A ROSTER OF WILLING HANDS IS SENT AROUND

A roster of former staff members who've indicated a willingness to carry out short-term assignments has been sent by the Association to the directors of personnel in Geneva and in regional offices.

Comprising close to 90 names, the roster is based on a questionnaire that was analyzed and then computerized by Roberto Masironi, a member of the Executive Group, into these nine categories of expertise:

Administration and General Service; Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases; Health Laboratory Drug Policy; Environmental Health; Health Manpower Development; Health Statistics; Information Documentation; Lifestyles, Education, Drugs Nutrition; and Immunization.

According to the Association's chairman, R. Pal: "We see our contribution as limited — to the project, the study, the assignment — that busy serving staff cannot carry out, and which outsiders do so, the experience has shown, inadequately." The intention of former staff is to supplement the work of staff in any capacity, voluntary or paid.

The Association's initiative resulted from an address to former staff at the annual reunion made by the Director-General. Citing the financial crisis, he had said: "I can see a whole range of possibilities for former staff: from preparing background documents to organizing meetings...why not participating in country missions."

In setting out policy in a covering letter dated 19 May 1995, the Association said it "does not favour employment of former staff to established posts, or to positions that might block promotions of our serving colleagues."

And, in an acknowledgment of a particular concern of serving staff, the letter also said that the opposition maintains that "short-term contracts so drawn up as to by-pass contribution to the pension fund."

However, as long as WHO seeks and needs consultants, former staff wish to be considered. Why? "We still retain our enthusiasm for service," says the Association's letter, "and our devotion to the aims of WHO."

Opposing Views

"Another reason for low morale is the recruitment of retirees and the extension of staff well beyond the mandatory age of retirement. This concerns mostly the professional and higher categories. We consider that better advance planning would eliminate the need to recruit retired staff."

—Mary-Jane Watson
Chair, WHO Staff Committee
in a statement to the Executive Board,
13 May 1995 (EB/96/INF.DOC/1)

"I believe that you will be pleased to learn that I have decided to establish a scheme whereby FAO will be able to benefit from the vast knowledge and experience which only you as former staff members could possess.

"In the near future we shall take steps to identify those among you who would be prepared to serve...as the need may arise for limited periods, under a new scheme."

—J. Diouf
Director-General, FAO
in a statement to the association of former staff at a meeting in Rome. (Excerpted from the UNPA Bulletin, Jan-Mar. 1995)

Association does not favour "short-term contracts so drawn up as to by-pass contribution to the pension fund."

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Health Insurance

LONG-TERM CARE NEGLECTED

All senior citizens face the prospect of declining vitality and health, with the possible loss of autonomy and dependence on the care of others. None of us can know whether — and when — our physical or mental faculties may suffer impairment, and how far we may then be able to cope. Forethought and advance planning can help with difficulties. Some proposals:

Accommodation. An effort has recently been made to gather information on different types of accommodation available to the elderly in the Geneva region (including the Canton of Vaud and neighbouring areas of France), ranging from retirement homes to institutions providing long-term medical care. That documentation is now in the hands of the AAFI/AFICS secretariat. It is to be hoped that it will be updated and circulated.

Primary Health Service. A proposal was made some years ago — in a cost containment study undertaken for the ILO/ITU staff health insurance fund — for the setting up of a primary care service within the Geneva-based international institutions, initially to serve retired officials and their families. Such a service could play a significant part in preventing situations of dependency, and promoting measures for home care, designed to avoid the need for moving to an institution. Little has been done on these lines.

Retirement Home. As regards home care, health insurance funds do not cover the cost of accommodation in a retirement home. Benefits are generally more limited (in amount and duration) than for stays in hospital. In national systems, there are generally three forms of social protection: pensions, health care and assistance. In so far as an individual’s resources are not sufficient to cover the cost of accommodation, then subsistence and care is provided. For most former international officials, such assistance is normally not available.

