

La FAAFI et les Associations soeurs

FAFICS and Sister Associations

VIEILLISSEMENT ET DROITS DE LA PERSONNE AGÉE

Une révolution silencieuse

LA FAAFI soutient la Déclaration
des ONG à la 62^e session de la Commission
des droits de l'homme

« *Le monde subit une transformation démographique sans précédent. D'ici 2050, le nombre de personnes âgées passera d'environ 600 millions à presque 2 milliards. Cette augmentation sera plus marquée dans les pays en voie de développement [...] où l'on s'attend à voir cette population quadrupler. [...] En moins de 50 ans, et pour la première fois dans les annales de l'humanité, il y aura dans le monde plus de personnes ayant dépassé les 60 ans que de jeunes âgés de moins de 15 ans.* »

Ces prévisions auxquelles s'est référé le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies pour qualifier le vieillissement de la population mondiale de « révolution silencieuse », révèlent que la tranche d'âge des plus de 60 ans est en passe de constituer un groupe très nombreux. A noter cependant que, malgré quelques avancées dans le domaine, la problématique du vieillissement ne figure toujours pas à l'ordre du jour dans les documents des N.U. et ne constitue pas une priorité pour la Commission des droits de l'homme. La déclaration des ONG a donc pour objet d'attirer l'attention de la Commission sur le besoin urgent de reconnaître les droits des personnes âgées et d'introduire la problématique du vieillissement dans tous les points de l'ordre du jour du nouveau Conseil des droits de l'homme dont l'Assemblée générale de l'ONU a approuvé la création le 15 mars 2006. Ce Conseil siègera à Genève en remplacement de la Commission, à partir du mois de juin prochain.

Les organisations non gouvernementales ayant statut consultatif auprès du Conseil économique et social (ECOSOC), et donc la Fédération des associations des anciens fonctionnaires internationaux (FAAFI), sont les signataires de la déclaration à la 62^e session de la Commission des droits de l'homme des Nations Unies, Genève, mars-avril 2006, dont on trouvera des extraits ci-dessous

Extraits de la Déclaration

Par le passé, le grand âge et les Droits de la personne âgée ont été peu présents dans les instruments internationaux, et il a fallu attendre 1982 pour que les Nations Unies adoptent à Vienne le premier « *Plan d'action internationale sur le vieillissement* », et ensuite 1991, pour que l'Assemblée générale promulgue « *Les Principes des Nations Unies pour les personnes âgées* ».

AGEING AND THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS

A silent revolution

FAFICS endorses the Statement
by the NGOs to the 62nd session of the
Commission on Human Rights

“The world is undergoing an unprecedented demographic transformation. Between now and 2050, the number of older persons will rise from about 600 million to almost two billion. The increase will be greatest in developing countries [...] where numbers are expected to multiply by four. [...] In less than 50 years from now, for the first time in history, the world will contain more people over 60 years old than under 15 [...]”

The above prospects of the world population ageing, which was qualified by the UN Secretary-General as a “silent revolution”, reveal that older persons are no longer a minority, they are becoming a growing majority! Despite these facts and the progress in some UN documents, ageing is still absent on the agenda and priorities of the UN and of the Commission on Human Rights. Therefore the statement of the NGOs would like to call the attention of the Commission to the urgent need to recognize the rights of older persons and mainstream ageing issues in the agenda of the new Human Rights Council who's establishment the UN General Assembly approved on 15 March 2006 and which will replace the above Commission as from next June

The non-governmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC, among them the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS), undersigned the following statement at the 62nd session of the Commission on Human Rights.

Extracts of the Statement

In the past, mention to old age and references to the Rights of older persons are very few in the numerous International Instruments. It took until 1982 for the UN to adopt the first “*International Plan of Action on Ageing*” in Vienna, and until 1991 for the General Assembly to promulgate the “*UN Principles for Older Persons*”.

