFSM-EUR to establish a bank account. We do not know how long this process will take, but we hope to be registered by the end of 2024.

Our short-term goals for the next six months are to:

- participate in the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Global Council of AFSMs on 25 November;
- host the annual Christmas lunch at the UN City on 29 November (*See photo on page 32*);
- establish a monthly meet up session for EURO retirees with one or two AFSM-EUR representatives on the first Wednesday of every month (the session will be open to all former staff on a drop-in basis); and
- once AFSM-EUR is registered with the CVR, reach out to the Regional Director, Dr Hans Kluge, with a view to negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding that takes into account the list of “asks” presented by the Global Council of AFSMs to the Director-General in 2023.

**Melodie Karlson and Sharon Miller**

**AFSM-PAHO/AMR:** We are pleased to inform you that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between AMRO/PAHO and AFSM-PAHO/AMR has been signed. The ceremony had been delayed so that it would take place during the Directing Council meeting.

In addition, AFSM was officially invited to attend the Council for the first time, and we were also active, formally involved, and participated in, the March for Health. A rainy but very well attended event in Washington.

We continue with our efforts to include members living outside of the Washington Metro area. Several countries have focal points, who, in the context of the MOU, can now officially interact with the country office. We have in the past had very good relations with all of them, but it was totally dependent on the goodwill of individuals. The new arrangement will make it easier to cross reference data bases, especially when we are tasked with locating retirees who have not presented their CEs to the Pension Fund. We play our part in the efforts to identify health providers in the countries who will accept the WHO card as payment guarantee.

We have a very active chapter in Colombia. They held their yearly meeting in which we participated remotely.

We are in the process of cleaning our membership records to improve communications. A new survey analyzed members' (and some non-members') wishes for AFSM activities. We shall accommodate as many as possible. We are also introducing a process of allowing members to nominate an Associate member, as well as a designated support person, to help with computer work. This is especially important to our most senior members who may feel overwhelmed by the move to on-line communications.

**Hernán Rosenberg** President AFSM-PAHO/AMR

**AFSM-SEAR:** I convey my greetings to all colleagues for a happy and healthy New Year 2025 and beyond.

The AFSM-SEAR continued with its regular constituent activities, reaching out and assisting the members in all matters relating to the support needed. All of the Officers of the Association, that included the President and the Vice-Presidents and Secretary were instrumental in keeping up with this work. We were able to achieve zero suspension of pension payments because of non-receipt of CEs, by continuously and consistently reaching out. One other vital matter that we handled was to ensure the continued receipt of pension by the survivor beneficiaries in cases of the sad demise of former staff members. Thankfully not so many.

The Association organizes its Executive Committee meetings regularly with important matters and issues being discussed as agenda items. We also hold regular meetings with the local SHI to bring to their attention issues faced by members to seek a resolution.

One of the important activities has been the continuing close collaboration and liaison with fellow AFSMs in all matters of common interests and mutual benefits. AFSM-SEAR has been instrumental in supporting and encouraging the Council to take up relevant and important issues.

With the new Regional Director, Ms Saima Wazed, taking over in February this year, we are yet to have a formal meeting with her. In my informal meetings with the RD on the sidelines of WHD and RC, she assured that she would meet with the AFSM to discuss continued support for AFSM's work and activities. The important matter relating to institutionalization of AFSM and signing of an MOU will be further pursued during the meeting with Ms Saima Wazed.

**M.R. Kanaga Rajan** President AFSM-SEAR

**AFSM-Africa: AFRO Retired but Not Tired:** The members of the Committee were active in preparing for the 7<sup>th</sup> Global Council Meeting at the end of November. Part of our briefing to the Council was an update of our ongoing efforts:

- AFSM-AFRICA now includes members from at least 41 out of the 46 countries of the African Region, however we recognize the need to strengthen the communication and mobilization of retirees at the country level.
- Work continues on the institutionalization process: An important development was the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Regional Office and AFSM-AFRICA on the 31 July 2024 after the 6<sup>th</sup> Global Council Meeting held in May.
- The Regional Director invited AFSM to the 74<sup>th</sup> Regional Committee held in Brazzaville from 26 to 30 August 2024. A very important Agenda item of the 74<sup>th</sup> RC was the election of the new Regional Director (*see footnote, page 24*). Our Vice-president Custódia Mandlhate attended on behalf of AFSM and was also able to discuss issues related to the implementation of the MOU with GMS and RH.
- Furthermore, through one of our team members, we arranged to hold an informal briefing with the elected RD's team and were able to inform them of our concerns.
- Turning to SHI concerns in the region: an SHI survey will be conducted in the following five countries of the region: South Sudan, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and Guinea.
- In addition to the SHI survey, AFSM is also conducting a survey in all 46 countries of the region to take stock of SHI-related issues.