That raises the question of the desirability of facilities for long-term care insurance. Insurance of this kind can already be obtained on an individual basis, but at high cost. The possibility of establishing more general long-term care insurance arrangements has recently been discussed by CCAQ, and also by AAFI/AFICS, but no satisfactory solution has yet emerged.

—Klaus Samson
(formerly ILO; legal adviser to former and serving staff.
For full text call 791 3103 mornings only, or write the Association.)

Changes, Changes, (More)

The following are recent staff retirements and appointments:

Drug Management and Policies
- Dr John F. Dunne, Director, Division of Drug Management and Policies, retired on 30 June 1995. Dr Juhanne E. Idänpää-Haikkilä, formerly Associate Director, replaced him.

Office of Publications
- Mr D.H. Thompson, Chief, Office of Publications, Division of Publishing, Language and Library Services, retired on 31 March 1995. Dr PA. Butler has been designated Acting Chief.

AIDS
- Dr Peter Piot, formerly Director, Division of Research and Intervention Development, Global Programme on AIDS, has been appointed Executive Director of the newly-established Joint U. N. Programme on AIDS.
HEARTBURN

We had finished discussing all the horrors of the day, including genocides, civil wars and gas attacks on and by civilized people. “Here we go,” said Albert, looking at the empty coffee-cups and the crumbs of the croissants we just consumed. “My stomach burns again like hell” said he, and lit a cigarette.

Albert has been struggling with his chronic gastritis for years. Gastritis — an inflammation of the stomach mucosa — is a common condition, and its frequency increases with age. According to a treatise of geriatrics, over half of people over 60 have chronic gastritis.

The main symptom is recurrent heartburn, triggered off often by trivial factors — even a coffee and a croissant, like in Albert’s case. Worrying and psychic problems may contribute to gastritis, and drinking alcohol is one causal factor.

In 1983 a hairy, somewhat propeller-like germ, helicobacter pylori, was identified as the possible cause of many, though not all, cases of gastritis. In Switzerland some 20 per cent of the population are presumed to be infected with this germ. With intensive antibiotic treatment, the infection can be brought under control in about 80 per cent of patients.

Doctors’ opinions differ whether that is really necessary; however, one point is certain, and I am grateful to Albert for lending me the opportunity of saying it once again: smoking (my “surfeit and loathing”) harms the stomach, especially in the case of a gastritis.

—Tom Strasser, M.D.,
(formerly CVD)
A 10-page report on all that is known about taxing U.N. pensions — which is not much — has been put out by the Association of Former International Civil Servants (AAFI/AFICS).

The report is deserving of praise, despite its authors modest claim of just providing “some basic information on tax rules applying to pensions in general and U.N. pensions in particular.” It’s the first work of its kind, leaving open the expectation of more to come.

Here are some nuggets of information from the report:

— Where there is no tax at all: Some EMRO countries; the Caribbean countries that provide “tax havens.”

— Where U.N. pensions are exempt: Austria, in deference to Vienna’s status as a U.N. centre; India, following a High Court ruling that pension is deferred salary and thus free of tax; and Singapore.

Also exempt are pensioners in Italy and Spain: In Italy, because of “the tax law which exempts income earned abroad from tax;” and Spain as a result of the host agreement with the International Tourism Organization in Madrid.

— Where U.N. pensions are taxed partially: In Germany, subject to a scale. (At age 60, “the amount to be declared and taxed is 29 per cent of the total received,” the report says. The percentage is reduced by 1 per cent each year thereafter to bottom out at 25 per cent for those age 65 and older.)

Also taxed partially are pensioners in Sweden. Contributions to the pension fund paid after 1 January 1969 are tax-exempt, which, in effect, is applicable to most pensioners. An attestation of contributions paid is required from the U.N. Joint Staff Pension Fund.

**WHAT JUDGES GET**

The U.N. Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) has recommended that pensions for judges of the International Court of Justice be set at $50 000 a year, plus increases of $250 for each month of service up to a maximum of $75 000 per year, according to a press release (DH 1850 dated 14 March 1955.) The judges serve nine-year terms.
Comment

STAND-OFF BETWEEN WTO AND LA SUISSE

The agreement between Switzerland and the newly-established World Trade Organization (the successor to GATT) is a done deal in all respects save one — taxes on pensions.

