Some of you may be experiencing that common feeling as one gets older:

The years seem to be passing more and more quickly. We can do nothing about such a subjective feeling of time; but we can do a lot to ensure that our time is filled with meaningful activities.

Last year I spoke about the invaluable help that former staff can provide, and are already providing, to the smooth-running of WHO, in these days of financial difficulty. I am delighted that your Association is considering mobilizing former staff members for voluntary work. I have been informed that about 100 members have declared their willingness to help WHO in this way.

I can see a whole range of possibilities for former staff; from preparing background documents, to helping to organize meetings and -- why not -- to participating in country missions.

I feel confident that, whatever your expertise, you can help to ensure that essential work is carried out, and that you can make a valuable contribution to preserving WHO's "institutional memory". In the life of any organization new blood is essential, but so too are continuity and experience.

The year that has passed has been full of social upheaval, conflict and natural disasters, resulting in much human suffering. Demands for United Nations action have increased, and the system is responding, within its mandate and its financial constraints. In this era of world-wide transition, WHO will have to adapt its methods of work, and mode of action, if it intends to maintain its place, and intensify its role, as the directing and coordinating authority on international health work.

The next few years will be exciting and challenging, but also difficult. Supported by the WHO's devoted staff, and also with your collaboration, I intend to take up that challenge, helping to shape the world in harmony with our mission and our principles.

But tonight, as we near the end of the year, let us turn our minds to family and friends. I wish you all a joyous festive season, for yourselves and for your families; and health and happiness to you all in 1993.

Hiroshi Nakajima M.D., Ph.D.
Director-General, WHO

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COOPERATING FOR DEVELOPMENT

To achieve the goal of development, cooperation between many participants is essential, particularly those from multilateral development agencies such as our own, permanent missions or embassies, the capitals of industrialized and developing countries, and nongovernmental organizations, private institutions and foundations.

The science of development has not yet been born, although there is agreement on a few broad issues such as it should be sustainable and health is an integral part of development. Many questions remain, however, with a key one being which agency should "coordinate" the actions of the others along a commonly agreed path. International debates continue in the hope of finding answers to such questions, and many people believe that funds will determine a solution.

WHO cannot respond fully to the demands made on it, and therefore play its rightful role in the development process, by relying solely on the funds available from assessed contributions. Extra-budgetary support is consequently sought, with more and more programmes competing with one another for scarce resources. At a time when the organization has to be more competitive, both within and outside the U.N. system, greater efforts will have to be made to rationalize the internal competition so that WHO's priorities are clearly indicated to those who pay the bills.

Cooperation begins at home; former and active staff should promote those conditions where an even better dialogue can take place.

Ron Anderson
Chief, Office of External Coordination

CHANGES, CHANGES (MORE)

The following are recent staff appointments:

Human Reproduction • Dr P.F.A. Van Look formerly responsible for research and development, has been designated Acting Director of the Special Programme on Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP). (He succeeds Dr M.F. Fathalla, now a former staff member.)

AIDS • Dr Peter Piot has been appointed Associate Director, Global Programme on AIDS (GPA), responsible for sexually transmitted diseases. He was formerly Professor of Microbiology and Head, Department of Microbiology, Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp.

• Dr Svein-Erik Ekeid, formerly Responsible Officer for GPA, EURO, has been appointed as Chief, Office of Cooperation with National Programmes.

Director-General • Mr Namio Takagi has been appointed as Adviser on Policy Cooperation (DGO).

THE NEW TEAM

The following members were elected or coopted to the Executive Group:

General Secretary: • Stanislas Flache
Assistant General Secys: • Rosemary Bell, • Rajindar Pal
Treasurer: • Joseph Chang-Wailing
Assistant Treasurer: • Margaret Baker
Social Activities: • Carlo Fedele
Members: • Yves Beigbeder, • Gerard Dazin, • Georges Esatoglu,
• Warren Furth, • Roberto Maisroni, • Victorino Tomassi,
• Alain Vessereau, • Richard Wilson
NOW IT'S OFFICIAL

Association members heard it first, a year ago. At the 1991 annual reunion, the D-G called upon former staff to volunteer their services. In response, the Association sent a circular to members. To date some 106 responses have been received.

Now it's official: A new text has been inserted in the Manual (Section II.16) outlining procedures for the recruitment not only of volunteers but also of interns. Details:

**Volunteers:** Carry out specific jobs on WHO premises under supervision of serving colleagues.

They are provided office accommodation and other facilities by the technical unit.