The general work of the committee continues: supporting, aiding and advising our members.

**Kalula Kalambay** President AFSM-Africa

**Custódia Mandlhate** Vice-president AFSM-Africa

**Solange Kouo Epa** Secretary AFSM-Africa

**AFSM-WPR:** A concrete case of implementation of recognition, making the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) a living document... and celebrates yet another milestone.

AFSM-WPR President participated in the 75<sup>th</sup> Session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific from 21–25 October 2024. Meetings continue to be held with WPRO Officials and the new Chairperson of the Staff Association to update on AFSM matters, consult on information and communication matters, and explore possible areas of collaboration. For example, meeting with HR to discuss possible activities or sessions where former staff may be involved or engaged to contribute to discussions as resource persons, in matters relating to preparation for retirement, financial literacy. Meeting and discussion with the Director, Healthy Environments and Populations (DHP) and the Regional Focal Point for Healthy Ageing centred on the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing and possible Regional activities as contribution to the WHO Work for the Decade, for example, a Regional Webinar involving WPR Country Offices on the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing.

Meanwhile, WHO continued its support to AFSM by providing access to information and facilities related to health and well-being of retirees/former staff. For example: use of newly renovated WPRO Gym and Library facilities; access to staff counsellor, webinars – WPRO media platforms as sources of correct and factual information concerning health and well-being.

A valued member of AFICS-Philippines, AFSM President joined AFICS-Phil ExCom in the official call on the UN Resident Coordinator where collaborative efforts on popularizing the SDGs, and a possible AFICS MOU with the UN on areas of cooperation (the AFSM MOU with WPRO was provided) were discussed.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Global Council Meeting**

*(see photos starting on page 36 of the digital edition)*

The 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Global Council of AFSMs was successfully organized and chaired by AFSM-WPR on 25 November 2024 with the full support of WPRO management, from the preparations, to the actual conduct of the Meeting.

Held in a WPRO Meeting Room with full use of WHO facilities and services, it clearly demonstrated what the DG says that “*Once WHO, Always WHO*”. The hybrid meeting with about 40 participants and resource persons from HQ and six Regional AFSMs tackled important issues such as SHI, AFSMs contributing to WHO’s work on the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing, and progress and challenges in the journey of the AFSMs towards recognition and institutionalization especially in the remaining three Regional Associations.

Highlight of the meeting was the message from the Director-General, Dr Tedros. The address by Dr Saia Ma’u Piukala, WPRO Regional Director, and the presentation by Tamas Landes, Director, of Administration and Finance and Regional Focal Point for AFSM, provided inspiration and encouragement to participants, who saw for themselves how well WPRO management demonstrated the DG’s vision of institutionalizing AFSMs.

Participants were impressed with the arrangements: from the elegant official meeting room set up, to the excellent handling of the hybrid nature of the meeting and commended the Regional leadership for promoting effective collaboration and nurturing a partnership that has allowed AFSM-WPR to do its work better.