WTO is insisting on an exemption of income tax for staff who retire in Switzerland, as is the case, for instance, in Austria and India. The host government has demurred. Thus, at the time the agreement was signed, sealed and delivered on 2 June 1995, an impasse had been reached. Now the issue has been put off, to be dealt with separately. It is not quite dead.

According to the Tribune de Geneve, in a report the next day, a possible compromise solution might be that pensioners pay their organization, through the cantonal tax office ("fonctionnaires à la retraite paient leurs impôts ...à leur ancienne organisation, via le fisc cantonal") — an idea, to put it mildly, difficult to understand. (See box also.)

Earlier, faced with competition from Germany, which offered facilities in Bonn to WTO, Switzerland made counter-offers to keep the organization in Geneva, most notably for staff was that spouses and children would be entitled to Permis C, thus allowing them to work. But while recognizing a second wife for citizens of countries where polygamy is legal, the accord restricts the right to employment to only the first.

Pensions

Just how the WTO arrangements will affect other agencies is not yet clear. But if a report by the Geneva Post on 18 April 1995 is right then “due to the non-discrimination clause in the accord, the benefits and privileges must be extended to diplomats and their families of all international and inter-governmental organizations in Switzerland.”

Which raises another question to be answered: are just diplomats, and by extension high-grade staff, to benefit, or all internationals?

There is more in the WTO hamper: A gift of the Centre William Rappard, where the organization is located; the contribution of 31 million CHF towards a new 725-seat conference hall, plus parking; the construction of a Maison Universelle for missions of developing countries, whose staff would be eligible to rent HLM (medium-priced) apartments. A refund of the value-added tax for purchases over 100 CHF.

"...il reste encore un point désaccord. Il devra faire l'objet d'une négociation ultérieure. L'OMC voudrait en effet que les internationaux à la retraite ne paient pas d'impôts sur leur revenu de leur rentes. Proposition à laquelle s'oppose Olivier Vodoz (conseiller, Canton de Genève), qui prêterait ainsi une manne précieuse.

"Solution envisagée: que diplomates et hauts fonctionnaires à la retraite paient leur impôts non pas an canton, mais à leur ancienne organisation, via le fisc cantonal. Ce principe est déjà appliqué à Bruxelles pour les ex-fonctionnaires européens...Une protocole séparé a toutefois été établi pour fixer les termes du désaccord."

—Yves Genier
(Tribune de Genève, 3-5 juin 1995)

Whatever the effect — if any — of the loss to Bonn of the U.N. Volunteers and the climate-change secretariat may be, this much is sure: there's a certain feeling of attachment to the international community in the Geneva air. It makes dollars and sense.

Witness the establishment of UNHCR staff in their new headquarters last March; the recent agreements for new offices for the World Meteorological Organization and the World Intellectual Organization.

Witness also terms of endearment from the Swiss Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs, Flavio Cotti: "The idea is to put up a conceptual framework in which to develop even further Geneva's role as an international city."

All of which is surely comforting to serving and former internationals: they are wanted. But even though the source of the funds is the same — namely the contribution of governments — salaries are exempt from income tax; pensions are not. But at least that is being challenged.

— Peter Ozorio, Editor
A firm believer in exercise, diet and healthy lifestyles — and not a pill for every ill — I take a constitutional walk first thing in the morning daily for an hour even in winter. Such was so on 12 January 1995 when I slipped on roads covered with snow and broke my left forearm near the wrist. I had sustained a collies fracture. It was about 8.40 a.m. I was near the French border in Meyrin, close to my home. Dazed, I picked myself up and made my way, somehow, to the Hôpital La Tour 2 km away. It was my first admission ever to a hospital.

As I look back on my accident, I realized that although I had brought a walking stick, that although I was properly clad for winter I was not properly shod. I had on my feet regular street shoes.