A formal agreement is normally concluded by an exchange of letters with terms of reference prepared by personnel and signed by both parties.

**Interns:** Are normally persons engaged in a health-related course of study leading to qualification. Work ranges from a minimum of six weeks to a maximum of three months, with extension. Relatives of serving staff are not eligible.

The unit receiving the intern is required to provide an outline of the proposed duties, and is also responsible for the development of a relevant programme of learning. In addition, the unit is responsible for providing office accommodation for the intern and should also liaise with the Library during the planning phase of the assignment if it is anticipated that bibliographic research will comprise part of the duties.

Interns have to submit an overall report of their experience to Personnel at the conclusion of the internship.

All volunteers must be covered by the group accident insurance policy taken out by WHO. Premiums (average $1.50 a day) must be paid by the technical unit. (Ask for Inf. Circular 93 for more details.)

Annual General Meeting

"The staff demands that recruitment be banned for retired staff members who receive a full pension based on 25 years of service."

So put off by what he saw in this part of a resolution, presented to the Annual General Meeting of the WHO Staff Association, that former staffer Peter Davies blew off steam in the best way he knows how — by cartooning.

Thankfully the text was dropped. But the intent to discriminate against former staff remained in a revised version that was adopted (89-5-13). The resolution was entitled "Appointment of Retired Staff Members." (Full story in next issue of News)
ANDROPAUSE AND RELATED TOPICS

Andropause in males is the equivalent of menopause in females. It used to be considered a myth, until its existence was proven recently by biological investigations. The term covers a complex pattern of symptoms, observed in men around the sixth decade of life, related to the fall in the production of testosterone, the male sexual hormone. Quality and intensity of the symptoms vary considerably from one man to another; they are equally present in the psychological, behavioural, and sexual sphere. According to a recent study, women are aware of these changes in their partners.

"Change" is the right word, and not "decline". It is part of the normal aging process that intercourse becomes less frequent, and that intensity of sensations, speed of reaching an erection, and the force of ejaculation become more moderate. Part of the picture is that the man is able to maintain an erection longer, because his ejaculatory demand is reduced. This fits well with the longer time needed for the older woman to reach the level of full excitation, and may contribute to erotic harmony between partners of similar age.

In short, age is no bar to sexual pleasure, which may continue well into the 70s, sometimes 80s, in both partners. Its decreasing frequency may render erotic pleasure an even greater treasure. Well, have a nice retirement!

(For balance, the next column will be about sex, age, and women. Promise!)

(Newsweek magazine reports that a sociologist, at the University of Chicago, has "offered scientific data to prove that sex is good and plentiful even after 60." For excerpts, see "In the Press" — Editor)

LIFESTYLES

Grandparenting

Entering the grand realm of grand-parenting are Dr Inayat Khan, formerly chief, psychotropic drugs, and wife Shemin, thanks to son Haleem, his wife, Nadia and grand-daughter, Sheima Sabrina, born in Geneva 8 August.
cigarette out of his hero's mouth and replacing it with a straw.

The publication, "La Santé dans les Bandes Dessinées," is by Philippe Videlier and Pierine Piras (Editions Frison-Roche/CBR$).

**TAX REIMBURSED**

After two years of correspondence, Mr Shawky Bishara, who lives in Segny, France has been reimbursed for income tax levied on earnings as a consultant retroactive to 1984.

He was hit with a tax bill of some FF 97 000 by tax authorities in 1990, seven years after he separated from service.

His claim for reimbursement was supported by the Association, the WHO Administration and the Ombudsman. It is based on an Executive Board resolution (EB9.R54) authorizing repayment for taxes on WHO income.

**In the Press**

**60, SEXY, SASSY**

Analyzing U.S. national-poll data involving nearly 6,000 respondents, Andrew Greeley a sociologist at the University of Chicago, finds that 37 percent of married people over 60 have sex at least once a week — and one in six more often than that. What’s more, Greeley says sexually active married men are happier with their spouses at 60 than 20-year-old single males who are sleeping around.

The frequency of sex declines with age — 61 percent of married people in their early 50s have sex at least once a week. But in some ways it may also get better. Those who say they are happiest are married couples 60 and over who have sex at least weekly. Ninety percent of these people find their mates "very attractive physically."

For most researchers, Greeley’s good news is really old news, but welcome nonetheless. "As we grow older, we develop more skills, more understanding of our partner, more sensitivity—the second language of sex," says Robert N. Butler, co-author, with his wife, of "Sex After Sixty." Sex in later life, says Butler, includes less of "the narcissism and self-centeredness [that is] part of the early instinctual drive."