**Linda L. Milan** President AFSM-WPR



## IN MEMORIAM

### Recent deaths<sup>1</sup> of former WHO staff members as reported to AFSM

|                        |                   |           |                  |                     |           |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Adnan                  | Bidayah           | 15 MAY 22 | Lunt             | Ramona              | 21 JUN 24 |
| Alexeev                | Valeri            | 31 AUG 24 | Magnin           | Denise M            | 06 JUL 24 |
| Almia                  | Pratap Singh      | 27 AUG 24 | Malankar         | Pradeep             | 11 NOV 23 |
| Cachafeiro             | Leda              | 18 JUN 24 | Markvart         | Karel               | 29 MAY 24 |
| Chhatwal               | Amarjit Sing      | 17 JUN 24 | Marques          | Audette             | 14 APR 24 |
| Christoffersen         | Oluf              | 29 MAY 24 | Mayouya          | Anatole             | 03 APR 24 |
| Coly                   | Malang            | 06 JUL 24 | Mondini          | Romano V            | 30 AUG 24 |
| Cooray                 | Navadeva Tissa    | 30 JUN 24 | Moudziba         | Albert              | 12 FEB 24 |
| Cussianovich Crosby*** | Joann             | 09 SEP 24 | Moumpala         | Georgine            | 22 AUG 24 |
| Fernandez-V            | Hector            | 06 JUL 24 | Novaes           | Humberto De Moraes  | 30 AUG 24 |
| Garcia                 | Yanuario          | 31 AUG 24 | Ntiwane          | Edith N             | 17 MAY 24 |
| Harring                | Arlette Elizabeth | 23 JUL 24 | Nzouzi           | Andre               | 31 DEC 23 |
| Hassan                 | Ekram Saad        | 04 AUG 24 | Phiri Mubanga    | Catherine           | 19 JUN 24 |
| Heiner                 | C Peter E         | 11 JAN 24 | Ponsolle         | Jean-Claude         | 22 JUL 24 |
| Jablenski              | Assen V           | 03 JUL 24 | Pouabou          | Jean A              | 26 AUG 24 |
| Jabra                  | Adib              | 27 JUL 24 | Prandle          | Margaret L          | 04 AUG 24 |
| Jakubowska             | Helene            | 27 APR 24 | Reynoso Pineda   | Francisco           | 12 JUN 24 |
| Kabasha Lubuika        | Lubuika           | 20 JUL 24 | Saleh            | Mona Mahmoud        | 28 JUN 24 |
| Kamara                 | Sebora A          | 15 MAY 24 | Samayoa Castillo | Carlos              | 12 DEC 23 |
| Khoury                 | Mariam Sami       | 26 AUG 24 | Sanchez Sanchez  | Luis Ignacio        | 16 AUG 24 |
| Ki                     | Bruno             | 20 SEP 23 | Toe              | Laurent Desire Elie | 29 FEB 24 |
| King                   | Maurice Henry     | 18 AUG 24 | Villa            | Lucio J             | 15 SEP 24 |
| Larusdottir            | Johanna           | 02 AUG 24 | Young            | Torres A            | 10 JUN 24 |
| Lindblad               | Nils              | 01 OCT 23 |                  |                     |           |

The deaths were also announced of the survivors of former staff members: Bachet, Daniel; Calderon, Maria De Los Angeles; De Diaz, Luz Rojas; De Jesus Machado, Neuza; Dota, Marie T Pauline; Halsall, Mireille; Houenassou-Houangbe, Kayissan Dravie; Huehne, Lai; Malm, Rose S P; McPhail, Jouhaina; Munteanu, Jacqueline Paule; Outschoorn, Maive Valerie; Peral, Maria; Stevens, Mary; Umstead, Florence Y; Wong, Chiung-Hua; Yovapue, Kingkaew.

<sup>1</sup> The present notification of deaths was gratefully received from UNJSPF and covers Q3 2024. 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.

## Carol Janet Martin, born 5 January 1944 in Kent, UK, died 7 October 2024 in Exeter, UK



I met Carol at an office party 40 years ago. I never knew her to miss a party! There was a vacancy in her department (Environmental Health) and she made sure I got the job. I worked directly with Carol from 1984 until she took early retirement in 2015. My

future husband shared an office with her for over a year as well, and she became an important presence in our lives, from wedding through children, to retirement.

Carol was one of the *crème de la crème* secretaries brought over from the UK after stringent tests and interviews. She arrived in 1967, and apart from a few years at the UN Vienna in the early 1970s, Geneva was her adopted home. Carol was an excellent assistant, and managed to be calm, patient, and helpful with all her colleagues. Well, all except her boss, Sam Ozolins, at whom she could

often be heard shouting through the wall. This sitcom provided endless amusement to all, but then we knew that there was deep affection and genuine respect.

Carol always thoroughly enjoyed travelling overseas, and continued through retirement, initially in Geneva and eventually in Somerset, where she lived close to her sister.

Carol was a *bon vivant*, always up for wining and dining. Four colleagues from the environmental health programme would regularly try out gourmet restaurants in Geneva, and even after Carol left for Somerset, she made a point of returning every summer to keep our “Gang of Four” tradition alive. We dined with her in July for what was to be the last time.

When sharing the sad news of Carol’s passing with former colleagues, I received comments about her being a “lovely lady,” “full of wanderlust,” “reliable colleague,” “fun-loving,” and “generous”.