A secretary at the emergency ward recorded essential information, then asked me to wait. After 20 minutes of growing agony I demanded to see the doctor immediately. It was an unusual request because there were two other persons ahead of me. But the doctor on duty let me in. I learnt later that my son, a radiologist at the Hôpital Cantonal, was his colleague.

I remained in the outpatient section till 12 noon when they found a bed for me. X-ray examination revealed a fracture of the radius and of the ulna which was broken in two places. My blood pressure was high, the intensity of pain increased, I felt a tremendous thirst and asked for a cup of tea. They started an infusion of glucose-saline which relieved me immensely.

An orthopaedic surgeon put two procedures before me — the first was to set the fracture manually then apply plaster; the second through an open operation, fix the bones manually by use of nails. Both procedures required a nerve block anaesthesia. I opted for the open method figuring that the chances of the bones recovery would be more complete. And the idea of nails intrigued me immensely.

Around 2.30 p.m. I was taken to the operating theatre. The anaesthetist took 30 minutes to block the nerves by injecting Xylocaine in the axilla. I blessed the magical effect of the drug. The surgeon took 90 minutes to set the fractures. He used three nails. I was informed by the anaesthetist that if needed I would receive an analgesic and a sleeping pill.

Back in the ward, I had a meal — my appetite was good — and I was given, orally, a mild analgesic which was to continue for a week. I received antibiotics for the first 24 hours. In the middle of the night, I asked for a single sleeping pill. Around 1 p.m. the next day, after taking a radiogram, the surgeon applied plaster and sent me home about 2 p.m. Six weeks later he removed the plaster, and the first of 16 sessions twice weekly with a physiotherapist began at the hospital's physiotherapy department.

Although my arm was still swollen and looked like a stick, the physiotherapist assured me that, after treatment, it would be normal again. She used her fingers, subjected me to a machine and, at the end of each session applied ice. Above all her smile and softly spoken encouraging words reassured me that my left arm would be able to carry my usual consignment of about 15 kgs of chocolate that I habitually take as hand luggage on trips home to Pakistan.

As my sessions progressed I realized more and more the importance of physiotherapy. Physiotherapists not only spend much more time than the doctor in treating a patient, but also provide the psychological support essential to recovery.

While I was recovering, I learnt that the King of Spain had met a similar injury while skiing in Switzerland. I sympathized with him and wondered if the Queen helped him to dress and with his ablutions.

When the surgeon extracted the three nails from my forearm, after removing the plaster, he asked if I wanted them as a souvenir. I pondered that offer for a while, then politely declined. It was not a memory I wished to cherish or to keep. In hindsight, it's best to forego the constitutional walk when snow is upon the ground. But with proper walking boots mine was an accident that could have been prevented — to the saving of $10,000 to our health insurance plan. I had been nailed by my shoes.

— Inayat Khan, Ph.D.
(former chief, psychotic, narcotic drugs)
LIFESTYLES

GRANDPARENTING

Re-entering the grand realm of grand-parenting are:

- Joe P. d'Souza, a serving colleague (FIN/CLX), thanks to daughter Jennifer, and her husband Martin Best, but most particularly to grand-daughter No. 2, Caroline, born 14 November 1994 in Geneva, weighing in at 8 kg. She's welcome company for big sister, Jessica now age three. Jennifer's with WMO, and Martin's with UNCTAD so that makes it all in the U.N. family, and then some.

- Ben Diamant, formerly WHO professor of environmental health, A.B. U., Zaria, Israel, and wife Shifra Judith, thanks to son Yariv Haim, his wife Barbara, and their fourth son Lior, born 24 April 1995 in Barkan, Israel, weighing 9 lbs, 2 oz, 21" tall.

ANYTHING BUT ‘RETIRED’

- Dr Halfdan Mahler, formerly D-G and now S-G of the International Planned Parenthood Federation has been named co-winner of the 1995 U.N. Population Award, along with the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices. The award is presented annually to individuals or institutions deemed to have made outstanding contributions to increasing awareness of population problems.