It helps to stay healthy. Various studies show that elders who control their weight are more likely to remain sexually active. So are those who exercise regularly. Although older men take longer to achieve an erection, "the man as he ages is able to last longer in intercourse," says sex therapist William Young, director of the Masters & Johnson Institute in St. Louis, Missouri. "That's a good thing, because it takes the female a little longer to respond."

— Kenneth L. Woodward with Karen Springen
(Excerpted from Newsweek, Sept 7 '92)

**ALZHEIMER DRUG**

A new study on tacrine, a drug for Alzheimer’s disease, shows that it may help victims regain some memory loss and ease other symptoms, researchers have reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

"It’s extremely positive news for the drug," said E. Peter Wolf, a spokesman for Parke-Davis, which makes tacrine under the trade name Cognex.

But Patrick Coll, a specialist in geriatric medicine in Hartford, Connecticut, said, "This is going to need a lot more research before any kind of conclusion can be reached."

_Reuters, 11 Nov '92_

**Letters**

(Unless stated to the contrary, letters are routinely considered for publication to encourage an exchange of views. — Editor)

**NEWS 'NOT CORRECT’**

Re: "The Notional Appeal" (in the Summer issue, No. 10) is meant to be a brief and fair summary of the arguments provided to the Tribunal by the parties in the case (of increases in health insurance premiums).
The arguments by the Administration are not in fact correctly stated, and one may question the attempt to do so, given the complexity of the issues in the case which is still sub-judice. In the final analysis, the question is one of fair sharing, and all parties will have to abide by the finding of the Tribunal.

Anthony Piel
Legal Counsel

(Surely the attempt to render into lay language even complex issues must be unquestioned — particularly if the attempt is balanced. However, the News does represent a point of view — that of former staff.

Its pages are open, of course, to a statement from the Legal Counsel that would set straight the alleged incorrectness. The issues of sub-judice and fairness are addressed below by the Association's General Secretary. — Editor)

INCREASES UNFAIR

We are challenging a system of health insurance contributions which we regard as inherently unfair, since it assesses the contributions of one group of insured persons on the basis of an imaginary income that bears no relation to their actual means.

We have drawn attention to the unfairness of assessing pensioners on their gross pension (i.e. pre-tax) while assessing serving staff on their net remuneration (i.e. after-tax).

We have also drawn attention to the excessive reserve fund provided for by the Staff Health Insurance rules, which are out of line with comparable funds and, in the view of several social security experts, are aberrant.

We hope for a new reasonable approach to reduce the contribution burden for all insured persons (active staff as well as pensioners) and, above all, at a time of financial stringency, for WHO.

Our members, to whom the newsletter is primarily addressed, are interested in knowing of developments in the case. The contested decision has now been in effect for close on three years and its consequences are becoming increasingly severe under the combined impact of the phasing-in arrangements and the progressive raising of the contribution.

Stanislas Flache
General Secretary

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

The Swiss Section of Amnesty International (AI) has a health professionals group in Geneva which would welcome new members and supporters who are willing to sign appeals on a regular basis.

Membership of the AI movement and participation in its activities may be problematic for international civil servants, but this is not the case once they leave their organization and we think that there may be several people who would like to make some personal and financial contribution to this noble cause.

Members pay an annual subscription (less than SF 100.-) and are invited to join in a number of activities — writing letters, campaigning for human rights or against torture; urgent actions such as sending letters or faxes concerning health professionals in prison or prisoners whose health or life is threatened; occasional coordination meetings.

Supporters simply give their personal undertaking to sign and send letters, telegrams, telexes or faxes to the authorities in different countries at the rate of one "action" per month.

These activities do not take up very much time. Anyone interested write us.

Daniel and Françoise Flahault
(94, rue de Genève, 1226 Thônex/GE)

'COMMITMENT HONOURED'


The Surveillance Committee did not rescind a previous decision. It agreed to reimburse medical costs for his wife's stay in a hospital care facility for six months. Payment, made by Washington on 11 March 1991, was confirmed in his letter of 14 July 1992. The Committee was subsequently asked to extend
reimbursement for a further six months. It refused the extension as approval would not have been in compliance with the guidelines established for long-term nursing care. The health insurance therefore honoured its commitment.

Ann Van Hulle-Colbert
Secretary, Hq Surveillance Committee

A GIFT, A THEFT

Enclosed please find a SF 500.- note for "life membership" in the Association with the remainder for the general kitty to defray other expenses.