We will miss you Carol.

**Jenny**, with **Richard Helmer** and **Robert Bos**

## Hélène Jakubowska, born 6 December 1921 in Rudomina, Lithuania, died 27 April 2024 in France

We have learned of the death of Hélène Jakubowska, a former WHO staff member and life member of AFSM. After retirement Hélène lived in Paris and died aged 102, making her the fifth known AFSM centenarian. She was born a Polish national and later became a French national. She remained single all her life.

Hélène joined WHO in September 1961 as an Administrative Assistant in the Translation unit of WPRO. In 1964 she transferred to EURO as Administrative Officer, Reports, and in 1969 moved to the same function in Brazzaville. Hélène stayed in AFRO for the rest of her career. In 1973 she became Editor, Reports section, where her

responsibilities included assisting staff and consultants to prepare clear assignment and duty travel reports in both English and French. Hélène excelled in this function. In 1976 she became AFRO’s Editor, Editorial Services, until her retirement on 31 December 1981.

If you can add any more information, or provide a photo, recent or period, please contact AFSM so that we can complete a fitting obituary for our colleague.

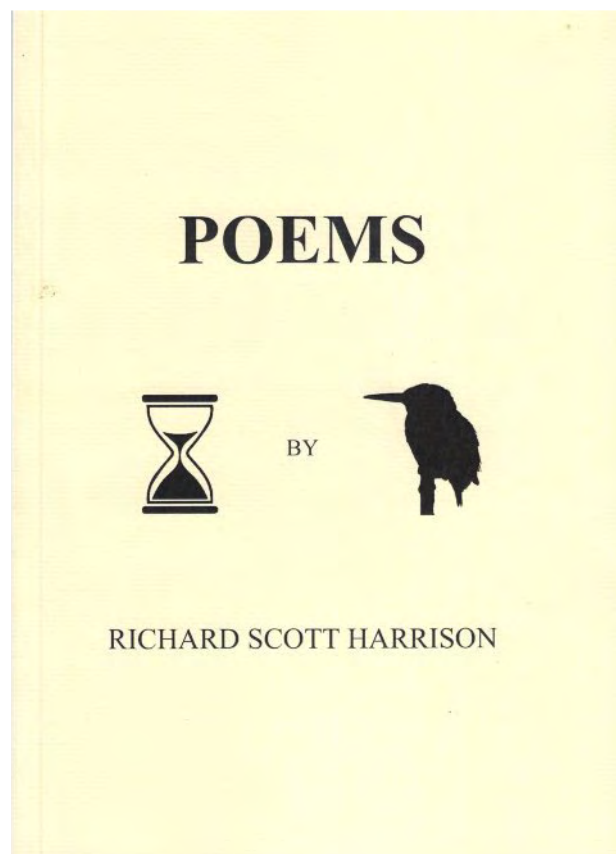
Thank you for your help.

**Members of the Executive Committee** and **WHO staff in the Archives service**

## BOOK REVIEWS

## POEMS

Richard Scott Harrison



Published: February 2021

Language: English

Paperback: 112 pages in b/w

Format: 21 x 14.7 cms

Published by, and available from:

R S Harrison, 184 rue de la Lilette, 01210 Versonnex, France

[harrison.richard@wanadoo.fr](mailto:harrison.richard@wanadoo.fr)

Paperback: 15 €, of which 5 € will be donated to charity

The author of this book of poetry is a former WHO editor/translator with 30 years' service to the Organization and a life member of AFSM.

The poems of Richard Scott Harrison reflect his strong beliefs and his love and reverence for words and their power. Many of the poems are based on his own deep experiences, his universal belief system, and a thorough observation of the world around us and the way it has developed due to human activities. As he writes, his motivation lies in a deep love of the world in view of all the challenges that endanger its very existence, and the realization that human existence is but a tiny moment in the history of the universe.

*"The Lord's Prayer"* is the centrepiece of his book. Richard reflects on every part of the prayer in detail. Each *"petition"* is interpreted and explained in a broader manner as he understands it. The poems are thoughtfully written and demonstrate an immense ability to use words, meanings and phrases that go beyond general conversational level, sometimes in a "playful" manner.

While some readers might find the style, vocabulary and choice of words of Richard's poems challenging, they will see them, in the end, as an invitation to delve into their depths and to spend time contemplating about their true meaning.

Overall, the book clearly demonstrates a mastery of language, a profound thought process, and deep spiritual beliefs.