- Eric Guichard, formerly INF technician, responsible for recording studios and the cinema on sous-sol 1, now applies his expertise and experience to managing the many movie houses at Les Grorres, newly-constructed on rue Servette in Geneva. He's also been seen taking tickets during the rush so that films can get rolling.

- Vic Pinto, formerly environmental health at Hq. and in AFRO, puts his expertise regularly at the disposal of the Senior Expert Corps, a part of the Swiss Foundation for Technical Cooperation based in Zurich.

His first assignment was in 1989 (when he turned 66) to Quito, Ecuador, to stop waste waters from a distillery from polluting the nearby river, San Pedro. In 1990 he went to Bolivia, to improve drinking water quality and to control the pollution of Lake d'Alalay.

In 1991 and 1992, he travelled to Chile, proposing measures to treat effluent wastes from factories in Cholguan (producing fibre board), and Valdivia (producing dairy, yeast, hides and skins, plus a slaughter house). This year a third Chilean assignment is planned.

The assignments ranged from one to three months. There's no salary, but Swisscontact provided air tickets for his wife, Louise, and himself, and the local enterprise offered board and lodging — and weekend tours. In 1993, though he did not venture afield, he was twice called upon for advice on environmental problems in Nepal and San Salvador.

"The simplest solutions are best appreciated," he says in summarizing his experience, "because they are affordable, and require little expertise to operate and maintain."

What makes this colleague tick? It's certainly not the money, he says, but the sense of service — putting his knowledge to use, and, in a sense, continuing to work for the aims of WHO.

SAYING IT COMPACTLY

Out on compact disc:

— Hearts, A Suite for Symphony Orchestra and Jazz Ensemble, dedicated to WHO and inspired by the World Health Day theme “Heartbeat: The Rhythm of Health.” The work of Finnish composer, Heikki Sarmanato, the disc has been released by Sony Music Entertainment, Finland. It’s a first-ever for WHO. (Contact: Antti Holma, Ahventie 4 B, 02170 Espoo, Finland, or the composer, 42 West 65th Street, Apt. 1A, New York 10023.)

— The U.N. and International Geneva, produced by the United Nations with Radio Suisse Romande as part of the U.N.’s 50th anniversary observance. About an hour long, the disc blends narration with excerpts of statements by Trygve Lie, the first Secretary-General, and others. Also featured are the specialized agencies in Geneva, and the League of Nations. Comes with a 64-page booklet by historian David Hiler, produced with the Tribune de Genève. (Contact: Issa B.Y. Diallo, director, U.N. conference service, Palais des Nations.)

— The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Geneva, produced in 1994, with statements by Eleanor Roosevelt, Jean-Paul Sartre and others. (Contact: as above)
AIDING PALESTINIANS

Through a letter from the D.G. to the European Commission, the World Bank, and 40 countries, WHO has launched a US$ 13 million appeal for funds to meet “the urgent health needs of the Palestinian people.”

Between 1985 and 1990, WHO aid financed fellowships to Palestinian physicians, and three centres in Ramallah and Gaza. Between 1990 and 1993, the years of civil unrest, it assisted Palestinian NGO’s. Now it will finance the health services of the Palestinian Authority, a WHO press release reports (WHO/16, 25 Feb. 1995).

AIDING BOSNIANS

Japan is providing US$ 1 million in emergency aid to support the work of WHO in repairing and restoring 50 neighbourhood primary health care centres in Greater Sarajevo that have been damaged during the conflict in former Yugoslavia.

Forty of the centres are in areas held by the Bosnian government and 10 by Serbian forces. Getting the centres fully operational again will relieve the tremendous pressure that has been on Sarajevo’s two main hospitals, according to a WHO press release (WHO/24, 4 April 1995).

Three years of war have caused serious damage to roofs, windows, and heating and plumbing systems of the centres. While most have remained functional, the quantity and quality of services needed at the community level have deteriorated.

