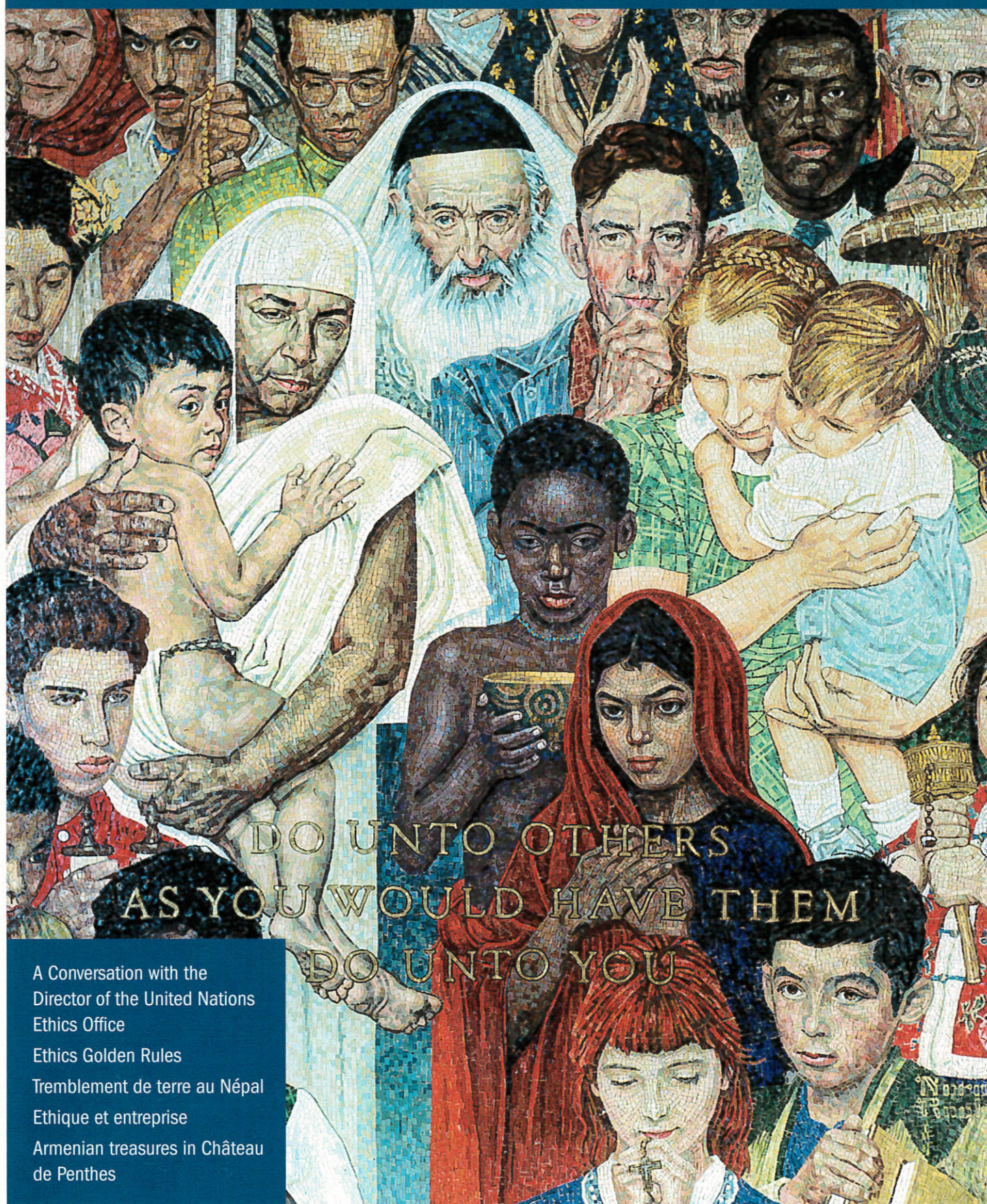


# UN Special



MAGAZINE DES FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX - THE MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS



DO UNTO OTHERS  
AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM  
DO UNTO YOU

A Conversation with the  
Director of the United Nations  
Ethics Office

Ethics Golden Rules

Tremblement de terre au Népal

Ethique et entreprise

Armenian treasures in Château  
de Penthes



# Fairness in international collaborative research partnerships for health – time for a certification process

## COHRED Fairness Index

*COHRED hosted during two days (April 16-17, 2015) its fourth high-level Colloquium at the Wellcome Trust in London for an intense, focused and multi-sector discussion on the CFI. Prominent leaders and institutions that shape research and innovation for health attended the event and contributed to the discussions that were key for furthering the development of the CFI.*

