

# The Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue

Newsletter issue No. 6, March 2020

Human Rights Without Prejudice



THE GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

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The Geneva Centre is pleased to announce the sixth edition of its Newsletter "*Human Rights Without Prejudice*". The Geneva Centre has evolved, with a new Board, team and strategic vision. In this framework, the Centre will strengthen its endeavours to further enhance mutual understanding and cooperative relations between peoples and societies of all regions, cultures and faiths. These noble goals remain at the heart of our work to promote a more tolerant, inclusive and peaceful world society built upon universal respect for human rights.

The present Newsletter will thus provide an update of our activities and efforts undertaken over the past seven months.

A short word with regard to the COVID-19 crisis. In difficult and uncertain times as these, we need to look back at the foundations of our identity, and search for the assets, resources and strengthens which have accounted for our successes and our collaboration throughout the years. This would provide an unflinching source of motivation to reaffirm our commitment to our mission.

## New Team

	<b>Dr Umesh Palwankar</b> (Switzerland)	Executive Director
	<b>Ms Tiziana Loschi</b> (France)	Executive Assistant
	<b>Ms Maryna Yazianok</b> (Belarus)	Project and Information Officer
	<b>Mr Florian Fiquet</b> (France)	Project and Information Officer

## New Board

The Board of the Geneva Centre is responsible for overseeing the policies and activities of the organization. The Geneva Centre's Board of Management meets at least thrice a year to discuss the strategic direction of the organization.

Chairman of the Board	<b>Ambassador Ghazi Jomaa</b> (Tunisia)	
Treasurer	<b>Dr Mohammed Butti Thani Tarish Al Shamsi</b> (United Arab Emirates)	
General-Secretary	<b>Mr Vincent Hornung</b> (Switzerland)	
Board Member	<b>Prof. Paola Todini</b> (Italy)	
Board Member	<b>Dr Judge Mohammad Al Tarawneh</b> (Jordan)	

*It is with deep sorrow that the Geneva Centre learnt of the passing away on 27 February 2020 of its previous Executive Director, former Ambassador Idriss Jazairy. See the homage on our website <https://bit.ly/3afWiLx>*

### OUR VISION

We believe in human rights, essential to the dignity of all human beings and to the development and harmony of the world community .

However, we observe that human rights, although universal at the normative level, are not universal in practice. There is a gap between the multilateral centres of debate and decision, primarily in Geneva and New York, and the rest of the world, between international consensus and State-level implementation. There is thus a pressing need to place human rights at the centre of governance throughout the world. There is an equal need of raising human rights awareness and understanding, and overcoming divisive trends by fostering human rights dialogue across cultures, religions and civilizations.



## ENHANCING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

Geneva, 18 September 2019

Co-organized with the Permanent Mission of the UAE and held at the United Nations Office in Geneva

Link: [http://bit.ly/article\\_children](http://bit.ly/article_children)

The purpose of the conference, held on the margins of the 42<sup>nd</sup> regular session of the Human Rights Council, was to raise awareness about the need to protect the rights of children in vulnerable situations and to gain deeper understanding of the root causes and risk factors of child abuse and neglect. The conference was also an occasion to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, celebrated in 2019.

The event took stock of the progress achieved in the legal empowerment of children, and identified areas of improvement in line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international legal frameworks.

### Opening Remarks

HE Mr **Obaid Salem Al Zaabi**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations Office in Geneva

### Moderator

Dr **Umesh Palwankar**, Executive Director *ad interim* of the Geneva Centre

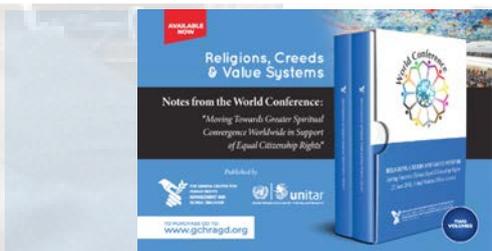
### Panellists

Ms **Fatma Ghulam Murad**, Head of Section of the Department of Child and Woman Protection, General Department of Human Resources, Dubai Police

Professor **Velina Todorova**, Vice-Chairperson and Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

Ms **Beate Andres**, Chief, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch, ILO

Mr **Phenny Kakama**, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia



### World Conference book launch

The Geneva Centre, in collaboration with UNITAR, will hold the Book Launch of the publication of the World Conference on Religions Creeds and Value Systems, at the UN Office in Geneva. We count on the participation of Ms Hamangai Pataxó, a young indigenous leader from Brazil, winner of the Young Activists Summit award. The book launch event was planned in March but had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis.



### The impact of armed conflict on human rights through environmental destruction

The Geneva Centre plans to organize a high-level conference on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Human Rights through Environmental Destruction. We will invite internationally renowned experts in environment and human rights, as well as persons working in the field to link theoretical aspects with experiences from the ground.

## PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS:

### WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

In 2010, the General Assembly Resolution [A/RES/65/5](#) proclaimed the first week of February the World Interfaith Harmony Week between all religions, faiths and beliefs. During this week the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill is spread all over the world, based on love of God and love of one's neighbour, according to the traditions and convictions of each religion or belief. Interfaith

dialogue represents a subject of high importance for the Geneva Centre, which organized a flagship World Conference on the Religions, Creeds, Value Systems and Equal Citizenship Rights in 2018, and continued working on the topic of inter-religious dialogue ever since. In the framework of the 2020 World Interfaith Harmony week, the Geneva Centre was invited to speak during two panel discussions. Dr Umesh Palwankar, the Executive Director, represented the Geneva Centre during these fruitful events.

07.02.2020

### WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES EVENT ON INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

*"There is an urgent need to counteract divisive trends and to respond to the proliferation of religious hatred, by instilling a culture of peace and tolerance through education, and by triggering a worldwide process of spiritual convergence based on the shared universal values embodied in all religions".* **Dr Umesh Palwankar, Executive Director of the Geneva Centre**



14.02.2020

### UNITAR event - 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENEVA INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

*"In such wounded times, education, understanding and solidarity, accompanied by love and forgiveness, can alone dispel the darkness of ignorance and hatred and usher an era of compassion, respect and dignity for all."* **Dr Umesh Palwankar, Executive Director of the Geneva Centre**



In Geneva, capital of human rights, important meetings are held on a daily basis. We attach great importance to conferences held within the United Nations Office and we also attend events organized by academic institutions in Geneva such as the Graduate Institute, the Geneva Academy Of International Humanitarian Law And Human Rights and the University of Geneva. Extensive environment scanning is a crucial part of our activities. We select meetings of interest that we consider relevant for the work of the Centre, but also for our mandate as a think-tank on human rights. We extensively cover all meetings we attend on social media, and produce a concise follow-up report.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of events attended since September 2019.



18-20 November 2019 Celebrating 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child



06 December 2019 HRC Organizational session – 14<sup>th</sup> cycle



29 November 2019 UNOG International day of solidarity with Palestine



25-27 November 2019 UN Forum on Business and Human Rights



10 December 2019 Young Activists Summit



January 2020, 35<sup>th</sup> session of the UPR



29 January 2020 Committee on the Rights of the Child, review of Palestine



19 February 2020 Martin Ennals Awards Ceremony



19 February 2020 Human Rights Council President meeting with NGOs



February 2020 UNMAS Meeting on Mine Action and Environment



20 February 2020 UN Library event: Multilateralism from perspective of Global South



24 Feb – 13 March 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the HRC



25 February 2020 UN75 Dialogue with Antonio Guterres at the Graduate Institute



20 November 2019

**World Children’s Day,**

*“The 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought forth new challenges and emerging threats. 30 years ago there was no World Wide Web, there were fewer protracted conflicts and people on the move, the crisis of climate change was not yet that present. Today more than ever the voices of the children and young people should be heard.” Full statement:*

<https://bit.ly/3ane2EU>

16 November 2019

**International Day for Tolerance,**

*“The Geneva Centre emphasizes the importance of fostering tolerance among individuals for building peaceful societies, and invites multiple actors to play their part and collaborate with each other in order to achieve this important goal” Full statement:*

<https://bit.ly/3dt2EcC>

29 November 2019

**International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People,**

*“The Geneva Centre takes the opportunity to express its entire solidarity with the Palestinian civilians who, for more than 70 years, have endured many tragedies and hardships, seeing their homes demolished and living in dire humanitarian conditions.” Full statement:*

<https://bit.ly/2WJXbbd>

20 February 2020

**World Day of Social Justice,**

*“In a period marked by a steep rise in xenophobia, racism and intolerance, social justice must constitute an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations” Full statement:*

[http://bit.ly/GC\\_social](http://bit.ly/GC_social)

THE GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE



21 March 2020

**World Day Against Racial Discrimination**

*“The Covid-19 public health concern will never be solved with fear and discrimination.*

*The Geneva Centre strongly condemns the growing Xenophobic – including Sinophobic, anti-Italian, anti-Iranian and others – rhetoric in political discourses. The Geneva Centre in this regard encourages ethical journalism and calls for accelerated global solidarity” Full statement:*

<https://bit.ly/3bdvpYF>

08 March 2020

**International Women’s Day,**

*“As we celebrate the International Women’s Day this week, and the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration this year, the time has come to definitively end the silent, but persistent injustice and discrimination that women have been subjected to for years” Full statement:*

<https://bit.ly/2UBCs6N>

10 December 2019

**Human Rights Day,**

*“The Geneva Centre continues to stress the need to empower children and youth, to ensure equal access to education, to justice, to employment opportunities and, above all, to full participation in society, with the young voices being heard at all levels.” Full statement:*

<https://bit.ly/2xn6Eul>

## TRAININGS SESSIONS

### 2-30 September 2019: “Human rights in a multilateral context” a training programme for students of Zayed University, Dubai (UAE)

**When:** 2-30 September 2019

**Who:** three trainees – female students from Zayed University (UAE)

**What:** The trainees underwent a 4-week training programme entitled “Human rights in a multilateral context”. The programme included lectures, on the history, role and mission of the United Nations, functioning and role of the UN Human Rights Council, Introduction to International Human Rights Law, and the role of communication in the field of human rights.