A general warning to those visiting Geneva: I inadvertently left my purse in the call box behind the reception desk, having phoned friends. Returning 15 minutes later, it was gone — to be found at the reception desk minus its not unhealthy content of French and Swiss francs since I was just starting my holidays.

It is easy to be forgetful in the excitement of meeting old friends again but a warning might be worth while in the News.

Joan Bentley
(Formerly family health; SEARO)
Dorset, England

FAN MAIL

I regret that I am not in a position at present to request life membership, but I am happy to send you the approximate equivalent in £ sterling of the annual dues for '92-93.

Yes, I do enjoy receiving the News. Thank you for your good work and efforts on our behalf.

Daphne R. Buchan
(formerly MNH.)
Bristol, England

I am pleased to enclose a SBS cheque representing my life contribution, to take effect from 1993, and a small donation of SF 80.-

I enjoy reading News and like knowing about staff movements though, as time goes by, the names become less and less familiar.

Jill Forman,
West Sussex, England

Please find enclosed my dues for 1992.

I do enjoy receiving the News and look forward to the next copy. In this troubled world, it is good to keep in touch and informed.

Ilse Guest
Somerset, England

I do enjoy reading the News, particularly the "Changes, Changes" column. I appreciate the good work you are doing in looking after the interests of former staff.

Bernadette Rivett
Surrey, England

FRENCH PREMIUMS

Following your request (Summer issue, No. 10) concerning the deduction of health insurance premiums from taxes, I should like to inform you that in France this is the case. They are deducted on the condition that it is the only request for reimbursement of medical care.

Jean Emmanuel, M.D.
Annecy, France

In reply to your question concerning taxes on revenue in France, I should like to inform you that WHO health insurance premiums have always been recognized and deducted from the total taxes payed (indicating "no Social Security" before the amount of the premium).

Pierre Lozes (Mme)
Sanary-sur-Mer, France

(Many thanks for the information. — Editor).
THE SURVIVORS

Is it reasonable to join an Association which publishes only a list of deceased former staff members and refuses to publish a list of survivors.

Is it because of an order, modesty or shame?

Roger Leclercq
Paris

(Because of lack of information — Editor)

WINNERS ALL

Re: "Continuing to Contribute" (Summer No. 10).

I have had on two occasions, been recruited as a short-term consultant (STC) by the Global Aids Programme. I realise that with current budgetary restrictions this may not be possible.

However, I feel I still have much to offer. To this end, would it not be worth considering payment of per diem only. This would at least allow volunteers to subsist wherever they might be asked to serve.

An appointment to cover per diem and transport only would, I feel sure, satisfy all personnel regulations. There could only be winners — WHO and volunteers. Count me in.

Ken Waldron
Brussels, Belgium

AGAINST INCOME TAX

May I point to a serious oversight in our activities — pensions being subject to income tax. As serving staff, we were exempt from income-tax negotiated with Member States. Why can’t similar negotiations be carried out about pensions? Have you realised that the pensions are the only U.N. funds which are not free from income-tax?

It is not so much the tax itself, as the constant filling of complicated tax forms with endless private questions and declarations that affect the pensioner.

The Association’s membership will double if you would include among your activities the unjustified payment of income-tax on pensions.

A. Brown, M.D
Essex, England

(Serving staff are subject to "staff assessment," which is comparable to national income tax. It is a deduction averaging about a third of gross salaries. In addition, serving U.S. colleagues also pay a tax on net income, which — to avoid double taxation — is reimbursed. To the best of our knowledge, only two countries — Austria and Spain — exempt U.N. pensions from income tax. — Editor.)

AT U.N. STILL WELCOME

After 15 years as a translator, I retired a year ago. On my near daily return visits to the U.N., New York, my colleagues have made me feel welcome. I know of no other organization, public or private, that accords retirees the same privileges the U.N. does.

With my grounds pass I have full access to the building and to many facilities. When a problem recently came up regarding a post-retirement entitlement, I was given a fair hearing at a number of levels of bureaucracy. The matter was resolved to my full satisfaction. I can, and do, join clubs sponsored by the Staff Recreation Council, and take language courses free of charge.

I can, and do, hold court in the lounges and in the cafeteria while the whole world passes by. Could any expensive private club be better? The U.N. bureaucracy is kinder to the departed than to the living.

Oren Jarromles
(Excerpted from U.N. Secretariat News July '92)

Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year

Acknowledgements: The Executive Group thanks those who have made possible this Autumn issue, especially Peter Osorio (Editor) and Regindar Pal.