AIDING SAKHALININANS

WHO has sent five emergency kits consisting of antibiotics, drugs, surgical instruments, anaesthetics and bandages, to aid victims of earthquake-stricken in Russian’s Sakhalin Islands.

One kit covers the basic health needs of 10 000 people for three months, the two surgical kits provides surgical material for 200 cases during 10 days, and the two last anaesthetics for 200 operations.

The earthquake, which struck on May 27 1995 at about 120km South of Okha registered 7.6 on the Richter scale. The town of Neftegorsk, hardest hit, was practically destroyed. By 1 June, there were 445 deads, 338 injured, and 410 homeless.

According to a press release (WHO/44, 2 June 1995) the WHO aid was made possible by a contribution from Japan.

WORLD HEALTH DAY

7 April 1995

A WORLD WITHOUT POLIO

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

POLIO: DOWN, DOWN

The number of poliomyelitis cases has declined by 82 per cent since 1988, when WHO launched
its drive to eradicate the disease from the world. As
WHO moves closer to its goal of "A World without
Polio" by the year 2000, only 6,241 cases were repor-

According to a release marking World Health
Day, 7 April, there are 145 polio-free countries in the
world. AMRO is polio free; WPRO reported its last
case in August 1991. Parts of the Indian sub-conti-
nent and Central and Western Africa account for 75
per cent of global incidence today.

AND PALAU MAKES 190

The Republic of Palau is WHO’s 190th and
newest member. Formerly a U.N. Trust Territory,
administered by the United States, it became indepen-
dent in 1994.

It consists of about 340 coral and volcanic
islands in the western Pacific with a total land surface
of 177 square miles and population in 1990 of
15,122.

(Unless stated to the contrary by correspondents, letters received are routinely considered,
and edited, for publication to encourage an exchange of views among colleagues. — Editor)

HELLO AGAIN

Re: Hello, Saint Endréol (News, No. 19,
Autumn 1994)

(The following is the response to a query by the
Association).

I can confirm that I can be reached at my tele-
phone in Paris: (33) 1 45.01.91.91; Fax: (33) 1
45.01.57.77. We are in process of printing a brochure
regarding the construction of residences on the site.
The physical, cultural and intellectual activities planned
will also be covered.

Please note that U.N. should not be used in
the title of this project. Legal dispositions regarding
the utilization of “United Nations” are extremely strict
and appear in specific conventions.

— Manuela d’Arcy
(formerly U.N. New York, now spokeswoman for the
Saint Endréol project.)

LIFE EXTENSION

Re: DHEA Delays Aging (News, No 20 Winter)

Professor Etienne-Emile Beaulieu cannot claim
to have invented anything, despite the fuss made in
the press and on television. The drug DHEA was dis-
covered in San Francisco many years ago, and is freely
sold in the United States, the United Kingdom and
even Switzerland.

I can provide the address where it can be pur-
chased as well as the price.

Colleagues who are interested in the aging pro-
cess and the best means of combating it can apply for
membership of the Life Extension Foundation, the
most advanced research organisation in this field. It
announces its findings in a number of regular publica-
tions, and indicates where products which have proved
effective in the struggle against aging may be obtained
and at what price.

— G.M. Bovay
(former WHO/INF)
5 avenue du Bijou, Ferney-Voltaire
Tel (33) 50 40 6838

“WHINGEING”

Re: Letters (News, No. 20 Winter 1994-5)

I continue to be amazed at the whingeing of
my fellow pensioners over the cost of our health insur-
ance.

Have they led such a sheltered existence that
they don’t know that it’s cold out there in the real
world?

The cost of health care is escalating and even
the most basic health insurance (public ward, no den-
tal care) here in Switzerland costs between 280 and
350 CHF per month per head. For the kind of care we get (private treatment, basic dental care, catastrophe insurance), they would have to pay at least 400 CHF per head.

This makes the 169 CHF I pay each month for two of us, seem the best value for money I have seen in a long time.

— Erica Royston
Founex, Switzerland

**TAXING PENSIONS**

(The following letter was sent to AAFI/AFICS, with a copy to us.)