### 2-13 March 2020 “Human rights in a multilateral context” a training programme for students of Zayed University, Dubai (UAE)

**When:** 2 to 13 March 2020 (the training should have lasted until 30 March but was suspended due to COVID-19)

**Who:** two trainees students from Zayed University (UAE)

**What:** An intensive 2-weeks training on Human Rights & International Law, Human Rights Council and UN Human Rights mechanisms, Gender issues, Women's rights and Interfaith dialogue. The trainees also attended the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council.



### 17-19 September “Safety Ambassadors” a study visit of Dubai high-school students

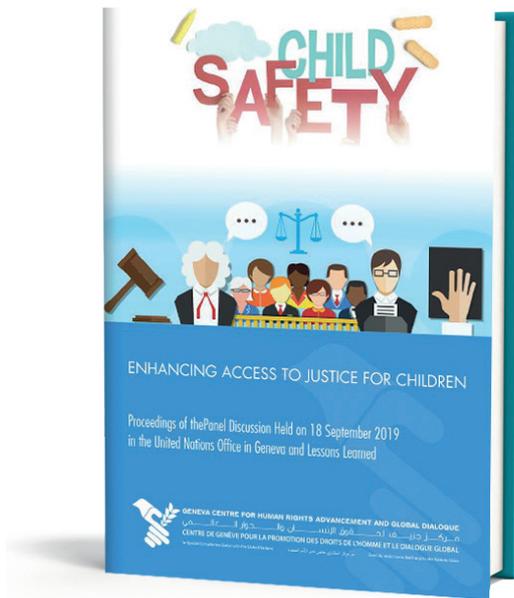
**When:** 17 to 19 September 2019

**Who:** Four high-school students, participants of the Dubai Police Safety Ambassadors programme.

**What:** During this 3-day study visit, they received a training on the UN human rights mechanisms and the role and functions of the UN Human Rights Council.



## “Enhancing Access to Justice for Children”



The publication constitutes a follow-up to an eponymous panel discussion organized by the Geneva Centre on 18 September 2019, in cooperation with the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates. The publication is also an occasion to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, celebrated in 2019. The book seeks to summarize the rich panel proceedings and presentations made by the experts from UNICEF, Committee on the Rights of the Child, International Labour Organization, and Department of Child and Woman Protection of the Dubai Police.

It also includes a think piece on the lessons learned from the panel debate, identifying the main challenges and the way forward for achieving equitable and universal access to justice for all children.

Find out more at: [http://bit.ly/publication\\_children](http://bit.ly/publication_children)

## “World Conference – Religions, Creeds and Value Systems: Joining Forces to Enhance Equal Citizenship Rights”

The publication features the proceedings of the World Conference, organized by the Geneva Centre and held on 25 June 2018, is comprised of two volumes.

- *Volume I* offers a comprehensive assessment of the enriching debates and the innovative solutions proposed by eminent dignitaries to eliminate all forms of practices impeding the enjoyment of equal and inclusive citizenship rights.
- *Volume II* includes a number of preparatory papers on various aspects of equal citizenship rights and their realization throughout the world, as well as the transcribed versions of the statements and talking points as delivered by the eminent dignitaries and keynote speakers during the World Conference

**The official launch of the publication had been announced for 26 March 2020, but has been postponed due to Covid-19 global health crisis.**



## A NEW FOCUS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

We have decided to intensify our communication efforts. As a consequence, our presence on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn greatly increased since the beginning of the year. Why ? Because we are aware of the importance of being present on social media. Visibility is key.

## WHAT DO WE SHARE ?

Our priority is to share our work with thousands of people in Geneva and abroad, giving them an innovative and constructive point of view on human rights and multilateralism. We share our reports, briefings and activities. We also share what is happening in the "Genève Internationale", whether it is events, demonstrations, exhibitions or simply facts that we consider as relevant for our audience.

## WHO IS OUR AUDIENCE?

We have a very diverse audience. Ranging from UN experts, UN Permanent Missions, Human Rights activists, scholars, politicians, people interested in human rights, media, students. People from Geneva but also from all around the world.

## JOIN US!

Every day, new followers join us, currently we have more and more followers: 4 430 on Twitter, 11 473 on Facebook and 987 on LinkedIn.

Become a member of our social media community. Join us to receive daily news on human rights, and more!



11 473



4 430



987





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