Depuis, seules quelques rares mesures ont été prises :

- en 1999 : l'approbation des « *Principes des Nations Unies pour les personnes âgées* » pendant l'Année internationale de la personne âgée,
- en 2002 : l'adoption à l'unanimité d'une « *Déclaration politique et d'un Plan d'action international sur le vieillissement* » pendant la 2^e Assemblée mondiale sur le Vieillessement, organisée par les Nations Unies à Madrid.

Ces deux documents comprennent des objectifs clairs et des mesures concrètes :

- veiller aux droits de la personne âgée ;
- protéger les personnes âgées de « l'abandon, la maltraitance et la violence » dans toutes les circonstances ;
- reconnaître le rôle des personnes âgées dans la société et leurs contributions à celle-ci.

Toutefois, il est évident que ces textes seuls ne suffisent pas pour garantir leurs droits à toutes les personnes âgées. Il reste de nombreuses situations dans lesquelles les personnes âgées ne sont pas reconnues en tant que telles et souffrent de l'exclusion et de discriminations. En voici quelques exemples :

(i) *La pandémie du VIH/SIDA* : la contribution des personnes âgées – particulièrement celle des femmes – est essentielle aujourd'hui dans la garde des petits-enfants orphelins et des enfants en général. Elle constitue un apport inestimable, bénéficiant au développement socio-économique et à la reconstruction de la société, en transmettant aux jeunes générations des valeurs et des compétences et en leur permettant de retrouver une identité.

(ii) *Les migrations* : beaucoup de jeunes générations dans les pays en développement s'expatrient en laissant derrière elles des personnes âgées. Sans soutien familial, social ou économique, et en l'absence de structures socio-sanitaires sur place, cela augmente leurs vulnérabilité, isolement, pauvreté et discrimination. D'autre part, les initiatives sérieuses qui sont actuellement en cours dans ces pays, visant à « délocaliser » et à « rationaliser » les services de santé pour les personnes âgées, se font souvent sur des bases de profit.

(iii) *La société de l'information* : le développement exponentiel des nouvelles technologies augmente le fossé entre les générations. Dans notre monde où cohabitent 4 à 5 générations, les plus anciennes souffrent souvent d'exclusion à cause de la fracture numérique et technologique. Les personnes âgées sont les premières victimes d'un développement axé essentiellement sur les jeunes et sur des impératifs d'ordre économique.

D'autres situations dans lesquelles les personnes âgées sont particulièrement touchées restent méconnues : c'est le cas de celles souffrant d'un handicap, des migrants, des travailleurs pauvres, des réfugiés et personnes déplacées, des victimes de conflits armés ou de désastres, des prisonniers, de celles qui sont maltraitées et torturées, etc. Certains problèmes fondamentaux restent aussi à régler, tels que l'égalité entre les sexes dans le grand âge, l'accès aux services de santé, le droit à la dignité et au respect

Since then, only a few steps were taken:

- in 1999: the endorsement of the “*Conceptual Framework*” during the International Year of Older Persons;
- in 2002: an unanimous adoption of the “*Political Declaration*” and an “*International Strategic Plan of Action on Ageing*” during the 2nd World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid.

Both of those documents include clear objectives and actions to be taken:

- to ensure the Rights of older persons;
- to protect older persons from “neglect, abuse and violence” in all situations;
- to recognize “their role and contribution to society”.

However, it is obvious that these precedents are not enough to give older persons their rights. It is clear that older persons are still unrecognized and increasingly excluded and discriminated. Just to cite a few examples:

(i) *HIV/AIDS pandemic*: the contribution of older persons is vital today, their right to care for orphaned grandchildren and children in general – especially older women – is an unestimated contribution benefiting the socio-economic development as well as the human reconstruction of society, restoring an identity, transmitting higher values and life skills.

(ii) *Migration*: younger generations migrating from developing countries without solid welfare systems leave behind them older women and men with no social, economic and family care support, thus increasing their vulnerability, isolation, poverty, discrimination and lack of health care. On the other hand, serious discussions are going on to delocalize and rationalize older age health care solely for economic gain.