You may be interested to learn that a retired Greek pensioner recently informed me that he does not pay income tax on his pension. It seems that foreign currency imported from abroad does not attract tax.

I have been retired 20 years and raised the question of taxes some 15 years ago. There was no interest! The subject now seems to have come alive. Recent legal opinion seems to indicate a strong case for not taxing our pensions. It is interesting that those governments which do not tax have different reasons for their attitude. Surely there must be synergy here.

— A.E. Brown, M.D.
Colchester, UK

(In May 1990 the European Court ruled that both golden handshakes and pensions are a form of deferred pay, which could strengthen any case for exemption. —Editor)

**SUPPORTS COURT CASE**

Re: Taxes (News No. 19, 20 Autumn, Winter)

(The following was sent to a member of the Association’s Executive Group.)

Re the taxation of pensions by the French government: I have read with much interest the article by Rolande Cuvillié (Arguing Against Taxes) and May Piaget (FISC in France). How can one participate in the actions that may be taken?

I would totally support any initiative bringing the case of taxation before an international court and would be willing to contribute if you need funds. It is a very important matter which should mobilize active staff as well as pensioners.

Re the article by J.M. Leclercq on the C.S.G. tax (Tax Reprieve). What can be done from here? I do not think that either staff or pensioners here in France are aware of the action of their frontalier colleagues.

— M. Ghess
LARC, Lyons

(First the good news: France has decided not to tax salaries of serving staff, as is reported elsewhere in News. Then, thanks to the Frontaliers’ Group, the quarterly CSG tax, also French, has been “suspended.”)

Now the bad news: None of this affects pensioners. However, arguing against any tax on international money, that is “funds made available jointly by member states” for salaries or for pensions, Rolande Cuvillié proposed that the International Court of Justice be asked for an opinion. This remains still nothing more than a proposal. —Editor)

**HAPPY PENSIONER**

Re: Your Directory of Members. The PAHO directory is more complete than yours as one apparently does not have to be a member to be listed.

Re: Your Newsletter. It seems to be driven largely by economics. I appreciate that money may be all important, but some of us would like to know more about the organization we devoted a great amount of our lifetime to support, at least technically.

I, for one, am happy with the way the United Nations and the WHO treat me as a pensioner. I have enough money for beer, wine and (...) the opposite sex.

— Robert Tonn
Las Cruces, New Mexico, U.S.
Appreciates Association

I enjoy receiving News from the Association...and appreciate the work that goes into it.

— Angela F. Cook
Gloucester, England

I enjoy the circular letters I receive very much: they are informative and entertaining.

— Errol Williams
Lithonia, Georgia, US

I appreciate the Association very much.

— N.S. Al Tawil, M.D.
(formerly WR, Pakistan)
Limassol, Cyprus

Homage: Fergus McCullough

We wish to express our deepest sympathy and our condolences to the family of Dr Fergus McCullough who passed away on 1 May 1995.

In 1957 he went to Zambia as a biologist consultant, and was subsequently assigned to the national WHO schistosomiasis control programmes in Ghana and in Tanzania. In 1974 he was transferred to Brazzaville; and in September 1977 was reassigned to the Division of Vector Biology and Control, Geneva, where he remained until his retirement on 31 July 1985.

All those who knew Fergus McCullough will remember a very warm person with outstanding professional qualities.

— Executive Group, AFSM

Homage: Alessandro Mochi

Alessandro Mochi was born on 23 April 1920 in Cairo, Egypt and died on 6 April 1995 at Lusaka, Zambia. His father was a medical doctor; Alessandro became director of a psychiatric hospital, collector, writer and philosopher. He received his doctoral degree in Rome, then his MPH in public health in the United States. From 1949-89 he worked at WHO where he was known for his integrity, his rare ability to listen to others, his humour and his diplomacy. He was dedicated to entomology, his life-long hobby.