***Maged Younes***



## EURO retirees Christmas lunch, 29 November 2024, at UN City in Copenhagen, Denmark

### Dr Hans Kluge, Regional Director, joined the WHO retirees for the group photo

See page 26



**Back row (from left to right):** Melodie Karlson, Rainer Verhoeven, Ole Borchersen, Hanne Fjeldhoff, Pedro Traver, Stig Guldhammer, Hanne Matthiesen, Manfred Huber, Sharon Miller, Gurli Vestergaard.

**Front row (from left to right):** Franka Edwards, Pamela Charlton, Jette Van Deurs, Birthe Havn, Dr Hans Kluge (Regional Director), Rita Larsen, Marie-Françoise Boré, Wendy Enersen, Lisa Copple, Joan Von Essen, Jenny Madsen, Angelika Alderslade.

**Present, but not pictured:** Mary Stewart Burgher, Marina Hansen.

Photo: © Uugangerel Davaasuren.



**A SELECTION OF ART EXHIBITIONS IN EARLY 2025****24 January 2025 – 1 June 2025****Treasures of the *Petit Palais* of Geneva****Fondation de l'Hermitage**

Route du Signal 2

1018 Lausanne

Switzerland

Telephone: +41 (0)21 320 50 01

Website: <https://fondation-hermitage.ch/>E-mail: [info@fondation-hermitage.ch](mailto:info@fondation-hermitage.ch)

In the Spring of 2025, the Fondation de l'Hermitage will welcome the masterpieces of the *Petit Palais* in Geneva, a particularly original collection of impressionist and post-impressionist art, which has not been presented in Switzerland since 2000, the year the *Petit Palais* closed to the public.

Acquisitions commenced in the 1950s by Oscar Ghez, this collection bears witness to a remarkably free spirit and great curiosity. Passionate about painting from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Tunisian-born industrialist acquired paintings by Édouard Manet and Auguste Renoir, as well as canvases by artists who were less well-known at the time, such as Gustave Caillebotte, Charles Angrand, Maximilien Luce and Louis Valtat, some of whom have since become icons.

The *Petit Palais* collection also includes exceptionally large groups of works, offering a panoramic view of the careers of certain artists, including that of Lausanne-based Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen. It also showcases female painters such as Suzanne Valadon, Marie Bracquemond and Tamara de Lempicka.

**14 February 2025 – 8 June 2025**

## **Francis Bacon: Human Presence**



Léonard Gianadda with Francis Bacon in 1987.

*Photo: © Michel Nguyen*

### **Fondation Pierre Gianadda**

Rue du Forum 59

1920 Martigny

Switzerland

Telephone: +41 (0) 27 722 39 78

Website: <http://www.gianadda.ch/>

E-mail: [info@gianadda.ch](mailto:info@gianadda.ch)

In collaboration with the National Portrait Gallery, London. Curated by Rosie Broadley.

British painter Francis Bacon was born in Dublin in 1909 and died in Madrid in 1992. His first paintings were highly influenced by Surrealism and Picasso.

This self-taught artist also took inspiration from Vélasquez, Poussin and Rembrandt.

## 26 January 2025 – 25 May 2025

### Northern Lights



### Fondation Beyeler

Baselstrasse 101  
CH-4125 Riehen/Basel  
Switzerland

Telephone: +41 61 645 97 00

Website: <https://www.fondationbeyeler.ch/en/home>

E-mail: [info@fondationbeyeler.ch](mailto:info@fondationbeyeler.ch)

At the beginning of the year, the Fondation Beyeler will present the group show “Northern Lights”, focusing on around 70 landscape paintings by artists from Scandinavia and Canada created between 1880 and 1930, among them masterpieces by Hilma af Klint and Edvard Munch. These artists all share the boreal forest as a common source of inspiration.

The seemingly boundless expanses of the forest, the radiant light of endless summer days, the long winter nights and natural phenomena such as the northern lights gave rise to a specifically Nordic way of modern painting that to this day exerts enduring appeal and fascination. The boreal forest, which stretches south and north of the polar circle, forming one of Earth’s largest primeval forests, was increasingly represented as a spiritual landscape.