(iii) *The Information Society*: exponential technological development increases the generational divide: in the 4 to 5 generation society we live in, the 2 older generations are too often excluded and affected by the digital divide, making them “digital homeless”. Older persons are the first victims of a development framework adapted primarily to younger generations and productivity imperatives.

In addition, other situations remain unaddressed: older disabled persons, older migrants, older working poor, older refugees or displaced persons, older victims of conflict, war or disasters, older prisoners, older tortured and abused persons, etc., but also key issues such as gender equality in old age, access to health, right to dignity, respect of the cultural life until the end of life.... When you think about it, each

dans les domaines culturels jusqu'à la fin de la vie... Chacun d'entre nous est concerné ou sera concerné.

Nous en appelons donc à la 62^e session de la Commission des droits de l'homme, et lui demandons de tenir compte, en proposant de nouvelles procédures et modalités de travail pour le Conseil des droits de l'homme, des demandes suivantes :

- Inscription à l'ordre du jour des droits de la personne âgée comme un point ou sous-point spécifique.
- Désignation d'un Rapporteur spécial d'une charge analogue pour traiter des droits de la personne âgée.
- Inclusion de la problématique des personnes âgées dans tous les thèmes pertinents que traitera le futur Conseil des droits de l'homme.

one of us is concerned or will be one day concerned.

Therefore, we call upon the 62nd Commission on Human Rights and request it to keep in mind when developing new procedures and modalities of work of the Human Rights Council:

- to mention explicitly the Rights of Older persons as an item or sub-item;
- to appoint a special Rapporteur or similar function dealing specifically with the Rights of Older Persons;
- to mainstream ageing in all relevant issues of the future Human Rights Council.

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS, by Aamir Ali PETITS RIENS ET GRANDS MOMENTS

*"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things:
Of shoes - and ships- and sealing wax -
Of cabbages - and kings -
And why the sea is boiling hot -
And whether pigs have wings."*

Lewis Carol
Through the Looking-Glass

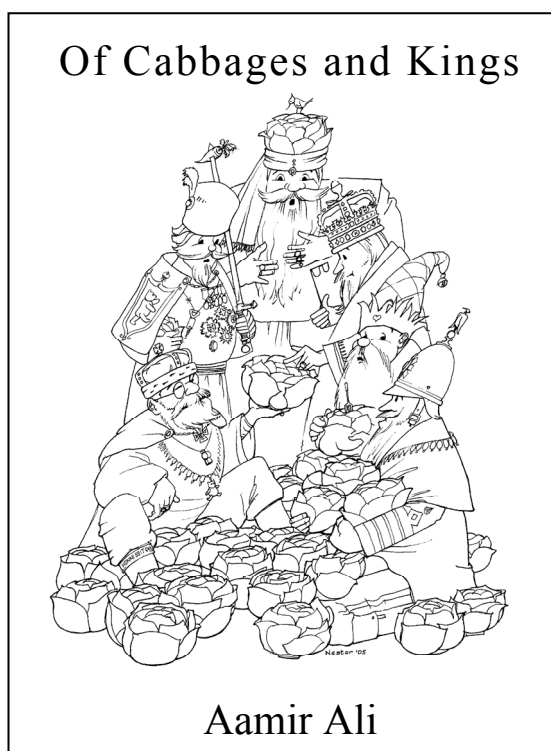
AAFI-AFICS Geneva has put together in a book the articles Aamir Ali published in their Bulletin over the five past years under the rubric *Of Cabbages and Kings, Petits Riens et Grands Moments*, a rubric that LINK reviewed regularly with great pleasure. AFUS members who would like to read these lively chronicles, brimming with smiling philosophy, sometimes with effervescent vengeance, an incomparable sense of observation and an abrasive humour, can order it, without cost, through the AFUS Secretariat.