**NAJIA MUSOLINO AND JANIS LAZDINS, COHRED GROUP**

When in 2006, the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research in Bangladesh raised the issue of equitable research contracting practice at the WHO's Advisory Committee on Health Research, Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED) committed to work on an initiative aimed at driving fair outcomes in collaborative research partnerships between high and low-income countries. As a result, COHRED established the Fair Research Contracting (FRC) initiative that has provided resources that enhance research partnerships in equitable and mutually beneficial contractual arrangements. FRC like any other good practices guidelines developed and/or promoted by many organizations (e.g.: Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries, Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences, Convention on Biological Diversity's Nagoya Protocol, World Medical Association's Helsinki Declaration, etc.) are examples of initiatives that seek to achieve high standards in best practices in international collaborative research for health. Nevertheless, COHRED and its African arm (COHRED Africa) have identified a gap when it comes to best practices in collaborative research partnerships beyond the contractual aspects. In this context, COHRED engaged in broad consultations with a wide spectrum of stakeholders in research for health, to better understand the key issues associated with research collaborations. Evidence shows that decades of global support for health research and innovation in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) have not substantially improved the systems that countries need to prioritize, conduct, commission, partner or finance research and to translate results into effective policy, practice and products. The recent Ebola outbreak has demonstrated how vulnerable are LMICs when local crises not foreseen by the global health prioritization processes emerge.

Contrary to high-income nations where activities related to global health contribute to expansion of research, social development and creation of economic benefits, LMICs don't often get an equitable share of the spoils. There is therefore a need to establish a new metrics to address the benefit sharing among the "north" and the "south" not only on the availability of the tools to address health issues but also increasing the strength of research and innovation capacity and infrastructure in LMICs while stimulating employment and social development. To address the above mentioned disparities due to the asymmetries among "north-south" collaborations, COHRED proposes the creation of a seal of certification aimed to reward initiatives aimed at reducing the disparities in attaining the benefits from research and innovation for health. For now we have called it the COHRED Fairness Index, in short the CFI.

CFI is envisioned as a tool to show how collaborative research between high and low income country researchers can lead to solutions that reach beyond the generation of knowledge and tools to address health problems. Sponsors, funders and investors need to assume an ethical responsibility that extends beyond the duration of the completion of initiatives for partnerships. Furthermore, as middle-income countries rise to be co-financers of research and innovation for global health, often expectations are high and there is not a very clear understanding of the contributing capacity of these countries. When it comes to co-financing research and innovation, a million dollar to a high-income country may not be the same as to a low and middle-income country, which may have only recently begun the race to gain a foothold in the global economy.

The primary vision that emerged from the above consultation is that the CFI integrates into the management structure of

partners at institutional or national levels to be a working tool reaching beyond the process of external validation. Key domains to be covered by the CFI certification were identified: Responsiveness to local priorities; Impact on Research and Innovation Capacity; Financial and Management transparency and parity; Fair distribution of Benefits and Burden; Reduction of Reputational Risk and Encouraging Ethical Principles. The CFI also proposes to be relevant to the complexity of values that each of the core users expect in a cost-effective manner without undue administrative burden on any partner. As a certification system, it will consider existing guides, tools and international conventions related to research and innovation and design new standards only when there are gaps or no guides available. The CFI will not name and blame or rank and publish, but rather lead into thinking if we can improve our practices. It seeks to articulate the needs, expectations and the local priorities of the different actors involved in collaborative partnerships, promoting ownership (of data, skills, products, technologies), responsibility and capacity strengthening,



General Counsel & Senior Vice President of International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), Director of the Centre for Biotechnology R&D from Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) and Under Secretary for R&D, Department of S&T, Philippines during a floor discussion, COHRED Colloquium 4.



Deputy Director of Ministry of Higher Education S&T, Kenya speaks during a panel Q&A session at COHRED Colloquium 4. Left from him, the National Secretary of STI, Panama.

encouraging creation of jobs for socio-economic development and increasing trust and accountability among partners to ultimately foster outcome and impact in global health research and innovation.

The key stakeholders endorsed the initiative thereby giving it the credibility, legitimacy and recognition it requires in the international arena. These endorsements ranged from organising regional consultations in order to increase geographical

representativeness, to helping COHRED with marketing and branding of the CFI, to providing legal consultative services to improve the index certification and even a few to becoming early adopters of the CFI allowing COHRED to conduct a CFI trial in some organizations in Latin America, Asia and in Africa. ■

**DUTY FREE  
STORE  
FOR DIPLOMATS**

GET UP TO

20% 30% 40% 50%

DISCOUNT VERSUS  
DOWNTOWN!

ADDRESS:  
Avenue de France 27  
1202 Genève

TEL:  
022 919 40 20



**batmaid**

Find your declared & insured cleaning maid  
in 60 seconds, then relax & have fun !



Book now & get CHF 10.- discount\*  
Code : UNSPECIAL15



More information on :

**www.batmaid.com**

\*Valid until September 1st 2015 for new customers