The exhibition will be the first of its kind in Europe in terms of the constellation of works on display. It will provide an opportunity to trace the development of Nordic landscape painting in modern art through selected works by Helmi Biese, Anna Boberg, Emily Carr, Prince Eugen, Gustaf Fjæstad, Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Lawren S. Harris, Hilma af Klint, J.E.H. MacDonald, Edvard Munch, Ivan Shishkin, Harald Sohlberg and Tom Thomson, as well as discover artists likely still unknown to many visitors.



## The 7<sup>th</sup> Global Council Meeting was held in a WPRO Meeting Room with full use of WHO facilities and services

*See page 28 for a brief preliminary report of the Global Council Meeting*

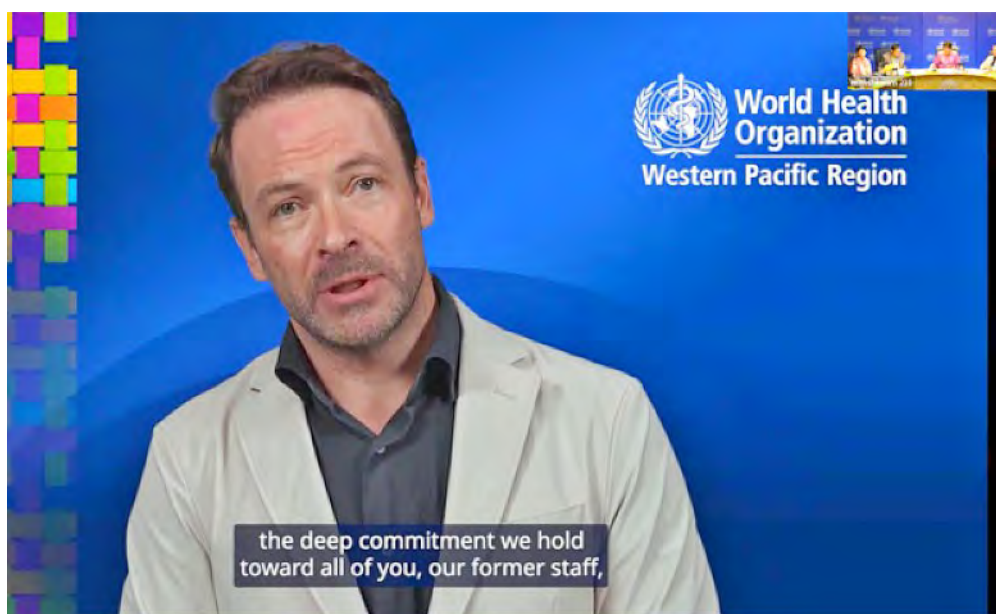




***Address by Dr Saia Ma'u Piukala, the Regional Director, WPRO  
at the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AFSM Global Council  
25 November 2024, Manila, Philippines (hybrid)***



***Dr Tamas Landesz, Director, Administration and Finance/WPRO,  
speaking at the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AFSM Global Council,  
25 November 2024, Manila, Philippines (hybrid)***



## Detailed Programme of the side event to the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council:

### ***“Geneva Calls: A pivotal moment for older persons’ rights”***

Geneva, 1 October 2024

*(See page 8 of the printed edition)*

**Moderator:** Alejandro BONILLA GARCIA, Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing, Geneva. Representative to UNOG of the International Federation on Ageing.

#### ***Opening statements***

Mr Volker TÜRK, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *(Recorded message)*.

Ms Claudia MAHLER, Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons. *(Recorded message)*.

H.E. Ms Anita PIPAN. Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

H.E. Carlos Mario FORADORI. Representative of Argentina to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

#### ***Panel Discussion***

H.E. Francisca Elizabeth MÉNDEZ ESCOBAR, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations Office at Geneva (The centrality of care and support from a human rights perspective).

Ms Alana Margaret OFFICER. Unit Head for Demographic Change & Healthy Ageing, World Health Organization.

Mr Kari TAPIOLA, Former Deputy Director-General of the ILO.

Ms Pernille FENGER, Director of the UNFPA Geneva office (the human rights of older persons in ICPD).

Ms Silvia PEREL-LEVIN, Vice-Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva), representative of the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), Meaningful participation and engagement of older persons and their representative organisations.

#### ***Spotlight Interventions***

H.E. Mr Héctor Virgilio ALCÁNTARA. Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations office at Geneva.

Ms Chitralekha Marie MASSEY. Chief, The Rights of Older Persons Section. OHCHR. 4. Closing remarks.

Mr Todd HOWLAND. Chief. Development and Economic and Social Rights Branch. OHCHR.