Of Cabbages and Kings, by Aamir Ali
Petits riens et grands moments

Traduction de Jean-Jacques Chevron

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Rumeurs, rumeurs

Au nom du Secrétaire général, M. Malloch Brown dément formellement les rumeurs relatives à une « privatisation » de la Caisse des pensions

Des rumeurs au sujet des plans visant à « privatiser » la Caisse des pensions – quelle que soit la signification de ce terme – circulaient il y a quelque temps au Siège de l'Organisation des Nations Unies ainsi que dans d'autres endroits. Ces rumeurs ont provoqué une vive inquiétude tant parmi les fonctionnaires en activité que parmi les retraités. M. Mark Malloch Brown, Chef de Cabinet du

Rumours, rumours

On behalf of the Secretary-General, Mr Malloch Brown denies formally rumours on the "privatization of the Pension Fund"

Rumours about the plans to "privatize" the Pension Fund – whatever that may mean – were circulating some time ago in the United Nations Headquarters and in other places as well. These rumours gave rise to a considerable concern both among active staff and retirees. They prompted Mr Mark Malloch Brown, Chef

Secrétaire général (il vient d'être appelé aux fonctions de Vice-secrétaire général, en remplacement de Mme Fréchette), a écrit à la Présidente du Conseil du personnel de l'ONU pour démentir ces rumeurs de la manière la plus formelle :

... « *En ce qui concerne la Caisse des pensions, j'ai déclaré nettement qu'aucune proposition visant à modifier le statut de la Caisse commune des pensions du personnel des Nations Unies n'était envisagée ou même considérée comme nécessaire ou souhaitable. J'ai dit que la Caisse des pensions était un des services de l'Organisation les mieux gérés et administrés et que les racontars au sujet d'une possible privatisation de la Caisse étaient sans fondement* ».

Dès que j'ai eu connaissance de cette lettre, en ma qualité de Président de la FAAFI, j'ai écrit à M. Malloch Brown pour l'informer que la FAAFI partageait son opinion au sujet de la manière dont la Caisse des pensions est gérée et que la Fédération a pris note avec une vive satisfaction de l'annonce aux termes de laquelle les rumeurs au sujet des propositions visant à modifier la situation de la Caisse, y compris sa privatisation, étaient sans fondement. Je lui ai également demandé l'autorisation de communiquer aux associations membres de la FAAFI la partie de sa lettre concernant la Caisse des pensions, afin qu'elles les reproduisent dans leurs bulletins. Cette autorisation m'a été accordée. Il me semble en effet que les informations communiquées par M. Malloch Brown sont d'un grand intérêt pour les membres de l'AAFU.

Witold Zyss

de Cabinet of the Secretary-General (who has recently taken over from Ms Fréchette the post of Deputy Secretary-General), to write a letter to the President of the United Nations Staff Council to deny formally these rumours:

"On the Pension Fund, I stated clearly that no proposal for changes to the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund have been considered, or even deemed to be necessary or appropriate. I said that the Fund is one of the most competently run and managed services in the Organization and that stories about the possible privatization of the Fund were wrong".

When this letter was brought to my attention, in my capacity as President of FAFICS I wrote to Mr Malloch Brown to inform him that FAFICS shared his appraisal of the way in which the Pension Fund was managed and that it had noted with great satisfaction that the rumours about proposals aiming at a modification of the status of the Fund, including its privatization, were without foundation. I also requested Mr Malloch Brown's leave to circulate to member associations of FAFICS that part of his letter which concerned the Pension Fund, so that they may reproduce it in their newsletters. This authorization has now been given. I believe that the information conveyed by Mr Malloch Brown is of great interest to members of AFUS.

AMERICANS FOR UNESCO

André Varchaver, President of AU



André Varchaver joined Jack Fobes from the early days of Americans for the Universality of Unesco, now Americans for UNESCO (AU). He has been AU's Secretary-Treasurer, Vice-President, becoming President in 2006.

For over 27 years, André Varchaver was on the staff of the United Nations system. Before serving at United Nations Headquarters in Geneva as Chef de Cabinet of its Director-General, he served Unesco from 1959 to 1981. Among his various posts, he was successively Deputy Director then Director of the Liaison Office with the United Nations in New York, Director of the Training and Fellowships Division at Unesco Headquarters in Paris and the Organization's Representative in Zaire, Burundi and Rwanda. He also served as advisor on training to the World Bank and the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa.