— Carlo Fedele
(Member Executive Group, AFSM)

Homage: Fred Kent

Fredric S. Kent died at the age of 78; his funeral took place in Geneva on 22 March 1995. As Chief of WHO’s Pre-investment Unit he was in charge of a large and unique programme through which WHO served as the Executing Agency for UNDP for major water supply and sanitation projects in developing countries. He also was responsible for the WHO-World Bank Cooperative Programme for Water Supply and Waste Disposal and the sectoral studies and project identifications.

Before joining WHO in 1972 he held several senior positions in the U. S. Public Health Service. Fred Kent was an engineer with convictions. His energy and vision brought a rare equality to the kind of interagency cooperative work which he directed. He would not accept anything but excellence. He will also be remembered for his human relations and a good sense of humour.

— Bernd Dieterich
(formerly Director EHE)
Geneva

Geneva’s Quality of Life Best

Geneva offers the highest quality of life of any metropolis around the globe, a study of 118 cities by an international business group showed. Canada’s Vancouver placed second, with Toronto and Montreal also in the top 10.

IN THE PRESS

Four west European cities were there too — Vienna, Luxembourg, Zurich and Dusseldorf. Paris came in only at the 24th position. U.S. cities, weighed down by problems of crime and personal security, fared badly in the report by the Corporate Resources Group (CRG). Its top city was Boston, coming 30th on the list, while New York was 44th.
In the bottom 10 in the overall ranking were the three big crime-hit centres of the former Soviet Union — Moscow and St Petersburg in Russia and Kiev, now the capital of Ukraine. Also among the worst were the Chinese cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, largely because of low availability of consumer goods, medical services, pollution levels, housing and poor public services.

The CRG based its findings on the level of security, public services, medical and health structures and political and social stability in the cities.

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<th>Top 10</th>
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Reuters
(Excerpted from The Financial Times, Jan. 1995)

FRANCE SAYS “NO” TO TAX

French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur ended speculation concerning the tax status of U.N. employees living across the border in France.

In a personal letter to Michel Hansenne of the ILO (dated 6 April 1995), Balladur stated that his government had decided “to present the 1947 Convention for ratification to the French Parliament, without attaching any reservations in fiscal matters.”

The 1947 Convention concerns privileges and immunities for U.N. institutions. France had never ratified the convention, leaving U.N. employees living outside Switzerland tax-liable.

The French prime minister acknowledged Hansenne’s insistence on applying the same fiscal policy to all civil servants of U.N. organisations. “By making this decision”, the letter concluded, “the French government wishes to underline the importance which it attaches to international organisations dependent upon the U.N. and to the quality of relations between France and these organisations.”

— Sarah Veal
(Excerpted from the Geneva Post, 7-9 April 1995. See also French version.

ILO: DON’T PUSH THEM OUT

Welfare and social security systems could collapse if older workers went on being pressed to retire early to create jobs for the young unemployed, according to the ILO.

In its “World Labour Report 1995”, ILO called for a flexible retirement age, arguing that early retirement buyouts in Western countries had failed to reduce unemployment significantly. Public pension expenditure will be even more costly as people retire earlier and live longer.

“The early retirement trend has gone too far, and it will have serious long-term consequences if it is not reversed in the near future.” — ILO report.

By the year 2025, about 14 per cent of world population will be aged 60 years or over. In Western Europe, 26 per cent of the population will fall into this category. ILO said incentives for early retirement should be removed and full pension rights be based on the number of years of contribution, instead of the worker’s age, to allow flexibility.

— Reuters
(Excerpted from Geneva Post, 26 April 1995)

RETIREMENT AT 104

There will also need to be a shift of attitude in two directions, ILO suggests in its “World Labour Report 95”: firms must stop automatically putting the oldest workers out of the door first. And countries must establish a phased transition between work and retirement to ease the shock of a growing number of retirees on the public purse.

After all, when the idea of retirement at 65 was established, average life expectancy was only 50 years. By that standard, with today’s longevity, retirement shouldn’t come until 104.

— Paul Maidment
(Excerpted from Newsweek, 8 May 1995)

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The opinions in the News are those of the authors, not necessarily of AFSM.