After graduating from Indiana University and Columbia University's School of International Affairs and the Russian Institute, and before joining Unesco, André Varchaver was a researcher at the Brookings Institution; he then headed the Eastern European Division of the International Institute of Education, before managing the New York Office of the Ford Foundation sponsored Project on Hungary. He also worked for the USIA European Field Service.

After his retirement from the United Nations, André Varchaver was a Consultant to the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., from 1987 to 1997, dealing with the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) and United Nations affairs; in this capacity, he participated in international conferences on Natural Disaster Reduction in Chiba and Yokohama; he joined the NAS advisory observation team following the 1988 earthquake in Armenia; he was interim Director of the Secretariat of the IDNDR at the United Nations in Geneva.

From 1987 to 1999, André Varchaver represented the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) at the United Nations' Headquarters in New York, and at the U.S. Congress in Washington, DC. He created, and directed the IPU Liaison Office with the United Nations.

Americans for Unesco, an update

A number of important decisions have been adopted at the recent meeting of AU's Board of Directors which is headed by its President. The organization's website is being revived and will be fully operative shortly under the management of Board member Professor John Daly and the assistance of a student as webmaster. Unesco has agreed to share its software package for hosting national commissions with AU. Past issues of AU's newsletter "*Prospects and Retrospects*" will be put on the website and, to save printing and mailing costs, future issues of the newsletter will also be posted on the website until such time as AU's treasury makes it possible to publish it as well as post it on the website.

The U.S. science community, in particular, had serious concerns with Ambassador Louise Oliver's letter to the Director-General outlining procedures for communications between Unesco and the U.S., including non-governmental partners. Following a positive meeting with the Executive Director of the U.S. National Commission for Unesco, concerns were attenuated though not entirely so. The Chairman of our Board Science Committee, Irving Lerch, organized a very successful panel-discussion on Unesco, including its relations with the U.S., at a major meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, also attended by government and National Commission officials.

Finally, the Board accepted the resignation of Richard (Dick) Arndt as President of the Board and of AU, appointing him co-chair of AU's Advisory Council. In addition, he will keep a number of functions, principally as editor of "*Prospects and Retrospects*" and relations with various schools of the George Washington University which has generously hosted us since June 2005. For over three years, as President and "Commissioner" (of the U.S. National Commission), Dick has been extremely active and the Board expressed its gratitude and appreciation. It then proceeded to elect the undersigned as Dick's successor. Raymond Wanner

remains as senior Vice-President, Irving Lerch becomes Vice-President joining in that capacity Michael Southwick and Emily Vargas-Barón.

AU's Advisory Council, co-chaired by Esther Coopersmith and Dick Arndt, is composed of a number of distinguished Americans in fields directly or indirectly related to those of Unesco. A particularly distinguished one, Dr Miller Upton, died a few weeks ago at the ripe age of 88, having devoted years of energy to education, internationalism in general and Unesco in particular. Over the years, while heading Beloit College in Wisconsin, he innovated the widely admired "Beloit Plan" that featured a continuous school year and a "World Affairs" program that revitalized the college, attracted national attention and inspired other colleges, such as renowned Dartmouth, to adopt his innovations. He was greatly admired by René Maheu, with whom I visited Beloit College, and Jack Fobes who much later succeeded him at the helm of the U.S. National Commission for Unesco. Upton headed it from 1971 to 1975 and led the U.S. delegation to the eighteenth session of the General Conference where he displayed exceptional qualities of leadership and an innate sense of diplomacy. He was an early supporter of Fobes' creation of "Americans for the Universality of Unesco", now AU, and we mourn the loss of this exceptional man.

In cooperation with AU, the Better World Campaign, a subsidiary of the United Nations Foundation (which actively supports a number of Unesco programs, notably the World Heritage), has resumed organizing meetings of representatives of civil society as well as of the government/National Commission and the Congress, related to or interested in Unesco. AU will continue and develop its cooperation with the National Commission and looks forward to working closely with Unesco's New York Office and its newly appointed Director Hélène Gosselin.

André Varchaver
March 2006